

Voices



The Newsletter of the Gender Studies Program at Northwestern University

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Word from the Director

Looking across the quiet snow-covered courtyard between the Kresge and Crowe wings, it is hard for me to remember the omnipresence of construction last year. As memory of the banging and sneezing fades, it seems like Gender Studies has always enjoyed our newly expanded program office, the added seminar room, and new faculty offices in the Crowe wing. Yet some amusing glitches from the renovation still stick with me. Even before the excess furniture in the hallways found homes, Gender Studies students and faculty eagerly camped in the new seminar room ready to claim the space. At one session of the Faculty/ Graduate Student seminar, tired of waiting for the long promised white board, Professor Ann Orloff (Sociology) taped sheets of paper on the wall to write down the week's discussion agenda. As participants smiled indulgently and talked on, I searched the office (red-faced and frantic) for more masking tape and newsprint! Of course, we only retain such stories to remind us of our current fortune.

This academic year, we welcome not only new spaces, but new faces as well. Everyone coming into the office has been treated with the quiet friendly presence of our new program assistant, Eli Brooke. New to NU and to Evanston, Eli braved trial by fire, as she learned to navigate registration, budgets, room assignments and strange abbreviations while returning students, faculty, and arriving guest speakers all required her immediate attention. That she smiled and kept her cool bodes well. Our hard working workstudy students Lizzy Venell and Pat Scharfe followed Eli's lead in rolling up their sleeves to dust, move furniture, cart refreshments and post flyers. Thanks to this great team, our fall projects took off smoothly – permitting me now the pleasure of sharing some highlights of our very busy quarter.

After many years of contributing to the intellectual and academic life of Gender Studies, Professor Jane Winston from the Department of French and Italian officially joined the Gen-

Cont. on p. 2

“Genome-Mania!”

By Emily Hagenmaier

On October 9, 2003, Roger Lancaster shared highlights of his latest book, *The Trouble With Nature: Sex in Science and Popular Culture*, with a packed audience of students, faculty, and community members. Lancaster discussed the recent hype in sociobiological “scientific” explanations of human behavior. With a sense of humor and witty sarcasm, Lancaster picked apart evolutionary justifications for historically and culturally specific social structures and behaviors.

“Genome-mania,” the expression Lancaster coined to describe the popularity of bio-reductivist studies in the mainstream media, is not so much about science but rather about the ideology of those who seek to uphold a mythological status quo.

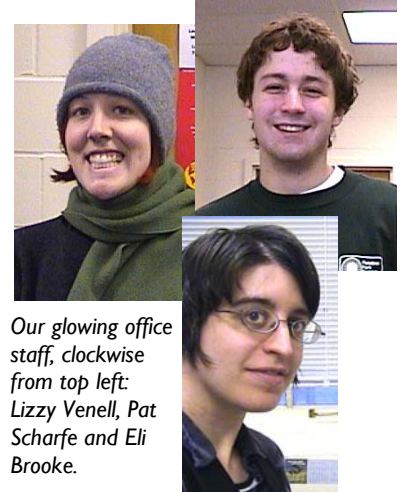
At a time of tremendous cultural shifting in sexuality, family, and economics, Lancaster noted the popularity of sociobiological genetics in the mainstream media. Lancaster drew links between the recent resurgence of biological explanations for gender norms, sexual desires, and human “nature” with contemporary struggles over sexual politics. In the midst of dramatic shifting in gender roles, the changing economic structure of families, and the normalization of certain gay and lesbian relationships, Lancaster illuminated a widespread obsession in popular science writing with an immutable human “nature.”

In this brand of science, research studies claim proof of such intriguing mysteries as “the sweet-tooth gene,” “the thrill-seeking gene,” “the shopping gene,” and last but not least—the highly-politicized “gay gene.” According to Lancaster, genes are now used to explain nearly any trait. While some one hundred and fifty years ago, American poet Walt Whitman explained his desire for men in phrenological terms, today the key to same sex desire lies within one tiny, little gene.

Hey, but what about a “straight gene”?

Lancaster noted the popularity of “warm and cozy” narratives: men are “risk-taking but protective,” women are “nurturing but savvy.” In a rebuttal against these evolutionary fairy tales popularized by the mainstream media, Lancaster illuminated the link

Continued on p. 7



Our glowing office staff, clockwise from top left: Lizzy Venell, Pat Scharfe and Eli Brooke.

In this issue...

- CyberQueer class p.3
- 2003 Fac/Grad Seminar p. 4
- Fac/Grad Seminar 3-Year Overview p. 5
- Jenni Vainik Interview p. 6
- Jane Winston Interview p. 9
- Jonathan David Jackson p. 10
- Roots of Feminism p. 11
- Leslie Hoffmann Colloquium p. 13
- E. P. Johnson's *Appropriating Blackness* p. 14
- Faculty/Student News p. 15



Roger Lancaster during his lecture in October.

Word from the Director cont. from p. 1

der Studies core faculty as a new joint appointment. In this issue, Ho Alan Chan, graduate student in French and Italian and a participant in the Fall Faculty Graduate Seminar, interviews Jane Winston. Professor Cynthia Bowman (Law School and Gender Studies) with Michele Van Natta (NU PhD 03 Sociology) were the featured speakers at this fall's Leslie Hoffman colloquium on Gender, Violence and the Law. Returning after a year's research leave in England – following a two year term as Director of Gender Studies -- Professor Alex Owen (Gender Studies and History) found time in her schedule to teach her popular "Roots of Feminism." We asked Torea Jade Frey to report on the course which has been one of the foundational historical courses in Gender Studies and earlier in Women's Studies. Professor Jillana Eenteen (English, Comparative Literature and Gender Studies) introduced yet another new course this fall. "Cyberqueer" investigates the forms that race, class, gender, nationality, and sexuality take on the Internet. We asked Amanda Schwartz to tell us more about the themes, projects and readings, while Professor Eenteen writes about her collaborator from Bowling Green State University, Professor Radhika Gajjala, who met with the class and also gave a public lecture entitled, "Examining Techno-Mediated Subjectivities: Gendering Processes within Transnational Workspaces."

Professor Helen Thompson of the English Department has developed for us an exciting new 200 level introductory class "Gender, Performance, Narrative." Teaching Assistants, Rebecca Rossen (Theater and Dance) and Ana Croegaert (Anthropology), now working with Helen Thompson, will be teaching their own courses this spring. Watch for Ana Croegaert's "Kinship, Class and Race in America" and Rebecca Rossen's "Gender, Sexuality and Embodiment in Physical Performance." With the aid of the Leland fund, Rebecca will be bringing choreographers Atalee Judy and Matt Hollis for a public dance/discussion in a session entitled "Warriors and Queens: Destabilizing Gender and Sex Norms in the Chicago Dance Scene."

Other new courses to look for this spring include "Race, Ethnicity and the Politics of

Beauty" to be taught by Nhi Lieu (Asian-American Studies). And, timed almost perfectly to follow from the visit of Fulbright Scholar and NU Alum Jenni Vainik, who spoke in Gender Studies and the Program of African Studies on her experiences studying and working with micro-credit in the Cameroon, Joan Sherman will be teaching a new Senior Professional Linkage Seminar through Gender Studies called "Add Women and Stir: Economic Development and the Politics of Gender." Joan will be drawing from her professional experience as a development specialist working in Haiti and India in such sectors as micro-credit, mother and child health, and water and sanitation.

For graduate students, Professor Ann Orloff will be offering a new course under GS 405: Advanced Feminist Theory. The syllabus parallels the Fall Faculty/Graduate Seminar. Professor Leo Bersani (University of California, Berkeley), one of the Distinguished Kreeger Wolf Professors who presented at last year's "Ends of Sexuality" conference, will return this spring to teach "Sexuality, Sociality, and Aesthetics." The course will be taught as English 481. Gender Studies certificate students are encouraged to enroll. The course will count as a Gender Studies 490 equivalent.

A steady stream of distinguished visitors came this fall. Anthropologist Roger Lancaster, who spoke on "The Politics of Nature: Sex in Science and Popular Culture," sociologist Julia Adams, who lectured on "The Rule of the Father: Patriarchy and Patrimonialism in Early Modern Europe," and political theorist Ernesto Laclau and professor of English, Comparative Literature and Media Studies Joan Copjec presented individual papers at a common panel called "Rhetoric, Psychoanalysis and Politics." In addition to their well attended public talks, Lancaster and Adams met with faculty and graduate students in the Fall Faculty/Graduate Student Seminar. We thank the American Studies Program, the Department of Anthropology, and the Political Theory Colloquium for contributing to our speaker series.

Gender Studies also co-sponsored many events with other programs and departments.

In October we contributed to Helene Cixous's visit and lectures. With Performance Studies and African-American Studies, Gender Studies joined in to celebrate the publication of Patrick Johnson's new book, *Appropriating Blackness* (Duke University Press). Also with Performance Studies, African-American Studies and English, Gender Studies welcomed the lecture/performance of Jonathan David Jackson (Goucher College and Temple University) on "The Social World of Voguing." Our program participated with a long list of co-sponsors – the Center for International and Comparative Studies, the Institute for Policy Research, the Departments of Sociology and Political Science – to endorse the conference organized by Ann Orloff, "Prospects for Women's Equality in a Global Economy: Varieties of Capitalism, Labor, and Gender." In November, Shari Stone-Mediatore (Ohio Wesleyan University) delivered "Confronting Our Taintedness: Story-Telling, Structural Violence, and the Politics of Resistance" at the invitation of the Writing Program and Gender Studies. Finishing our busy fall program in reading week, Hulya Adak, Professor of Comparative Literature at Sabanci University in Turkey, gave the first lecture in the series "Women in Islam," organized by the Center for International and Comparative Studies and co-sponsored by the Gender Studies Program.

Finally, before signing off with wishes for a creative and happy new year, we begin 2004 with many thanks to Professor Micaela DiLeonardo for many years of inspiration and leadership in Gender Studies and earlier in the Women's Studies Program. This fall, Professor DiLeonardo decided to move full time into the Anthropology Department. Fortunately, her intellectual acumen and wonderful courses, like her path-breaking scholarship, will remain a vital part of our broader community.

Wishing you good cheer as we look for the first signs of spring,

Tessie Liu

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CyberQueer Class Engages with New Technology

By Amanda Schwartz

"This is going to be the best class I have ever taught," Professor Jillana Enteen announced to her students on the first day of her Fall 2003 course, "Cyberqueer: Representing Race, Gender and Sexuality Online." The class' fervor soon matched hers as we began to examine how virtual media represents cultural perceptions online. Readings and discussions investigated the forms that race, class, gender, nationality, and sexuality take on the Internet. We challenged the neutrality of Internet technology by exploring the interactions between net environments like Multi-User Domains, newsgroups, chat rooms and websites, and real life environments, like bars, bedrooms, factories, protests, and, of course, classrooms. One of the class' first activities was to meet in the University Library PC Laboratory to discuss the assigned reading — however, Enteen required her students to communicate completely through posts to a message board. As we made our arguments and responded to those of our classmates, we became engaged in the very technology we were in the process of analyzing. Throughout the quarter, a weekly online discussion board continued to supplement class discussion. Threads included, "The

Amazing Power of White(Male)-Out," "Cybercrime," and "Welcome to Utopia..." As an online community, the class explored the evolving meaning of community that electronic interactions signify.

We began the quarter studying texts on social accountability by theorists Steve Jones and Lisa Nakamura and the contributions of Alluquere Rosanne Stone and Donna Haraway to the concept of a feminist cyborg ideal. Our readings spanned all the way to fiction that depicts the fears and desires surrounding new technology. These stories have grown out of the genre dubbed "cyberpunk," although their alternate visions of the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality with technology ultimately "queer" the genre of cyberpunk, challenging its ideologies. The class read selections from Kate Bornstein and Caitlin Sullivan's landmark novel, *Nearly Roadkill*, and Nalo Hopkinson's recent success in Afro-futurism, *Midnight Robber*. Enteen encouraged us to consider how technology and constructions of gender and race are made, as well as how they become interlocked with one another.

The course's central challenge was to create a website along with students from Bowling Green State University. The class chose groups according to the topics of Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Non-

heteronormative Sexuality. Along with the extensive theory we studied, we learned CSS and html coding from Northwestern's electronics guru, Brian Nielsen. Communicating with BGSU to complete the sites by the deadline pushed students from both universities to use computer mediated communications, like blogs and video conferencing, to solve problems and bridge perspectives. Under the guidance of Enteen and her BGSU counterpart, Radhika Gajjala, the class used technology as the medium through which we critiqued it, along the lines of race, gender and sexuality. The final projects included a timeline of me-

Cont. on p. 11



Website built for analysis by CyberQueer students

Cyberdiva:

Radhika Gajjala

By Jillana Enteen



BGSU's Radhika Gajjala

This fall, Gender Studies invited Radhika Gajjala, Associate Professor of Interpersonal Communication at Bowling Green State University to give a lecture entitled "Examining Techno-Mediated Subjectivities: Gendering Processes within Transnational Workspaces" in conjunction with my Gender Studies 390 course, "Cyberqueer." Providing an overview of Professor Gajjala's work is a challenging task. She inhabits a wide range of seemingly contradictory discursive and theoretical paradigms. Professor Gajjala speaks simultaneously as an academic, a theorist, a South Asian woman, and, most conspicuously, as both producer of knowledge and culturally positioned "other." Her enduring presence on the Internet as the "Cyberdiva" marks a challenging voice found in the most likely, and unlikely, of virtual spaces. Cyberdiva established and moderates important early listservs such as the postcolonial list, South Asian Cyborgs, and SAWNNET (South Asian Women on the Net). These listservs provide forums for the sharing of resources and the discussion and development of diaspora and postcolonial theory. Professor Gajjala's oeuvre spans several media and genres. Often in a single piece, she blends New Media and Feminist theory, ethnographies of on-line communication, and innovative research methodologies, while creating websites, hypertext, and poetry in several languages. She is well known (particularly to many of my students) for her creative pedagogical and inter-institutional online collaborations and in the real world she constantly facilitates intellectual exchange and critical engagement with the developing work of her students and colleagues. Her writing style fluctuates: concise social science essays and erudite theoretical publications are complemented by resistance to generic expectations and her insistence on open-endedness.

To summarize her challenge to the study of online communication, I will quote from her recent essay, "Studying Feminist E-Spaces" published in the 2001 collection *Technospaces*:

We need an examination of the locations and dislocations of contradictory subjects that emerge (even if barely visible) through the fluency and antagonisms of prolific participation, flaming, and lurking within so-called women-centred on-line discussion contexts. This could lead to a better understanding of the socio-cultural, political and economic (whether they be 'post' colonial, 'post' modern or 'neo' colonial) framings of social spaces online.

Professor Gajjala is committed to meeting her own challenge both directly and through subterfuge.

2003 Faculty/Graduate Seminar Probes the Possibility of Explanation

By Tessie Liu

Do gender scholars lament the days when feminist intellectual work held high emancipatory hopes? Participants in this Fall's faculty/graduate seminar, "Gender, Social Theory and the Possibility of Explanation," led by Ann Orloff (NU Sociology), grappled with this question as we traced the political and explanatory ambitions of gender scholarship over the past three decades. Two classic articles, exemplifying some of the most enduring of this early scholarship, Sherry Ortner's "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture" (1974) and Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex." (1975), kicked off the discussion. "Much of the work of the 1970s," Orloff noted, "took the form of origin stories, challenging and revising Engels' narrative of the 'world-historic defeat of the female sex,' and engaging in a spirited conversation with Marxism. Feminism as a knowledge project was predicated on social change. In other words, understanding the sources of gender hierarchy was tantamount to ending oppression."

What has happened to these "revolutionary" expectations linking explanation to social transformation? As gender-focused scholarship mushroomed over the last decades, the sheer weight and variety of empirical work has challenged the presumed coherence and universality of sex/gender



Elizabeth Hurd, Suk-Young Kim

systems. At the same time, how societies change and who defines the meaning of liberation were no longer self evident. Perhaps the simple account of where we are in feminist scholarship today lies not with the abandonment of earlier hopes, but in our reckoning with the complexity of the phenomenon in a sobering political climate requiring that we recognize the depth of resistance and the unpredictability of transformation.

Several provocative books and articles on the claims of theory, on what constitutes knowing and on what counts as explanation set up the overarching questions framing each week's more specific methodological



Ann Orloff (convener of 2003 seminar), Tracy Davis, Ho Alan Chan

explorations on such topics as feminist standpoint theory and the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. Particularly important in our interdisciplinary dialogue were the discussions on the theme "gender as performance and achievement." Here, seminar participants in literature, theater, and performance studies were especially helpful to colleagues in history, political science, and sociology, in pointing to the problems of loose inter-disciplinary borrowing of such popular concepts as performance and discourse without understanding the genealogy of the ideas.

Visiting scholars highlighted two long standing themes of feminist critique: biological determinism and patriarchy. Anthropologist Roger Lancaster (George Mason University) discussed his recent work that examines an entirely new generation of arguments in popular media that invokes nature to explain the inevitability of a desired social arrangement. Despite a generation of critique exposing these discourses of "nature" as social constructions, why do such explanations remain so deeply satisfying? Why are they fodder for political justifications? Asking how masculinist assumptions came to define entitlements and notions of the political, sociologist Julia Adams (University of Michigan) took the view that patriarchal power must always be understood in its historical specificity because male power, like all forms of power, must be maintained and reproduced. While feminists have long argued that patriarchy has not always existed, fully historicizing the analysis allows us into the inner working of the replication. Adams' own research examines the gendered strategies through which elite families constituted the state as an institution in early modern Europe. Following Adams' visit, the seminar considered the new feminist scholarship on the welfare state that historicizes notions of needs, rights, and the domain of the social.

In November, the visits of Ernesto Laclau (University of Essex) and Joan Copjec (SUNY Buffalo), who were originally invited for the 2002 seminar, raised some interesting connections between the two seminars. As Ella Myers (Political Science) reported in last year's newsletter, in "Gender, Sexuality, and the Politics of Postmodernity," seminar participants asked how and why feminist political projects since the 1980s have become increasingly scripted in neo-

liberal terms, that is, in terms of identity and the "politics of recognition." What are the limits of understanding feminism as a rights-based political practice? Moving beyond critiquing these juridical and state-centered approaches, Linda Zerilli (NU Political Science) who facilitated the seminar, pushed participants to articulate alternative notions of politics. Assembling such theorists as Hannah Arendt, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Jacques Rancière, and Cornelius Castoriadis, Zerilli powerfully suggested that feminism, following Arendt, could be a practice of freedom.

Laclau's and Copjec's presentations this fall directly addressed this need for an as-yet-fully-imagined emancipatory politics. While the animating questions of the 2003 seminar share a political genealogy with Laclau and Copjec — both must be considered parallel critical responses to the breakup of the New Left — their differences pose some creative tensions. For example, explanation — the central problematic of the fall seminar — figures nowhere in Copjec's and Laclau's projects. Rather, both scholars ask us to consider the anticipatory mode. They direct our attention to the "what could be" moment in politics rather than appealing to a critical understanding of "what is" or "what was" to set an agenda for change. Copjec, through a Lacanian



Fran Hutchins, Steve Hoffman

interpretation of forepleasure, and Laclau, through the capacity of rhetoric to figure that which is previously un-named, open up the universalizing moments in mobilization and group formation to locate the conditions for a new conception of politics.

Their interventions recall an important strand of discussion in the 2001 inaugural faculty/graduate student seminar "Post-Millennial Gender" led by Cora Kaplan (University of Southampton, UK). As participants debated the role of emotion and affect in gender studies and how they might use psychoanalysis, many found the explorations of Jacqueline Rose, Joan Scott, Cora Kaplan, and others on fantasy a provocative and useful way to navigate the

Cont. on p. 5

Gender Studies Faculty Graduate Student Seminar 2001-2003

Post-Millennial Gender 2001

Gender, Sexuality, and Politics of Postmodernity 2002

Gender, Social Theory, and the Possibility of Explanation 2003

In Spring 2000 as part of the strategic plan to establish the Gender Studies Program, then WCAS Dean Eric Sunquist, with the financial support of Law, Society and Culture Program, established for three years a competitive-entry faculty-graduate seminar dedicated to exploring cutting-edge developments and debates in Gender Studies scholarship. Each fall, the Gender Studies Program invited top scholars in the field to give public lectures and to engage in extended conversations with seminar participants. Faculty and graduate student members of the seminar received a research stipend for their quarter-long participation.

SPEAKERS 2001-03

Philip Brian Harper (New York University): "Social Identity, Abstractionist Aesthetics, and Prospects for Cultural Critique," 2001

David Glover (Southampton University): "Masculinity and the Future of Gender," 2001

Joan W. Scott (Princeton University): "Political Representation and Sexual Difference: Le Mouvement pour la Parité in Late 20th Century France," 2001

Lauren Berlant (University of Chicago): "Uncle Sam Needs a Wife: Citizenship and Denegation," 2001

Roger Lancaster (George Mason University): "The Politics of Nature: Sex in Science and Popular Culture," 2003

Julia Adams (University of Michigan): "The Rule of the Father: Patriarchy and Patrimonialism in Early Modern Europe," 2001

Ernesto Laclau (University of Essex): "Rhetorical Developments & The Construction of Political Frontiers," 2003

Joan Copjec (SUNY Buffalo): "Whatever-Being," 2003



Clockwise from top left:
Philip Brian Harper, Lauren
Berlant, Joan W. Scott, David
Glover, Ernesto Laclau, Joan
Copjec, Roger Lancaster, Julia
Adams.



Left: Cora Kaplan, convener of 2001 seminar

Right: Linda Zerilli, convener of 2002 seminar

Participants 2001-03

Joshua Andresen (philosophy), Crina Archer (political science), Dana Bilsky (english), Michael Booth (radio/to/film), Peter Carroll (history), Ho Alan Chan (french & italian), Alan Czaplicky (sociology), Tracy Davis (theater & english), Steven Eisman (art history), Carole Emberton (history), Jillana Enteen (english, comp lit, gender studies), Sarah Fraser (art history), Lane Fenrich (history), Christine Froula (english), E. Patrick Johnson (performance studies), Michael Hanchard (political science), Steve Hoffman (sociology), Elizabeth Hurd (political science), Frances Hutchins (french & italian), Suk-Young Kim (theater & drama), Tessie Liu (history, gender studies), Nancy Maclean (history), Lida Maxwell (political science), Jana Measells (history), Ella Myers (political science), Ann Orloff (sociology), Alex Owen (history, gender studies), Amy Partridge (performance studies), Nicole Richardt (political science), Kendra Schiffman (sociology), Helen Thompson (english), Celeste Watkins (sociology, african-american studies), Jane Winston (french & italian), Fariba Zarinebaf-Sahr (history), Linda Zerilli (political science)

Seminar syllabi and readings are available through the GS office.

NU Alum GS Major Jenni Vainik Speaks on her Fulbright in Cameroon

In May of 2002, Gender Studies major Jenni Vainik was awarded an IIE Fulbright Scholarship to research gender and economic development in Cameroon. She spent the following year at the University of Buea in Buea, Cameroon, studying women's micro-credit organizations. During her undergraduate work with NU Law School's Center for International Human Rights, Vainik became interested in development policy and its effect on women's economic agency. While studying abroad in Paris her junior year and working with student activist organizations there, Vainik says she gained understanding of both feminism and activism through a different cultural perspective. She sought to continue that experience and develop her understanding through her Fulbright research in Africa. This Fall, Vainik (Gender Studies/Political Science '02) visited the campus to give a lunchtime talk for the Program of African Studies titled "Female Students' 'Njangis': The Purpose, Organization, and Outcomes of Secondary School and University Students' Micro-Credit Activity." Senior Lizzy Venell (Gender Studies/Psychology '04) interviewed her for the newsletter.



Jenni Vainik at her talk for the Program in African

LV: Let's start by defining terms. Could you explain what njangis are and what "micro-credit" means?

JV: Micro-credit is a blanket term. There are many types of njangis -- some people say that they don't fit under the definition of micro-credit, and some people say they do. In the groups that I was working with, grassroots organizations in the most elemental form, they would be women who lived next to each other. There was no institution organizing these women; they were doing it themselves. There would be some form of rotating lending. Some people call that rotating credit. They would come together once a week or a couple times a month and pool a set amount of money. For example, if you and I and Fran [Paden] were in a group, we'd each come together and give \$10 a week, and at the end of the day one of us would take home the \$30 that all of us contributed. At the next meeting, that person would come back and someone else would take the money home. It's a way of accessing a larger amount of money that you might not be able to accumulate on your own, and it's also a group form of savings, because you're putting money away which you will eventually get back. They call it "micro-credit" because it's generally in very small amounts. You'd never be able to get the small amount from a normal bank; they'd require that you take out a much larger loan. I think that is why it's popular among women: it allows them to get money which they might not be able to get from a formal banking institution.

LV: Can you tell us about the origins of the groups? Is this a politically recognized phenomenon, or are there few people actually naming and describing the groups?

JV: Formed by development organizations, starting in the 1970s, njangis became very popular as a form of trying to develop countries and tapping into women's empowerment. They'd see that women are involved in micro-credit and that they pay back their loans. It was a great way of starting up small businesses. Development agencies recog-

nized this and poured a lot of money into creating micro-credit programs like the Green Bank in Bangladesh. But it's been happening forever and its origins come from rotating farm work. Cameroon is essentially an agricultural economy and in the past (and still to this day) each person has a farm that they need to work, so the group would come and work the farm and harvest all the corn, and then the next time they would go to someone else's field. So that's where [the idea of njangis] comes from before the cash economy.

LV: Is the money usually used for education, or is there one main purpose?

JV: The work I did was with younger girls; I worked with people from the age of 14 to 30. There were several different uses for the money. Some would just be personal consumption -- the [younger] girls would be part of it so they could buy make up or buy clothes. With girls at the university level, often times they'd have kids, or they'd be using the money to help out with their younger siblings, so it would go to pay school fees. I think in general it's seen, especially among older women, as a source of paying school fees for the children and also for starting up small businesses. But in my own work it was a lot of personal consumption and then some familial responsibilities.

LV: So, using the 'you, me, and Fran in a njangi' example, say that you go home with the money this week, where does the money come from when you come back next week? What are the other sources of money, besides the njangis?

JV: It's really rare for someone to default and show up and not pay. Oftentimes if someone can't pay, someone else in the group will pay for them. It relies on this notion of trust between people to show up. Women access the money from a variety of different sources. At the younger ages that I studied, a lot of times it would be pocket money that their parents gave to them, and their participation had to be secretive because they wouldn't want their parents to know that part of the money they were using was for the njangi, instead of buying their lunch or paying for the taxi that took them to school.

Women would also get money from boyfriends, but that would also create problems because it would cause them to rely on these men to be able to pay back the loans. People would always tell me that prostitution can be a big problem for people who are part of these groups. And then some people would be involved in different sorts of petty of businesses. Girls would bring things like handbags or purses and sell them at school.

LV: Is there a general reputation or representation of the njangis? You mentioned secrecy, potential prostitution, dependence on men -- are these underground organizations, or it is a pretty open thing?

JV: It's underground in the sense that it's just among friends or networks of people who know each other, so it would be difficult for someone who had no affiliation with one of the groups to come in and be part of it. People who didn't play njangis -- that's what they call it, "playing," like playing a casino -- would say that they would very much like to do it but they'd wait until they knew they had the resources to do it because they didn't have the money. Some people, students, just didn't have any way to be a part of it so they knew that it would be a failure, but they would really want to be a part of it. It's something very common in the culture -- men and women alike participate in it. A lot of people go to school with money that their parents have gotten from these organizations. There are some people who don't want to be a part of it at all. Since it is a very tight-knit organization, it can be like a sorority in a certain sense. There's backstabbing among people, there's gossip. If you get a bad reputation or default you're kind of blackcarded, and people will know about you, so there's also that fear of being ostracized.

LV: You said men and women participate? Are there any co-ed groups?

JV: Among the younger groups that I studied, I found that there are very few male groups... I'm hesitant to say that there were absolutely no boy groups, because I went there

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between a changing society and conservative backlash. Indeed, such bioreductivism is understandable in an era in which little seems stable about identity. During a period of rapid social change, nostalgia for a fantastical heteronormative bliss flourishes.

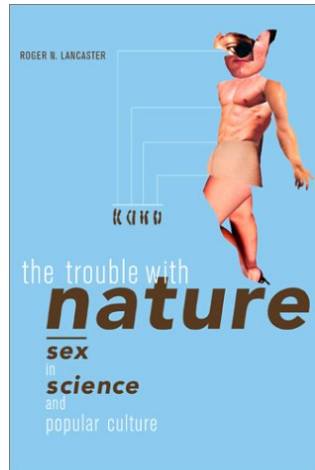
If such pseudo-scientific findings sound suspiciously like mainstream middle-class values, you're on the right track. Periods of rapid changes in gender and social norms are fertile ground for this brand of sociobiology to thrive. And, as students enrolled in Professor Lane Fenrich's "American Gay and Lesbian History" this past fall quarter studied, this phenomenon is nothing new. In the late 19th century U.S., industrialization, urbanization, and immigration increasingly threatened the dominance of the white, male, middle-class.

In the language of nineteenth century sexologists, women who desired women were gender inverters. Their deviant sexual desire could be located in a physical sexed, gendered body. Thus, in the nineteenth century, certain behavior among members of immigrant communities or the working-class might have been attributed to a "virilized" clitoris. One hundred years later, during another period of rapid social change, this behavior is understood again

within the body and this time, the "gay gene."

Lancaster showed his audience how reductionist explanations of sexual desire depend upon essentialist, and historical and culturally specific constructions, of gender norms. Moreover Lancaster contextualized such explanations within the release of the Human genome project and the rise of an omnipotent genetics.

As graduate student Nancy Deutsch pointed out in the discussion: a finding that admits to



The cover of Lancaster's latest book, *The Trouble with Nature*.

the complexity of gender simply isn't a finding in *The New York Times*. These days no research results will ever make the cover of such a publication by saying "it's complicated."

Newspapers like *The New York Times* should know better. Instead, such publications have relaxed their reporting. While none of the sociobiological studies discussed by Lancaster have been replicated, studies with fewer than ten samples have made the front page, upholding essentialist ideas about gender. Moreover, these studies assumed a 1:1 correspondence between gene and trait, completely ignoring the possibility of genes interacting and reacting with cultural and social forces.

In his analysis, Lancaster drew links between *The New York Times*' 1996 publication of research findings of 'the thrill seeking gene' and sexual politics by contextualizing this study within the Clinton sex scandal. In addition, Lancaster provided analysis of the failure of queer theory and the left to provide a strong presence in public critical discourse. "I'm not sure quite how the media got so stupid," he said. As a result of the de-legitimation of the social as a form of critique, science stepped in as an all-knowing Truth. ■

2003 Faculty/Grad Seminar cont. from p. 4

critiques of identity and the simple view of agency, and, at the same time, to reconnect subjectivity, politics, and activism. As visiting scholar Joan Scott (Institute for Advanced Studies) noted in one of her articles read by the seminar, "fantasy is not the object of desire, but its setting.... Fantasy can help account for the ways subjects are formed, internalizing and resisting social norms, taking on the terms of identity that endow them with agency... and it can be used to study the ways in which history – a fantasized narrative that imposes sequential order on otherwise chaotic and contingent occurrences – contributes to the articulation of political identity."

Returning then to the *possibilities of explanation*, all these interventions expose the gulf between the retrospective moment of understanding and the prospective mode of collective action. There may be shared dissatisfactions with attempts to paper over the gap, but there's no common emerging resolution. In fact, the tensions are more interesting than areas of agreement.

So, do gender scholars miss previous eras of feminist theorizing? Maybe there's a touch of envy for the exuberance and confident anger of the 1970s, but clearly we are no longer simply shadow boxing with the promises of a Marxist paradigm. As Cora Kaplan aptly noted when asked what awaits feminists at the turn of the millennium: "The challenge is to ask better and more nuanced questions. Feminism is best seen as an urgent and always changing set of questions rather than a fixed set of answers." ■

*"Fantasy Echo: History and the Construction of Identity" in *Critical Inquiry*, Winter 2001: 284-304.

New Undergraduate Course: GS 394

Professional Linkage Seminar

"Add Women and Stir":

Economic Development and the Politics of Gender

This course will provide students with a practitioners' perspective on how gender and the development field have progressed from the paternalism of colonization to the ambitious goals of the United Nations decade of the woman. In recent decades, as more women are working as development professionals, the goals and mechanisms of including women in development projects have come under greater scrutiny. Both in theory and in practice, the field has had to recognize that economic and social change is never gender neutral: that power struggles over resources, whether between ministries or within a family, are greatly affected by gender issues.

Using several real-life situations, we will examine what occurs when institutions make deliberate decisions regarding development using a women/gender lens. How have the competing objectives of different organizations, state policies and philosophies challenged practical implementation? What happens to finite resources when a "new" actor is suddenly given center stage? How well have program and development specialists understood gender? How reluctantly or willingly have they responded to the mandate of prioritizing gender when engaging in economic development? Case examples and student research papers will explore both the desired and the unanticipated effects that development projects have had on the quality of life for women in the developing world.

Instructor Joan Sherman worked for CARE International, one of the world's largest development and relief non-governmental organizations, for several years. She will draw on her experience in Haiti and India working in sectors as varied as micro-credit, mother and child health, and water and sanitation.

specifically to study girls' group. But when I would ask them if it was common for boys to be a part of it, they would say no. There were a few co-ed groups, certainly among the older ages. Adults would definitely have male groups and co-ed groups. But, among the younger kids, it was more a girl thing to do -- it seemed very gendered.

LV: What were some positive or negative outcomes from membership in the njangis?

JV: It was positive in the sense that people felt they were learning how to be financially responsible. A lot of girls saw that as very important in becoming future mothers. They felt that if they knew how to manage their money, they could also be able to manage the money for their household. A lot of what was positive stemmed from their idea that being part of the njangis now is kind of a step towards becoming a mother or a woman. A lot of people would talk less about the actual rotation of money than about how important the group was to them in terms of being a social support. If someone gave birth or if they had a death in the family, the core group would come to the house, and it's the tradition that at either one of those times the person would have to give a huge celebration where they feed hundreds and hundreds of people, all done from scratch. The group would come and do everything for them. So I think that the social support was something that was really positive. They also felt that it was a way to exchange information -- that they could learn from each other. I think the negative parts were that it pushed people to do things, like if they couldn't pay they could steal or prostitute themselves. If you didn't have any money at all, they would advise you not to be part of a njangi. What that showed me was that for raising people from the very bottom of poverty, njangis aren't the solution, because in order to participate you do have to have at least a little bit of money. So there is still this group of people who can never be part of it or do not want to be a part of it because they just don't have that money. The njangis were not a program that could possibly help that sector of the population.

LV: Do you think a lot of the attention has been given to these groups as a way to raise people out of the lowest rung of poverty, and then it's not been very successful?

JV: Definitely. Also, it takes a lot of responsibility off the government, for actually creating jobs or opening up rules regarding businesses or self-employment. Instead of saying "we'll help you generate this money," it becomes a more individual task, and the government is left without responsibility in it. That could be seen as both a positive and negative outcome.

LV: How did you find out about all this? Were there experiences at Northwestern that especially prepared you for it?

JV: My junior year I studied abroad in France, and I had such a wonderful experience that I knew I had to study abroad again, so I applied for the Fulbright. You need to have a university affiliation when you apply, and I [met] Virginia Delancey, who now is the academic coordinator in the African Studies department. She has lived throughout Africa for many years of her life. She had been in Cameroon for a really long time, and she knew of a university where they had a women's and gender studies program. As far as being interested in the topic of women in development, I was a Gender Studies major. I had also done work with Doug Castle at the Center for International Human Rights at Northwestern's Law School on development in Latin American and East Asia, looking at economic policies and social welfare in these countries. Women always come up when you see how economic policies affect families.

LV: What was your experience like at the University of Buea?

JV: The university itself is similar to NU in that there are about 7,000 students. It's in the middle of town, and it's a beautiful campus. When I got there, they had just opened up a new IT facility where they had thirty beautiful brand new Dell computers with internet access. Having

never been to Africa, I expected worse conditions. The university was nice, and the Gender Studies department was small. Their curriculum is mostly based on looking at women in development -- specifically, different theories of development concerning women in development, women and development, and gender and development. Their coursework is designed around these themes, and they concentrate on what Cameroonian women's roles are in the development process. Gender Studies is really popular there. In the first class they had 90 students signed up. I was amazed they had so many students. When I asked people why they wanted to study Gender Studies, they'd [say] "Oh, because I'll get a job afterwards." So many NGOs have gone in there, and also the UN comes in and starts programs that say "You have to have a women's element" or "this has to be gender inclusive." When they have these degrees, the NGOs will hire them because they've been trained. A lot of people thought it was for the jobs.

But they're definitely limited in terms of materials. Even though they had access to the internet, a lot of people can't pay for it, nor do they know how to do research on the internet. There's a lot of information about gender or gender studies on the internet, but a lot of people just can't get it. No one had books -- the teacher would copy pages out of her book, or copy stuff off the internet, and everyone would get photocopies. But even those were difficult for some people to get. So that was frustrating. Their curriculum wasn't outdated in any sense, but they just didn't have the materials to back it up.

LV: Were you taking classes?

JV: I didn't take courses. I did help teach some courses. I assisted in their Introduction to Women's Studies, and a course on Gender and Anthropology in Cameroon. I got to know the students really well. In some ways it was kind of funny because I was either the same age or younger than a lot of them. I think that we both learned from each other.

LV: What do you plan on doing, now that this experience is under your belt?

JV: First I'd like to write my experiences into a paper, and then at some point I'd like to go back to school. I'd like to work on an international scale, doing work with women, and development policy is one way to do that. I do hope to go back to Cameroon. I couldn't imagine not going back. ■

Best Wishes to our Gender Studies Senior thesis writers.

This year's honors candidates, their topics and their directors are listed below.

**Mel Bostwick — Gender & the Search for the Gay
Gene — Amy Partridge**

**Emily Hagenmaier — Queering Mourning, Felix
Gonzales-Torres — Fran Paden**

**Kristina Hughes — Representations of
Post/Feminist Female Characters in TV Drama —
Mimi White**

**Lizzy Venell — Representations of the Menstrual
Cycle — Lane Fenrich**

New Faculty: Jane Winston



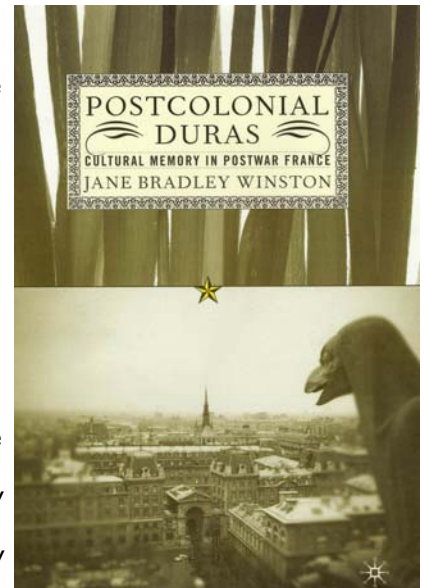
Jane Winston

This fall, Professor **Jane Winston** came on board as a new joint-appointment in Gender Studies for a three-year term. Professor Winston received her Ph.D at Duke University. She is currently Associate Professor in the Department of French and Italian and the Gender Studies Program. Her book, *Postcolonial Duras: Cultural Memory in Postwar France*, studies French writer and cultural icon Marguerite Duras in relation to her colonial upbringing, cultural politics in metropolitan France, and to writers of the African-American and Vietnamese diasporas.

Most students in Gender Studies know Jane Winston through her popular course “Gender and Orientalism,” offered this Winter quarter as GS 390-21 and taught regularly either as undergraduate or graduate seminar. In winter quarter 2005, Professor Winston will be the Lane Professor of Humanities at the Alice Berline Kaplan Center for the Humanities. In this interview, **Ho Alan Chan**, a PhD candidate in French talks to Jane Winston about her research and teaching.

HAC: Could you tell us what you are going to do next winter at the Humanities Center and how it relates to Gender Studies?

JW: I am going to teach a course, “Colonial Images in the Global Age,” which will investigate the mass circulation of colonial images in our times. Most scholars agree that in the 1990s, the United States worked to extend its economic, military, and cultural powers globally. In that same decade, cultural representations and images that bore strong resemblance to the colonial images produced by the European colonial powers appeared increasingly in the U.S. cultural sphere. They were most prominent on the “high-end” of cultural production, including high fashion (*Vogue* magazine) and high-end restaurants such as Cyclo in Manhattan, Indochine, and Le Colonial, which opened in five major U.S. cities during the 1990s, including on Rush Street here in Chicago. My interest lies in the relation of such representations to the globalization project. For their part, French colonial propagandists believed the colonial images they circulated could and did shape public sentiment, electoral support, cultural memory, and national identity. Their belief suggests the need to inquire into the possible impact of the borrowed and transformed “colonial images” that appeared in American culture in the 1990s. The questions I bring to this inquiry, and which will structure my Humanities Center course include: what is the role, if any, played by these images in helping shape contemporary American cultural identity? who disseminates these images and to whose profit? what gender roles do these images articulate and support? what is the relation between these prominently figured and idealized images of the former colonies and that other set of images that one does not find often in the mass media—the images of former colonial regions *today* and their actually existing populations as they attempt to cope with globalism’s relations of production and consumption?



Cover of Winston's book, *Postcolonial Duras*

HAC: So, it seems to me that you are trying to tackle a relatively overlooked dimension of globalization, the globalization of representation, besides the economic, political, and demographic aspects of globalization that most people examine. It is an enormous undertaking.

JW: For the last decade or so, I have been concerned with the place and role of mass-circulating representations in cultural arena characterized by an ever more intense saturation of images. Let's talk about the perception of war and fighting a little bit. In *Lord of the Rings*, for instance, there is a scene in which the evil is embodied by men wearing turban and riding elephants, and the “men of the West,” if I remember it correctly, shall fight and prevail against these evil characters. These are the same blatant citations of Orientalism that Edward Saïd talks about in his 1978 book. On the other hand, exotic and exoticized imagery takes on a life of its own through the circulation of goods and services. I saw a whole shop window on Michigan Avenue displaying oriental motifs which made me wonder if I were back in the '60s and '70s, and expensive leather handbags that look like a Chinese take-away are sold at stores like Saks. By focusing on these images and their meanings, paradigm emerges and informs us of the cultural and psychic underpinnings of our relation with the other.

HAC: What do you think *Diaspora Studies* is going to bring to the discussion of “Western” gender theories?

JW: It will encourage a reframing and reconsideration of gender studies' questions in relation to a much broader spectrum of experience. This reframing complicates our understandings of gender and subjectivity by permitting us to study them comparatively in and across a wide-range of cultural formations, including the transnational and transcultural axes. For example, in my course “Gender and Orientalism,” I am interested in knowing how different configurations of gender in the colonial and post-colonial world, have entered and have been inflected in the gender imaginings of Europe.

HAC: Thank you for your time and Happy New Year of the Monkey!

Strike a Pose: Performance as Theory

By Jyoti Argadé

Jonathan David Jackson 'vogued' up and down the aisle to 1970's dance music by Larry Levan of Paradise Garage and the legendary German electro quartet, Kraftwerk. The artist/scholar sashayed across the auditorium floor, struck a pose, and returned to his microphone to eloquently theorize the derivations of his movement. Combining theory and dance to perform the cultural politics of the Ballroom Scene, Jackson's lecture, "The Social World of Voguing," uniquely demonstrated the materialities of race, class, and gender. Sponsored by the Departments of Performance Studies, African American Studies, English and the Gender Studies Program, Jackson's lecture took place in Harris Hall, Room 107 on November 6, 2003.

Without cue cards or printed lecture notes in front of him, Jackson, currently the Jesse Ball duPont Visiting Scholar at Goucher College, eased between speaking and dancing -- only pausing for a sip of water or to change the music on the sound system. Gleaned from his own experience of growing up in Philadelphia's and New York's Ballroom scenes, he narrated accounts of poverty, violence, and the aesthetics of resistance which continue to bind the culture together.

Emerging out of Harlem circa 1970, this community that originated Voguing comprises at least 5,000 African American and Latin American gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders. Many members identify themselves as Butch Queens, Butch Queens-In-Drags, Femme Queens, Butches or Women. Jackson claims that these self-imposed categories resist the all-encompassing label of "queerness" and disrupt racialized definitions of gendered norms.

Because of Jackson's proximity to this ethnographic site, the intimacy he conveyed while speaking to the audience revealed his investment in the values and traditions that inform the practice of Voguing. In response to an audience member's inquiry, Jackson briefly mentioned Madonna's distorted appropriation of Voguing in her 1990 hit song and video. He also hesitantly touched upon Jennie Livingstone's problematic portrayals of the Ballroom Scene in her documentary *Paris is Burning* of the same year. Criticizing their depictions of Voguing was not his agenda in this lecture/ performance. Rather, Jackson illumined an understanding of this transgressive performance practice by locating it within history and framing it as a site of cultural production and theory.

Jackson is one of the few scholars (if not the only one) to conduct a thorough historical and anthropological examination of the Ballroom community. Throughout his presentation, the artist/scholar testified to the remarkable agency of Ballroom members' abilities to create complex theories of their own without depending upon the dominant culture to produce meaning for them. Jonathan David Jackson's edifying approach not only translates Ballroom movement into theory, but also allows us to learn from a scholar who unites bodily action with intellect and choreographs movement to the beat of his own signification. ■



Jonathan David Jackson promotional image

Leo Bersani Returns to NU

ENG 481: Special Topics in the Theory of Literature and Literary Criticism:

"Sexuality, Sociality, and Aesthetics"

Meeting Time: W 1-4

Counts as a GS 490 Course for Gender Studies Certificate Students

Course Description: This seminar assumes—and takes as its point of departure—a certain familiarity with the widespread problematizing today of the nature and value of community, of the relation between community and identity, and, most significantly, of the nature of sociality itself. A time of relational crisis is also a time of dangerous but also potentially beneficial confusion about modes of connectedness, about the ways in which who, what, or how we are depends on how we connect. We will structure our study of various "plateaux of relationality" (monogamy and the intimately conjoined couple; cruising and promiscuity; sociability; solidarity between the human and the nonhuman) through a confrontation between psychoanalytic and aesthetic modes and models of desire and, most fundamentally, through belief in the world's being. Works (including selections) by Plato, Sophocles, Freud, Lacan, Laplanche, Bollas, Simmel, Foucault, Genet, Wittig, Beckett, and Almodóvar.

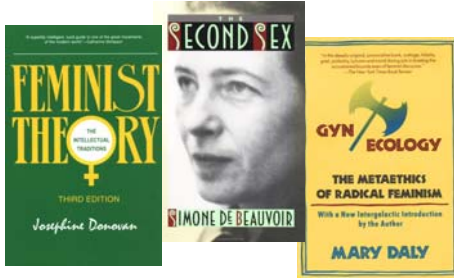
Teaching Method: Class discussion.

Evaluation Methods: Midterm and final papers; one class presentation.

Attendance at first class mandatory.

Getting Back to Our Roots

By Torea Jade Frey



Books used in the Fall course

Bras burning. Lesbians run amok. Hairy armpits. Women hissing at men, claiming an identity forged by rejecting everything male.

Telling some people that you are taking a gender studies course may draw wild stereotypes, particularly when the class is Roots of Feminism – as if reading Mary Wollstonecraft necessarily dictates that a woman should doff her D-cup and join a radical sect. But Alexandra Owen's course challenges the very meaning of feminism and asks students – women and men – to contextually examine a number of power dynamics and apply them to the conception of gender differences.

Before reading any historical or theoretical texts, students read two pieces –

one by Rosalind Delmar, the other by Bell Hooks – that focus upon the ability to define feminism. This introduction immediately turned students' attention to the divided nature of the feminist movement and posed complications to one's conception of gender by questioning power inequality of all kinds.

In the syllabus, Owen underscored the importance of considering many facets of feminism, writing, "The course seeks to develop an understanding of why feminism looks the way it does today; in fact, why we must talk about feminisms rather than assume the existence of a single, unified voice or movement."

But after this important intellectual intervention, students read seminal historical texts and placed them within social and political backgrounds. First was Mary Wollstonecraft, complemented by Josephine Donovan's *Feminist Theory*, which grounded the work in the currents of the 1790s. Owen also introduced the idea of liberal feminism and the tenets of the Enlightenment, which moved Wollstonecraft's tract.

After charting the course of early liberal feminism, students read Harriet Jacobs' slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Though this did not directly address a feminist perspective, the account showed how women were doubly cursed in a system that oppressed them for both sex and race.

Other complications to the definition of feminism arose when the works of Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were discussed. In addition to racial divisions in the feminist movement, Freudian psychology and socialist or Marxist thought further segmented a group with an unclear identity.

An examination of Virginia Woolf focused the class on a literary tone, but again focused on the division between doubly classed women. Woolf's idea that for a woman to succeed, she must have a room of her own and an independent source of wealth, is appealing – but it also is nearly impossible for women in the working classes to achieve.

Cont. on p. 12

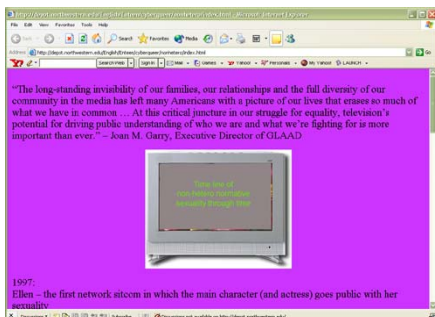


Authors Mary Wollstonecraft (left) and bell hooks (right)

CyberQueer cont. from p. 3

dia that has promoted gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered identities to date, an online essay examining the role of the Asian female in constructions of sexuality online, a site of racial profiles confronting cybertourism, and a site featuring articles and other webpages, which challenges its audience's assumptions about gender.

Bowling Green students greeted their Northwestern counterparts with a webcam message. As we judged the impressions their messages gave, we considered the ways that technology affects human communication. When Enteen's students recorded response messages, we strove to use the technology more comfortably—singing, joking, and creating performed messages that we felt better suited the medium. Later on, the groups got a chance to interact through real time video conferences from school to school. Students' responses to these discussions were dramatic. Matthew Alderton noted, "The webcam brings a thread of the physical world, which we can 'see,' into the new virtual world, thus making it feel more "real" to us... It seems that in webcam communication we all rely on a script, and in the absence of such a script we look and feel like deer in headlights."



Screenshot of Cyberqueer student website

The final component of the course challenged us to analyze our own sites with the same critical theory and objectivity that we had been applying to other personal and professional websites throughout the quarter. To prepare for this, Gajjala came to speak to us in person. She showed us the organization of her own site. Her visit allowed us to react to the computer screen with the same critical skills we had applied to our syllabus reading all quarter. Each of Enteen's students completed a research paper critiquing the creation of our websites. Whether we assessed the process or the product in our final projects, the variety of the media, histories and geographies we studied all quarter revealed the need for critical theory that addresses the ever growing reality of the World Wide Web. Our studies also revealed our ability as students to fulfill that need by continuing our work on social constructions online. ■

Roots of Feminism cont. from p. 11

As the class ventured into second wave feminism, utility and idealism clashed. Readings from Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan were hugely appealing to American women at the time, but many students had difficulty relating to the ideals being espoused. Again, while the words were powerful for one segment of the female population, many simply couldn't see themselves as a part of a populist feminist movement.

In a more contemporary era, liberal and radical feminisms were pitted against each other; student presentations during the last few weeks of class focused on issues of inclusion. While Mary Daly looked for women to "spin in a new space," other authors sought to empower the Chicana feminist movement or shape a lesbian continuum.

Roots of Feminism shattered many myths about feminism and elementary gender theory. Owen provided students with texts that offered not answers, but more questions – teaching students to question feminism and in turn, create a personal definition based upon close examination of historical, social and political readings. ■



Tresca Meiling and Lizzy Venell

Student Liaison Committee Notes

By Elizabeth Venell

This quarter was a busy one for the Gender Studies Liaison Committee. In addition to serving as a liaison organization between the Gender Studies students and faculty and the university at large, we visited to the Block Museum of Art, conducted the Leslie Hoffmann Colloquium "Gender, Violence, and the Law," spun off an undergraduate reading group, had wild parties, hiked up a mountain, and, as always, ate bagels in the seminar room twice a month.



Still from Carolee Schneemann exhibit

The morning of the Carolee Schneemann lecture, members and friends of the liaison committee trooped over to the Block to tour her exhibit, a drawing/performance piece called "Up to and Including Her Limits." For the Leslie Hoffmann Colloquium, we chose the topic, arranged for speakers, and helped to facilitate a table discussion after the panelists spoke. In the end, we all left with new questions about current events -- the complications of prosecuting rape, the violations of women in prison, the treatment of lesbians involved in domestic violence

cases -- and the role of gender in violence and the law. The turnout was low (where were you?), so we also left with plates full of cookies and cheese.

The Gender Studies undergraduate reading group, a relatively new spin-off from the liaison committee, met just once this quarter, but it was a blast. We plan to meet a few times this winter, most likely on Friday afternoons at The Unicorn Cafe.

Stay tuned to the Gender Studies listserv for updates. The winter quarter meetings are every other Tuesday at 10 am. Majors, minors, and interested parties are always welcome to this open committee. Underclassmen, this is going to be your organization next year... get involved! Please direct any questions or comments to e-venell@northwestern.edu.



Emily Hagenmaier, Jennifer Probst, and Tony Rella at a recent meeting

If you have something to say about Gender Studies, say it!

By Tresca Meiling

The Gender Studies program has two student representatives, Elizabeth Venell and Tresca Meiling, who want to hear what you have to say about it! Not only do we welcome feedback about the program itself, but the representatives are part of the WCAS Student Advisory Board, which gives Gender Studies a voice in the College of Arts and Science community.

Fall quarter, the Student Advisory Board (SAB) took its first steps in choosing a research project for the year. Student representatives from every WCAS major brainstormed ideas, from the way AP credits affect students' academic paths to the college's advising system. In addition to completing a research project for the year, SAB also organizes the Weinberg College Teaching Awards, through which professors and graduate students are honored for excellent teaching by student nominations.

Please contact Lizzy (e-venell@northwestern.edu) or Tresca (t-meiling@northwestern.edu) for more information about what SAB does and/or how you can represent Gender Studies next year!

Fall Leslie Hoffmann Colloquium: Gender, Violence and the Law

By Eli Brooke

On November 7, the Gender Studies Liaison Committee hosted the Fall quarter Leslie Hoffmann Colloquium. With Hoffmann's generous donation to the Gender Studies Program, the undergraduate committee was able to invite three speakers to this afternoon event, themed "Gender, Violence, and the Law." The structure of the Hoffmann Colloquia make them uniquely interactive educational experiences, as the attendees are invited to participate in extended table discussions (called "break-out sessions") after each panelist gives a brief speech from his or her own expertise within the colloquium's broader theme.

Panelists for the fall event were Cynthia Bowman, NU Professor of Law and Gender Studies, and Michelle Van Natta, who received her Ph.D. from Northwestern in the spring of 2003. The third speaker, Kelly Robinson, a victim's rights advocate with the domestic violence team of the Evanston Police, was called away for an emergency just before the colloquium started. Her departure vividly underscored the stark realities behind the panel discussion.

Using the Kobe Bryant case as a current high-profile example, Bowman addressed the problems that women encounter when they try to prosecute their assailants through the courts. The first is establishing non-consent. The prevailing attitude still requires that the woman put up "utmost resistance." Physical injuries sustained by fighting the rape stand up as evidence better in court than simply having said "no". In the Kobe Bryant case, the woman went to the hospital immediately, and was found to have injuries consistent with sexual assault. However, she also willingly went to Bryant's room and engaged in consensual kissing beforehand. Although her actions should be irrelevant to proof of rape, any hint of initial intimacy may incline judges and juries to not believe the woman's claim.

In the Bryant case, the defense was also able to bring in evidence that the victim had had very recent consensual sexual activity with another man, which they claim was the source of her injuries. Whether this tactic will countermand the fact the victim's blood was found on Bryant's shirt will not be known until the trial. Unfortunately, Bowman said, once evidence "smearing the reputation" of the victim is introduced, juries are often influenced against the victim.

To counter these attitudes, feminists and women's advocates have fought for and established Rape Shield Statutes which permit into evidence only the victim's sexual behavior with the defendant, but, as seen in the Bryant case, there are loopholes that are regularly exploited. Rape Shield Statutes are important because they address one of the most persisting myths about rape, that "only good girls can

get raped." The implication is that "bad girls", i.e. sexually active or "promiscuous" women, somehow are considered incapable of saying no. As Bowman points out, "just because a woman consents to having sex with one man at one time is no kind of proof that she consents to sex with another." Related to the good girls/bad girls divide is another myth that "women somehow encourage rape by their appearance and behavior." Flirting, dressing provocatively, or willingly accompanying a defendant to secluded places translates to some people's minds that a woman is "asking for it".

An audience member brought up the question of whether in this case the victim might just be a gold-digger hoping to profit from Bryant's fame and fortune. Bowman called this "the men's nightmare myth": that women often make false claims of rape. Statistically, though, rape is shown to be one of the most under-reported crimes, with estimates that up to 84% of cases are not reported. This is probably in large fact due to the difficulties of proving non-consent combined with the way the woman's life and behavior are put on trial, that often increase the trauma that she has already undergone. Many women simply want to forget the experience and do not want to keep reliving it through retelling the circumstances in court sessions that could drag out indefinitely. In short, as Bowman summed up, "It's no wonder so few women pursue rape complaints."

Speaking on her work with women in prisons, Michelle Van Natta informed the audience that sexualized violation is part of the sanctioned routines of prison life. Because of increased drug sentencing and mandatory minimums that give judges no discretion to fit the punishment to the individual circumstances, the number of women in prison since 1980 has increased at nearly double the rate of men. Not only should the general public be alarmed by the rate of this growth, but the demoralization and physical abuse that women endure in prison should cause public outrage. While 85% of women in prison are there for nonviolent crimes, the violence of prison discipline has inverted who is the source of violence and who is its victim.

Nearly half of women prisoners have experienced sexual abuse or violence at some point in their lives prior to incarceration, Van Natta informed the audience. Rape or sexual harassment by guards force women to relive these earlier experiences. Often it is the sexualized violation of prison routine that is the source of debasement and trauma. For example, prisoners are required to go through strip searches, sometimes including cavity searches after meeting with visitors. Prisoners often feel so humiliated and endangered that a lot of women forego seeing all visitors, including lawyers and children. Since

the majority of women in prison are mothers, this can be especially difficult for both the women and their children.

When women fight back, they are often further isolated. For instance, in the State of Illinois, a woman reporting a rape during her incarceration is put into isolation -- a procedure which used to be followed as a punishment of the woman for having sexual conduct with a guard, but is now justified as being for investigative purposes and the woman's own protection. If women in civil society have difficulty prosecuting rapists without their innocence being put on trial, imagine the threshold that a woman in prison must pass if she is already deemed a "bad girl" by the society that incarcerated her.

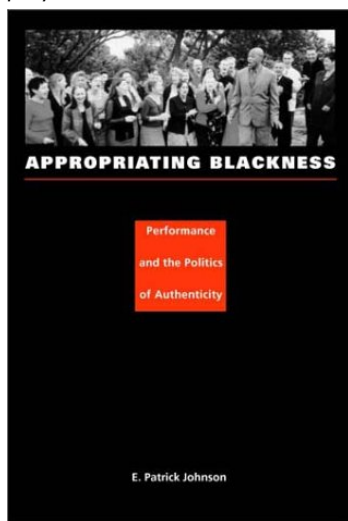
After the speakers, the student audience came together in one round table discussion to explore aspects of the topic in more depth. Students with backgrounds in domestic violence issues and service shared their experiences. Additionally, the panelists addressed questions ranging from jail conditions and anti-abuse advocacy for same-sex couples to quasi-institutional uses of sex and violence during wartime. Some students connected the two individual topics by discussing how sexual assault and domestic violence can drive women to criminal acts of retaliation against their attackers or abusers, or to escape through illegal drug use, often winding up in a justice system that subjects them to further violence. Michelle Van Natta offered resources and contact information for anyone interested in finding out more about programs designed to work with and help women in prison. It was a great culmination of the event. Many thanks go to Michelle Van Natta and Cynthia Bowman for leading the students to such provocative questions and engaging in the dynamic break-out session afterwards, and to Fran Paden for helping to facilitate the Liaison Committee meetings and colloquium arrangements.

The student-run Liaison Committee is already planning the next Leslie Hoffmann Colloquium, scheduled for April. The Colloquium will focus on questions of race, sexual identity, civil rights and activism through the life of civil rights activist Bayard Rustin. Thus far in their planning, the Liaison Committee has invited Nancy Kates, who directed and produced the award winning documentary, *Brother Outsider*, and historian Adam Green, a specialist in African American History and a family friend of Rustin's who will lead a discussion after the screening of the film. ■

Anyone interested in learning more about women in prison may contact Michelle Van Natta at mva472@northwestern.edu



Above: E. Patrick Johnson addressing the party. Below: Book cover



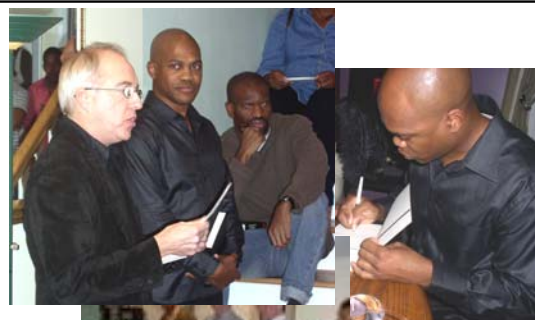
This Fall, the Departments of Performance Studies, African-American Studies and Gender Studies jointly hosted a party to celebrate the publication of E. Patrick Johnson's new book, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity*.

"*Appropriating Blackness* develops from the contention that blackness in the United States is necessarily a politicized identity--avowed and disavowed, attractive and repellent, fixed and malleable. Drawing on performance theory, queer

studies, literary analysis, film criticism, and ethnographic fieldwork, Johnson describes how diverse constituencies persistently try to prescribe the boundaries of 'authentic' blackness and how performance highlights the futility of such enterprises.

Johnson looks at various sites of performed blackness, including Marlon Riggs's influential documentary *Black Is . . . Black Ain't* and comedic routines by Eddie Murphy, David Alan Grier, and Damon Wayans. He analyzes nationalist writings by Amiri Baraka and Eldridge Cleaver, the vernacular of black gay culture, an oral history of his grandmother's experience as a domestic worker in the South, gospel music as performed by a white Australian choir, and pedagogy in a performance studies classroom. By exploring the divergent aims and effects of these performances -- ranging from resisting racism, sexism, and homophobia to excluding sexual dissidents from the black community -- Johnson analyzes the multiple significations of blackness and their myriad political implications. His reflexive account considers his own complicity, as ethnographer and teacher, in authenticating narratives of blackness."

-from the Duke University Press description



Clockwise from top: Dwight Conquergood discusses the significance of Johnson's book; autographing a copy of the new book; gathered guests

Gender Studies 405: ADVANCED FEMINIST THEORY

Wednesdays 3-5 pm - Ann Orloff

Course Description: Feminist intellectual work of the second wave began with high theoretical hopes: taking up Simone de Beauvoir's claim that one is not born a woman, scholars worked to understand why there is gender and why gender so often means inequality, domination, difference. They expected that understanding would contribute to women's emancipation, often seen in utopian terms as the end of gender.

In the last two decades, while investigating gendered systems of difference, scholars have brought to light surprising forms of gender-bending creativity among women and men, and instances of women's exercise of power, even on the basis of some of the most disqualified or apparently sexist symbols and signs in addition to the now more-expected forms of inequality. Pleasures, as well as troubles, are to be found in (multiple) gender differences. The more mixed picture complicates both politics and explanatory intellectual projects. In gender studies, as across the human sciences and humanities, the very possibility of explanatory social theory is questioned. Yet, particularly within the social sciences and history, there are deep investments in explanation as an intellectual project, and some scholars are struggling to develop more situated knowledges. One form this takes is turning from origins and overarching explanations of gender systems (if such exist) to explorations of the processes by which gender is accomplished, constructed or practiced the *how* of gender, or *gendering*. Another strand of work claims a historicized project: why do gender relations take specific forms in particular times and places, and why and how have these practices and structures changed or stabilized? Others pursue a Foucauldian-inspired strategy of genealogical explorations. What do these diverse analytic approaches mean for gender studies as an intellectual project? And for gender politics?

Method of Evaluation: Students will make presentations on seminar readings, and will write either: (a) one 20-25 pp. term paper; or (b) four shorter (5-7 pp.) critical reaction papers on subsets of the readings.

RESTRICTIONS: Enrollment limited to students pursuing a graduate certificate in Gender Studies. Students must be beyond their first year of graduate coursework. Contact Professor Orloff for a consent (E-mail: a-orloff@northwestern.edu).

Faculty and Student News

Faculty

Cynthia Grant Bowman (Gender Studies and the Law School) presented a paper on Women and Access to the Courts at the Program of African Studies November conference on Governance and Security in West Africa. She is off to Ghana in December to preside over final conference evaluating a five year partnership between NU law school and the University of Ghana Faculty of Law. She will also attend a "book launch" party and give radio interviews about her recently published book on Women and Law in Sub-Saharan Africa, co-authored with Akua Kuenyehia.

Hollis Clayson (Art History) was a Fellow at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Mass. during the fall of 2003. She will be a Visiting Scholar at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles during the spring of 2004. Her current project is a study of American Art and/in Paris, 1865-1914, which will underline the contrasting experiences of and work produced by male and female artists during their residence in the French capital.

Patrick Garlinger (Spanish and Portuguese) had his book *Confessions of the Letter Closet: Epistolary Fiction and Queer Desire in Modern Spain* accepted by University of Minnesota Press in the summer of 2003.

E. Patrick Johnson (Performance Studies) recently published a book, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* with Duke University Press, 2003. He guest edited a special issue of *Text and Performance Quarterly* on "Performance and Race and Ethnicity" that just came out. He also wrote an article for the Journal of Homosexuality entitled "Specter of the Black Flag: Parody, Blackness, and Homosexual B(r)others." V. 45.2,3,4 2003. In November of 2003, Patrick gave a talk at the University of Texas at Austin entitled, "Clutching the Pearls: Black Gay Vernacular and the Reclamation of Home" for the Center for African American Studies.

Phyllis B. Lassner (Writing Program) published an article, "Aimee and Jaguar," in the volume *Holocaust Literature*, Routledge, 2003.

Susan Manning (English and Theatre) will lecture on "Making a (Queer) American Dance: Jose Limon, Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey" at the University of Chicago in January, Wesleyan University in February, and Stamford University in May. Her book *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion* will appear in March from the University of Minnesota Press.

Frances Freeman Paden (Gender Studies and Writing Program) authored a biographical essay on Itabari Njeri that will appear in the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Women's Autobiography* (Greenwood Press).

Sylvie Romanowski (French and Italian) wrote an article entitled "*Passion simple* d'Annie Ernaux: le trajet d'une féministe", which was published in *French Forum* 27 (2002): 99-114, which came out in spring of 2003.

Sandi Wisenberg (Visiting Scholar) has work in four anthologies that came out this fall--fiction in *What Are You Looking At? The First Fat Fiction Anthology* (Harcourt), *Chicago Works: A New Collection of Chicago Authors' Best Stories* (Morton), *The Thing About Hope Is...* (Pearson) and nonfiction in *In the Middle of the Middle West* (Indiana). She teaches in the new Creative Writing certificate program at Northwestern's School for Continuing Education.

Graduate Students

Nancy Deutsch (Human Development and Social Policy) received a Dissertation Year Fellowship for the 2003-2004 academic year. In March 2004, she will be chairing two events at the Society for Research on Adolescence biennial meeting in Baltimore, MD. She will be presenting the paper "I am What S/he's Not: The Role of 'Others' in Gender Construction at an Urban Youth Organization". Deutsch will be chairing a discussion hour entitled "Engaging with Adolescents: The Rewards and Challenges of Qualitative Methods and Feminist Methodology."

Leslie Johnson Harris (Communication Studies) has an article being published this winter in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, "The Court, Child Custody, and Social Change: The Rhetorical Role of Precedent in a 19th Century Child Custody Decision." She was awarded a graduate research grant to work on her dissertation and will be presenting a paper at the Rhetoric Society of America conference this spring on Carrie Chapman Catt and the rhetoric of evolution.

Rebecca Rossen (Theatre & Drama) is working to complete her dissertation on Jewishness in modern dance. She will be performing a solo in a March concert at Link's Hall in Chicago.

Undergraduate Students

Emily Hagenmaier (2004) received an undergraduate research grant to travel to New York City in January to interview curators and see works by Felix Gonzales-Torres.

Tresca Meiling (2004) has been awarded a Teach for America elementary school position in New York City for the coming year.

Come to the Gender Studies Program Open House!
Free Food, Drinks, Information and Advice
Wednesday, February 18, 3:30-5:00
Kresge Hall 2-360

Spring Quarter Courses

250	Gender Issues in Science and Health	Amy Partridge
390-20	Got to Be Real: (Re)Thinking Sex & Gender	Lane Fenrich
390-21	Gender & Postcolonial Literature & Film	Dominique Licops
390-22	Race, Class & The Politics of Beauty	Nhi Lieu
390-23	Gender, Sexuality & Embodiment in Physical Performance	Rebecca Rossen
390-24	Race, Class, Gender: The Politics of Kinship	Ana Croegaert
392	Gender and Autobiography: Performing Memory, Making Selves	Fran Paden
394	Professional Linkage Seminar: Economic Development & the Politics of Gender	Joan Sherman
399	Independent Study	Staff
405	Advanced Feminist Theory (Graduate)	Ann Orloff
Eng 481*	Sexuality, Sociality and Aesthetics (Graduate)	Leo Bersani

** will count as a GS 490 for Certificate students*