

industrial citizenship, and finally, community deterioration. He then discussed the "Homewood Workers' Republic" as an illustration of these shifts. Homewood was composed almost exclusively of workers and their families. It was a model of industrial citizenship. Not only did workers negotiate reasonable working hours, but they constituted the town council, fostered education, music and the arts, and pioneered the development and production of prostheses. The current "contempt for workers" leads to the view that they are merely "instruments of production."

There were twenty participants in the workshop engaged in animated discussion. Topics raised included the role of multinational corporations in various countries, effects of the free trade agreements with Canada and Mexico, "the nation's divestment in the American worker," Catholic Church involvement in labor unions, the breakdown in political structures leading to fascism, and the health hazards for women who work in factories and offices.

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EXPERIENCE AS A RESOURCE FOR FEMINIST THOUGHT

Two presenters, Professors Susan Secker and Jeanette Rodriguez-Holguin, colleagues from the University of Seattle, reflected dialogically on how "women's experience" is used in theology. Each presented her own paper followed by reflection on what she had learned in working together on the project, sharing not only their conclusions but the process by which they reached these conclusions. Their presentation was an exercise of collaborative scholarship made possible through mutual trust and honesty. Approximately fifty participants in the workshop joined enthusiastically in their conversation.

Secker began by considering some of the ways that the term "women's experience" is used in theological discourse, particularly as identified in her research among Christian ethicists. She began with two commonly held assumptions: that women can discover at some deep level of our being features of womanness which transcend our differences; and that this knowledge can then be placed in dialogue with men's experience to comprise a truly universal notion of the meaning of human experience. She found herself challenged by Rodriguez who argued that the term "women's experience" masks differences among women.

Rather than assuming a common starting point described as "women's experience" Rodriguez emphasized the profound differences between Secker as a white theologian and herself as a Latina theologian. As Catholic women committed to building new relationships in the world by "justice-seeking actions" (Hunt, 1992), they recognized one commonality in their starting point, but they also discovered significant points of divergence and underlying fears. Whereas Secker used "women's experience" in order to generalize, Rodriguez focused on questions of culture, race and class which led her to see the inherent differences among women. She heard in Secker's quest for universality the danger of trivialization of her people and of herself. Secker worried that insistence upon distinctiveness of race, culture and class could fragment women's collective contribution.

As a result of Secker's dialogue with Rodriguez the second section of her paper was a rethinking of the term "women's experience" beginning with difference rather than searching for commonality. Through dialogue with women of color, she began to understand that a theory of women's experience can only be the product of an interactive quest for understanding which does not set up white women as the norm. Even to say that someone is different is to imply that there is a criterion of sameness from which the other deviates. The dominant group (for instance male or white feminist) becomes the standard against which