



**The McGill Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies  
presents a seminar by:**

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*The Girl Child of Today is The Woman of Tomorrow* – Fantasizing the  
Adolescent Girl as the Future Hope in Post-Tsunami Reconstruction  
Efforts in Aceh, Indonesia

**Date: Tuesday, 15 March, 2011, 4:00pm**  
**Place: IGSF Seminar Room**  
**3487 Peel Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor**

***Registration is encouraged:***  
**514-398-3911 or [info.igsf@mcgill.ca](mailto:info.igsf@mcgill.ca)**

**Lecture summary:**

This paper (a draft article open for comments and revisions!) introduces Ida, a 15 year old Acehnese girl, one of the main characters of the Oxfam International's mini radio drama 'Women Can It Too!', broadcast in local radio stations in the tsunami-hit coastal areas in Aceh, Indonesia in 2006 and 2007.

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Various feminist queer scholars have illustrated an interface between adolescence and youth, with the wider sexed, gendered and sexualized nation-building narratives of the state. For example, Laurent Berlant (1995; 1997) has analyzed the state fetish on future orientation and illustrated how girl child stands as a “condensation of many citizenship fantasies” (Berlant 1995, 380; 1997, 58). Thus, it is not surprising, that the radio drama through its storyline repeats the statement of the Beijing Platform for Action, the final document of the fourth UN World Conference in Women 1995: ‘the girl child of today is the woman of tomorrow’.

In this paper I suggest that normativity could be thought of as a continuous negotiation of norms that are embodied in various localities and temporalities. Intersectionality, experiences of social inequalities. Instead of referring to intersectionality of norms as fixed and stable axes of power, it could instead be understood as expression of trauma and embodied experience (Grabham 2009). What kinds of images of tomorrow does the radio drama construct as the idealized picture for Acehnese adolescent girls? How do these images intersect with other intersecting social hierarchies? What alternative images emerge to resist dominant images of adolescent girl?

This paper argues that although the storyline of the radio drama offers avenues to resist simplistic gendered and sexualised categorisations of adolescence outside the heteronormative frame, this opening is entangled with other social hierarchies, such as ethnicity and encounters with tsunami and conflict that gain meanings in the locally lived experiences of adolescent girls. The paper further suggests that a close reading of the radio drama production offers a critique to the seemingly stable and closed gender advocacy storyline offered by the narrator of the drama. Finally, the paper suggests that adolescence could be considered as an embodied process of constant negotiation of norms.