



Aloha and Mahalo

In Fond Appreciation for 15 years

Aloha is the Hawaiian word that encompasses both greetings of goodbye and welcome. Mahalo is the Hawaiian word that signifies thank you. Aloha allows us to reflect on past accomplishments and the lasting ties we are bound to as we face departures and allows us even in the face of uncertainty to embrace the chance to begin afresh.

Growing up in Hawaii in the late 60s and early 70s, one might say that the spirit of Aloha was fundamental, its practice defining in many ways, and informs every thing I do. As editor of *The Asian American* since 1997, I want to express my sincere Aloha and Mahalo.

Aloha and a fond Mahalo to AASI founding director Roger Buckley, who is stepping down to return to History and devote more time to writing. After 15 years under his watch, the Institute is positioned to take his vision to the next level, guided by his unbridled enthusiasm for collaboration and innovation.

Aloha to Gary Okihiro, who will keynote the 2008 East of California Conference, and to the opportunity to host it at UConn. A big Mahalo goes to all the co-sponsors and organizers especially to Asst. Prof. Cathy Schlund-Vials.

Aloha and congratulations to Asst. Prof. Kornel Chang, who received a prestigious yearlong fellowship at Yale College for fall 2008, and to Assoc. Prof. Margo Machida, who will be on sabbatic leave in fall 2008 to curate a seminal Asian American Graphic Arts exhibition in San Francisco.

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Director's 2008 Comments

Sayonara

Fifteen years is a long time to run any operation. The need for new leadership, coupled with university politics and the pressure to return to teaching and writing, led me to step down as the Director of the Asian American Studies Institute, effective June 2008. Needless to say it was a hard decision to reach: I have been at the helm of the Institute since July in 1993. Why did I remain as director for as long as I have? The answer is quite simple: once I entered the world of Asian American Studies I didn't want to leave. It was easy to feel at home in a movement I regarded as critical to an understanding of the Asian American experience and the broader American experience. I wanted to be a part of the effort that shed light on the history of peoples of Asian ancestry and told America's story from their point of view. It appealed to the story teller in me. Until recently, few people knew that Asians have been coming to these shores since at least the 17th century and predate the arrival here of many European ethnic groups.

Needless to say Asian American Studies has made many contributions to Ethnic Studies. For example, it has fundamentally changed the discourse on the question of race in America. Thanks to the work of Ron Takaki and others, no longer can race be defined in simple binary terms of black and white.

Turning to the Asian American Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut, and at the risk of sounding self serving, we accomplished a number of important things. For instance, setting aside the traditional way of understanding the American ethnic experience, we understood and valued the dictum that everything has a context. With that idea in mind, we absorbed Asia into the Asian American experience, and before we hired our first joint appointment we proudly stated in our literature that Asia informs the Asian American experience. This decision shaped much of what we did at the Institute, in terms of faculty scholarship, the minor in Asian American Studies, the co-publication of *Catamaran: South Asian American Writing*, and the faculty exchange program with Visva Bharati (Tagore University) in West Bengal, India, to name a few.

At the time we were defining the mission of the Institute, we also agreed that the Institute's signature piece would be the history of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War Two. It was our way of recognizing one of the most important events in the history of 20th century America. Our Japanese American Resource Library, the Bainbridge Island Oral History Project, the Michi Weglyn Collection, the Yuri Kochiyama Papers, and the Government of Canada Japanese



From left: Cathy Schlund-Vials, Bandana Purkayastha, Kornel Chang, Margo Machida, Fe Delos-Santos and Roger Buckley. Maxine Smestad-Haines not pictured.

Until recently, few people knew that Asians have been coming to these shores since at least the 17th century and predate the arrival here of many European ethnic groups. Asian American Studies has made many contributions to Ethnic Studies.

Canadian Internment Documentary Collection point to our commitment to Internment Studies. The subject of Japanese American internment has attracted renewed scholarly attention in the aftermath of 9/11 and the illegal detentions that have become a part of the so-called "war on terror".

I take this opportunity to thank our students, the Asian American community in Connecticut and beyond, our many friends at UConn, particularly the Asian American Cultural Center, and last but not least, the Institute's prolific faculty and devoted and capable staff for their valuable support since 1993. Without this collective support we would be like a sky rinsed free of its beautiful and defining clouds.

I return full time to the History Department after a long but very rewarding sojourn. But, glad to say, a courtesy appointment allows me to remain active with my colleagues at the Institute. This link makes me look forward eagerly to the work that remains to be done, in the direction of a true version of American history and away, finally, from an orthodox understanding of who we are.

Roger N. Buckley

Gandhian Solutions to the Crises of the 21st Century

Ela Gandhi

Peace activist and former Member of Parliament of South Africa, Ela Gandhi spoke at several gatherings during her visit to the University of Connecticut in October of 2007 at the invitation of the Asian American Studies Institute. Speaking on the “Crises of the 21st Century” to a standing room only audience of students, faculty, staff and community members in the Student Union Theatre on October 4, she offered a Gandhian perspective as a means of arriving at a more enduring solution to the problems of spiraling violence, in the form of religious and ethnic hatred, environmental degradation, runaway consumerism, terror and warfare. On October 5, she met with newly installed President of the university, Michael J. Hogan, and Provost Peter J. Nicholls, and also gave a talk for the Gandhi Endowment Fund at Middlesex Community College. On October 6, she addressed the Annual Ahimsa Seminar at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center (details on page 4), as well as toured the ANC Archives there.

Ela Gandhi was banned from political activism during apartheid and subjected to house arrest for nine years. In Parliament she aligned with the African National Congress party and represented the area of her birth in South Africa, in the KwaZulu Natal province near Durban. Granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, she founded the Gandhi Development Trust, developed a 24-hour program against domestic violence, and currently serves as Chancellor of Durban University of Technology.

Her visit to UConn was made possible by the generosity of many co-sponsoring groups: Jain Center of Greater Hartford, Asian American Cultural Center, Women’s Center, UNESCO Chair and Institute of Comparative Human Rights, India Studies Program, Department of History, Women’s Studies Program, and the Office of the Vice Provost of Multicultural and International Affairs.

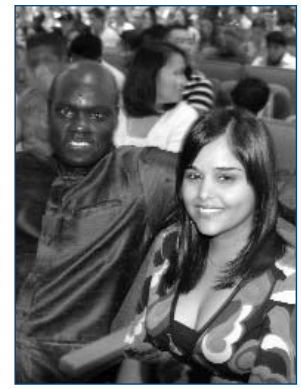


Ela Gandhi

With both an education for the world of work and the obsession with wealth, we have dehumanized people.

In addressing the crises of the 21st century, she asked the audience to reflect on ten issues she identified as the most significant, beginning with the problems of information access and control and the media’s power over our thinking and behavior, referencing Vandana Shiva’s “subjugation of knowledge.” According to Ela Gandhi, “knowledge is so strictly controlled by the powers that be that we can no longer accept everything we read or even see as the gospel truth. And even where information is truthful it is controlled by the media through the amount of time dedicated to information. So on a given day, what makes breaking news and what gets skimmed over is an individual’s choice, which however affects the way we think and understand what is happening. [I]n summary, we get selective information; we get bombarded with certain information; and we are deprived of certain information.”

Gandhi also gave her unique perspective on the development of prejudices and xenophobia, the devastating effects of consumerism and globalization, as well as those from the increase in



UNESCO chair Amii Omara-Otunnu and UConn student Shahista Ramanand

armaments, violence, terror, warfare and patriarchy, particularly on the lives of women and children and on the sustainability of the environment.

Given the university setting, Ela Gandhi dovetailed her commentary on the nature of our education into the dehumanization she believes we are witnessing and experiencing throughout the world. “It is in the past two centuries that the focus has shifted from a broader humanist values of education – being the development of the body, mind and soul – to a more technological approach to education narrowly defined as education for the world of work. We now produce technocrats with little knowledge of ethics and morality.”

Ela Gandhi paid due homage to her grandfather Mahatma Gandhi, who emphasized the equal importance of just means to just ends, and “advocated a culture of respect for all points of view. He believed that we should listen to even what was being said by our opponents, and discern what aspect of what they were saying was applicable and what aspect was unjustified. We must then oppose the injustice. In a world where there is a steady polarization between people on the basis of religion and ethnicity, it is so important to develop an understanding and respect for diversity.”

See <http://asianamerican.uconn.edu/resources> for more on Ela Gandhi.

Fifth Annual Ahimsa Seminar

Perspectives of a Peace Activist

Ela Gandhi gave the Keynote Address at the fifth Annual Ahimsa Nonviolence Seminar, which was established through a partnership between the Asian American Studies Institute and the Greater Hartford Jain Center to engage Mahatma Gandhi's legacy of social activism. This partnership was forged in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. The inaugural program celebrated the 2600th birth anniversary of Tirthankar Mahavir and examined his teachings of interconnectedness of and nonviolence toward all living beings.

Opening with her grandfather's "Be the change you wish to see" in a world that is daily confronted with terrible acts of violence – Ela Gandhi reminded us to "start with ourselves. In so doing, we need to look at what we mean by violence." She then elaborated on seven of its different forms, some obvious such as physical violence, others not so visible such as emotional violence that is inflicted by hurting other people's feelings either deliberately or by being insensitive. Strongly tied to emotional violence is psychological violence, "which is much more subtle and hidden from us, but we constantly see that there's goading by people against other people, which results in the development of a poor self-image."

Distinguishing between institutional and structural violence, Ela Gandhi said that whereas the former is entrenched in society over years of conditioning and may not be deliberate, it results in "the person feeling helpless, incapable, not aspiring ... as for instance in the creation of roles, which we are conditioned to believe that this is how life is meant to be, and also by the creation of status, caste, class divisions, racial stereotyping, what size you are – fat or thin, the color of your skin, and countless other ways in which we create divisions." Structural violence on the other hand is government legislated, so that policies victimize people on the basis of religion, race and appearance, such as those carried out in apartheid South Africa.



Members of the dance group UConn Surya surround Ela Gandhi who said economic violence impacts women most.

While touching briefly on environmental violence, which can result "from simple acts of littering and plant damage, to huger issues of pollution, water wastage and contamination" to name a few, Ela Gandhi spent a bit of time on the more complex form of economic violence, "which is seen when people are deliberately not given access to funds. We see this sometimes in our households, where a woman's work is not valued and she is not given access to funds, leaving her constantly feeling dependent ... This can lead to physical and emotional violence, and women feel forced to remain in such a relationship because they feel they can never be able to live an independent life away from the home." Yet she recognized that poverty, chronic low-income and high debts also factor into non-access to funds and economic violence. To this end, she offered her understanding of a Gandhian response based on her grandfather's belief that everyone had a right to work, and that all work was valuable, including housework which is often considered "invisible" work, and therefore, must be properly compensated.

Vivek Maru also spoke passionately on what Mahatma Gandhi's legacy means in these times for him while challenging the audience to do the same. "He's really become canonized as a saint. I think that's with very good reason, but canonization holds a danger ... there's the possibility that you remove it from real-world considerations."

For Maru, Mahatma "Gandhi's genius was a commitment, a kind of dogged, fierce commitment, to transform the self and the world according to our highest ideals of truth and love ... and [his] conscious, deliberate and hard striving ... That's what set him apart as a leader." Maru further explicated Gandhi's model of social action – Satyagraha, which most famously dealt with political oppression and wide social engagement, but also includes the personal struggle to be more honest, to overcome fear, in addition to devoting time to constructive work that is based locally and hands-on.

Vivek Maru hails from Danbury, Connecticut and ancestrally from Bidada village in Kutch, Gujarat. He has worked on human rights and development issues for grassroots organizations in India, South Africa and the U.S. Trained in the law, he is also a spoken word and hip-hop artist who draws on both American hip-hop and the Kutchi oral/poetic tradition.

In 1906, September 11th, Mahatma Gandhi put Satyagraha into practice to resist the unjust laws in apartheid South Africa first and later in British ruled India.

The Sixth Annual Ahimsa Seminar will be held on October 2, 2008 at 4:30 pm in the Betty Tipton Room, Eastern Connecticut State University. Call AASI for more information.

The Art of Gaman Exhibition at the Benton Museum

Guest Curator Delphine Hirasuna

From the moment the first boxes of artifacts began arriving from San Francisco to the Opening Reception on January 29, 2008 the William Benton Museum of Art at the University of Connecticut seemed to fill and expand with long-deferred excitement and record numbers of visitors. Primarily funded by a grant from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, the exhibition was additionally supported by the Asian American Studies Institute, Asian American Cultural Center, and Foundations of Humanitarianism Program.

The Art of Gaman exhibition takes its name from the book of the same name by guest curator Delphine Hirasuna, who was inspired by a tiny wooden bird pin found among her late mother's things, an enduring fragment of a people's resilience and a painful reminder of an American shame. In *The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese Internment Camps 1942-1946* (Ten Speed Press, 2005) page after beautifully presented page tells the story of unjustly imprisoned Japanese Americans who created art from the bits and pieces – scrap wood, paper and metal, shells, slate, mayo jars, peach pits, fabric, nail polish – out of the anguish, the boredom, the uncertainty, the adversity, and the need.

What does it take to carry on, to rise above? Each piece that traveled to the Benton from the original exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Craft and Folk Art, with its own story and its maker's presence manifest in resourceful and meticulous detail, carried the dignity and the patience of the hands that created it. No one who has a chance to see this exhibition will soon forget its power and beauty.

Designed to raise public awareness about the internment camps in general and the arts and crafts of the camps in particular, the



From left: Michael Ego, Delphine Hirasuna, Roger Buckley at the Opening Reception

Art of Gaman exhibition also included three companion exhibitions: (1) A Place Called Manzanar: Photographs by Ansel Adams – a selection of contemporary prints from “Suffering Under a Great Injustice: Ansel Adams’s Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar” in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress; (2) Manzanar and Tule Lake: A Soundscape by Richard Lerman – sound recordings of remaining objects that witnessed the goings on at these two camps, using self-built transducers, part of a longer work that

The Japanese word “gaman” means enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity.



Delphine Hirasuna



From left: Karin C. Nelson, Benton Museum Director Steven Kern, Delphine Hirasuna

includes recordings of Auschwitz, Trinity (New Mexico), and Hiroshima; and (3) Pamina Traylor's Tagged – primarily consisting of solid-sculpted glass tongues onto which WRA photos of the camps by Dorothea Lange and NY Times clippings from 9/11 are imposed, and intended as a meditation on the nature of ethnic prejudice. The Art of Gaman exhibition ran from January 22 to March 30, 2008.

On February 19, Delphine Hirasuna gave a Day of Remembrance lecture entitled “Triumph of the Spirit” at the Benton based on her family's personal internment story of loss and redemption that speaks to a larger national narrative about injustice and redress and also participates in an ongoing global dialogue about history and memory and human rights.

See also pages 6 and 12 for additional Art of Gaman cultural and educational outreach programs co-sponsored by the Asian American Studies Institute.

The Art of Gaman Exhibition at the Benton Museum

Poetry & Jazz with Lawson Fusao Inada

Oregon's Poet Laureate and Emeritus Professor of English at Southern Oregon University is no stranger to UConn-Storrs, an invited guest and speaker three times at last count. Before he was introduced to writing, the third-generation, U.S. born grandchild of Japanese immigrants to America played bass and followed the music of Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Billie Holiday. On March 5, 2008 Lawson Fusao Inada shared his family's uniquely American journey and wartime internment experience through sometimes searing and sometimes playful poetry and through his love of jazz music.

Like the barbed wire that surrounded the internment camps in California, Arkansas and Colorado that unconstitutionally incarcerated his family during World War Two, the arts and crafts from the wartime camps that constituted the Art of Gaman exhibition surrounded Inada's reading in the Benton Museum, a visual component amplifying the resonance of the spoken word. Then – with only the slightest of promptings from Inada, the four-piece, jazz ensemble composed of UConn students Jennifer Susin (on flute), Joseph Axiak (on drums/percussion), Stephen Marotto (on cello) and Thomas Wise (on saxophone) would strike just the right note to send everyone else in the audience on a truly memorable ride.

"In the spirit of the camps ... you had to make do ... you had to improvise," Inada's voice now trailing, his arm as if sweeping across the vastness of space and time

Lawson Fusao Inada was 2004 Guggenheim Fellow in Poetry and received two National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowships. His award winning books include *Before the War: Poems as they Happened*; *Legends from Camp*; *Drawing the Line*; and *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience*. This visit to Storrs was co-sponsored with the Benton and the Asian American Cultural Center.



From left: UConn students Stephen Marotto on cello, Jennifer Susin on flute, Thomas Wise on saxophone and Joseph Axiak on percussion



Lawson Fusao Inada

Denver Union Station

from *Drawing the Line*, Coffee House Press, 1997

The crescent moon. Reminding me of that special crescent rising like a crescendo over Colorado as we made our way by special train from Amache Camp to Denver,

where we would transfer to all those special places we knew as home...

it was a slow train, faster than fences, faster than Amache...

Daybreak. The crack
of dawn, and a man in uniform...
shouting over and over: "Denver Union Station
Everybody off!"

What to say of that journey?
Let's just say it was special;
let's just say it was eventful;
let's just say that special and eventful journey
continued long after we arrived in Fresno,
continued as it does to this very day,
to every day I wake up
not in Amache, *not* in Amache;

and as a matter of fact, you might say
we never left that station either,
because for years after, my grandfather would call me into
his living room...

and the old man would whisper ...
"Rhosohn – do Denvah. Do Denvah."
and the young grandson would intone, over and over...
"Denver Union Station! Denver Union Station
Everybody off!"

And then there would be silence.
And there in the empty, echoing station ...
the old man would look at the child,
their eyes would meet,
and they would both smile –

... the smile of the journey,
their journey,

... the smile, their smile,
and everybody's smile,

of freedom.

OMIA Tenth Anniversary

Promoting Excellence through our Diversity

Created in 1997 and expanded in 2002, the Office of the Vice Provost for Multicultural and International Affairs (OMIA) celebrated its tenth anniversary at the University of Connecticut with a series of panels that showcases the depth and breadth of its academic units' research endeavors and scholarly publications. These panels also bring attention to some of the more contentious debates in academe and issues facing our evolving and inter-linked communities.

Immigration was the topic of discussion on September 18, 2007. Assoc. Prof. of Sociology and Asian American Studies, Bandana Purkayastha calls for considering immigration beyond geographic boundaries and physical barriers. Assoc. Prof. of History, Mark Overmyer-Velazquez is concerned with global, transborder constructions of race and how this translates for the development of nations, and he traces the impact of the Chicano movement of the 1960s on citizenship to the notion of "the Mexican" for the average American and migrant rights, and to the "nueva frontera" of the Mexican diaspora to New England post the 1986 passage of the Immigration Control and Reform Act. And, Asst. Prof. of History and Asian American Studies, Kornel S. Chang examines the nexus of capital and empire and the internationalization of culture. Chang is working on a book that looks at turn of the 20th century transnational "flow" of ideas, people and goods between the Canadian West and the U.S. Pacific Northwest – a wild multicultural mix involving South Asian revolutionaries, Chinese and Japanese migrant workers subject to exclusion laws and the 1907 Riots, to the transformation of "border control" from an imaginary abstraction – flow, to a concrete reality, its modern manifestation.

On October 16, 2007 AASI founding director and Prof. of History, Roger N. Buckley was on a panel with Assoc. Prof. of Curriculum and Instruction and Puerto



Kornel Chang

Rican and Latino Studies, Xae Alicia Reyes, Assoc. Prof. of Psychology and African American Studies, Michelle Williams, and Assoc. Prof. of English and Editor of MELUS, Martha Cutter, to discuss Identity Development.

Assoc. Prof. of Art History and Asian American Studies, Margo Machida moderated the November 13, 2007 panel on Art & Culture, with director of Institute for Puerto Rican and Latino Studies and Assoc. Prof. of Modern & Classical Languages, Guillermo Irizarry, Assoc. Prof. of Communication Sciences and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, Diana Rios, and Assoc. Prof. of Dramatic Arts and African American Studies, Carlton Molette. Irizarry offers a critique of hybridity while Molette focuses on performance over selling scripts, and Rios analyzes "black and brown" audience reactions.



Marysol Asencio



From left: Margo Machida, Guillermo Irizarry, Carlton Molette and Diana Rios

The panel on Feminism and Sexuality on March 18, 2008 featured Assoc. Prof. of Family Studies and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, Marysol Asencio, Assoc. Prof. of English and Women's Studies, Margaret Breen, and AASI's Bandana Purkayastha. Breen's reading from a work in progress suggests that language translates bodies, a form of social policing that addresses not just what is unsaid but also what is unspeakable. Asencio asks "what is sex?" through a multidisciplinary, sociological, empirical approach that is grounded in critical race theory. She shared the fascinating findings of her field work with New York youth in the 1980s at the height of the AIDS/HIV epidemic. Purkayastha's forthcoming book on Hindu and Muslim women allows them to narrate their own religion as they define it, challenging the ethnocentrism of religious notions, and concludes with an essay on religion and human rights.



Mark Overmyer-Velazquez

Day of Remembrance

“Of Wars, Relocation and Documentation: Surveying Japanese American Internment and the 1947 Partition of India”

With the view of a pan-Asian connection, Professor Somdatta Mandal of Visva Bharati University, India, focused her public talk on what she called “two Days of Remembrance – February 19, 1942 and August 14, 1947 – both events that are marked by pain, trauma and forced migration.

Beginning with a review of the historical antecedents, she cited the 1798 Alien Enemies Act as the basic rationale for the internment of Japanese people in the Americas. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor the United States joined the allied forces into the Second World War against Japan, Germany and Italy. President Franklin Roosevelt subsequently signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. “Though the people of Italian and German ancestry were allowed to remain, those of Japanese ancestry were required to leave their homes in California and parts of Washington, Oregon, and Arizona. Thus from 1942 to 1945 began an epochal American tragedy when the United States incarcerated behind barbed-wire fences almost an entire ethnic group living within its continental borders. Without formal charges, trials, findings made, or sentences passed, nearly 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, including children and the elderly, were held in crude prison camps situated in the dusty and desolate areas of the United States. With very few belongings, entire families lived in cramped, one-room quarters that were poorly constructed.”

In the Indian context, the partition had its roots in the freedom struggle from more than 200 years of British colonial rule. “Beginning with the Quit India Movement in 1942, to the formation of the INA (Indian National Army) [by] Subhas Chandra Bose who took the help of the Japanese and Germans to fight against the British from outside the country, to the actual independence of India, [it] was a long journey full of loss, violence, and death. Though the violence that erupted killed at least a million people, there were no criminal enquiries, arrests, court cases or convictions associated with the carnage, rapes, mutilations, arson, and pillage. As Ashis Nandy, the noted Indian political psychologist informs us, the origins of the culture of immunity [sic] in South Asia, about which some human rights groups and the media have become alert now, lie probably there. Partition of a country can either be the outcome of a full war or it could also be caused by the warlike disposition of two groups and their animal-brutality proceeding hand in hand with pernicious politics – for example, the Partition of the Bengal and Punjab provinces of India was done according to religion. None could deny that partition was an act of political expediency, yet at the time there were few who had any real inkling of the very

With very few belongings, entire families lived in cramped, one-room quarters that were poorly constructed...



photograph: Margaret Bourke-White, 1947

worst in human behavior that the uprooting of millions of people on apparently sectarian grounds would give rise to. Partition took place when human rights movements were mostly unknown, in a world just getting accustomed to genocide and ethnic cleansing and the wanton destructiveness of the two World Wars. This, perhaps, was the greatest component in the cost of Indian independence, and the most palpable evidence of the truth in

Mahatma Gandhi’s warning that Independence would not be an end in itself.”

Prof. Mandal’s survey of the literary and narrative outputs drawn from the two events include the official and canonical sources, but more importantly those that are more personal and sometimes overlooked, such as the camp newsletters *Tulean Dispatch* (Tule Lake), *The Pen* (Rohwer), the *Chronicle* (Poston) and the *Trek* (Topaz) on the American side; and on the Indian side, the 50th anniversary of the partition ushered in a new approach that criticizes the existing discourse based only on political developments among parties and politicians. “To understand this new approach to Partition, it is necessary to look into the work of South Asian historiographers and scholars of the so called ‘Subaltern Studies’ group, who are more keen on focusing on the ‘fragments’, ‘oppressed voices’ and ‘silences’ in history writings. In order to discover where ‘silence’ lies, some of these scholars [are exploring] how memory of events was constructed and reconstructed by different groups of people, by interviewing them and comparing their narratives with each other and with other narratives in official documents ...”

A full transcript of Dr. Mandal’s talk is available online at <http://asianamerican.uconn.edu/resources.htm> or contact the Asian American Studies Institute for a hard copy.



photograph: Clem Albers, 1942



photograph: Clem Albers, 1942



photograph: Clem Albers, 1942



photograph: Margaret Bourke-White, 1947

Visva Bharati Scholar in Residence

Somdatta Mandal

The Associate Professor in English at the university founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921 and a scholar of Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the U.S. was in residence at UConn from February 11 to 29, 2008. Somdatta Mandal conducted research at UConn's Libraries and in the Institute's Archives and Documents Collection on "Pearl Harbor Echoes: Japanese American Internment Experiences through American Literature and Culture." She argues that the various, dynamic and complex ways that second generation Americans of Japanese ancestry responded to the "hegemonic attempts at controlling and suppressing the dangerous 'Other'" cannot be understood in monolithic or linear terms. She found that the collection of papers and speeches by or devoted to Yuri Kochiyama is one of the more interesting of the Institute's archival offerings. Mandal was also able to view the unique artifacts from the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans offered by the "Art of Gaman," which was on exhibit at the Benton Museum during her stay.

Somdatta Mandal edited *The Diasporic Imagination* (Prestige Books, 2000), the first anthology on Asian American writing published in India. In 2005, she co-edited with Himadri Lahiri, *The Ethnic Literatures of America: Diaspora and Intercultural Studies*, also published by Prestige Books. Her research areas of interest include texts and contexts of Indian cinema, literary and cinematic representations of the Indian woman, and colonial travel writing from India. She has taught English and American literature at the college level since 1987, and continues in her official capacity with the India Chapter of the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States,



From left: Bandana Purkayastha, Somdatta Mandal and Margo Machida

MELUS-India. She is one of the driving forces in the effort to widen MELUS-India's reach to examine literature in a global context, thus establishing the Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the World, also known as MELOW. Both entities will be managed by a team of senior university-level professors across India, and will be advised by an international board. The MELUS/MELOW 2008 Conference entitled "Literary Transactions in a Globalized Context: Multi-Ethnicity, Gender, and the Marketplace" will be held November 28-30 at Visva Bharati University in Shantiniketan, West Bengal.

The UConn/Visva Bharati Scholar Exchange Program was initiated and funded by the Asian American Studies Institute following the enormous success of its 1998 International Conference on the work of Rabindranath Tagore. In inviting Somdatta Mandal to also give a Day of Remembrance lecture, AASI Director and Professor of History Roger Buckley said, "A university education should include an international perspective and a transnational exchange of ideas. Dr. Mandal brings a different perspective to the Japanese American internment experience. An outsider may see things differently than we do, but this can contribute to the understanding of important issues, and that is the value of perspectives from a wide range of sources."

Hate Crime in America

The Dream in Doubt

The Asian American Studies Institute co-sponsored two programs with a focus on hate crimes against Asian Americans. On November 10, 2007 the Asian American Cultural Center's IMPAACT Organizing Committee (Identifying the Missing Power of Asian Americans in Connecticut) invited Ismael Iletto to Keynote its second annual conference, "Hate is Real, Realize Hate, Speak Out Against Hate Crimes." Iletto's brother Joseph was murdered in 1999, a Filipino American victim of hate crime.

"It's something when you lose someone you love from a medical condition like the heart attack that took my father. It's quite something else when you lose a loved one from a senseless act of hatred and violence." Ismael Iletto said that first, there is denial, the whole family refusing to believe that Joseph, very shy and only 39 years old then, could have been involved. Then he described a numb feeling as from a nightmare he couldn't seem to wake from. And "then you go into anger and you feel like retaliating, but you don't know who to get mad at. At this point, we still didn't know how he was killed."

Joseph Iletto, a mail carrier, was shot by Buford O. Furrow on August 10, 1999 after a shooting spree at the North Valley Jewish Center and carjacking a woman. Sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole, Furrow testified he resented that Joseph was a government employee and shot him because he couldn't tell whether Joseph was a "spic or a chink."

Presenting as the average guy who drives a UPS truck for a living, Ismael Iletto speaks compellingly of the need to stand vigilant against all forms of hate and intolerance. The Iletto family has been recognized for their advocacy with the American Citizens for Justice Award and the Public Service Award from the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, and by the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission.

On March 20, 2008 the Sikh Student Association sponsored the screening of Tami Yeager's documentary *A DREAM IN DOUBT* (2007), co-produced by Preetmohan Singh and asks, "When you look like America's enemy, is the dream worth the price?"

The film centers on Rana Sodhi, a Sikh American, whose brother, Balbir Sodhi Singh, was gunned down in Arizona by Frank Rocque on September 15, 2001 – the first victim of a post-9/11 hate crime. Less than a year later, Rana's other brother Sukhpal is killed under mysterious circumstances in San Francisco.

Refusing to suffer in silence, Rana Sodhi and his family turn loss into social activism. He and his wife educate Phoenix area residents about Sikhs and support local Sikh Americans as they face incidents of hate crime.

A DREAM IN DOUBT received the Special Jury Award at the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival and the Best Feature Documentary at the Arizona International Film Festival. Visit www.adreamindoubt.org for more information.

Transnational Women's Movements

South Africa and Morocco

Organized by the Women's Studies Program, the mini-conference on Transnational Women's Movements featured Professor Amanda Gouws (Political Science) of the University of Stellenbosch, whose talk illuminated the opportunity structures in South Africa, and Professor Zakia Salime (Sociology) of Michigan State University, who discussed the interactions between the feminist and Islamic women's movements in Morocco.

While many transnational social movements literally cross geographical borders, they can also mean other ways of crossing borders through the sharing of ideologies, discourses or strategies, which influence multiple sites across those borders.

Manisha Desai, Women's Studies Program director gave the opening remarks. "When people talk today about transnational social movements, they think of them as a contemporary phenomenon, when in fact we know that historically a lot of movements – the women's movement, the anti-slavery and anti-colonial movements, and the international socialist movement – have all been transnational. But there is a qualitative shift, and I want to allude to a couple of the ways that today's movements are different from those of the past." She said whereas the elites tended to dominate the activism of the past, contemporary movements are more democratic and inclusive of other actors, although not entirely, as poor people still get left out because of a lack of access to information, the internet or communication technologies.

"The other important change is the movement is no longer from northern, industrialized countries to ex-colonial countries. There are a lot of South to South linkages. So it's North to North, South to North, North to South – more multidirectional. Contemporary transnational social movements have changed both in terms of who's involved and the flows of ideas and strategies," Desai also said. "Since 1975 when the United Nations introduced it as International Women's Year and 1975-85 as International Women's Decade, women have been coming together much longer than other contemporary social movements. They have more experience in devising trans-border strategies before the internet, so we have a lot to learn from the women's movement."

Co-sponsored by AASI, the mini-conference was held at UConn on November 2, 2007, an audio file of which is available upon request.

OMIA Collaborative Symposia Series

Engendering Race, Ethnicity and Class in a Globalizing World

Focusing on the ways cultural agents, social movements and ordinary people articulate, circulate and mutate discourses on gender, race, ethnicity and class, the symposia series that brought Lisa Lowe, Joyce Hamilton Henry, and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes to UConn was funded by OMIA and Vice-Provost Ronald L. Taylor.

Led by Manisha Desai, Women's Studies Program director, in collaboration with Roger Buckley of AASI, Tricia Gabany-Guerrero of the Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies, Guillermo Irizarry of Institute for Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, and Jeffrey Ogbar of Institute for African American Studies, the series also explores the ways transnational flows under conditions of late capitalism and U.S. imperialism become available to various actors to reinforce inequalities and challenge them as well.

Lisa Lowe spoke of "Metaphors of Globalization" on February 20, 2008. She opened with Hock's "Pyramide del Sol" to juxtapose the majesty of rulers versus the new destiny of workers and their unheralded lives of labor. Examined closely, a multitude of strawberry baskets are dramatically arranged, figuring as a huge monument, pointing skyward. Dr. Lowe was Visiting Professor of American Studies at Yale College. She is Professor of Comparative Literature and an affiliated faculty of Ethnic Studies and Critical Gender Studies at Univ. of California at San Diego. Author of *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1991) and the widely cited *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Duke Univ. Press, 1996), Lisa Lowe also co-edited *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital* (Duke, 1997) and writes about race, culture and immigration within globalization.



Joyce Hamilton Henry

Joyce Hamilton Henry addressed the fragmented self in "Between Two Worlds" on March 20, 2008. She referenced her own journey of political consciousness, first as a young immigrant newly arrived in the U.S. from Jamaica. "You get redefined ... and you have to make a decision on 'who you are.'" Dr. Henry has battled the negative stereotypes, complicating the usual notions about race and immigration and resisting the blind assignment to a monolithic group. Joyce Hamilton Henry holds a Master of Social Work from UConn and a Ph.D. from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. She was former director of the Office of Multicultural Programs at the Univ. of Hartford, and continues as Adjunct Prof. in African American Studies, Sociology, and Psychology there. Committed to racial, social and economic justice, she also co-chairs the Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition.



Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes
and Guillermo Irizarry



From left: Bandana Purkayastha, Roger Buckley,
Joyce Hamilton Henry and Manisha Desai



Lisa Lowe

Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes delivered "Translocas: Migration, Homosexuality, and Transvestism in Recent Puerto Rican Performance" on April 15, 2008. He deconstructs Freddie Mercado's "the body as performance"; complicates what Puerto Rican and gay "looks like" in Javier Cardona's work; and includes Jorge Merced's Bronx inflected nostalgic Puerto Rican theatre pieces. Dr. La Fountain-Stokes said "translocas" include many things, some contradictory; that "trans" as the core of transformation is not necessarily "in-between" and "loca" as a sign of complicity, of being in the know, can also be a sign of self-loathing, performed in daily life or on the stage, all of which he considers a "celebration." The Asst. Prof. of American Cultures and Romance Languages & Literatures at the Univ. of Michigan at Ann Arbor wrote *Queer Ricans: Cultures and Sexualities in the Diaspora* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2009) and co-edited a special issue of *CENTRO: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies* (1:19), Spring 2007 on Puerto Rican queer sexualities.

The Art of Gaman Exhibition at the Benton Museum

Public Education and Community Outreach

Building on its commitment to research and educate the wider public about the internment of Japanese people in the Americas, the Asian American Studies Institute's Roger Buckley and Fe Delos-Santos both conducted gallery talks, the latter also leading an oral history workshop. AASI provided and supported additional public educational and external community outreach programs, in coordination with Benton Museum staff and docents.

Windham High School

Students in UConn alumni Sean Gilligan's 9th grade and Jason McGarry's 12th grade classes viewed the exhibition on February 28, 2008 to supplement their understanding of Global Studies and World History, respectively. Both Gilligan and McGarry are former students of AASI Director Roger Buckley.

Both groups of students also participated in a film review and discussion of *AFTER SILENCE*. Based on Bainbridge Island oral histories and archival photos of that period, contemporary high school students connect the World War Two experiences of Japanese Americans and the scapegoating of Muslim, Arab and South Asian Americans after the bombing of the World Trade Center on 9/11. Gilligan and McGarry's students were similarly asked to engage in reflection about the sources and impact of ethnic stereotypes and prejudice that, at its worst, support the rationale for government policy.

Sean Gilligan enlarged on this exercise, assigning each of his students to assume the role of a 16 year old Nisei in 1943 and to write a letter from internment camp to a



Windham High School students visit the Benton Museum on February 28, 2008

friend s/he left behind, including period appropriate details and his/her hopes and fears for the future. An excerpt from an exemplary letter is reproduced below.

Dear Joe ... We all try to keep hope but it gets hard. Some people get together and play games and others try to tend a garden like they had at home. Many men joined the Army and they were allowed to leave camp. When I am old enough I might join because it seems the best way out. I hope, though, that I do not have to and my family and I can go home soon. Sometimes I ask myself why we are here ... Even if they let us out, how long will it be ... I am just afraid of what is to come if it is this bad now. All I can do is hope and try to believe that things will get better ... From Henry Iwano, Manzanar Camp, California.

Sometimes I ask myself why we are here ... Even if they let us out, how long will it be ... I am just afraid of what is to come if it is this bad now.

As a result of the successful response from Gilligan and McGarry's classes' visit, AASI also gave additional funding for WHS students in student teacher Jennifer Marquez and James Clark's U.S. History class to take in the exhibition on March 28, 2008.



Japanese American Citizens League members reflect on Pamina Traylor's sculpture "Tagged". The piece juxtaposes photos of the wartime camps with newspaper clippings from 9/11, intended as a meditation on ethnic prejudice.

Japanese American Citizens League

Community members of the New England Chapter of the JAACL, mostly from Massachusetts, and the New York Chapter, many from Manhattan, toured the exhibition on February 16 and March 7, 2008, respectively.

The New England group was led by Margie Yamamoto, and included third and fourth generation Japanese Americans whose parents and grandparents were interned. They also participated in a film review and discussion of *MANZANAR* and *TOPAZ*, the latter especially eliciting the acknowledgement

of shared community history. The New York group was organized by Eileen Yamaguchi, whose energy kept them going through the three and a half hour bus ride to get to the Benton; docent Arthur Rovozzo's informative tour of the touching and lovely pieces in the Art of Gaman exhibition made the journey all worthwhile.

First Annual Nazrul Lecture

Winston E. Langley

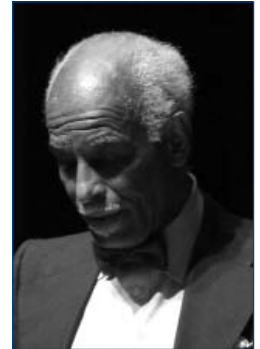
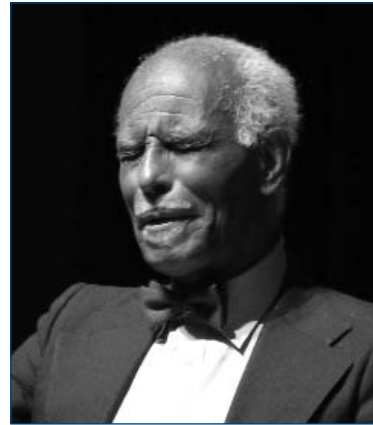
Following the success of the Nazrul Symposium at the University of Connecticut, the first Annual Kazi Nazrul Islam Memorial Lecture took place on October 27, 2007 and featured Winston E. Langley, who delivered “The Voice of Poetry and the Direction of Civilizations.”

The annual lecture is sponsored jointly with the Asian American Cultural Center and the Nazrul Committee, a community based group whose aim is to place Kazi Nazrul Islam and his work within the context of broader literary, political, social and intellectual ideas and movements.

Winston E. Langley is Associate Chancellor and Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He is the author most recently of *Kazi Nazrul Islam: The Voice of Poetry and the Struggle for Human Wholeness* published by the Nazrul Institute of Dhaka, Bangladesh. A major theme that runs through the book is Nazrul’s significance for the 21st century.

Professor Langley began with an overview of the “Clash of Civilizations” thesis. He then focused directly on Nazrul’s voice of poetry. “Far from seeking to construct oppositional identities, the voice of poetry—apart from identifying and giving expression to the uniqueness in each person or group (including nations and civilizations)—seeks, as well, to evoke another, that is, to call forth or bring into being another and to join with that other to compose something more complex. To the extent that anyone or anything is unique, it means that differences exist between that thing (or someone) and others. This is the ‘natural condition’ out of which poetry develops and which it seeks to keep in tact; and those differences, according to Nazrul’s understanding of the voice of poetry, are not to be seen as alien, something to be avoided, or with which (whom) to do battle. Indeed, poetry brings differences into being—often making those differences sharper and clearer. These differences, which are found everywhere (part of uniqueness) are the foundational sources out of which true unity is born.”

Tying together the “clash” thesis with Nazrul’s work, Langley continued, “For Nazrul, the absence of effective self-assertion, including the will to crush that which oppresses, is nothing less than decrepitude. And he was not unwilling, during his day, to identify that condition whenever he saw it. So, in his poem *Pioneers* we find him castigating the then ‘decrepit races of the ancient East,’ who had lost their ‘pride to inspire.’ Far more important, however, is the fact that, for him, the author of the “Clash of Civilization” betrays such a profound lack of faith in human beings and their individual and collective possibilities. He, the author, can only think of civilizations ‘co-existing’ where one or more dominates, not where differences are openly evoked, embraced, and celebrated, and where the civilizations are co-equals.”



Winston E. Langley is the author of *Kazi Nazrul Islam: The Voice of Poetry and the Struggle for Human Wholeness*.

“Above and beyond the abstract, constitutive attributes of the voice of poetry, that which evokes another, Nazrul explicitly sought to use his poetry to join a diverse world into becoming tomorrow’s joint pioneers in inter-civilizational encounters, not pursuing cultural ‘clashes.’ The ‘end of night’ he sought to effect, including the night of social disparities and oppression, also bore with it the daybreak of transnational creativity and moral solidarity.”

Dr. Langley’s talk is available online at <http://asianamerican.uconn.edu/resources.htm> or contact the Asian American Studies Institute for a hard copy.

Winston E Langley earned his Ph.D. in International Relations from Howard University, and a J.D. from Suffolk University. He has taught for over 37 years at the collegiate level, with an emphasis on global order. He has been Associate Provost for the past six years. His areas of specialty include international law, with human rights law as a particular area of research and teaching.

Second Annual Nazrul Lecture

Rachel McDermott, Barnard College
Thursday, October 16, 2008, 7:00 pm
Thomas J. Dodd Research Center

Politics and Education in Nepal

Honorable Laxmi Das Manandhar

Speaking in the Asian American Cultural Center through an interpreter, the Minister of Education and a Member of Parliament with the UML Party addressed the state of Nepal's current political and educational systems that included an examination of seven decades of democratic struggle against an autocratic monarchy. "State-run public education in Nepal is ineffective and very weak in spite of the great amount of state expenditure. This fact is glaringly reflected in the results of annual high school examination, which are always [surpassed] by non-government private schools. The majority of students from private schools pass [with] distinction and first division. Whereas, in government schools, the pass rates rarely reach above 30 or 40 percent. Yet the government has no clear plan of improving its educational service."

The Honorable Laxmi Das Manandhar said that higher education in Nepal fare no better, again with private school students outperforming those of the state-run university campuses. "One direct cause of this discrepancy is politicalization [sic] or interference of leaders from the ruling elite in the management of the educational institutions ... In short, educational institutions run by the state [have not reached their] academic [potential] ... The education system of Nepal can be expected to improve only with the improvement of the political system."

Asian American Faculty and Staff Association President, Bidya Ranjeet, who is also Director of Student Support Services for UConn's Center for Academic Programs, introduced His

Excellency. In her remarks, she noted her parents' struggles to give her the benefit of education amid the challenges of political upheaval. Ranjeet received both her M.A. in Education Administration and Ph.D. in Education Leadership from UConn. She taught in the Nepali educational system at Vanasthali High School and co-founded the Indreni School, where she served as principal before coming to UConn. Dr. Ranjeet is co-author of "Minority within a Minority: Reflecting on Marital Violence in the Nepali American Community" with AASI's Bandana Purkayastha, in *Body Evidence: Intimate Violence Against South Asian Women* (Rutgers University Press, 2007) edited by Shamita Das Dasgupta.

Nepal is a small country in comparison to its neighbors, China and India, and had been ruled by the Shah Dynasty since 1769 until recently. Its cultural wealth stems from the immense diversity in languages with more than six dozen spoken, in major religions existing peacefully side by side for centuries, and in ethnicity with 103 distinct ethnic groups. In May 2006, Parliament was reinstated after a popular, nonviolent uprising against autocratic rule.



From left: The Honorable Laxmi Das Manandhar, Roger Buckley and Bidya Ranjeet

In April 2008, the Maoists emerged on top of the national elections although lacking a majority to lead Nepal outright, and will likely share the top posts with the Nepali Congress, the Unified Marxist Leninist party and the Madhesi People's Rights Forum, a newly formed regional group. The United Nations places Nepal in the 14th spot for its representation in women in national elected bodies.

The education system of Nepal can be expected to improve only with the improvement of the political system.

Aloha and Mahalo

continued from cover

Mahalo to affiliate faculty Tina Reardon for arranging Tibetan poet Buchung Sonam's participation in the April 23, 2008 Litchfield County Writer's Project's "The Creative Process" poetry workshop. Visit www.tibetwrites.org to sample his work.

Mahalo to Assoc. Prof. Bandana Purkayastha, who continues as editor of *Gender & Society* and Director of Graduate Studies for Sociology and who has been unwavering in championing the strength of our work, and to Maxine Haines, who is the key to the smooth and steady functioning of the Institute.

And, a warm Aloha to Assoc. Provost of the Office of Multicultural and International Affairs, Cathleen Love, who will serve as AASI interim director.

Fred Ho Fellowship

Asian American Politics and Culture

Fred Ho's revolutionary music, political struggles and artistry will be the subject of a collection of essays being edited by Roger N. Buckley, who will also write the introduction. Contributors, whose own work reflect the innovative, variegated, and progressive productions of their subject, include Magdalena Gomez and Peggy Choy, Bill V. Mullen and Ruth Margraff, and Diane Fujino and Amiri Baraka.



Fred Ho in 2006 promoting Fujino's book on Yuri Kochiyama

Also contributing to the anthology is Arthur J. Sabatini, who received a Fred Ho Fellowship from the Asian American Studies Institute in July 2007 to conduct research in the Fred Ho Collection, held at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut. Professor Sabatini's piece focuses on Fred Ho's operatic works that journey through "intensely conflictual experiences and consciousness of the masses and ... internalized in heroic individuals who choose, or are called upon to respond to oppressive material conditions." In his submission, Sabatini also writes, "In all his productions, Fred Ho's baritone saxophone, musical compositions and big band aesthetic are enjoyed by audiences and often acclaimed by critics. Generally overlooked, however, are the thematic significance of his choice of an expanded language and performance style of Afro Asian music ... [Ho's] work proposes a deep and hard won affirmation of art – music, storytelling, performance and the collaboration of artists – as a powerful, synthesizing force that seems necessary"

Arthur J. Sabatini is Associate Professor of Performance Studies in the Department of Interdisciplinary Arts and Performance at Arizona State University, West Campus. He holds a Ph.D. from New York University in Performance Studies. He teaches classes on Avant-Garde Movements and Performance; Art, Media, Technology and Performance; and Verbal Art: Storytelling and Performance. As an arts organizer and journalist, his career began in Philadelphia with The Relache Ensemble and The Yellow Springs Institute for the Arts. As AJ Sabatini, he performs with The Cathedral Band and also contributes to The Cathedral Band website. His publications concern contemporary performance and the work of such figures as John Cage, Robert Ashley, Lee Breuer, and Armand Schwerner. Recent publications include "Robert Ashley: Defining American Opera" in *PAJ/Performing Arts Journal* (27:2) 2005; "Staging Noise: The Plays of Charles Mee" (2004) for the MLA Conference; and "On the Dialogics of Pedagogy and Performance" in *Teaching Performance: Theory, Practices, Pedagogy* (Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 2001). He has received two NEH Fellowships for Performance Theory, and Latin American Fiction. He also received a Visual Arts Critics Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Hira & Sunita Jain

Endowment Fund Scholarship

Receiving a book on her 21st birthday was not exactly in Shrina Amin's ideal version of a grand celebration, even if that book was Mahatma Gandhi's *An Autobiography or The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (First Edition, 1927; Reprint by Beacon Press, 1993 – foreword by Sissela Bok). But ever since she finished reading it, the path seems to have been paved for her in ways that still amazes her.



Shrina Amin, Hira Jain Scholar 2008

The Dr. Hira and Mrs. Sunita Jain Endowment Fund awarded its 2008 Scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 to the Sociology major, with a minor in India Studies, who is also conducting an Independent Study project on "Contemporary Hindu and Muslim Relationship in the State of Gujarat, India: 2000 to present." And after taking a series of classes in Asian American and Ethnic Literature, she is looking at how she can fulfil the requirements of the Asian American Studies minor, too.

Shrina Amin vows to apply herself even harder – only 21 and already possessed of a firm set of guiding principles and a serious work ethic. She plans to continue on to graduate studies, comparing youth culture in the United States and India, where she expects to work for a few years, and also volunteer at orphanages, in her spare time.

While identifying as an Indian American and a U.S. citizen, Amin is keenly aware of being treated as a perpetual foreigner in both India and the United States, where she is equally at home. "I am living a double life and taking the best of both worlds which I am constantly negotiating," she told AASI's Fe Delos-Santos for this profile. Her views about identity, ethnicity and structural analysis have been deeply influenced by Bandana Purkayastha, Assoc. Professor of Sociology and Asian American Studies, who authored *Negotiating Ethnicity* with Rutgers University Press.

Asked about her sources of inspiration, Shrina Amin is quick to say that her hero is her mom, whom she calls "the smile that happens when I do something. Everything I do is for her. A hero is the one [who] has the most impact on your life." It was Shrina's mom who gave her Gandhiji's book for her 21st birthday. Amin is also profoundly inspired by her maternal grandmother who marched with Mahatma Gandhi, whose granddaughter Ela Gandhi, Amin was honored to meet at UConn in October, 2007.

**Asian American Studies Institute
2007-2008**

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GARY OKIHIRO
Striking for Asian American
Studies, West/East
2008 East of California Conference

Friday, Oct. 31 at 4:00 pm
Student Union Ballroom



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