

Voices



The Newsletter of the Gender Studies Program at Northwestern University

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Nikki S. Lee's "Parts & Projects:" The Leslie A. Hoffmann Colloquium

By Corey Robinson (WCAS 2006)

For the culmination of the winter's Leslie A. Hoffmann Colloquium theme "Cultural Studies Perspectives on Gender and Sexuality," the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board invited Nikki S. Lee to campus. Lee, who describes herself as an "assimilartist," is studied in courses across disciplines, including Gender Studies' Amy Partridge's "Politics of Style." At this well-attended event in the Block Museum, Lee's destabilization of identity and theories of the "self" captured the attention of students and faculty from all over the university.

Born in Korea and currently based at New York's Leslie Tonkonow Gallery, Lee produces conceptual art that explores the construction and performance of non-mainstream identities through costuming, corporeality, and positioning, placing herself within particular subcultural milieu. Artwork from the series "Projects" such as the Yuppie Project, the Hip-Hop Project, and the Lesbian Project, potentially expose identity categories such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and age as illusory. In her series called "Parts" Lee always appears, but her companion is cut from the photograph, leaving the viewer to fill in the remaining narrative. Knowing that Lee has established a career around her ability to perform seemingly disparate identities, I, along with fellow Undergraduate Board members, wondered what she would perform at the February 23 event. Some attendees guessed that she would come dressed as a college student. Others thought she may perform the eccentric, pretentious artist. Regardless, it was impossible not to question the "authenticity" of Lee and constantly wonder what version of her "self" she was presenting to us. (continued on p. 3)



Nikki S. Lee

New Gender Studies Professor to Arrive in the Fall

Gender Studies is very pleased to welcome new faculty member Nicholas Davis. In Fall Quarter, Davis will begin teaching at Northwestern as an Assistant Professor in Gender Studies and English. Davis's specialty is film, with teaching and research interests in queer and feminist film.

Davis comes to Northwestern from Trinity College, Hartford, where he has been a Visiting Assistant Professor of English this year, teaching courses in film and American literature. Davis earned his Ph.D. degree at Cornell University, with a concentration in Film and Video Studies, in 2005. At Cornell, he studied with queer-studies scholar Ellis Hanson, the longtime chair of Cornell's Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Studies Program, and renowned African-American studies and feminist critic Hortense Spillers, among others. Davis was an undergraduate at Harvard University, where he wrote a senior honors thesis on gay dramatist Tennessee Williams and graduated with highest honors.

In Fall Quarter, Prof. Davis will offer a new introductory course in Gender Studies – "Introducing Queer Cinema" – a new version of the core Gender Studies course, "Voices and Visions" (Gender Studies 231). The course is designed as an introduction to both queer studies and film studies; it will analyze such films as *Paris Is Burning*, *Velvet Goldmine*, *Looking for Langston*, and *Boys Don't Cry*, alongside the work of critics and theorists Leo Bersani, Judith Butler, Diana Fuss, Kobena Mercer, and others.

Davis is an award-winning teacher; he received the Russell Distinguished Teaching Award at Cornell. His new "Voices and Visions" course is especially recommended for Gender Studies majors and minors, but it's open to students in all disciplines. Davis's research is related to this course – he is currently writing a book on contemporary queer cinema. The book engages film theory and the work of theorist (continued on p. 3)

A Word from the Director



Gender Studies Program Director Jeffrey Masten

With new courses, ongoing research, special events, reading groups, and new-faculty hiring, it's been an active and eventful year in Gender Studies – as you'll see throughout the pages of this newsletter.

Senior theses are a capstone of our undergraduate academic program, and it's a sign of real success in the Program that we have so many students doing advanced, independent research projects. This year, six students completed senior theses on a fascinating array of topics in gender and sexuality studies across a wide variety of disciplines. We have 28 senior majors and minors set to graduate in June, and we wish them all the best as they take their education out into the larger world.

This year, our undergraduate leadership organization, the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board, launched its very successful Scholars' Group, with student-led discussions of gender and sexuality issues in popular culture and theory. The Leslie A. Hoffmann Colloquia – with an event every quarter organized by the Board – have brought big audiences together to hear from visiting artists, scholars, and activists. In Winter Quarter, a lecture and discussion with visiting “assimilartist” Nikki S. Lee attracted an audience from a vast range of programs and departments across the College and the School of Communications. Faculty members Jennifer DeVere Brody (English and Performance Studies) and Amy Partridge (Gender Studies) provided stimulating commentary on Lee's photography. Queer and Asian-American studies scholar Prof. David Eng (Rutgers) spoke to the Colloquium this spring.

In our graduate program, we have had overflow enrollments in our recent seminars – Ann Orloff's “Advanced Feminist Theory,” a central course in the graduate certificate program; Sandra Richards and E. Patrick Johnson's “Black Feminist and Black Queer Theories” seminar; and my course in pre-modern sexualities.

I've also been very pleased to be a part of the Gender Studies Doctoral Colloquium -- new this year and organized by Sarah Mesle. Meeting several times a term, the group has been discussing the role of gender scholarship in its members' dissertation projects – work on topics as diverse as twentieth-century Polish history, the historical development of German economic thought, British colonial medicine, and the neo-conservative movement in U.S. politics.

And, with all this, we've also been building the faculty of the program, conducting two faculty searches this year. Working jointly with the English department, we have recruited a new Assistant Professor with interests in media, gender and sexuality -- Nick Davis, introduced elsewhere in this newsletter. Stay tuned for news next year of a possible further faculty appointment in Gender Studies. I'm grateful to all Gender Studies faculty who participated in these searches.

I also want to extend warm thanks on behalf of the program to our program assistant Anna Kate Bishop, who has brilliantly and efficiently kept our operations humming this year.

In addition to Prof. Davis, next year we welcome new faculty affiliates Kasey Evans (English) and Kate Baldwin (American Studies), each of whom will be offering new courses in the undergraduate curriculum.

As we congratulate our senior graduates and graduating certificate students receiving Ph.D.s in June, we look forward to another year packed with events and new ideas in Gender Studies.

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Nick Davis

(Davis, continued from p. 1)

Gilles Deleuze, alongside “new queer cinema” films and others from directors such as David Cronenberg, Todd Haynes, Julie Dash, and Cheryl Dunye.

In addition to a forthcoming essay on the cinema of Todd Haynes, Davis has also published an article on James

Baldwin’s play *Blues for Mister Charlie*. His research interests include a future project on feminist film theory and depictions of women in global cinema.

Beyond his teaching and research, Prof. Davis has an active career as an online film reviewer. He’s the writer/owner of Nicks-FlickPicks.com, a site with over 300 essay-length reviews of commercial, independent, international, and classic films. The site gets over 10,000 hits per month.

Davis is looking forward to moving to Chicago later this summer and “to finding two new homes in English and Gender Studies.” He adds that he’s been “thrilled by the intellectual energy of the Northwestern campus.”

Gender Studies warmly welcomes Davis and the new perspectives he’ll bring to the program and the university.

(Lee, continued from p. 1) In Lee’s lecture, titled “Parts & Projects,” she described the process of developing “Projects,” explaining that she approached her subjects adorning their style of dress and then revealed her project to them. To the surprise of some audience members, there was supposedly no deception involved, and Lee even admitted to maintaining friendships with some of her subjects after the project’s finish. Furthermore, Lee said that she could not immerse herself in a subculture for more than three months because after that amount of time, the experience began to feel too “real.”

Lee’s “Parts” series explores the notion that our identities are relational, continuously constructed and reinterpreted by those around us, as the reader must use the clues presented in the photo to fill in the body that is supposedly missing. While this series did not receive the same amount of inquiry as “Projects,” Lee’s theory on the “self” sparked much debate at the event’s subsequent reception and dinner.

Lee’s talk was followed by two responses - from Professor Jennifer Brody (English & Performance Studies) and Amy Partridge (Gender Studies). One of Brody’s poignant concerns with the work was how the “Projects” series disregarded intersectionalities. For example, where in Lee’s work was there room for a Hispanic Yuppie lesbian, considering those identities were portrayed in three separate projects? Furthermore, Brody questioned why there was no sex in the Lesbian Project, noting the limited representation that “Projects” presents.

Partridge was interested in the difference between identities that are assumed to be essential and those that are assumed to be consciously chosen. She applied Bourdieu’s theory of the “habitus” to Lee’s work in discussing the ways in which identities are experienced as natural. Partridge asked: how does the juxtaposition of, for example, the Exotic Dancers Project and the Hispanic Project force us to question the notion that particular identities are fixed? How does Lee’s conceptual art destabilize that which we assume is stable?

For members of the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board, as well as for many of the audience members, Lee’s mysteriousness, the seeming ease with which she completed her projects, and the sheer logistics of her work provoked many questions, particularly around representation and exploitation. However, as Brody pointed out, many of “Projects” subjects may have been exhibitionists, and furthermore, it is possible that our discomfort with the artwork stems from our own assumptions about identity as deeply rooted and not performative. The mere fact that we were all discussing who the “real” Nikki S. Lee is, reveals how the theory of performativity has not disseminated into our quotidian thoughts and practices. Maybe the question is not, “who is the real Nikki Lee,” but “does Lee’s lack of realness expose, not just her life, but our own lives, as constant, repetitive performances?”



Gender Studies students at the Nikki S. Lee reception



Lee chats with Gender Studies Students

Gender Studies Majors write Honors Theses

In 2005-06, a landmark six Gender Studies majors have submitted senior theses for honors in the Program. Thesis writers were assisted by their individual advisors and thesis seminar director Amy Partridge. The following descriptions suggest the rich diversity of these capstone projects.

Always Already Mothers: The qualified citizenship of women in the United States.

Rupal Vora (WCAS 2006)

From the formation of their political identities, women have had to use the rhetoric of motherhood to contend equal citizenship rights for women. I argue that women have been historically viewed as "always already" mothers which has both created the space through which women have made political claims as well as limited the extent to which equal citizenship is accessed. My research begins with literature on the "social question" as addressed by Hannah Arendt and gendered in Denise Riley's understanding of the "women question," the discourse surrounding women as political beings has been highly intertwined with women's social identities. This theoretical framework gives insight to the revolutionary era "Republican Motherhood" ideology in which women's claims to political rights were justified through their status as mothers of future civic-minded sons. Through the work of historians including Aliene Kraditor, Ellen Carol DuBois and Nancy Cott I trace the displacement of women's political identities by the social. I argue that prioritizing women's social identities before their political status created a subordinated form of citizenship for the entire disenfranchised class. By discussing this qualified citizenship, I hope to shed light on current views and struggles of women's rights in the U.S. with regard both to women's existing subordinated political status and to understand the basis for contemporary rights debates with women in the political arena.

Nancy Drew Goes Camping: A Re-Writing of American Cultural History

Lindsay Shadrick (WCAS 2006)

The *Nancy Drew* series has captivated young readers as well as cultural, literary, and feminist scholars. Nancy Drew is undoubtedly a cultural icon, a part of the American lexicon and imagination. The post-1959 versions of the *Nancy Drew* series are influenced by and complicit in producing a specific version of American history. Nancy's world has no room for marginal voices, and, as a result, it might exclude a number of its readers. My project, then, analyzes the *Nancy Drew* series as a cultural product that is open to multiple interpretations. More specifically, I address how the camp sensibility as a political tool may be utilized to re-read these novels, and, by extension, various versions of American history, to expose gender as a social construct and re-include lesbian women and same-sex desire. Camp allows those who have been excluded from the process of cultural production to laugh at, expose, re-read, and re-write popular culture. My reading of the *Nancy Drew* series thus suggests that literature is inextricably linked to protest and illustrates that the mainstream can be reappropriated by the sub-cultural and that camp sensibility allows enough breathing room to laugh at the past, creating a psychological community that forges themselves as subjects, and not objects, of American history.

Imagining the First Female President: A project in the negotiation of gender, power, and culture in a postfeminist America

Veronica Percia (WCAS 2006)

This thesis explores the relationship between fiction and reality in the collective American imagination depicted by the first female president in the prime time network show *Commander in Chief*. I use this television program as a text where real life American anxieties and contradictions about contemporary femininity and masculinity are manifest and thus can be critiqued and problematized, situating our seemingly progressive ideas about gender roles today. I argue that we are in a moment of national identity crisis, a moment of delusional postfeminism in American life, wherein our own contradictory demands for what a liberated woman or man should look like are not being adequately recognized. Our uniquely American misconception that we have somehow skipped ahead to a time where sexism and racism have been miraculously defeated obscures the oppressive frameworks within which we live as gendered individuals. My work thus seeks to encourage a new level of consciousness about the collective action still needed to be taken if we are to work towards alleviating ourselves of the punitive consequences that come to follow when impossibly contradictory gendered expectations are not adequately met.



Where Have All the Queer Boys Gone?: Representation, Respectability and the Political Potential of Bodies

Corey Robinson (WCAS 2006)

My thesis explores how visibility, or more specifically, representation has significant effects on the gay/queer community (recognizing the problematic use of “gay/queer.”) Section one analyzes print media representations of two contemporary, prominent gay figures. Matthew Shepard, the gay college student murdered in Wyoming, has become the face of hate crimes, and Mark Bingham, one of the 9/11 flight 93 passengers, stands in for the “straight-acting” gay man. I analyze the attention paid to both figures’ bodies in relation to their



sexual orientation, offering evidence for why and how these bodies are used for current gay political aims. Section two argues that the contemporary politics of representation of gay men intersects with the politics of respectability. Furthermore, I evidence the effects of particular mass-mediated images by exploring the “straight-acting” phenomenon and its reactionary, yet (slightly) subversive components. Finally, I present particular body-centered subcultures -- the Radical Faeries and the gay clones -- from the historical repertoire of marked gay bodies to present ways in which a progressive, queer politics of representation can employ the (radical) material body for political ends -- a politics invested in representative representation.

Pineapples and Politics: Ugandan Women and the Road to Empowerment

Abby Rogosheske (WCAS 2006)

Abby’s project looks at major trends in Gender and Development discourse within the context of Uganda’s women’s movement. She argues that the specific circumstances of political oppression leading up to Museveni’s National Resistance

Movement have given an urban focus to the women’s movement.

Given this reality, she questions whether the successes of the national women’s movement have actually



resulted in the empowerment of the majority of Ugandan women—particularly those within the rural, agricultural sphere. Abby looks to the experience of three community-based agriculture and savings groups in Hoima district of rural, western Uganda. Through an analysis of the motivations and impact of group membership, she argues that mobilization around practical needs such as income-generation has indirectly provided the women involved with a sense of empowerment and agency within their personal and community lives. The women of Uganda’s Hoima district are empowering themselves at a grassroots economic level, in a way that the national-level women’s movement does not. Thus, Abby argues, the points where the urban, rural, strategic, and practical “means” to empowerment intersect will be crucial areas for the development of Uganda’s women.

“Regulating Race and Imperialising Space: Colonial Legacies in the Public Discourse of Hong Kong’s Filipina Domestic Service”

Stephanie Chin (WCAS 2006)

Since decolonisation in 1997, Hong Kong has undergone a constant re-articulation of its national identity. The goal of my project is to reveal how Hong Kong’s history of colonisation makes itself present in the field of domestic labour. Over 90% of the domestic workers in Hong Kong are Filipina women. I examine the public discourse surrounding a piece of legislature known as the two-week rule, which restricts the ability of domestic workers to stay in Hong Kong after their contracts are terminated. The two-week rule initiated a series of heated letters written by both Hong Kong employers and Filipina workers to the editor of a local newspaper. The discourse constituted by the letters is a site on where contesting claims of nationality, space and inclusion are negotiated. I analyze how the colonial experience of Hong Kong (1) interacts with and informs the ways in which the maid and the nation are conceptualised, and (2) governs quotidian strategies of ideological and discursive regulation and resistance. My work reveals some of the implications that Hong Kong’s post-colonial nationalism has on the way subaltern Filipinas formulate strategies of subversion and on state and national attitudes towards immigration in the wider context of globalisation and transnational labour.

Meet the Associate Director, Jillana Enteen

Freshly returned from a parenting leave for her twin girls and a Fall Quarter leave of absence spent in Berlin, Jillana Enteen is back in our Kresge offices as Associate Director of Gender Studies and Director of Undergraduate Studies. Enteen's return to campus gives a chance to reintroduce her to Gender Studies students, faculty, and friends of the program.

Enteen joined the Northwestern faculty in 2000 as a Visiting Assistant Professor in English and Comparative Literary Studies and has become increasingly involved in the Gender Studies Program—leading the Gender Studies Reading Group and teaching a wide variety of 390-level “special topics” courses, including her courses “Cyberqueer” and “Queer Theory.” Her courses often fulfill the program’s theory requirement. “If you want to get away from thinking of sexuality in terms of category, definition and scripts,” says an enthusiastic student about her “Trouble With Normal” course, “you need to take this class.”

Innovative use of new media and technology is a hallmark of Enteen's courses—for student interaction and response, as well as for the subject of critical analysis. Her courses typically bring together theoretical texts with a range of other materials: fiction, film, internet, performance, journalism.

Enteen earned her Ph.D. degree in English, with an emphasis in Cultural Studies and Gender Studies, at Rutgers University. Actively engaged as a scholar and researcher, Enteen is currently finishing a book entitled *Virtual English: Internet Use, Language, and Global Subjectivities* (forthcoming from Routledge Press). This project brings together her interests in new media technologies, sexuality, and non-Western articulations of identity.

Enteen's other publications also combine her interests in new media, new literary and linguistic forms, and sexual and national identities. They have appeared widely -- in the African-American studies journal *Callaloo*, *The Journal of Lesbian Studies*, and *New Media and Society*, among other journals and collections. A recent essay, “Spacial Conceptions of URLs: Tamil Eelam on the World Wide Web,” has just appeared in a special issue on Asian internet practices in the journal *New Media and Society* (April 2006).

Gender Studies majors and students looking to major or minor in Gender Studies should look for Enteen's courses next academic year, including a new 200-level introductory “core” course under the rubric “Gender Studies for a Small Planet” (Gender Studies 240, Spring Quarter). Bringing together queer theory and non-Western conceptions of sexuality, the goal of this course is to broaden notions of gender, sex and sexuality through discussions of Western accounts and analyses of non-Western practices.

As the main point-person for Gender Studies advising questions and queries about the major, Enteen has experience with the full range of Gender Studies students and has been actively involved in promoting our strong undergraduate program – organizing the quarterly Open Houses and helping the Undergraduate Board plan their winter and spring events.

“I find gender studies students to be highly engaged in the major,” she says – “extremely professional and collegial, and academically astute. I enjoy acting as DUS, and as Associate Director, I've been able to participate in a rapidly growing Program, one of the most vibrant and intellectually innovative on the campus.”



Gender Studies Undergraduate Board Update

By Corey Robinson

As the spring quarter comes to a close, the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board is proud to reflect on a highly successful year. Led by co-chairs Corey Robinson and Lindsay Shadrack as well as interim Director of Undergraduate Studies, Amy Partridge, and DUS Jillana Enteen, the group decided to aim for an event-filled year: three colloquia, supplementary events, and the formation of a Scholars group. With hard work and the collective effort of highly-motivated, intellectual undergraduates, we achieved every single one of our goals.

Our three colloquia were as diverse as they were successful. In the fall we organized a politically-

charged event called, “Radical Chicago: Jane, ACT-UP, and the ongoing struggle for civil rights.” In February we brought artist Nikki S. Lee to campus for a presentation titled, “Parts & Projects,” and this quarter our colloquium featured two events: a screening of Stanley Kwan's highly-acclaimed, queer-themed film *Lan Yu* and a lecture by David Eng of Rutgers University titled, “Expressive Desire in Stanley Kwan's *Lan Yu*.”

Aside from the Leslie A. Hoffmann colloquia, our supplemental events have been a fantastic addition to our regular programming. In January the Undergrad Board co-sponsored a week on sexual freedoms with College Feminists and Rainbow Alliance. As a follow up to “Radical Chicago,” the Undergrad Board was in charge of bringing to campus (**continued on p. 10**)

Guest Speaker Zorina Khan asks “Does Copyright Piracy Pay?”

By Jana Measells (Ph.D. Candidate in History)

What institutional contexts contribute to a “democratic” economy, drawing women and other less powerful individuals into an economy as viable agents? What role does law, in particular intellectual property rights, play in economic growth and development? In her work, Bowdoin College Professor and National Bureau of Economic Research member Zorina Khan brings much-needed empirical data to bear on these questions, contributing to current debates about economic development through research into the economic history of laws and institutions. At the invitation of the Gender Studies Program and the Department of Economics, Professor Khan spoke at Northwestern on January 11 on the economic effects of copyright piracy and revealed the U.S.’s own history of economic development as a rich source for “investigating the consequences of international copyright policy.”

Khan’s talk, “Does Copyright Piracy Pay? The Effects of U.S. International Copyright Laws on the Market for Books, 1790-1920,” addressed a central conclusion of her book, *The Democratization of Invention: Patents and Copyrights in American Economic Development*, namely that Americans likely profited from their flagrant piracy of foreign works during the long nineteenth century. Ironically, Khan pointed out, while the United States today is the leading advocate for greater enforcement of intellectual property rights in developing countries, U.S. copyright laws from 1790. (continued on p. 8)

Bringing *Jane* Into the Limelight

By Annie H. Lee (WCAS 2006)

Do you know Jane, the hush-hush, women-run abortion service that burgeoned in the Midwest in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s? As women and men born during the post-Roe v. Wade era, most undergraduates are not aware of this empowering, controversial, and highly politicized relic of Chicagoland history. Thus, in the spirit of the fall’s Leslie Hoffmann Colloquium “Radical Chicago: Jane, ACT-UP, and the ongoing struggle for civil rights,” the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board invited the feminist theatre company 20% to perform scenes from the play *Jane: Abortion and the Underground*.

The play examines the culture of the clinic and the rise of the women’s movement from multiple points of views. Not only does it portray the grassroots evolution of Jane, but it focuses on the divergent real-life experiences of the individuals involved in its history. For instance, one monologue tells the story of a frightened woman who underwent an abortion in an ordinary residential apartment, while another monologue depicts the terror of those who performed the procedure while facing threats of violence from passionate opposition. The play also addresses the political aspects of abortion, but does so without taking on a polemical tone. Overall, *Jane* engages in the ongoing reproductive rights debate by giving voice to the women who sustained and guarded one of the best kept secrets in Chicago.

The Q&A session that followed the performance—which involved the audience, *Jane*, cast, members of the 20% Theatre Company, and playwright Paula Kamen—allowed everyone to bring their own stories to the table. Whereas one actor revealed that she is still exploring both sides of the abortion debate, another actor stated that she views her work as pro-choice activism. Likewise, the audience was comprised of individuals who had varying opinions on the issue of abortion. Despite these differences, however, everyone agreed on one thing: there is a need to talk about reproductive rights. As Paula Kamen put it, the play “doesn’t give you any answers—as far as it’s an activist piece, I don’t know what it’s activist for...except for discussion.” Hopefully, with provocative conversation starters like *Jane: Abortion and the Underground*, the discussion will keep on going.

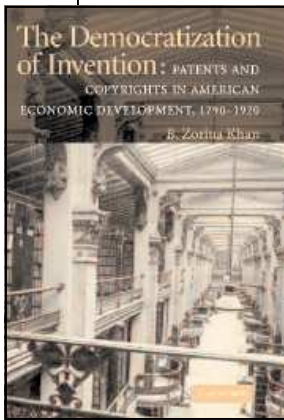


(Khan, continued from p. 7) to 1891 protected only works by American citizens and defined foreign-authored works as falling within the public domain. American printers and publishers freely reprinted the works of famous foreign authors and fueled a century of successful resistance to appeals for harmonization of U.S. laws with international policies from American and European authors, artists, and musicians, and from European countries that protected works authored by nationals and non-nationals alike. Yet still more ironically, after the 1891 legal changes that began allowing

foreigners to obtain U.S. copyright protection, a 1900 survey of printers and publishers revealed widespread agreement among them that everyone—publishers, authors, employees in the printing industry, and the book-reading public—was better off as a result of these reforms. Khan's research, however, suggested that none of these groups had in fact been harmed by U.S. piracy of foreign works, and she explained this change in outlook as the result of a more fundamental shift in the U.S.'s overall level of economic and social

development. The earlier protectionist policies regarding material culture were no longer necessary, she explained, because, "once the U.S. had developed its own native stock of literary capital, it voluntarily had an incentive to recognize international copyrights."

While issues of gender were not central in this particular talk, Khan's research has important implications for questions of gender and economic development. Indeed, in other work she focuses explicitly on how 19th century U.S. copyright and patent laws, deliberately designed, she argues, to promote national social and economic welfare to which everyone—regardless of wealth and social status—could contribute, resulted in a much higher number of women and artisan inventors than in Europe. Through her interest in indigenous institutions and their historical evolution, and especially in the more democratic elements of early U.S. legal structures, Khan's empirical work raises the possibility the current U.S. policies toward the global south may, in fact, be counterproductive. As recent studies that highlight the centrality of gender in debates about globalization have made clear, the effects of development policies, laws, and institutions are not gender-neutral—with women often bearing the lion's share of economic strain—and Khan's research points the way toward a better understanding of what policies and structures might actually contribute to more democratic economic outcomes.



Prof. Brody Speaks with the Undergraduate Scholars' Group

By Corey Robinson (WCAS 2006)

At the winter Leslie A. Hoffmann Colloquium titled, "Parts & Projects," Professor Jennifer Brody responded to Nikki Lee's work by asking questions about representation, medium, and intersectionality. Brody's suggestive engagement inspired the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board to ask her to talk further at a Scholar's Group meeting.

Over lunch, members of the Undergraduate Board and Professor Brody explored the implications of Lee's "Parts & Projects." We discussed issues of performance and performativity, as well as questions concerning representation and exploitation.

Our discussion honed in on the differences between "Parts" and "Projects"—"Parts" had more of a narrative within while "Projects" had a narrative outside of the photograph. Professor Brody also had the Scholars Group analyze photographs by other artists that consider gender, sexuality, post-colonialism, and race. This supplementary event greatly enhanced the Colloquium itself, providing a space for further reflection. We thank



Nikki S. Lee, Amy Partridge, and Prof. Brody

Professor Brody for her commitment to helping us further think through the important nuances of Lee's work and presentation and look forward to working with more professors concerned with the subtle aspects of the intersections of these seemingly fixed categories of identity.



Students enjoy Thai food after Nikki S. Lee's lecture

Gender Studies Reading Group

The Gender Studies Reading Group, an interdisciplinary gathering consisting of more than seventy faculty and graduate student members who hail from more than twenty different departments, meets on a quarterly basis to discuss recent scholarship in the area of gender studies and/or new publications with a gender focus. In addition to allowing its members to remain fluent in the latest theories and writings, the group encourages cross-school and cross-departmental dialogue with the aim of fostering a collaborative, interdisciplinary environment at Northwestern. Reading selections are made by GSRG organizer, Harvey Young, Assistant Professor of Theatre, who chooses them from a continually updated list of books recommended by the group's membership. The Gender Studies Reading Group is funded by the

Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences.

At the January 2006 meeting, the group read Afsaneh Najmabadi's *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity*. Deemed "extraordinary" by Joan W. Scott, the book investigated the operation of gender in pre-modern Iran. Contrary to expectations, Najmabadi's characterized the society of Qajar Iran (1785-1925) as a comparatively liberal society in which same-sex liaisons were deemed socially acceptable and, perhaps even, commonplace. In contrast, the advent of modernism and the arrival of

Europeans in Iran--which many might consider to be liberating--actually ushered in oppressive elements such as increased sexual prejudice and gender oppression and a revised attitude toward homosexuality as both immoral and criminal. During the two hour meeting, members of the group discussed the fine points of Najmabadi's argument, identified potentially problematic areas, and postulated how some of the author's theories could be applied to other case studies.

The GS reading group met again on March 8 to discuss *Portents of the Real: A Primer for Post-9/11 America* (Verso, 2005) by Susan Willis, professor of English and cultural studies at Duke University, who visited campus in spring 2005. The group vigorously contested many of Willis's premises about the cultural ramifications of the 9/11 attacks, disputing what seemed to many Willis's insufficiently historical claims for the continuity of U.S. racism and the political/ erotic currency of the

Abu Ghraib photos. The group's lively exchange powerfully demonstrated the urgency of Willis's arguments for the cultural resonance of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

If you are interested in joining the group, please e-mail Harvey Young at harvey@northwestern.edu.

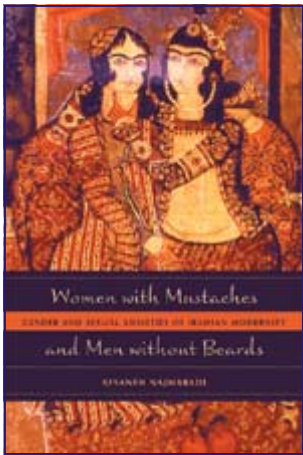
Gender Studies Doctoral Colloquium

The Gender Studies Doctoral Colloquium is a new offering this year. It provides the chance for graduate students from across the university to get to know each other, share work, and talk about issues of gender as they emerge both in our scholarship and in our professional lives. At our monthly meetings we focus on the pre-circulated work of one of our members. Because participants come from several fields, looking at written work allows us to open our discussion to broader issues of disciplinarity and the multiple frameworks for studying gender. We reflect seriously on the results that different approaches enable and foreclose.

The goals of the GSDC are primarily professional, but the meetings are social too. "When you're writing your dissertation, it's easy to get a little isolated—wrapped up in your own work," says participant Katy Chiles (English). "It's great to meet people from different departments and have the chance to talk about our strategies for writing and balancing work with life." It's this sort of support network that GSDC meetings, conducted over food and drink, aims to provide. By combining constructive intellectual engagement with a congenial peer atmosphere, the meetings are both socially casual and critically provocative.

Meetings thus far this year have discussed dissertation proposals by Darcy Hughes Heuring and Ronnie Grinberg, and a chapter draft by Jana Measells. In spring meetings discussing work by Meaghann Pytka and Kelby Harrison, the GSDC hopes to carry on in the spirit of our first meetings. Next year, we plan to also provide an informal setting to talk with professors about planning research projects and exploring careers that are integral to the study of gender.

We encourage all graduate students, regardless of field, to join us in future meetings—particularly if you have work you'd like to share! To be added to the GSDC list-serve, contact Sarah Mesle, at s-mesle@northwestern.edu.



Gender Studies Course Review

GS 405: Dialogues: Black Feminist and Black Queer Theories

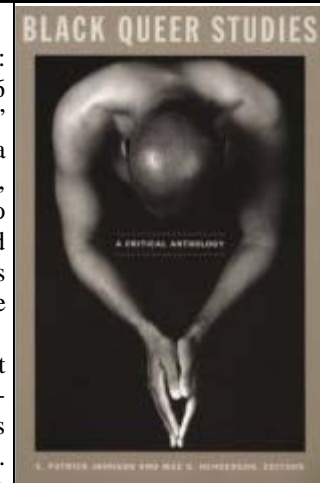
Instructors: E. Patrick Johnson and Sandra Richards

By Chloe Johnston (TGSG)

With a syllabus ranging from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to *Set It Off*, “Dialogues: (U.S.) Black Feminist and Black Queer Studies,” the Gender Studies Winter 2006 graduate seminar explored a variety of topics from Alice Walker to “the down low.” Taught by Professor E. Patrick Johnson (Performance Studies) and Professor Sandra Richards (African-American Studies), the class attracted a diverse group of students, both undergraduate and graduate, with backgrounds in everything from theatre to sociology and from English to engineering. Some in the group identified as artists and some as activists, but all were drawn by a commitment to exploring the intersections between scholarship and action, and to gaining a more in-depth understanding of the lineages of two important bodies of theory.

The extensive reading list for the class covered early Black feminists like Harriet Jacobs and continued through the 20th century work of the Combahee River Collective to contemporary thinkers like Patricia Hill Collins and Joan Morgan. Students also read the recently published *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology* (Ed. E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson) and had the opportunity to hear contributors like Devon Carbado of UCLA and Sharon Holland of UIC at the Black Queer Studies Symposium sponsored by Northwestern on January 20. Professors Johnson and Richards also encouraged students to consider the ways in which the issues addressed in critical reading are also engaged in more mainstream pop culture, in plays (*Blues for An Alabama Sky*), music (R. Kelly), and television (*Law and Order*, *Noah’s Arc*). Class meetings reflected a similar diversity of approaches to learning as student presentations included poetry recitations and performance workshops. This eclectic collection of material and methods addressed the intersection of interests and challenges faced by scholars in these fields and motivated students to consider the importance of both written and embodied knowledge in their study of identity politics.

Discussions were lively and reflected the amalgam of personal and political issues that were central to the course. Professors Johnson and Richards struck a delicate balance between shaping the debate and allowing it to flourish without their interference, which was wholly appropriate to the spirit of the class. Yet two moments come to mind in which the instructors offered particular insights into their own pedagogical philosophies. The first day of class, Professor Richards encouraged all students to listen carefully and with an open mind to one another over the next ten weeks, and to make the imaginative leaps necessary to understand the experiences of our fellow classmates. On the final day of class, Professor Johnson shared his hope that: “If I have not ruined the way the way that you watch television, movies, or media in general, then I have not done my job as a teacher. I am trying to get my students to not accept popular culture as ‘merely’ entertainment, but to see the ways in which ideology is embedded, communicated, and reinforced within it.” These remarks, which book-ended the course, indicate the unique collection of questions and topics suggested by the title of the class, and the intellectual rigor and emotional investment with which they were addressed.



(Ugrad Board, continued from p. 6) “Jane: Abortion and the Underground,” a play performed by the feminist theatre company 20%.

This year the Undergraduate Board also formed a reading group, called the Scholars Group. We meet once a month, and a member of the Board leads the event around a topic of his or her choice. Discussing diverse subjects from a documentary about a female body-builder to theoretical discussions about *Transamerica*, the Scholars Group is an opportunity for students to consider popular culture through a gender studies lens. Completely student-run, this addition has been very popular among the Undergraduate Board members.

The Undergraduate Board is welcome to all students who are passionate about Gender Studies, and we are always looking to add members to our vibrant group. We encourage anyone who is interested to attend our bi-weekly meetings and learn more about our events as well as socialize with a fantastic group of budding intellectuals. Please email gender@northwestern.edu if you’d like to be put on our listserv.

News and Notes

Graduate News

Kathryn Burns-Howard (History) recently gave a paper entitled "'Popular Errors' and 'Morbid Social Phenomena': Religious Belief as Mental Illness in Nineteenth-Century New York" at an interdisciplinary Religious Studies graduate student conference at Columbia University.

Katy Chiles (English) published an essay on Dion Boucicault's 1859 play, *The Octoroon; or, Life in Louisiana*, in *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film*. She also presented portions of her dissertation work at the Humanities Center Mellon Dissertation Forum, the McNeil Center for Early American Studies (Penn), Midwest Modern Language Association, and Ethnohistory.

Hollis Griffin (RTVF) has been accepted to present papers at conferences for the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, the Cultural Studies Association, and Console-ing Passions. He has also had an article accepted for publication in the anthology (tentatively) titled "Film and Sexual Politics."

Sarah Mesle (English) presented at the Narrative Society Conference this spring in Ottawa. She will also give a paper at the Modern Language Association's 2006 annual meeting. In addition, she will participate in the GSC panel entitled "Public Engagement and the New Professoriate," giving a paper entitled "Going Public: Pedagogy and Politics in Gender Studies."

Jeffrey Q. McCune, Jr. (Performance Studies) published a review of Mark Anthony Neal's *New Black Man* in *Men and Masculinities* Journal. He has also received a Post-Doctoral fellowship at the University of Rochester in the Frederick Douglass Institute of African-American Studies. He has been selected as a member of the Women and Theatre Debut Panel for Advanced Graduate Students and Junior Faculty at The Association for Theatre in Higher Education Conference to be held in Chicago in August 2006.

Oyku Potuoglu-Cook's (Performance Studies) essay, entitled "Beyond the Glitter: Belly Dance and Neoliberal Gentrification in Istanbul," will be forthcoming in *Cultural Anthropology* 21(4). An earlier version was awarded the 2005 Sylvia Forman Graduate Prize in Feminist Anthropology.

Faculty News

Jillana Enteen's (GS) essay, "Spacial Conceptions of URLs: Tamil Eelam on the World Wide Web," was published in the most recent issue of the journal *New Media and Society* 8.2.

Chuck Kleinhans (RTVF) has produced an audio documentary, "A Polemical Introduction for the Visual Studies Crowd" in the February 2006 *Jump Cut* 48. In this

same issue, he coauthored "The Woodsman: Full Disclosure."

Jeffrey Masten (GS & English) was recently named Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence. At meetings of the Modern Language Association and the Renaissance Society of America this year, Masten gave a series of papers on Christopher Marlowe and what we mean when we talk about "homosexuality" in relation to his life and writings. "Editing Boys: the Performance of Genders in Print," has been published in the collection *Redefining British Theatre History: From Performance to Print in Shakespeare's England*.

Susan Manning (English, Performance Studies, and Theatre) won the 2005 Mayor's Award for the Arts for her work with the Evanston Community Foundation. As the founding donor and chair of Arts in Community, she has convened a series of focus groups on the arts in Evanston; spearheaded the commissioning of an arts survey from the Illinois Arts Alliance; and raised more than \$100,000 for a new arts endowment for the community. A second edition of her 1993 book, *Ecstasy and the Demon: The Dances of Mary Wigman*, and a paperback edition of her 2004 book, *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion*, will be published in the fall by the University of Minnesota Press.

Alex Owen (GS & History) gave invited talks at Princeton University and the University of California, Los Angeles, and delivered the closing address at the "What is Enchantment?" conference at Columbia University. Her essay, "The Religious Sense in a Post-War Secular Age," will appear in *The Art of Survival: Essays in Honour of Olwen Hufton* (Oxford University Press) in June 2006.

Sylvie Romanowski (French & Italian) published *Through Strangers' Eyes: Fictional Foreigners in Old Regime France* (Purdue UP 2005).

Rebecca Rossen's (GS) article "The Jewish Man and His Dancing Shtick: Stock Characterization and Masculinity in Postmodern Dance" will appear in an anthology on Jewishness in postmodern American culture (Rutgers UP).

Julia Stern (English) has finalized the details of her contract with the University of Chicago Press for her manuscript, *Mary Chesnut's Unfinished Epic*.

Helen Thompson (English) received a fellowship from the Alice Berline Center for the Humanities (2006-07). She recently presented at the annual American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference in Montreal, and in mid-April she is giving an invited talk at the University of Southern California.

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Mimi White (RTVF) has co-edited, with James Schwoch, *Questions of Method in Cultural Studies* (Blackwell, 2006). She presented a guest lecture at the University of Lugano in December, 2005 and participated in a panel for the concluding discussion at "Cultural Studies Today: Problems and Perspectives" conference.

Linda Zerilli (GS & Political Science) was awarded a Stanford Humanities Center fellowship for 2006-07 for her book project, *Toward a Democratic Theory of Judgment*.

Undergraduate News

Barrak Alzaid (WCAS 2007) was recently awarded the Herskovits Undergraduate Research Award for the academic year 2006-2007 and an Undergraduate Research Grant by the Office of Fellowships. He is also currently producing a show called *Flesh and Blood*, adapted from the novel by Michael Cunningham.

Kate Doehring (WCAS 2006) directed the February 2006 production of *Vagina Monologues*.

Alumni/Alumnae News

Blaine Bookey (2004) will begin graduate study at the University of California, Hastings, College of Law, in September.

Lindsey Gilroy (2003) has been accepted into the graduate program in Library Science at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

Lauren Gutterman (2003) has been accepted into the Ph.D. program in history at New York University. Lauren plans to study the history of GLBT senior organizing.

Emily Hagenmeier (2004) has been accepted for graduate study at UCLA, where she plans to complete the combined MSW/Ph.D. in Social Welfare with a concentration on aging and end-of-life care.

Lars Johnson (2005) has been accepted to NYU's law school, and will start in Fall 2006.

Alison Pflapsen (2000) has been awarded a David L. Boren Fellowship that will enable her to continue research and activism concerning the education of women in Africa. She will be working in Uganda, Ghana, and Senegal.



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