NAU Welcomes its First Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence

Northern Arizona University’s efforts to institutionalize global education have taken yet another exciting direction in the 2009-2010 academic year. The university is hosting its very first Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, Dr. Evan Poata-Smith, Senior Lecturer in the School of Languages and Social Sciences at Auckland University of Technology. The Scholar-in-Residence program is aimed at expanding institutional capacity, internationalizing lecturing and curricula, and advancing the quality of faculty, student, and community experiences.

“We are thrilled not only to have a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, but particularly Dr. Poata-Smith, because he brings knowledge and a perspective from a part of the world that is quite unfamiliar to most of our students,” says Dr. Michelle Harris, academic administrator for this Fulbright award and faculty sponsor for Dr. Poata-Smith.

Dr. Poata-Smith is excited to be at NAU. He says that he sought this Fulbright opportunity to further internationalize his research and teaching as well as to collaborate with NAU faculty engaged in scholarship in ethnic relations, Indigenous studies, and sociology. He is currently teaching two courses in the Department of Sociology, including Indigenous Politics and Society, and Ethnicity and Race. In the spring semester, he is scheduled to teach a course on Maori Society and Race Relations in New Zealand that will be cross-listed with the Ethnic Studies program and the Department of Applied Indigenous Studies. He will also teach a graduate course on the Sociology of Music for the Department of Sociology.

NAU is fortunate to have a scholar of Dr. Poata-Smith’s depth and breadth of experience. He has combined his personal knowledge as a Maori with significant research and teaching in the area of identity formation among young, urban Maoris. This area of inquiry is regarded as cutting edge in the field of Identity Studies. His collaboration with the Ethnic Studies program and the Department of Applied Indigenous Studies offers an opportunity to extend and enhance learning and teaching opportunities on the experiences of Indigenous peoples around the world.

Apart from his teaching commitments on campus, Dr. Poata-Smith will be exploring with faculty and the Center for International Education opportunities to develop new global learning experiences for NAU students that may involve study, internship, and / or research abroad experiences in New Zealand in the area of Indigenous studies. In addition, he will visit a number of community organizations as well as Diné College on the Navajo reservation to lecture on his area of scholarship and to talk about New Zealand, its people and culture. This dimension of his tenure as a Scholar-in-Residence is a Fulbright program requirement to ensure that the local community is able to benefit from his presence in the United States.

We are delighted to have Dr. Poata-Smith with us for this academic year, and we believe that his presence and his work as an instructor and as a collaborator with faculty will do much to further the global education agenda at NAU.
The rapid advancement in communication technologies serves as a two-edged sword: while we are able to communicate in real time with almost anyone anywhere on the planet, at will and for mere pennies, instantaneous communication brings us the depressing and disillusioning news of the social injustices experienced by millions of our fellow human beings all around the world on a daily basis. From wars and civil unrest that kill, injure, and leave homeless or deeply traumatized victims to the trafficking in women and children, from the perils experienced by those involved in forced migration to the millions living under the heel of authoritarian regimes, the cry for social justice gets louder and more urgent.

Social justice is of concern on a global scale. This is probably best articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948. The declaration begins with a rather profound assertion, by recognizing "the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" as constituting "the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

It continues by stating that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want" as being "the highest aspiration of the common people."

The preoccupation with promoting human rights, social progress, and better standards of life in the context of free societies around the world is manifested in the work of some of the main bodies of the UN, including the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and the International Court of Justice. It is also reflected in the thematic issues with which the UN is engaged, including the Secretary-General’s campaign to end violence against women and to deal with issues regarding genocide, Indigenous peoples, children and armed conflict, and disability.

There is no question that social justice challenges are universal and the storyline is remarkably similar, even in democratic societies, which, it is reasonable to argue, offer the most ideal context for such challenges to be both acknowledged and resolved. Indeed, ancient Rome, one of the world’s earliest experiments with democracy, saw a long and bloody struggle between those who advocated on behalf of the disfranchised and the oligarchy that controlled most of Rome’s resources.

Michael Parenti, in the Assasination of Julius Caesar: A People’s History of Ancient Rome, writes that the struggle around social justice involved the redistribution of public lands on behalf of the indigent, seeking to give people the right to appeal jury verdicts, reducing the period of military service, constructing roads into more fertile districts in order to improve Italian agriculture, and providing free clothing to soldiers, among others. Some of these struggles are still being fought even today. For championing the cause of the dispossessed, for attempting to reverse the upward redistribution of wealth, for having "the audacity to advocate reforms that gave something to the poor," Julius Caesar, the leading

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Social Justice in a Global Age
By Dr. Harvey Charles

Recent political events have, for the time being, pushed the issue of U.S. immigration reform into the media background. Every day, however, immigrants cross the desert in search of a better life, and in immigrant communities the specter of deportation haunts working people who have risked everything to come here. Immigration is not an issue that will easily go away.

Though a nation of immigrants, we seem unable to discuss this issue in any kind of a coherent manner, while solutions continue to elude us. On this, and the larger issue of social justice in America, a cultural divide emerges—a moral division between fundamentally different worldviews. This divide has Americans on both sides talking past each other.

Drawing on recent breakthroughs in cognitive science, George Lakoff proposes that neural functioning of the human brain, and the different mental frames with which we see reality, are the real basis for this cultural divide and the foundation of our divergent notions of social cause. One side looks at undocumented immigration as a moral issue, proposing that naturalizing the American dream for the very young and the very old. The rest of the refugees move to urban areas the specter of deportation haunts working people who have risked everything to come here. Immigration is not an issue that will easily go away.

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(Continued on page 18)
Migration & Human Rights as Issues of Social Justice in the Global Economy

The movement of people across national borders is a phenomenon closely linked with globalization and its associated effects, such as the permeability of sovereignty. While many migrants are welcomed as tourists and skilled workers, many more arrive as poor, unskilled, “undocumented” or “illegal aliens,” who pose a conundrum for states. While the latter fill low-wage jobs and help fuel a country’s global economic competitiveness, they raise the specter of a permanently disenfranchised and impoverished population. The low-wage migrant thus occupies a liminal space—“between and between,” as it were—in the modern state system.

The notion of inclusion and exclusion around rights endowed by citizenship are frequently deployed to keep low-wage and/or undocumented migrants in their place and preserve their status as outsiders (see, for example, Benhabib 2004; Ngai 2004; Agamben 1998). Yet when rights are withheld from a large number of non-citizens, state commitments to basic international human dignity, as well as humanitarian principles and norms, are called into question. Historical and contemporary expressions of exclusion and civil association, humanitarian treatment, nondiscrimination, and access to adequate resources necessary to sustain life are considered fundamental and universal human rights that should be available to all, regardless of national origin, under existing international treaties and declarations. But the exclusion or exemption of many non-citizens from political life, and the denial to them of basic civil, social and economic rights, bring into play exclusionary issues of nationalism, sovereignty and citizenship.

Further, in popular discourse the migrant is largely feared and criminalized. This stems in part from a racialized logic, which is simultaneously classed and gendered, and historically rooted. Ongoing debates and critical analyses of citizenship suggest the need for a deeper understanding of the relationship between histories of migration and the politics of inclusion and exclusion. This need extends also to the exclusion of refugees—migrants arguably endowed with a clearer legal status—in the nexus of citizenship and sovereignty (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2004). While at first glance the distinction between citizen and non-citizen may be a straightforward one based on understandings of national sovereignty, it becomes complicated when different categories and classes of migrants are brought to the discussion. For instance, some non-citizens in the United States have entered under an expedited border-crossing program that has produced a “business-class civil citizenship” (Sparke 2006). Similarly, in Southeast Asia, “expatriate” non-citizens enjoy a level of well-being and rights from their elite status that are not available to many impoverished who enter illegally. The selective inclusion and exclusion of migrants is inconsistent with notions of universal human rights, and reflects discriminatory policies and practices. The plight of migrants has long drawn the attention not only of transnational organizations and migrant rights advocates, but also of governments, which must address the complicated connections between global asymmetries of wealth and power and the flow of humans across borders. Yet the presence of international labor laws and basic human-rights norms governing how migrant workers may be treated, as such the 1975 International Labour Organization Convention 143 and provisions in United Nations human-rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), promise little in the way of actual protections. Such laws, even when subscribed to, are not always applied or integrated into national laws governing the treatment of migrant labor. Clearly, more attention needs to be given in both transnational and domestic policymaking to the problems associated with addressing migrants’ rights and integrating these in more meaningful ways into actual governing legal frameworks. The peril of not doing so may be seen in the heated rhetoric of anti-immigrant groups around the world and in the violence accompanying such rhetoric. Indeed, the plight of migrants around the world continues to call out for social justice.

Enrique’s Journey: Critical Engagement with Immigration and Social Justice

Each year, the NAUreads program chooses a book for all first-year students. Students are asked to read the book and in so doing to participate in a common experience as they begin their educational journey at NAU. Students can use the book to initiate conversations and build community with their new classmates, roommates and faculty. This year’s selection, Enrique’s Journey, was driven by the university’s global learning goals of diversity, sustainability and global education, themes that appear throughout this book. Enrique’s Journey documents the astonishing true story of a Honduran boy who braves unimaginable hardship and peril to reach his mother in the United States. Written by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Sonia Nazario, the story recounts an unforgettable perspective of the effect of immigration on children.

We first meet Enrique in his hometown of Tegucigalpa, Honduras. At age five he is “orphaned” when his mother immigrates to the U.S. to find work in order to support her children. Enrique and his sister are left in the care of different relatives, a situation which finds them unsupervised, uneducated and frequently foraging for food at the city dump. Drug use, particularly glue sniffing, is common among these children, who are not only escaping the reality of their childhood but using the drugs to alleviate their hunger pangs.

Enrique cannot accept the loss of his mother and sets out to find her to determine if “she still loves him.” His journey takes us on a dangerous route through Central America, as Enrique faces frequent deportation, assault by gangsters, bandits and corrupt police. The only simplification afforded by the story is that any attempt to cross the U.S. border is not merely dangerous, but life-threatening.

The NAUreads book selection committee felt it important to expose our students to these specific issues because they are so relevant to life in Arizona. The story is not without hope. While fraught with peril, Enrique’s journey is also propelled by the kindness of strangers. There is a network of sanctuary and aid provided by both the Catholic Church and local citizens. In one of the most compelling parts of the book, we learn of a village that mobilizes at the sound of the train to pass water, clothes and food to the children. These are items the villagers can ill afford to give away due to their own impoverished circumstances, but they do it anyway.

(Continued on page 18)
Social Justice and Mental Health in a Global Context

By Prof. Michelle Harris

At first glance, the link between mental health and social justice is not necessarily obvious.

But from the socio-psychological perspective, the link becomes readily apparent. Social psychology is concerned with the interaction between a person and the environment. Mental health or ill health may seem to rest with the individual, while social justice connotes fairness and equity in society. Yet when we look at how structural forces can shape responses in groups of people, we can begin to see how mental health, too, can operate in society. Moreover, the mental health of a group can have larger social-justice implications because groups that suffer discrimination or disadvantage at the societal level may also experience impaired mental health.

One way to examine these links is to look at the structural mechanisms through which these relationships occur. What, for instance, is the tie between the perception of having suffered racial discrimination and racial and ethnic minority status, or between gender and ill health in parents? My research is centrally involved with understanding how these relationships work (not only in U.S. society, but also in communities in other parts of the world), and in identifying the processes through which social status affects mental health.

In a 2004 paper titled “Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Perceptions of Discrimination,” I reported that the prevalence of reports of discrimination in the U.S. differs according to racial/ethnic group classification (such as black, Latino or white); when the data were disaggregated by ethnic groups (or country of origin), further disparities in prevalence emerged. Immigrant status, lower socioeconomic position, and gender were some of the factors that were important predictors of perceptions of discrimination. Immigrant Mexican Americans, for example, reported experiencing more discrimination than their native-born counterparts.

The findings highlighted the contextual nature of perceptions of discrimination, and the fact that certain standings in society can expose individuals to more negative experiences. In a Global Context

Social phenomena that affect mental health can be found in every society.

By Prof. Michelle Harris

By Prof. Michelle Harris is Associate Professor Sociology and Coordinator of the Graduate Program in Sociology.

One way to examine these links is to look at the structural mechanisms through which these relationships occur. What, for instance, is the tie between the perception of having suffered racial discrimination and racial and ethnic minority status, or between gender and ill health in parents? My research is centrally involved with understanding how these relationships work (not only in U.S. society, but also in communities in other parts of the world), and in identifying the processes through which social status affects mental health. In the end, my work seeks to eliminate social injustice.

Tribulations of this nature are really social injustices and seem to have negative implications for the sense of well-being of the individuals who endure the inequities.

Social phenomena that affect mental health can be found in every society. In Jamaica, using data from a sample of adults, I sought to understand the relationship between patrilineal, education and psychological distress. It is well established in the literature that parents with children at home are less psychologically well-off than childless adults. The disadvantage in well-being is likely a factor of the stressors involved in parenting. Mothers, more than fathers, also report worse mental health. Feminist theorists believe that the pervasive structural inequalities that women face in society (less power, authority, prestige and value) relative to men, and the stress of performing the “nurturing role” that characterizes motherhood, can lead to deleterious mental health outcomes.

The research project supported these findings: Mothers, more than fathers, reported higher levels of distress, and this distress increased as the number of children and the financial pressures grew. Additionally, respondents with higher levels of education reported less strain. Thus, education ameliorated the effects of the stress of having and caring for children, and this, in turn, may have a positive influence on mental health. Immigrant Mexican Americans, for example, reported experiencing more discrimination than their native-born counterparts.

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Cultural Constructions of Social Justice: The Body Versus the Mind

“Diga.” With that word, a middle-aged Cuban judge directed the young man before him to explain, in his own words, whether or not he was guilty of crime in question—climbing through an apartment window to steal a pair of running shoes—and, if so, why he did it. Since 1985, when I began my study of routine justice practices in Cuba, I have remained fascinated by the drama of this moment.

When the lead judge presiding over a Cuban court says “diga” to a victim or a defendant, the judicial panel, court functionaries, family, friends, curious observers and foreign researchers lean forward to hear the story. And usually, a story it is, typically replete with narrative detail and tangential elaborations surrounding the human trouble the court must resolve.

The difference between these performances in Cuban courts and permissible talk in courts in the U.S. is dramatic. In Cuba, victims and offenders are invited to tell a story that situates the trouble at hand in the wider context of their lives. In the U.S., victims and offenders are constrained to answering, and only answering, narrowly drawn questions posed by attorneys. Cuban courts are interested in the wider lives of those before them, while U.S. courts are concerned with only what are defined as the “facts” of the immediate case.

“Diga” followed a variation of the civil legal system found in some European countries, Cuba included, where the formal trial is designed and parties to decide cases. Minor crimes are heard by three-judge panels and less-serious offenses by five judges. In both cases, rows of the “tribunales” are ordinary citizens, not formally trained jurists, which provides a degree of popular representation.

The way talk in a Cuban court differs from that in the U.S. is far more than an interesting tale of exotic foreign practices. Rather, it is a signpost on the road to understanding important historical, cultural and political differences between these two societies, and, as such, it provides a valuable window into understanding not just Cuba, but U.S. society as well.

To me, the primary benefit of comparative research and internationalized educational content is its ability to deepen the way my students and I comprehend our own society. Seeing the United States in the context of other, often very different societies fosters a deeper understanding of what we as a nation, why we are the way we are, and the relatively small niche we occupy in the complex panoply of human experience. It is also often a window to wider and deeper questions.

My work in Cuba, for instance, began with a desire to understand routine practices of law, courts and justice. I soon realized, however, that understanding the logic of Cuban justice required understanding the particular way Cuban society centers its perception of human rights around the body rather than the mind. In the context of socialist Cuba, the most important rights to be protected are those to food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, and recreation, even if certain political liberties must be sacrificed to achieve these goals. By contrast, in Western market societies the rights of mind often come first, that is, freedom of speech, press, worship, and private happiness, are the ones that must be protected above all else, even if doing so means that access to the needs of the body will be highly inequitable.

For me, and I hope for my students, learning how and why societies come to embrace very different constructions of what it means to be human is a basic reason for recognizing that human societies cannot simply be divided into the good and the bad, the free and the unfree, the holy and the unholy, the affluent and the impoverished. Rather, all human communities are rich in some things and poor in others, all do some things well and other things poorly. Understanding this is the path away from either demonizing or romanticizing other societies. It is also the pathway toward understanding that, as increasing globalization draws all these communities ever closer together, there is an ever greater need to learn about other societies so that we can better know our own, and in that knowing be better prepared to work in ways that will ensure all societies are able to provide dignified existences for those who live in them.

Raymond Michalowski is Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Regents Professor and Chair of the Academic Chairs Council.
The Role of Education in Advancing Social Justice for Women in China

By Prof. John Kong Leung

The notion that a secular humanist-education widely available to the citizens of a country is a cornerstone for the social progress of any civilization was prominent in Western thought during the Enlightenment. In China's case, in the late 19th century it was embraced by reformist intellectuals who sought to strengthen Chinese society, culture, and policy after decades of domestic corruption and ravaging by Western powers.

A major part of China's modern schooling system that developed in the 19th century under the influence of this progressive social/cultural ideal was the emergence of the first schools for women. For many centuries, the educational opportunities for China's females had been restricted to training in the proper “women's arts” in the home. But from the 1870s on, a small number of Chinese women were given a “modern” Christian and Western education in missionary schools in China's urban “treaty ports.” In 1899, the first “public” school established by Chinese intellectuals for the education of Chinese women began the arduous social enterprise of introducing an education that had a modern, progressive, relatively unconfined and unconfining, Westernized (but secular) curriculum and purpose. It was not until 1907, however, that the education of women was formally incorporated into the modern public school system of China.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, the number of girls being educated in this system rose markedly from 40 in 1903 to 20,557 in 1908, numbering 141,130 in 1912–1913, and 417,820 in 1922–1923. Nevertheless, the education of China's women was far from equal to that of China's men. Aside from the basic subjects, primary and secondary schools for women generally had different curricula from those taught in schools for boys. Furthermore, the numerical inequity was stark. In 1915, when more than 3.7 million boys were reported to be enrolled in primary schools in China, the number of girls in primary education totaled 161,839, a ratio of 24:1. Even more important, the fact that women had not yet been universally educated became an excuse for China's political leaders, including the well-known Dr. Sun Yat-sen, to argue for the limitation of women's suffrage.

From its tentative beginnings in the 1890s, China's women's education movement had been linked to other issues of women's “liberation,” such as the horrifying custom of foot binding and the traditional society's acceptance of concubinage and prostitution. Still, it was only in the 1920s that the women's education movement in China became fully integrated with a broader struggle to promote women's rights in all areas of social and cultural life. Since then, women's education has played a major part in the cultural assault on political disenfranchisement, on the hegemony of patriarchy, and on women's social deprecation, especially in the transitional period of the 1950s to the 1970s, when, in many parts of the world, including the West, the right of every citizen in every sector of society to partake of all of that society's general progress finally came to be affirmed as an intrinsic right and a matter of basic justice.

Social justice is a fundamentally important perspective in our education. Global education should lead us to a more sophisticated understanding of issues of social justice in all societies; it should not foster stereotypes or allow us to be self-congratulatory in any way, but illuminate for us, more deeply in our consciousness, the fact that the ongoing human struggle is a major part in the cultural assault on political disenfranchisement, on the hegemony of patriarchy, and on women's social deprecation, especially in the transitional period of the 1950s to the 1970s, when, in many parts of the world, including the West, the right of every citizen in every sector of society to partake of all of that society's general progress finally came to be affirmed as an intrinsic right and a matter of basic justice.

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Readers seeking the references used in this article should contact the author directly.

John Kong Leung is Professor of History
American students have become a minor but recognizable presence in most artistically significant cities of Europe. Siena is one of those cities and at the Siena School for Liberal Arts we work to give that presence a special kind of recognition, and to convey to our students a special kind of message. We aim to provide a way for our students to encounter foreignness, to help them find within themselves the instruments to deal with the unfamiliar constructively. We want our students to return home with the knowledge that if they approach difference with an alert yet humble curiosity, the smallest detail of one’s experience can expand to become full of potential new adventures, and lead to an understanding that the path to knowledge is the most enjoyable journey of all.

From our experience it seems that more and more students look for meaningful contact with and within the community abroad, but that they are less and less capable of finding their own path toward making that connection. The latest technological tools, such as Skype, iChat and Facebook, offer the illusion of “connectedness.” In some ways, everything is within reach and as a result can seem familiar, but at the same time the students are not really being exposed to much of it. In addition, there seems to be an expectation that the role of teachers is to make communication in Sienese culture to combine a Sociology or a Deaf Studies course with an internship that will combine a Sociology or a Deaf Studies course with an internship that will be academically and socially relevant. These internships are intentionally not limited to students majoring in either of those disciplines, but aim to appeal to individuals in any discipline who are interested in exploring a foreign country through the lens of diversity, and motivated enough to “put themselves out there” in pursuit of this interest.

Students can choose to work with senior citizens, with psychiatric patients, with children or with the deaf community. In each case the individual student is made responsible for a project that may be small but is important for the community. These experiences invariably prove to be transformative in the lives of the students: Pam worked to bring Mr. B. back into the senior citizen community of the Campanosi home, since... (Continued on page 18)

NAU student working with an elderly woman in a senior center in Siena to appeal to individuals in any discipline who are interested in exploring a foreign country through the lens of diversity, and motivated enough to “put themselves out there” in pursuit of this interest.
The Indispensable Connection: Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice

By Prof. Marcus Ford

Sometimes people think that environmentalists put the needs of plants and nonhuman animals ahead of the needs of people—that environmentalists care more about trees than they do about loggers and their families, or more about fish than about fishermen and women. And sometimes environmentalists talk and act in ways that seem to support this view. But, in fact, environmental issues and human issues, including matters of social justice, are often so deeply intertwined that it makes no sense to set them apart.

Take the example of loggers and trees: unless forests are managed in a sustainable manner, there will be no logging jobs in the future, and unless fisheries are sustainably managed, there will be no jobs in the fishing industry and many people will be deprived of their primary source of protein. Because human beings are so closely tied to the environment, looking after the needs of the environment is looking after the needs of people, often in the short term, always in the long term.

Or consider the case of lead in gasoline. Environmentalists were concerned with air quality and therefore worked to ban leaded gas. Lead in even small doses is harmful to children’s nervous systems and brains. The Clean Air Act is usually thought of as a monumental environmental achievement, but it could just as easily be thought of as a monumental human-rights achievement—the right of children not to be poisoned by the air that they breathe.

The examples that I have given are predominantly internal to the United States, though they have obvious parallels in other countries. But it is also important to consider how our actions “here” affect human beings “somewhere else.” Many of the inexpensive goods the U.S. imports from China, for example, are made under environmental conditions that are not tolerated in this country. How we shop and what we buy is not just an economic issue; it is also a human-rights issue and an environmental issue.

There are some human-rights issues, such as the full disfranchisement of women and respect for religious and cultural diversity, that are not clearly also environmental issues, but certainly all of the concerns that deal with human health and physical well-being are always both environmental as well as social. Take global warming: although this is often thought to be an “environmental issue,” it is also a social justice issue. The world’s poor, who have contributed less to climate change than any other demographic, will suffer the most. What gives the relatively wealthy the right to increase the suffering of innocent human beings?

It is my belief that the best chance we have for addressing global warming and other “environmental issues” is to see that these are issues of social justice and that we have a moral obligation to address them. So long as we see them as environmental concerns, we will leave the solutions up to scientists and policy experts. When we recognize that they are also moral issues, then it is clear that the solution lies not with just a handful of experts, but with all of us.

The best chance we have for addressing global warming and other “environmental issues” is to see that these are issues of social justice.

Marcus Ford is Professor of Comparative Cultural Studies.

Environmental movements, community groups and academies have articulated the relationship between climate change, environmental justice, and social justice in a number of ways. Examining these various frameworks, and delineating an alternative, has been one of my projects over the past year.

Many of the early discussions on climate justice focused on historical responsibility. The argument supports the view that specific actors and development practices have brought us to our current condition, and these actors (and countries) should now pay for their past transgressions. This is a basic “polluter pays” principle that places the burden squarely on long-industrialized nations, and was part of the rationale for not requiring developing nations to cut emissions in the Kyoto treaty.

An alternative approach to climate justice is a per-capita equity argument, in which climate justice is based in current equality rather than in past responsibility. The concept would require a scientifically based agreement on the total amount of greenhouse-gas emissions we can continue to allow as a planet. That amount would then be divided by the total world population, and the result would be a per-capita emissions allowance for each person. Each country, then, would be allowed to emit the sum of their population multiplied by the allowable emissions per person. An alternative version would look specifically at “high emitters,” or those individuals in both developed and developing nations who emit more than their fair share of greenhouse gases. In this scenario, the intent is to treat all people equally in addressing the necessary emissions cuts, no matter their past practices.

Other recent approaches to climate justice focus more specifically on rights that should be preserved, whatever the response to climate change. A “development rights framework” combines the right of people and nations to develop out of poverty, which combines a conception of social justice with an attempt to stabilize climate change. The burden here, as in the historical approach, is squarely on the developed and on those that are currently developing out of poverty. Those nations that are already developed, then, would have the capacity and responsibility, to act; they would pay into a global pool to enable poverty alleviation as well as the capacity of the global system to respond to the climate crisis.

Some notions of climate justice, including my own recent work, attempt to get more specific about the relationship between social justice and the impacts of climate change. For example, we can argue that all people have the right to a basic environment in which they can function and flourish, which includes a stable climate system and what that brings in terms of agriculture, water, health and security. In this model, climate justice would mean that we have a duty not to exceed a particular quota of greenhouse-gas emissions, and not to impose environmental conditions necessary for fellow human beings to survive. If, in fact, we do have an impact on the ability of individuals or communities to function, we can be seen as committing an injustice and violating the rights of others. In this case, justice would require compensation to those whose rights are violated, as well as support for attempts to provide an environment necessary to our survival as a planet.

As attention recently gathered around the Copenhagen conference on climate change, many rightly focused on the ability of nations to agree to policies and practices that will actually slow our impact on the earth’s climate systems. But no matter what has been agreed to, or not, at Copenhagen, climate change will inevitably affect the way we live and will continue to undermine the environmental conditions necessary for human beings to flourish, for some more than for others. One of the key questions—beyond the science, beyond parts per million of carbon dioxide, and beyond modernizing energy systems—is how we address the various injustices that come with a changing climate.

David Schlosberg is Professor of Politics and International Affairs.
Negotiating the Complexities of Social Justice, Children’s Rights, and Family Vulnerabilities in Northern Ghana

By Prof. Aaron R. Denham

The international discourse on children’s rights often focuses exclusively on the individual child while neglecting to consider the rights and needs of the family. Although it is encouraging to see calls for governmental responsibility, decisions made in the best interest of children, and an emphasis placed on child survival, these ideals remain detached from the realities that families confront.

My ethnographic research into the discourse and practice of infanticide in northern Ghana reveals the complexities associated with universal notions of children’s rights through illustrating circumstantial instances wherein the “best interests” of the child might not be in the best interest of the family. I found that the discourse and practice of infanticide, a way to cope with unwanted or sick children, or to address the effects of endemic diseases such as cerebral palsy or suffered from the impacts of the Nankani perspective, spirit children are not human but rather bush spirits masquerading as such. From a biological perspective, many of these children are disabled or chronically ill. Indeed, all the spirit children I encountered had conditions such as cerebral palsy or suffered from the effects of endemic diseases such as cerebral spinal meningitis.

Various stakeholders within the community—community members, researchers, development workers—describe the spirit child practice as infanticide, a way to cope with unwanted or sick children, or as a primitive practice grounded in ignorance and in need of complete eradication. Rarely are the family and social contexts considered; moreover, outsiders are quick to characterize people practicing this and similar traditions as savage, pathological and morally inferior. My research shows that infanticide is less frequent than believed and that community members primarily use the spirit child as an explanatory model to understand the ultimate reason why, for example, a child died from natural causes. In the rare instances when infanticide occurs, the circumstances are more akin to euthanasia. I’ll now summarize a spirit child case that offers an alternative perspective into child and family rights.

Several months into my ethnographic research I accompanied Joe, a local NGO (nongovernmental organization) fieldworker, to visit Nana, a suspected spirit child, and her family. Upon arriving at the family’s compound, we exchanged greetings with the eight or so men and women who were present and then sat in the compound to discuss Nana’s condition.

Nana, meaning mother, is a generic name given to newborns before an ancestral name is bestowed, which usually occurs before the child’s first birthday. Although Nana hardly appeared to have reached her first birthday, she was actually close to three years old. She looked fragile and malnourished; at age two, the last time she was weighed, she was, according to her medical card, 16 pounds. She could neither stand, crawl, nor talk, and had experienced several episodes of malaria in addition to the primary cause of her current state, a serious case of meningitis contracted when she was six months old.

The literature on the spirit child describes the decisions around sending a child “back to the bush” as being a quick, callous and unilateral process. However, I found there is commonly a long period of seeking help before the child is actually taken. (Continued on page 20)
Justice for Indigenous Peoples

By Prof. Marianne O. Nielsen

In colonized countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, Indigenous peoples are imprisoned in far greater numbers than they should be. If Indigenous peoples—Native Americans, Aboriginal peoples, Maori, for example—are 12% of the population of the country, one would expect them to be 12% of the prison population, but they aren’t. In Australia, for example, where Indigenous peoples make up about 2% of the population, they represent 27% of those in prison. In the United States, a similar trend is found in states with large Native American populations, such as North Dakota, Montana, Alaska and Arizona.

There are many reasons for this overrepresentation, but most have to do with marginalization, that is, the reality that many Indigenous peoples live on the fringes of the non-Indigenous society. Indigenous peoples are among the poorest of the poor, have less education, work in lower-paying jobs, have had their culture and language stripped away (though not completely), are subject to laws that apply only to them, and hold little political power. Historically, the process of colonialism meant that the Europeans entered and took over the lands of Indigenous peoples illegally (or at least immorally through discriminatory laws), isolated the people on reservations, and engaged in misguided attempts to change their lives and culture. This had terrible consequences for Indigenous peoples, many of whom still suffer from a kind of group post-traumatic stress disorder.

Fortunately, things are changing: Indigenous peoples are regaining their culture, traditions and control over their lives. They are subject to less individual and group discrimination, though it is still prevalent in some communities. Criminal-justice service organizations run by and for Indigenous peoples are helping this revitalization of communities, and working to change the overrepresentation in the statistics. These organizations contribute by preventing crime, treating offenders, and combating recidivism. They provide services that include youth programs, court advocacy, counseling and programming in prisons, and anger management efforts, among others.

The specific services they provide depend on the needs of their Indigenous communities and the availability of resources. Because these organizations have mainly Indigenous staff and use elements of Indigenous culture in their programs, they are more trusted by their clients. Indeed, they have developed innovative approaches to justice issues that have been adopted by non-Indigenous agencies. In New Zealand, the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Program established the model for most domestic violence programs that followed. The Alberta Youth Justice Committees started in one small isolated community, where a group of elderly women were concerned about their youth being flown out of the community to attend court in the big city and never coming home again. There are now more non-Aboriginal committees in Alberta than Aboriginal ones.

Like their clients, these organizations have also faced prejudice. There are still members of non-Indigenous society who think Indigenous peoples are not capable of operating their own services or believe they should just forsake their culture and assimilate. Indigenous organizations have had to fight to prove their right to exist more often than other types of service organizations in exist. These efforts have been very successful in doing so. Some of these organizations have been around for more than 40 years and are still going strong despite funding issues, prejudice and pressures from both non-Indigenous and even some Indigenous stakeholders to be more bureaucratic, more “normal,” and less Indigenous.

The social studies and that demand interventions. Literatures offer readers the chance to experience translocation, the feeling of being transported to another place, where different values frame the world. That is, different cultural experiences also count different ways of being in the world, that there are different historical and political realities, though the broad experience may be comparable. Literature offers readers the chance to experience translocation, the feeling of being transported to another place, where different values frame the world.

Social justice does not begin and end with reading a book—far from it. A witness-reader knows that books are filled with biases and are usually the product of the commercial publishing industry (which exerts many different pressures on forms of stories). A witness-reader knows that a books context of publication must be read as carefully as the cultural context embedded in the text itself. No one book can offer complete testimony on a subject. More reading may be required as a means of context, of recalibrating the information relayed in the original testimonial literature.

Reading literature is only the beginning. It can give us access to unfamiliar experiences that move us emotionally, spiritually, even viscerally. The language of literature—alusive, lyrical, evocative and connotative—demands that we actively engage in meaning making rather than operate as passive consumers of facts reported to us. Reading-as-witness makes the act of interpreting literature, and the world, an ongoing, engaged process, one that leads undoubtly to some level of self-transformation, and, possibly, hopefully, to transformative action.

Jeff Berglund is Associate Professor of English and a President’s Distinguished Teaching Fellow.

I learned a lot about the Navajo Long Walk listening to distinguished Dine’/Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso tell her great-aunt’s story on a car ride through New Mexico. Her aunt’s story riveted me and allowed me to see the painful human dimensions of the forced marches and internment of 1864 to 1868. Her lyrical voice gently reminded me that this story from the past was connected to our lives today. What we are doing now in courts and overseas, and the violence programs that followed. The Alberta Youth Justice Committees started in one small isolated community, where a group of elderly women were concerned about their youth being flown out of the community to attend court in the big city and never coming home again. There are now more non-Aboriginal committees in Alberta than Aboriginal ones.

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Social Justice in a Global Age

(continued from page 2)

populists in ancient Rome, met with an untimely death when he was assassi-
nated. But the same was true about just about every leader of the Middle and
Late Republicans who took up the popu-
lar cause. They all met a violent end, be-
ginning with Tiberius Gracchus. In the pro-
ceeding on to Gaius Gracchus, Fulvia Flaccus,
Livius Drusus, Salpicius Rufus, Cornelius Cinna and others. Even more reprehensible, these pup-
los and their hired goons killed thousands of
the populists’ supporters. The real sin of
these populists lay, argues Parente, is not in
their subversion of the constitution, but “in
the economic democracy of their programs.” The moral of this story is that seek-
ing social justice may be dangerous business.

Etched into the façade of Stillman Hall, which houses the School of Social
Work at The Ohio State University, are the following words: freedom, know-
ledge, happiness, democracy, justice, experience. I walked by this building
many times while a graduate student at OSU without noticing this inscription.
On a recent visit, however, it caught my at-
tention, and it occurred to me that these
words all speak to social justice, either in
terms of desired outcomes or conditions
that help to advance social justice. These
words, inscribed where they are, also re-
minde me that colleges and universities
should be in the vanguard in advocating for
social justice. After all, one of the
necessary aims of education is to prepare
students to be the vanguard in advocating
for change. To quote the NAU Global:
“The articles in this semester’s issue of
NAU Global take a hard look at social
justice issues in a global context.”

Women’s Rights

(continued from page 9)

Women’s economic empowerment contributes to the slowing of the spread of the disease. International educational experiences, both within and outside the
classroom, provide opportunities for us to join with women’s groups across the globe and become part of transnational feminist networks that work together
as well as with transnational human-rights, labor, social,
justice, and environmental organizations to try to influence policymaking, and to insert a feminist per-
spective in transnational advocacy and activism.

Women, as the Chinese say, hold up half the sky. Yet only 1% of the world’s landowners are women. Without due understanding and consideration of the intricacies of women’s lives, the sexual divi-
sion of labor and the care economy; the trafficking of women’s bodies; civil rights (i.e., to bodily
integrity, reproductive rights) and social rights (such as paid maternity leave, parenthood leave, quality child
care) in our country and across the globe — there can be no justice. The slogan “Gender justice and econom-
ic justice” is simply a variation of the slogan “Women’s rights are human rights.” Both are key concepts of
global feminism; both are ways to connect the local and the global; both are furthered by the linking of international, transnational and transnational feminism on the NAU campus.

Dr. Frances Julia Rotem is an Associate Professor of Educational Policy and Director of the Women’s Gender Studies Programs

Nancy Paxton, Fulbright Senior Scholar

I was thrilled to be named one of six
Fulbright Senior Scholars in Australia for 2009-10. With the support provided by this grant, I plan to
travel to Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Parramatta in Sydney on July 1, and I will remain in Australia until late De-
ember, 2009. This award has given me the opportunity to complete research for a project that I have been working on for the last five years, entitled Books Travel:
Modernism and Literary Censorship in a Global Age. This interdisciplinary
study will analyze the careers and writing of Radclyffe Hall, D. H. Law-
rence, and the New Zealand Australian writer Jean Devanny, using these writers as case studies for a comparative analysis of the censorship practices in Great Brit-
ain and the United States in the late 19th and early 20th century. I will be traveling to Australia for two months of library research at James Cook University in Townsville, which is a regional journal of Jean Devanny’s
letters and personal papers. James Cook University is located in a beautiful part of the coast of North Queensland. Shortly after I arrived in Brisbane, I present-
ed a lecture on Devanny’s novel, Sugar
Heaven. I also plan to present talks on
my research at James Cook University
in Cairns. In late October, I will travel
back down the coast to Brisbane where I will present a lecture at the University

NAU GLOBAL
Fall 2009

18

NAU FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS

Aregai Tecele

Dr. Aregai Tecele, a Professor at NAU’s School of Forestry in
Ethiopia as a Senior Fulbright Fellow for the 2009-10 academic year. He is currently affiliated with the Africa Union, (formerly the Organization of African States) and the Graduate Program in Envi-
ronmental Science at Addis Ababa University in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Tecele’s research is concerned with developing an early warning system and intervention mecha-
nisms for possible conflicts within and across African countries as well as on minimizing the effective management of resolving existing conflicts in Africa. These are essential conditions for Afri-
can development. In addition to these responsibilities, he is teaching
two courses; Hydroclimate-Related Environmental Issues in East
Africa, and Conflict Avoidance and Management in Environmental
and Natural Resource Management.

Upon completion of the Fulbright Program, Dr. Tecele hopes to develop
a workable and functional framework for conflict avoidance and resolution. He hopes that the developed mechanism would be trans-
portable anywhere there where need is as well as become pedagogi-
cally useful at NAU. Dr. Tecele hopes to develop good contacts for future collaboration with Ethiopia academics and Africa Union professionals.

This Fulbright grant has helped to support the cost of my travel to Canberra to attend a conference on Australian liter-
ature in early July and to conduct
research on four books, letters, and
other materials by, and about Jean Devanny at the National
Library and National Archives there. In early August, I traveled to Brisbane where I presented a workshop on teaching texts
that were censored in Australia between 1900 and 1978 at Queensland Technical University. This workshop, along with my two
years of library research at James
Cook University in Townsville, was
an integral part of my research. With
this Fulbright grant I was able to travel to Sydney and Melbourne, and it
was invaluable to teach classes on the major authors and their works. The
government and the people of this country have been most welcoming.

The chapters that I have written about Jean Devanny have been
published in a book entitled The British New Zealand Literary Tradition: A
Study in the History of English Literature (2009). I have also published
in United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

I will remain in Australia until late De-

NAU FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS

19

Nancy Paxton, Fulbright Senior Scholar

Nancy Paxton, Fulbright Senior Scholar

(continued from page 5)

Migration & Human Rights

(continued from page 4)

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Shiva Naik is Professor of Politics and International Affairs.

Enrique’s Journey

(continued from page 5)

“What can the reader do? This
is the challenge implicit in Enrique’s Journey. For some of our students, action will be limited to reading the
book. However, most students who participate in the NAU reads pro-
gram deepen further their un-
derstanding of these issues. This year we were fortunate again to bring the author to campus. We are also host-
ing Book Club NAU discussions and BorderLinks that will bring their
“Immigration Simulation for our
students and faculty. These programs will provide the campus community
an opportunity to become engaged in conversation and action that
ultimately advance the cause of social
justice.

Rebecca Campbell is Director of the Academic Transition Program and NAUreads, Lind-
ye Ponseree and Shiva Naik are both
Graduate Assistants in the Academic Transition Program

Vulnerable Populations

(continued from page 10)

inner dynamics had isolated him; Callie
produced (wrote, illustrated and bound) a
delightful storybook for deaf children;
Sam worked for three months with Al-
zheimer’s patients and was given a tear-
ful goodbye party by them all at the end of
the semester. In these cases and many
more, students learned that the best cul-
ture, but, most important, they learn about themselves and feel the joy that comes from connecting with the lives of others.

To touch the humanity of the host community while studying abroad is to
touch one’s own. And that is a priceless lesson impossible to forget.

Miriam Grottsendal of St. Martin is Director of the Sinae Program for Labor Arts, Sinae, Italy

(continued)
the family summons the ritual specialist. Nma’s family described how they took her to the health clinic and hospital several times with little success and at great expense. Even the herbalist they consulted concluded that she could not be helped. The family was running out of choices and resources. “It has been making me suffer a lot,” the mother said, “always being indoors and having to watch her. She just sits on the ground and cries all the time. That tells me she is not a normal human being.”

I asked the family head how he had discovered Nma was a spirit child. He replied that two years earlier, when her sickness started, he and Nma’s father went to consult the diviner numerous times and discovered that the child was trying to find a way to kill everyone in the family. At that point, he said, “We knew she was a spirit child.” Nankani discourse frequently indicates that the ultimate goal of spirit children is to destroy the family. This belief is legitimate: Severely ill or disabled children require continuous care—keeping a family member away from the farm or market—and additional resources that are difficult to provide in a rural and impoverished subsistence-farming context with no government support or social services. Despite the costs, families do all they can to help such children; however, intensive levels of care cannot always be sustained. If the child does not improve, the health and lives of family members can be put at risk.

As we prepared to leave Nma’s home in the stifling midday heat, Joe emphasized that there was nothing we could do. “There are a lot of reasons for why the child is this way,” Joe said, looking straight ahead, “but they have to do away with it because of the tradition. They know the child cannot survive. Really, Aaron, the child is suffering; the family wants to set it free.”

It is important to recognize the suffering of these children while also considering the anguish of the family. Rather than condemning the families outright in the name of children’s rights, it is essential to consider the context in which these cases occur and the family’s rights for normality and survival. A holistic examination can help people address the root causes that surround similar infanticide or euthanasia practices and offer opportunities to critically examine notions of relativism, universalism, social justice and children’s rights.

Aaron Denham is Assistant Professor of Anthropology.