

The Awakening

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Table of Contents

From the Editor
Page 1

Opinion
Page 2

Major Update
Page 2

Q & A
Page 3

Siobhan Brooks
Page 4

*The Vagina
Monologues*
Page 5

Big Gay Love
Week
Page 6

Scholarship
Page 7

Spring Quarter
Events
Page 7

Spring Quarter
Courses
Page 8

From the editor: Diversity

Recently we have seen increased emphasis on building diversity throughout the OU community. A focus on diversity is essential because learning to understand and accept difference is critical in developing an understanding of the world.

The University already supports academic programs such as Women's Studies that address the influence of various elements of diversity in the human experience. Christine Taylor, Interim Assistant to the President for Diversity, thinks that OU could be doing more. She points out that many of OU's students come from small homogeneous towns, and she believes OU needs to help them expand their horizons by preparing them to work within an international and diverse world.

But education doesn't happen only inside a classroom. She says that establishing and maintaining relationships with diverse communities is imperative. "We've got to build relationships with K-12, with community groups, with organizations and cities, that say that we have an excellent campus here. We have strong academic programs, and it's important that [prospective students] are aware of us."

Taylor also says that OU is working to concentrate its efforts on developing possibilities for cross-cultural interaction. While OU boasts pockets of excellence, Taylor says, it remains a fairly segregated community. "There may be places where it's happening, ... but to really prepare you as a student, there needs to be something that cuts across your experience."

Getting involved in activities and organizations that promote diversity helps expand its reach. OU has various programs and offices that focus on promoting diversity:

* The Office of Diversity—"We initiate and support opportunities to learn about racial, ethnic, gender, religious, and cultural differences that result in a greater understanding of human diversity." The office focuses on recruiting and retaining underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. It encourages programs that enhance intercultural dialogue.
<http://www.ohio.edu/diversity/>.

* The Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Programs—The office offers "educational programs about issues relevant to LGBT students, faculty, staff, and the community." Some programs include Coming OUT Week and PRIDE Week.
<http://www.ohiou.edu/lgbt/index.htm>.

* Lindley Cultural Center—The Office of Multicultural Programming wants to develop programs that increase understanding and appreciation of cultural differences. Some of its programs are the KWANZAA celebration, and Native American Awareness Week.
<http://www.ohiou.edu/culturalcenter/>.

* International Student Faculty Services— Provides support for students, faculty, staff and others. Promotes intercultural exchange programs between international students and the OU community and provides immigration information and assistance.
<http://www.ohiou.edu/isfs/>.

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Training Thongs: Little girls in big girls' clothing

by Christine Fram

I'm inside the trendy clothing store Forever 21. Techno pop plays over the speakers, putting me into a shopping trance as I move from rack to rack. I look around at my fellow shoppers, and it strikes me that most are at least three years younger than I am, probably still in high school. This may not seem odd, but notice the clothing: tiny skirts, shirts cut almost to the belly button, sleeveless see-through blouses, camisoles that look more like underwear than something to wear in public, and yes, the thong.

Eventually, I make it to the register. Two girls, about 14 years old, and their mother stand in front of me. One girl, still a stick with as many curves as a broom handle, is holding a red and brown satin tank top with lace accentuating the chest.

Okay, I'm not the most provocative dresser out there, but I would feel uncomfortable in that shirt unless I was in a club cruising for a hot date. And my own mother would have ripped that shirt off my body had I tried to leave the house in it at that age.

I have a problem with the way girls are dressing more and more sexily at younger and younger ages. I'm worried about their self-images. When I read *Seventeen Magazine* at age 13, I thought I needed to have all the beauty products within its pages in order to measure up to everyone else. The trend has continued and grown in strength. Are these girls detesting their

flat hair and measuring their flat chests, just like I did?

Early in life, pre-adolescent girls are being told to look pretty and base their self-worth on how they look in make-up and heels rather than how well they do in math class. These priorities are worrying me. Girls are going to grow up and buy anti-aging cream at 22 years old. They're going to have foot problems from stilettos. They are part of a generation learning to define themselves in two-word phrases: "bad girl," "booty call," "kissing whore." They can buy shirts that say "Mrs. Kutcher" and "Mrs. Timberlake." Catch yourself a husband, girls. Take the path of married bliss.

We can pretend that this type of clothing is not marketed to preteens, or "tweens," but it is. Companies are taking advantage of the insecurities already inherent in adolescent girls and in girl culture in general and exploiting them. Girls then become women and carry those insecurities with them for the rest of their lives. What's next? Maybe it will begin even earlier, and along with strollers and cribs, the expectant mother will be given lacy diapers and tiny training heels to start her girl off right.

Christine Fram is a junior journalism and Spanish major.

Major update

The proposal for a major in Women's Studies has now been approved at all levels of University governance and awaits final approval by the Board of Trustees. Please check our web site for updates.

The Awakening welcomes your comments and letters. Please e-mail Cynthia Becker at cb107702@ohio.edu or submit to the Women's Studies office, Lindley 004.

Seeing things from a global perspective

Ka Lee (Carole) Suen came to the United States from Hong Kong fall quarter. She is here for one year, during which she will earn her Women's Studies Certificate.

At her home university, Carole majors in public relations and advertising. She wanted to study in the U.S., she says, to "see if the myths about it were true." When she learned she could take any courses she wanted, she decided to delve into women's studies. She will complete all certificate requirements in a single year.

Carole spoke about her experiences in Women's Studies and in the U.S. in general earlier this quarter.

CB: Why did you choose women's studies in particular?

Carole: Before I came, I had to make a study plan for the academic year. So I looked at the course offerings and found that OU has a lot of subjects that we don't have in Hong Kong. I saw this women's studies class, which sounded really interesting to me. So I registered for that the first quarter. The class was mainly focused on the U.S., and then the professor, Dr. Whitson, told me that she is going to teach a class about global feminism. And I took it this quarter.

CB: Can you not study women's studies in Hong Kong?

Carole: We have sociology classes in which women will be discussed. But in Hong Kong the system is a little bit different from here. Because my major does not include any classes in sociology, it's really difficult to get into them. And very often topics about women and feminism are upper level classes. They have prerequisites, and are not for all the students, so it is very difficult. But here, you have introduction to women's studies and many other courses, and it's very good.

CB: What are your particular interests in feminism and gender studies?

Carole: In the global feminisms class, I see a lot of diversity, especially people coming from different countries. There are students from Russia; I come from china; and some come from Indonesia. This not only can teach you a global perspective, but also the way that different people in different



Carole Suen came to the United States from Hong Kong and studies Women's Studies. *Photo by Cynthia Becker*

cultures can interact in class. I think this is very important.

CB: Do you think that women's studies can be applied to any major?

Carole: It is a very important subject because it can help students realize how one thing happening in other countries is exaggerated or transmitted through the media to the United States. Because the information is filtered before it comes here, it is often exaggerated in some way, or the media only pick extreme cases. That's the reason people often have false images about people in other parts of the world. Especially if you are doing research comparing countries or cultures, you have to be very mindful not to be biased.

CB: What differences do you see between Chinese and American classrooms?

Carole: I think it is very comfortable to study here. The big difference inside classrooms here is that people don't talk. I mean, if the professor is talking, mostly students don't talk to each other. But in Hong Kong, nobody cares. They are very chatty, and they just keep talking. I think that is one problem with the Chinese-Hong Kong student: they are disrespectful toward their professors. Attendance is often pretty low. I often skip class in Hong Kong, but here, I seldom do that. And people here are very engaged in class and raise questions very actively. We seldom ask questions.

Siobhan Brooks:

Holistic politics key to social change

By Sarah Kennedy

Progressive change will come, but not until different groups start working together, Siobhan Brooks told a packed crowd in Scripps Auditorium Feb. 17.

"It's unfortunate that activists today don't see connections," she said. "We need to get away from single-issue politics and have a more holistic viewpoint, instead of leaving groups of people out."

Brooks identifies as a "queer black feminist." She experienced the disconnect between the queer and black communities when she began organizing a union at the Lusty Lady, where she worked as a stripper to support herself while earning a bachelor's degree in Women's Studies.

Even in San Francisco, a city famous for its diversity and tolerance, Brooks said, "I got flack from the lesbian community — mainstream lesbians said I sold out by dancing for men. And I got flack from the mainstream black community too."

The Lusty Lady, which Brooks described as "the Yale of strip clubs, where everyone is reading Marx and talking about the revolution," is run by female managers and thought of as more progressive than its counterparts. But Brooks noticed the club was not as progressive in regard to race. When she asked her manager why she wasn't able to dance in the most profitable booth in the club, her manager told her, "black women make the club lose money."

This prompted Brooks to organize the first sex workers' union to help women of color gain equal treatment at the Lusty Lady. So far, it is the only successful sex workers' union in the country. "Organizing a union at the Lusty Lady gave me empowerment. It helped me to speak up in the real world," she explained.

An audience member later asked Brooks why women of color make less money in the sex industry, and Brooks said that because women of color are so over-sexualized, men think, "I don't have to pay for this" or "you can get this for free." The problem we need to address is that women of color are "already starting out at a

different place from them....You have a lower market value," Brooks explained.

Change has to come from within communities, she said, and focusing on only one issue will not make that happen.

Brooks also addressed the need for many black communities to be more accepting of their queer members. In the past, there were many reasons for black people to downplay their sexuality, especially in dangerous times when lynching was a frequent practice, Brooks said. "Being queer was not in your best benefit. Then, the black community needed to be unified."

Brooks emphasized the media's role in the homophobia in black communities. She said, "The media often play white progressive queers against conservative black church groups. What's missing in this dialogue [of sexuality] is race. This reproduces the notion that white is queer."

Brooks wants to see more activists work together to break down stereotypes; queer groups need to work together with black groups to understand their similarities.

One audience member asked Brooks to explain any strides she has seen in getting different communities to work together, but then answered the question herself. "Well, you were brought here by one group to speak about two different issues (race and sexuality)."

Brooks nodded and said there were small steps. Ohio University's student group Swarm of Dykes coordinated Brooks' visit to Athens as part of "Big Gay Love Week."

"We have to learn to balance autonomy and coalition building," Brooks said. "It can be difficult to know 'when do we come together?' and 'when do we split?' I have one foot here and one foot there."

Sarah Kennedy is a junior magazine journalism major and women's studies certificate student.

***The Vagina Monologues* performed at OU**

By Heidi Snead

Ohio University became one of 720 universities helping to turn Valentine's Day into V-Day, a global campaign to end violence against women and girls, when a student group gave a benefit performance of *The Vagina Monologues*, by Eve Ensler.

The 17 members of the Lost Flamingo Company wore black with red accents as they gave their rendition of the well-known play in Baker Center's 1804 Lounge. The performance was sponsored by the OU chapter of FemCo.

The Vagina Monologues ranges from funny to painful to profound. It is drawn from Ensler's interviews with a diverse group of women, in which she asked a series of questions about their vaginas. The play has been performed at OU on Valentine's Day for eight years.

Ensler established V-Day in 1998 with a single benefit performance in New York City. The official tag-line of V-Day is "Until the Violence Stops."

"It reminds everyone that until women can walk home at night or speak up in public or do anything else without feeling afraid or in danger, we must not give up our fight," said Lost Flamingo Director Emily Maluski. This was Maluski's first time directing a show. She said she chose to do this performance because she is a women's rights activist and wanted to see *The Vagina Monologues* performed at OU.

V-Day focuses on sexual assault, battery, rape, genital mutilation and sexual slavery, and spotlights a specific issue each year. This year's spotlight was on women in the Middle East, said student organizer Drue Dosie. At least one in three women and girls globally has been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime, according to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women Report.

The purpose of V-Day is to educate as well as to raise money to stop worldwide violence against women and girls. The performances

raised \$1,304 after costs, according to the Lost Flamingo's web site, <http://lostflamingo.com/>.

Ten percent of the proceeds from the performances will go to The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, and \$100 will be given to sexual assault prevention at Ohio University. The rest of the money will be given to My Sister's Place, which is a safe house for emotionally and physically battered women in Athens. V-Day is a non-profit corporation which distributes funds to national and international organizations working to stop violence against women and girls.

The theme for 2005 was "Vagina Warriors Lead The Way." The "V" in V-Day stands for victory, valentine, and vagina. Performer Leslie Shelton said, "It's all about empowering, having fun, and educating, and it's on Valentine's Day."

The two performances played to standing-room-only crowds, and the interest on the last night led to an unexpected additional showing later that evening.

The audience reacted to each of the monologues with laughter, sober silence, or the occasional tear, especially during the pieces "My Vagina Was My Village" and "Crooked Braid," which deal primarily with rape and abuse.

"It was the quietest I have ever heard a roomful of people, and that was pretty touching," said Maluski.

The Lost Flamingo Company plans on making *The Vagina Monologues* its annual winter show.

"I had a woman come up to me and thank me for putting it on," Shelton said. "It defined my quarter."

Heidi Snead is a senior in magazine journalism and political science. She is graduating in the spring of 2005.

Send us your articles, reviews, stories, poems and artwork. Please limit written submissions to 500 words and make sure artwork is suitable for black and white print. The Awakening carefully considers all submissions.

E-mail submissions to cb107702@ohio.edu; print submissions to the Women's Studies office at Lindley 004.

Celebrating Gay Love

Big Gay Love Week, coordinated by OU student group Swarm of Dykes, kicked off with a sex toy party on Feb. 11 and a menstrual health workshop the next afternoon.

Other events included the popular Open Doors Dance Party at Casa Nueva; *The Vagina Monologues* by the Lost Flamingo Company; “Dykes on Boyz,” a sex workshop for straight men; a screening of “Live Nude Girls, Unite!,” a documentary about Siobhan Brooks and her experiences working at the Lusty Lady; “Coming Out as an Ally,” a presentation by speaker Shane Windmeyer; and the “Love Makes a Family” photo exhibit, which premiered on Monday and ran all week.

-Sarah Kennedy

Love Makes a Family



Above, Elaine Mather, a human resource director at SunPower, Inc., looks at the “Love Makes a Family” exhibit in the 1954 Lounge. “Love Makes a Family” is a traveling, museum-quality exhibit that includes black and white photographs of and interviews with families who have lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members of all ages. Photographs are by Gigi Kaeser, and text is edited by Peggy Gillespie.

At right is a photo of Jonathan Cooper and Robert Cooper with their three children. Robert Cooper is quoted saying, “It’s very important for people to understand that love makes a family. Without love, there is no family. Gay and lesbian parents have the same power of love as anyone else. All they do is love their children and try to do their best to raise a family.”

Photos by Cynthia Becker



Scholarship

The Women's Studies Program at Ohio University is pleased to announce the following scholarship:

Ethel H. Moll Scholarship (\$2000)

The family of the late Ethel H. Moll, a Xenia, Ohio, resident, created this scholarship for nontraditional women students. Moll came to Ohio University in 1953 to resume her interrupted college career and served as the first Director of Jefferson Hall on the Ohio University campus for many years before her retirement. This scholarship is open to any woman over the age of 25 who is returning to college to complete an interrupted education and who will be a first-, second-, or third-year student on the Athens campus. She must have a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 and demonstrate financial need.

To Apply: Submit a one-page letter stating your scholarly goals and objectives to Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, Chubb Hall 020, Athens, OH 45701.

Applications/nominations will be accepted through March 31, 2005.

Scholarship monies will be directly credited toward academic year 2005-06 tuition expenses through the Office of Financial Aid.

Recipients will be notified by the Women's Studies Program.

For questions, contact the Women's Studies Program at 593-4686 or visit the office in Lindley 004.

Spring Quarter events

March 12 - Oct. 30: Kennedy Southwest Native American Collection

The exhibition explores how the objects displayed exist at the intersection of a complex web of cultural discourses that reflects traditional Native American cultural practices and modes of representation as well as 20th-century market influences. Visit the Web site or call (740) 593-1304 for hours and information. Contact: kennedymuseum@ohio.edu. Web site: <http://www.ohio.edu/museum>.

March 12 - June 12: Le Boudoir Fantastique

This intimate exhibition of the whimsical porcelain sculptures of Anne Clark Culbert (1921-1994) presents her highly personal reinterpretation of traditional western religious allegories, fairy tales, and poignant social commentary. Visit the Web site or call (740) 593-1304 for hours and information. Contact: kennedymuseum@ohio.edu. Web site: <http://www.ohio.edu/museum>.

April 20, 12 p.m.: Affirming Diversity, LGBT Experience

Moderator: Mickey Hart. Location: 1804 Lounge, Baker Center. Contact: ziffk@ohio.edu. Web site: <http://streaming.cns.ohiou.edu/diversity>.

May 4, 12 p.m.: Affirming Diversity, International Voices

Moderator, Matthew Adeyanju. Location: 1804 Lounge, Baker Center. Contact: ziffk@ohio.edu. Web site: <http://streaming.cns.ohiou.edu/diversity>.

May 7, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.: Mind, Body and Soul Women's Conference

This allows mothers, daughters and sons the opportunity to join together. Location: Baker University Center Ballroom. Contact: danielsl@ohio.edu.

Spring 2005 Course Offerings

WS 100: Intro. to Women's Studies (4)

06397; MW 8-10 a.m.; Bentley 110; (Little)
 06398; MW 10-noon; Morton 322; (Grow)
 06399; MW 6-8 p.m.; Bentley 120 (Bedford)
 06400; TF 10-noon; Morton 227; (Peck)
 06401; MW 3-5 p.m.; Bentley 120; (Hall)
 06402; TTH 12-2 p.m.; Morton 122; (Freeman)
 06403; MW 2-4 p.m.; Clipping 135; (Grow)

WS 200: Issues in Feminism (4)

06404; MW 12-2 p.m.; Ellis 014; (Reynolds)

WS 210 (prev. WS 493): Women, Gender and Rock & Roll (4)

06684; M 6-10 p.m.; Bentley 110; (Burgess)

WS 350 (prev. WS 250): Feminist Theory (4)

06685; MW 12-2 p.m.; Gordy 203; (Bedford)

WS 360: Internship: Women and Work (4)

06406; TTH 2-4 p.m.; Bentley 205; (Wales)

AH 538A: Contemporary Art Theory and Criticism: Queer Theory and Visual Representation (4)

00633; MTH 3-5 p.m.; Seigfried 403; (Klein)

CLAS 343: Women in the Ancient Mediterranean (4)

01630; MTTHF 2-3 p.m.; Ellis 212; (Palmer)

CLWR 484: Women and Religion (4)

01649; TTH 3-5 p.m.; Ellis 212; (Flemming)

COMS 420: Gender and Communication (4)

01734; TTH 2-4 p.m.; CTCL 313; (Miller)

ENG 306J: Women and Writing (4)

02995; MTTHF 8-9 a.m.; Ellis 110; (staff)
 02996; TTH 10-noon; Ellis 112; (staff)
 02997; MTTHF 12-1 p.m.; Ellis 031; (Mantey)
 02998; TTH 12-2 p.m.; Ellis 108; (staff)
 02999; MW 4-6 p.m.; Ellis 014; (staff)
 03000; TTH 4-6 p.m.; Ellis 031; (staff)
 03001; MW 5-7 p.m.; Ellis 214; (Marciniak)
 03002; MW 5-7 p.m.; Ellis 015; (staff)

ENG 325: Women and Literature (4)

03023; MW 3-5 p.m.; Ellis 115?; (Holm)

HCCF 360: Human Sexualities (4)

03431?; TTH 1-3 p.m.; Grover W215; (Janson)

HIST 320C/520C: Women's Health and Medicine in American (4/5)

03617/03666; MW 2-4 p.m.; Bentley 109; (Wolf)

HIST 453D/553D:

Studies in Medieval History: Women in Medieval Society (4/5)

03637/03677; MW 4-6 p.m.; Bentley Annex 402; (Uhalde)

POLS 420/520: Women, Law and Politics (4/5)

05387/05403; MW 1-3 p.m.; Bentley 205; (Richard)

PSY 378: Psychology of Gender (4)

05530; TTH 3-5 p.m.; Porter 107; (Young)

Complete course descriptions and updated course listings can be found on the Women's Studies Program Web site at www.ohiou.edu/womenstudies/.