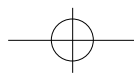
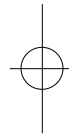
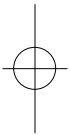


Critical Chatter



Gender and Justice Series

Nicole Rafter, Editor

Critical Chatter

Women and Human Rights in South East Asia

Caroline Lambert

Sharon Pickering

Christine Alder

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
Durham, North Carolina

Copyright © 2003
Caroline Lambert, Sharon Pickering and Christine Alder
All Rights Reserved.

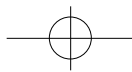
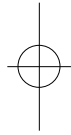
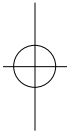
ISBN: 0-89089-120-6
LCCN: to apply

Carolina Academic Press
700 Kent Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
Telephone (919) 489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
E-mail: cap@cap-press.com
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America.

Dedication

**In memory of Raquel Tiglao.
In celebration of the many women who
share her passion for activism.**



Contents

Acknowledgments	xi
Chapter One	
Universality, Feminism and Human Rights	3
Critical Chatter?	3
Universality in Feminist and Human Rights Theory	7
Conversations with Feminist Theorists	7
Conversations with Human Rights Theorists	14
Universal Theories?	26
Conclusion	32
Chapter Two	
Representing Critical Chatter	35
The Politics of Representation	36
The Mechanics of Representation	42
Conclusion	45
Chapter Three	
Women's Social Activism in South East Asia	47
Engaging Political Practice	48
Colonisation	48
Women, the State and the Criminalisation of Struggle	56
Decision Making and Political Action	59
Engaging Social Representation	62
Violence Against Women	62
Sexuality and Reproductive Health	63

viii Contents

Religion and Gendered Social Mores	64
Conclusion	67

Chapter Four

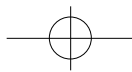
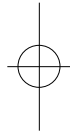
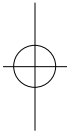
Naming Activism, Naming Feminism	69
Naming Activism and the Coercive State	71
Choosing to Engage the State?	72
Welfare or Political Work?	76
Criminalising Activism	80
Naming Feminism: The Challenge of Representation	84
Positioning Women's Activism	85
NGO, Woman, Feminist?	
The Activist Continuum in Thailand	89
Acting Local, Naming Global?	95
Positioning Organisational Activism	101
Conclusion	107

Chapter Five

Naming Human Rights	109
The Distance of Human Rights	112
Distancing Indigenous Concepts and Human Rights Discourse	112
Distancing the Affirmation of Alternative Values in Human Rights	117
Distancing Human Rights from the Everyday	122
The Difficulties of Human Rights Discourse	127
Diminished States: The Difficulties of a Rights Based Approach	127
Human Rights and the Difficulties of Individual Empowerment	130
The Difficult Cost of Human Rights	138
The Difficulty of Implementation	141
Strategic Engagement with Human Rights	146
Human Rights as a Demanding Language	147
Strategically Moving from Rhetoric to Action	151
Strategically Negotiating Culture	155
Conclusion	162

Contents ix

Chapter Six	
Critical Chatter	165
Strategic Universality	167
A Conversation on Strategic Universality	168
Final Words: An Invitation to Continue	
Critical Chatter	174
Selected Bibliography	175
Index	183



Acknowledgements

To be welcomed into conversation by sixty-four women with significantly different life herstories than yourself is a wonderful experience. Our thanks go to those who spoke with us, helped us arrange meetings, translated for us and inspired us.

The genesis of this project was a collaborative research project between The University of Melbourne and Amnesty International Australia. The committed work of Liz Watson and Deb Stringer ensured this project realised its potential. We also acknowledge the contribution of Kate Gilmore, Sue Davenport, Edna Aquino, Tim Parritt and Donna Jean Guest and members of the Amnesty International Australia Victorian Women's Group in 1998.

The project challenged our own understandings of human rights and women's activism. While this was difficult at times the project opened up new and shared spaces of learning, and a valuable collaborative working relationship between the authors.

In terms of the final production of the manuscript, Michael Gard engaged in many insightful discussions with us. Sharon Bong, Amrita Dasvarma, Evelyn Loh, Nathan Zhivov and Mary O'Kane offered comments on earlier drafts. Tiffany Bodiam ably assisted us in referencing. We have also benefited from an understanding and supportive editor in Nicole Rafter, and from the patience and insight of Sue Johnson at Carolina Academic Press.

Gill, Tom, Tim and Gwen Lambert have always offered love and support to Caroline; Amrita Dasvarma, Bridget Mainland and Leilani Farha offered friendship and support during this project. Caroline also acknowledges that her academic work is sustained by

xii Acknowledgments

the energy and challenge of working in the women's human rights community.

Sharon was sustained by the love and support of Jan, Graham and Fiona Pickering and Michael Gard who let her paint his kitchen fuschia and then yellow and then still proof read our book.

Christine thanks Somebody's Daughter Theatre for their inspiration, Ken Polk for his support and Venus Bay for its peace.

Financial support for the project was provided by the Australian Research Council, Amnesty International Australia, the Centre for Cultural Research into Risk at Charles Sturt University, and the Department of Criminology at The University of Melbourne.