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Intimate Labors

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Report on Conference on “Intimate Labors”
October 4-6, 2007

Over fifty scholars—researchers from all the UC campuses with Women’s Studies programs, professors from major Ivy League and state universities, and participants from Canada, Britain, Korea, and South Africa—came to UCSB for a three day conference on “Intimate Labor” the first weekend of October. In conjunction with the conference, Eileen Boris, the co-organizer, held a first-year seminar; the fifteen students from the seminar attended the sessions; so did graduate students and faculty from UCSB and other campuses (particularly UCLA and UCB) who were not on the program, as well as the general public for the opening keynote on Thursday evening and some plenary sessions. Overall attendance averaged 80 per plenary and keynote session, with the first two sessions—Thursday open keynote to the public hitting around a hundred persons and Friday morning keynote/first panel, over hundred to overflow into the corridors the McCune Conference room at the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, where most of the conference took place.

Intimate labor is work that entails bodily or emotional closeness or personal familiarity, such as sexual intercourse and toileting another, or intimate observation and knowledge of personal information, such as childcare or housekeeping. Such work exists along a continuum of service and caring labor, from high end nursing and low end housekeeping, and includes sex, domestic, and personal care work. Against a scholarship that considers nurses, nannies, home aides, cleaners, prostitutes, masseuses, therapists, and hostesses apart from each other, this conference explored intimate labor as a useful category of analysis to understand gender, racial, class, and other power relations as well as look at current economic transformations in a global economy. In addressing intimate labor in terms of these large economic shifts in “From Patient Advocate to Social Advocate: The Work of Nursing,” Jill Furillo of the California Nurses Association began the conference with a reminder of the activist roots and impact of these deliberations. (Furillo substituted for Rose Ann Demoro, who could not leave union business on that date; she was even better because she is a nurse as well as union educator.)

The gathering advanced the debate among feminist theorists over the relationship between ‘care’ and economy. For some, these terms stand in for the “hostile worlds” of love and money, an inscription of separate sphere ideology with gendered attributes repackaged: women give care, men earn money. These theorists bemoan an increasing commodification of aspects of life that normatively should be beyond the market. Others claim that commodification already has entered into relations of care, while still others, including the conference co-chairs Women’s Studies Chair and Hull Professor Eileen Boris and Professor of Asian-American Studies Rhacel Parreñas of UC Davis, point out that relations of intimacy already involve the exchange of money and the wages of care or sex work suffer from social expectations about what women should undertake out of love, kinship, or obligation. To navigate these debates, conference sessions sought to understand what happens when intimate labor enters the marketplace and becomes paid both in terms of working conditions and the value of the worker herself. Viviana A. Zelizer (Sociology, Princeton) addressed these issues in her theme setting keynote,

“Caring Everywhere,” which considered unpaid care in intimate settings, paid care in organizations, and paid care in intimate settings. Appendix one has the full listing of presenters, their affiliations, and topics.

Conference Logistics and Dissemination Summary:

Participants were invited for the plenaries and keynotes. But we selected the workshop participants after a call for papers that was disseminated at the UC Council of Women’s Studies, sent throughout the UC system, sent to key faculty, and sent to key listserves in Women’s Studies, Sociology, and History. The response was overwhelming. We had initially thought that we would have fifteen graduate student-beginning faculty papers but we had nearly 90 applications. We gave first preference to faculty and graduate students from the UC system, whose housing and travel expenses we paid in addition to that of the invited speakers. Other workshop participants had to pay their travel, but we provided lunches and dinners. There were thirty-three workshop papers that were commented on by the invited presenters, that is, over double the amount that we had envisioned. We could have taken another fifteen easily but felt that expanding the conference any more would impact on its interactive agenda. This format proved extremely fruitful: plenaries mixed with multiple workshops, with papers read in advance.

The schedule and arrangements for the conference, as well as abstracts of papers and the actual papers, are available on the conference website:

<http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/intimatelabors/>

Papers can be accessed with login: intimatel and password: purple

The only incorrect information on the website was the charge for lunches; we waived that charge in light of restriction on funding not to charge for events and because we had gathered enough funds to provide sandwiches at lunchtime. Our goal was to keep the participants, including audience, together for further conversations, although the audience tended to move in and out of sessions and not all stayed for lunch. The conference dinners, in contrast, were by invitation only at the faculty club October 5 and at the home of Eileen Boris on October 6.

With student assistants, we oversaw the conference’s publicity. We strived to draw an audience from the academy, the labor movement, and the Santa Barbara community. The largest project was the website, which was completed two months before the conference, and included almost all of the participants full papers. We sent information about the conference, which included a link to the conference, to nationwide list serves for sociologists, feminist scholars, historians, political scientists, economists, and legal scholars. We also used the two hands from the website’s banner in our print advertisements. I distributed posters with the conference schedule and a smaller “Save the Date” postcard with the conference’s website to colleagues at UCSB, faculty members at other UCs, women’s centers at all UC campuses, peers at the American Studies Association Conference, the conference participants at schools outside the UC system, as well as local Santa Barbara activist groups such as People United through

Economic Justice Building Leadership through Organization (PUEBLO), Health Care for All, and the Central Coastal Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE). News of our conference spread beyond these networks, *Ms.* magazine mentioned our conference in its July 2007 issue.

In addition, with a mini grant from UCSB Instructional Development that helped to pay for labor and materials, we had the plenary sessions and keynotes recorded. These have appeared on UCSB television station and are available on UTube and through UCTV on the web. We provided all speakers with a copy of the session that they appeared in. The conference, thus, lives on and the numbers who have viewed it increased (Our Chancellor remarked how he saw me a number of times late at night!) Most significantly, the conference is resulting in two publications edited by the co-conveners: we have an advance contract from Stanford University Press for a collection, mostly of plenaries papers but also including some of the outstanding new directions found in workshop papers; with Stephanie Gilmore, one of the workshop scholars, we are co-editing a special issue of *The Journal of the History of Sexuality* on “Sexual Labors” and are including three to five papers, now in revise and resubmit stages, from the conference.

Financial Report:

Appendix two is the financial report. Because funding came from a number of sources, three different units of UCSB housed money and kept accounts. ISBER was the main administrator because the UC LERF grant was run through there. IHC administered UCHRI funds. Waiting for money to be transferred from UC Davis to UCSB kept us from filing the final report until this time. We provided honorariums of \$250 (with some fringe costs as one time payments) to four UC faculty; \$500 honorarium to other invited speakers; and \$1,000 honorarium to keynoters. UCSB faculty did not receive any honorarium. We were fortunate to lock in rates lower than expected for both hotel and airfares and had a willing group of workshop participants who shared rooms.

Appendix I: Panels, Presenters, Paper Titles

Keynotes:

From Patient Advocate to Social Advocate: The Work of Nursing

Jill Furillo, California Nurses Association

Caring Everywhere

Viviana A. Zelizer, Princeton University

Panels:

The Political Economy of Intimate Labor: States, Markets, and Families

Chair: Leila Rupp, University of California, Santa Barbara

The Bonds of Home: Reproducing Race and Gender in the U.S. Welfare State

Eileen Boris, University of California, Santa Barbara

Jennifer Klein, Yale University

Transnational Adoption and International Intimacies

Laura Briggs, University of Arizona

A Multiplicity of Acts, Acting and Caring: The International Sex Industry

Laura María Agustín, London Metropolitan University

Caring and Inequality

Evelyn Nakano Glenn, University of California, Berkeley

Examining Globalization "From Below" through Intimate Labor Practices

Chair: Kum-Kum Bhavnani, University of California, Santa Barbara

Traveling Cultures of Servitude: Loyalty and Betrayal in New York and Kolkata

Raka Ray, University of California, Berkeley

Labor, Intimacy and the Informal Economy in the Dominican Republic

Steven Gregory, Columbia University

Transnational Homecare Workers: Reconceptualizing the Domestica Model

Candace Howes, University of Connecticut

Conquering Divides: Sex Worker and Migrant Worker Alliances against Human Trafficking

Grace Chang, University of California, Santa Barbara

Work Process and the Cultures of Intimacy: Beyond the Binary of Paid and Unpaid Labor

Chair: Celine Parreñas Shimizu, University of California, Santa Barbara

The Home as Hospital: Family Caregivers and High Tech Healthcare Offloading
Cameron Macdonald, University of Wisconsin—Madison

Cultures of Flirtation: Sex and the Moral Boundaries of Filipina Migrant Hostesses in Japan

Rhacel Parreñas, University of California, Davis

'Bounded Authenticity' and the Commerce of Sex
Elizabeth Bernstein, Columbia University

Understanding the Significance of Gifts and Solidarity: Tourism and Sex in Cuba
Amalia L. Cabezas, University of California, Riverside

My Reward Is Not Money: Deep Alliances, Spirituality and Self-Crafting Among Mexicana Elder Care Providers

María de la Luz Ibarra, San Diego State University

The Politics of Space and Labor Organizing

Chair: Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, University of California, Santa Barbara

But Who Will Watch the Children? Welfare Reform and Struggles Over Child Care
Ellen Reese, University of California, Riverside

Power, Intimacy, and Contestation: Domestic Workers and Their Employers in the 1960s

Premilla Nadasen, Queens College, City University of New York

Manicuring Intimacies: Inequality and Resistance in Asian-owned Nail Salons
Miliann Kang, University of Massachusetts—Amherst

The Expulsion of Sex Workers from Vancouver's West End, 1975-1985: A Cautionary Tale

Becki Ross, University of British Columbia

More Intimate Unions

Dorothy Sue Cobble, Rutgers University

Workshops:

Domestic Service

'Maid' with Rights: The Contradictory Citizenship of Domestic Workers in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Shireen Ally, University of the Witwatersrand

Breaking the Domestic Silence Through Representation

Lachelle Hannickel, University of California, Santa Barbara

An Intimate World: Race, Migration, and Chinese and Irish Domestic Servants in the late-Nineteenth Century United States

Andy Urban, University of Minnesota

Desires for Distance: White Working-Class Women's Rejection of Domestic Service in the late 19th-century United States

Lara Vapnek, St. John's University

Discussants:

Premilla Nadasen, City University of New York, Brooklyn

Raka Ray, University of California, Berkeley

Hospitals and Home Care

The Body/Work Nexus: The Work of Nursing Assistants in Nursing Homes

Lucy Fisher, University of California, San Francisco

How Care Is Constituted in Interaction: A Situated Comparison of Two Hospital Wards

John Kaiser, University of California, Berkeley

Laboring Lives: A look at Transnational Work Practices. The Making of Home Eldercare Assistants in Italy.

Francesca Degiuli, University of California, Santa Barbara

Money Matters: How Family Home Care Providers Assign Value to Care

Clare L. Stacey, Kent State University

Discussants:

Candace Howes, Connecticut College

Cameron Macdonald, University of Wisconsin—Madison

Varieties of Carework

Reconstructing Motherhood: Caseworker Approaches

Stephanie D'Auria, University of California, Riverside

"First Get Your Hare": Urban Women and the Work of Food Procurement in the Twentieth Century

Tracey Deutsch, University of Minnesota

Revisiting the Picture Bride: Reproductive Labor and Ethnic Community in Hawai'i

Kasturi Ray, San Francisco State University

Discussants:

Dorothy Sue Cobble, Rutgers University

Viviana A. Zelizer, Princeton University

Globalization and Empire

The Criminalization of Sex Work and Panamanian Women's Resistance to U.S. Empire
Neel Ahuja, University of California, San Diego

Romancing Human Rights: Gender, Intimacy, and Power Between Burma and the West
Tamara C. Ho, University of California, Riverside

Sex without Friction: Replicant Sex Workers in Cheang Shu Lea's I.K.U.
Jian (Chaun) Chen, University of California, Irvine

Erotic Citizenship: Cyber-Marriage across the Americas
Felicity Schaeffer-Grabel, University of California, Santa Cruz

Discussants:

Laura Briggs, University of Arizona

Evelyn Nakano Glenn, University of California, Berkeley

Sex Work

Strange Bedfellows: "Liberal" Feminists, Prostitutes, and Sex Workers' Rights in the 1970s

Stephanie Gilmore, Trinity College

The Client-Worker Relationship among Different Sectors of Saigon's Sexualized Economy

Kimberly Kay Hoang, University of California, Berkeley

Laborers, Managers and Counselors: A Comparative Analysis of Intimate Work in the Sex Industry

Cecilia Benoit, University of Victoria

Bill McCarthy, University of California, Davis

Discussants:

Laura Agustín, London Metropolitan University

Becki Ross, University of British Columbia

Children and Globalization

Building Communities of Sentiments: Money, Emotions, and Decision-Making Among Maya Migrants

Bianet Castellanos, University of Minnesota

Shrine Wives and Fisher Boys: Drafting Child Trafficking Legislation in West Africa

Benjamin N. Lawrance, University of California, Davis

Companionship and Custom: The Mechanics of Child Circulation

Jessaca B. Leinaweaver, University of Manitoba

Discussants:

Rhacel Parreñas, University of California, Davis

Ellen Reese, University of California, Riverside

Affective Labor as Work

Gender, Life Coaching, and the Commodification of Interpersonal Services

Molly George, University of California, Santa Barbara

Intimate Labor and Affective Technologies

Ariel Ducey, University of Calgary

The Commodification of Affect in Indian Call Centers

Kalindi Vora, University of California, Berkeley

Discussants:

Eileen Boris, University of California, Santa Barbara

Geographies of Care Work

Adopting Orangutans: Ecotourist Labor, Altruism, and Charismatic Megafauna

Rheana Juno Parreñas, Harvard University and University of California, Berkeley

Intimate Environments: Reimagining the Relation of Care Ethics and Environmental Justice Through Linda Hogan's Solar Storms

Michelle Stuckey, University of California, San Diego

Cultural Conflict and Cooperation: Instilling Western Values in a Chinese Orphanage

Leslie K. Wang, University of California, Berkeley

Discussants:

Fiona Williams, University of Leeds

Miliann Kang, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Creating Gender through Intimate Labor

Shots and Surgery vs. Scheduled Sexuality: Egg and Sperm Donation in Daily Life

Rene Almeling, University of California, Los Angeles

Maintaining Honourable Masculinity: Gender and Intimate Labour in Firefighting

Susan Braedley, York University

Femme Labor and the Production of Trans Masculinity

Jane Ward, University of California, Riverside

Discussants:

Elizabeth Bernstein, Columbia University

Amalia L. Cabezas, University of California, Riverside

Sex Work and Desire

Creating an Authentic Fantasy: How Women-Produced Pornography Constructs “Real” Sex

Jill Bakehorn, University of California, Davis

In/Visible Desires: Black Women Sexual Laborers in the American Pornography Industry

Mireille Miller-Young, University of California, Santa Barbara

Reproduction of Desire: Race, Erotic Capital, and Same Sex Desire

Siobhan Brooks, University of California, Santa Barbara

Discussants:

Steven Gregory, Columbia University

Hyuna Moon, Center for Women’s Culture and Feminist Theory

Appendix II: Financial Report

07/01/07 - 06/30/08

	LERF	Hull/Dean	UCHRI	TOTAL
A. SENIOR PERSONNEL				
1. Eileen Boris, Hull Professor, Principal Investigator	0			
2. Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, Collaborator, Co-PI @ UC Davis	0			
TOTAL SENIOR PERSONNEL:	0	0	0	0
B. OTHER PERSONNEL				
3. Grace Chang, Assistant Professor, UCSB Invited Speaker	0			
Student Assistant - E. Shermer		4,277		
TOTAL OTHER PERSONNEL:	0	4277.07	0.00	4,277
C. FRINGE BENEFITS				
1. Eileen Boris, Hull Professor, Principal Investigator	0			
2. Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, Collaborator, Co-PI @ UC Davis	0			
3. Grace Chang, Assistant Professor, UCSB Invited Speaker	0			
Student Assistant - E. Shermer	0	0		
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS:	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SALARY & FRINGE BENEFITS:	0	4,277	0	4,277
D. TRAVEL				
<i>Domestic Travel</i>				
1. Airfare	1726.40		6,000	
2. Lodging	3003.67	180		
TOTAL TRAVEL COSTS	4730.07	180.30	6000.00	10,910
E. OTHER DIRECT COSTS				
UC Honoraria (4 speakers)	1094.80			
Non UC Honoraria (12 speakers)	7000.00			
Nurses Foundation Honoraria	1000.00			
4. Conference meals	3987.08	471		
5. Light Refreshments for Conference	90.03			
6. Publicity: Posters and Flyers	103.02			
7. Video services	1892.00			
8. UCSB Parking passes for speakers @ \$8/day x 2 days x 12 people	103.00			
TOTAL OTHER COSTS	15269.93	471.00	0.00	15,741
F. TOTAL PROJECT DIRECT COSTS	20000.00	4928.37	6000.00	30,928
G. INDIRECT COSTS:				
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS* MTDC x 0%	0			0
H. TOTAL PROJECT DIRECT & INDIRECT COSTS	20,000	4,928	6,000	30,928
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS:	30,928			