



# gender:dynamic

The Newsletter of the Gender Studies Program at Northwestern University

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## Queertopia! — Notes on an Academic Festival

by Theo Greene

Northwestern's Queer Pride Graduate Student Association (QPGSA) held its inaugural graduate student festival, entitled *Queertopia!*, on April 25 and 26, 2008.

The festival kicked off Friday evening at Northwestern University, with "Other Pleasures: A Queer Burlesque Review." This performance and talkback brought together some of the Chicago's top burlesque performers to engage in conversation on the often overlooked topic of queer sexual pleasure and live performance (see photo at right.)

An all-day interdisciplinary graduate student conference followed on Saturday, April 26, at Center on Halsted in the Lakeview/Boystown neighborhood of Chicago.

QPGSA designed this two-day event with two things in mind. While we wanted to provide a fo-

rum for graduate students to present their scholarly work on queer topics in a supportive environment, we also wanted to create a space to bridge our research interests with those of the communities we research. Splitting our festival between Northwestern's campus and Center on Halsted has become a defining characteristic of this festival; one of the reasons we held the conference outside of an academic space was to get more of the community involved. Sixty



photo: Kathleen Fitzgerald

people participated in this event, representing 20 institutions, some from as far away as California and New York.

The conference included panels examining Chicago queer history, queer identities in social movements, queer representations in literature, television and film, genderqueer access to healthcare and marriage, and queer theory as an analytical tool to critique social and political structures.

Many of the panelists featured research by Northwestern graduate students. Tristan Cabello (History) presented "The White Queens Got Scared!" which focused on Bronzeville's gay nightlife during 1935 – 1965. Jeff Kosbie (Sociology) addressed the ways in which black feminist and black queer theories could provide potential models for gay rights scholars. Stefanie Bator (History) presented "But He Didn't Live Happy Ever After: Sexuality and the Ideal Man in *Tarzan and the Apes*," a paper queering Edgar Rice Burroughs's 1914 novel by examining how the character of Tarzan, in spite of his idealized manhood, does not fit the model of twentieth-century heterosexuality.

Among the panelists who presented during the conference, we were also fortunate to offer an opportunity for undergraduate students to present their original research. April Ledbetter, a third-year English major and McNair Scholar at UCLA, presented a paper comparing the depictions of heterosexual characters Remus Lupin and Sirius Black in the *Harry Potter* novels with depictions of their

### 2008 AWARD WINNERS



Sharlyn Grace, winner of the Moses Leadership Award with Director of Undergraduate Studies Amy Partridge. (Photo: Kristina Ogilvie)

At the annual spring awards banquet in June, Gender Studies recognized its graduating seniors and presented three undergraduate prizes.

**Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs Prize**, for the best senior honors thesis written in the Program: **Katherine Gorringer '08**, for "When She Sings, I Hear Revolution: Radical Feminist Demands on Women in Popular Music, 1969-1973." The award committee lauded the thesis as "an original, carefully researched and well-written thesis that represents a contribution to recent historical accounts of the theoretical formulations and political goals of 'second wave' feminism and to recent work on social movement formation and consolidation." In particular, the committee noted that the thesis "provides a spectrum of radical feminist positions rather than trying to produce a monolithic version of radical feminism."

**George C. Casey Prize**, for the best undergraduate essay on any topic relating to the situation of gender and society: **Cora Leech '08**, for "Rape Myths in Romance Novels: More Troubling than Porn?" written for Dr. Don Misch's Gender Studies course "Sexual Assault in America." The award committee praised Leech's essay for its "skillful interweaving of categories of rape myths with her reading of selected romance novels, interrogating how the fictions at once mirror and create dominant cultural myths about rape." Honorable Mention went to **Megan Brown '08** for "Super Women, Tip Drills & Kobe Bryant: Rape Disclosure among African Americans," also written for Misch's course.

**Rae Arlene Moses Leadership Award**, presented to a graduating senior who has fostered initiatives and demonstrated leadership, both within the classroom and in co-curricular Program activities: 2007-08 Undergraduate Board co-chair **Sharlyn Grace '08**. Under the direction of Grace and co-chair **Marissa Faustini '09**, the board produced an especially active year of events.

## From the director's desk

**You will transition.** This was one of the very clever "gender-fortunes" our undergraduate group created for our spring Gender Studies Open House, remaking (rebaking?) the idea of the fortune cookie.

Open House participants and anyone else who stopped by the Gender Studies Program office in the weeks that followed read (and ate) actual cookies and confronted their provocative, witty, sometimes gnomic, and revolutionary predictions. "You will stop the traffic in women." "You will deconstruct hegemony." "You will experience a MAJOR change." "Strategic essentialism works for you."



Jeffrey Masten

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## From the director's desk

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"You will transition," in its prediction of a coming transgender or transsexual change for its recipient, neatly summarizes a theme in the activities of our exceptionally energetic Undergraduate Board this year. With the leadership of co-chairs Marissa Faustini '09 and Sharlyn Grace '08, the guidance of Associate Director of Gender Studies Amy Partridge, and the support of Program Assistant Katy Weseman, the student Board organized a series of events on transgender issues in Winter and Spring Quarters. As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, the Board brought transgender activist Julia Serano to campus and organized an event with the "genderqueer" media collective "Actor Slash Model."

Additionally, some students took fieldtrips to the Chicago History Museum's acclaimed "Out at CHM" series to hear transgender historian Susan Stryker, as well as Gender Studies and History faculty member Lane Fenrich. The Board also brought lesbian filmmaker and scholar Michelle Citron to campus for a lunchtime discussion and evening lecture.

This year, through the extraordinary generosity of Garry G. Mathiason, we have been able to give additional financial support to these programming activities of the Undergraduate Board and to travel scholarships for Gender Studies majors attending scholarly conferences such as the annual Duke Feminist Theory Workshop. Mathiason is the father of Gender Studies alum and award-winner Jessie Mathiason '07, and we are very grateful for his support of our undergraduate program.

In other "transition" news, the Gender Studies Reading Group has been revitalized this year under the leadership of Kasey Evans, Assistant Professor of English and Gender Studies faculty affiliate. We have read and had spirited discussions of Andrew Parker and Janet E. Halley's "After Sex" special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Diana Fuss's *The Sense of an Interior*, and Halley's *Split Decisions*.

The Gender Studies Doctoral Colloquium has also had an active year, with meetings to discuss articles-in-progress by Gender Studies Graduate Certificate students, and roundtable discussions on "methodologies" and "identities" from our various disciplinary perspectives. Thanks to Sarah Mesle for her organizational work.

Our Interdisciplinary Graduate Cluster fellowships received record applicants this year, and we will welcome a new Cluster Fellow in

the fall, Alison Boyd (Art History), who joins current students with home departments in English and Performance Studies.

It's a time of transition for Gender Studies in several other ways. Sadly, we bid farewell to Professor Linda Zerilli, who leaves Northwestern for a position in Political Science at the University of Chicago. We will miss Linda's intellectual commitment and generosity to Gender Studies at Northwestern, but we look forward to future conversations as she remains a part of the local gender studies community.

As the cookie says, I will transition too – this is the last of these columns I will write, as I'm now concluding my term as director of the program. I'm happy to look back on the things we have together been able to build in Gender Studies at Northwestern over the past three years – additional tenure-line and lecturer positions in the program; faculty recruitment at the junior

and senior levels; record numbers of courses, offered by regular faculty and a dynamic roster of local and international visitors; new graduate fellowships in Gender Studies through the Graduate School's interdisciplinary "cluster" initiative; and renewed visibility of Gender Studies' unique status as a vibrant, multi-faceted, interdisciplinary program at Northwestern.

Together we transition to a new director, Ann Orloff, Professor of Sociology and longtime core faculty member in Gender Studies. Ann's current research is profiled on page 6 of this newsletter.

We welcome Ann as director, and look forward to the continued growth and dynamism of Gender Studies at Northwestern. Meanwhile, best wishes for a smooth transition to summer!

—Jeffrey Masten

### Feminist Interventions in Western Political Thought

by Marissa Faustini '09

In each newsletter, *Gender Studies* asks a student to introduce a course to our readers. Marissa Faustini '09 contributed this description of a Winter 2008 course by new faculty member Mary G. Dietz (*Gender Studies and Political Science*).

Since the 1970s, feminist political theorists have offered critical interpretations of the "canon" of Western political theory. In addition to interrogating canonical texts and writers, these theorists have destabilized the concept of the canon itself, revealing a gender bias which tends to privilege male voices as authorities on justice, freedom, and citizenship. The canonization of these "epic theorists," whose work often diminishes or entirely neglects the question of women, also tends to render invisible the work of contemporary female theorists.

This winter, Professor Mary Dietz further complicated this project in her class "Feminist Interventions in Western Political

Thought." Throughout the quarter, we looked closely at the work of classic theorists from Plato to Nietzsche, and engaged in a radical rereading of the canon. Moving beyond simply "the woman question," we asked how gender, sex, and sexuality provide frames of analysis through which canonical texts can be both critiqued and reevaluated by feminist political theorists.

photo: Kristina Ogilvie

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### Queertopia! – Notes on an Academic Festival

homosexual relationship in *The Shoebox Project*, the most widely read story in Harry Potter "slash fiction." Darlene Edgley, a fourth-year Women's Studies major, also at UCLA, examined social networks among African-American breast cancer survivors.

Queertopia!'s keynote address featured Amy Villarejo, Associate Professor in Film and Director of the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Program at Cornell University. Prof. Villarejo's talk, written especially for this conference and delivered at the conference lunch, considered queer images in the context of a "new, new queer cinema." Cautioning against a critical approach to queer media that focuses only on positive representations of queer people, Prof. Villarejo argued that, in the context of international queer cinema which emerges from many different geographic, political and economic contexts, audiences and critics should consider the relationship between the diaspora and migration, while paying attention to "world-making structures here and elsewhere." The lunchtime keynote was made possible through the generosity of the Gender Studies Program.

Queertopia! afternoon events included a film panel examining issues affecting the transgender communities. Documentaries included the feature-length documentary *Still Black*, directed by Northwestern graduate student Kortney Ryan Ziegler (African American Studies) and exploring the lives of six black transgender men living in the United States. Through the intimate stories of their lives as artists, students, husbands, fathers, lawyers, and teachers, the film offers viewers a complex and multifaceted image of race, sexuality, and trans-identity.

An innovative "sermon competition" was one of the highlights of the day. Five seminary students each delivered a queer-positive sermon to a congregation for a cash prize. The winner of the

sermon competition, Shannon T.L. Furness Kearns of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, drew upon Ezekiel 37: 1 – 14 to examine the transgender experience as being able to lead into a discussion of gendered embodiment and authentic resurrection.

Queertopia! concluded with a "Queerstorming Session" designed to promote new ideas and new approaches in queer research, and an evening reception in the new Irving Harris Reception Hall and Daley Roof Garden at Center on Halsted, with its spectacular view of the Chicago skyline.

Both as a conference and an event attracting visibility in the Chicago area, Queertopia! far exceeded our expectations. We had no idea that Queertopia! would gain the attention of the Chicago gay, lesbian, and trans community newspapers *The Windy City Times* and *Chicago Free Press*, who wanted to share our project with their readers. We were also humbled by the overwhelming outpouring of support of our colleagues, professors, mentors, and friends. We are especially grateful to Northwestern's Graduate School (Associate Dean Simon Greenwold and Sarah Keepman); The Center on Halsted (Operations

Manager Thomas Dow, Executive Director Modesto "Tico" Valle, as well as Patrick Sheehan, & the Board of Directors), Northwestern's Gender Studies Program, Northwestern's Canterbury House and University of Chicago Brent House (Rev. Liz Stedman), Kellogg's Gay and Lesbian Management Association (Michi Murako, Mitch Rolnick, and Teo Ornelas), the fine people at Caribou Coffee Boystown, and our photographer, Kathleen Fitzgerald.

Plans are already underway for Queertopia! 2.0, which we hope will expand on the many discussions started at the 2008 conference. We hope to expand

### GENDERED CONNECTIONS

*Gender Studies organized and cosponsored a wide range of events at Northwestern this year – from events coordinated with courses, to collaborations with student groups and other departments and programs, to conferences on gender and sexuality issues. Here's a selection of our activities; photos and full event descriptions are available on the Gender Studies website.*

**October 26, 2007** Chicago Area Women's and Gender Studies Internship Fair at Roosevelt University, cosponsored with other area Women's and Gender Studies Programs

**November 6, 2007** Alexandra Robbins, cosponsored with the College Feminists

**November 20, 2007** "Autonomy and Solidarity: Gender and the Zapatista Movement," a Presentation by the Mexico Solidarity Network, organized by the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board

**November 27, 2007** Amanda Gouws, Edith Kreeger Wolf Distinguished Visiting Professor, "The Consolidation of Democracy in South Africa: What Prospects?"

**November 29, 2007** Angela Davis, "Building Activist Communities," cosponsored with the Peace Project

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our scope disciplinarily, offering a day of events which explore how sexualities are read through performance, art, and film. We also will seek to expand the field of intellectual inquiry, including panels that engage the divides between spirituality and sexuality and between activism and academia. Additionally, through Queertopia!, we hope to build our queer community, reaching out to universities and colleges across the nation, to build a dialogue about the directions of queer research. In short, we hope to make Chicago in springtime the place to be for young queer scholars to get together, share scholarship, build networks, and create the dialogue that will take the study of sexualities to the next level.

Photos will be available this summer on the Northwestern QPGSA website, <http://groups.northwestern.edu/queerpride>.

*Theo Greene, a second-year graduate student in Sociology, is Co-President of Northwestern's Queer Pride Graduate Student Association. Along with Kelly Harrison (Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy and 2007-08 Gender Studies Teaching Assistant), Greene co-chaired Queertopia!*





## Faculty News, Honors, and Achievements

**Micaela di Leonardo** (Anthropology) recently delivered a paper at Rutgers University on her current research, and will be a keynote speaker for the Performance Studies Summer Institute on Radical Performance, Neoliberalism, and Human Rights at Northwestern.

**Alice Eagly** (Psychology) has been awarded the Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement in the Science of Psychology from the American Psychological Foundation of the American Psychological Association. In March, Eagly gave a keynote address at the Eastern Psychological Association in Boston titled “Sex differences in human behavior: What are their origins?”

**Jillana Enteen** (Gender Studies) has recently published several essays, including “Lesbian Studies in Thailand” in *Twenty-First Century Lesbian Studies* (Haworth Press, 2008) and the preface to *South Asian Technospaces* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2008). She presented papers entitled “Gay Bangkok Online,” at the National Communication Association Annual Convention, and “Bangkok: Gay, and Thai,” at the Association for Internet Researchers Annual Convention. In addition, she co-organized the “Feminist Internet Researchers” pre-conference at the Console-ing Passions conference.

**Lane Fenrich** (History) delivered a lecture entitled “That’s Not How It Works: Sexual Politics from the Lavender Scare to Larry Craig” as part of the Chicago History Museum’s Out at CHM series. This spring, Fenrich was named Charles Deering McCormick University Distinguished Lecturer, Northwestern’s highest teaching honor.

**Christine Froula** (English) delivered a paper entitled “American Feminism, Freedom of Speech, and the

Gender of Violence” at Princeton University, led a Newberry Library Seminar on “Mrs. Dalloway as Public Elegy: Women, War, and the Art of Mourning,” and organized an MLA panel titled “Joyce Lost and Found: The National Library of Ireland Manuscripts.” Recent publications include a review essay entitled “Giacomo Joyce or Assumed Dongiovannism,” “Sex” for *Joyce in Context* (forthcoming from Cambridge University Press), and “On French and British Freedoms: Early Bloomsbury” (a 2005 essay now reprinted in Portugal). Froula also wrote a libretto, “Heloise and Abelard,” for composer John Austin.

**Bonnie Honig** (Political Science) published *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy*, (forthcoming from Princeton University Press). She also received a grant from the American Philosophical Society to finish her book entitled *Antigone, Interrupted* at Oxford University next academic year.

**Louise (Lucy) W. Knight** (Communication Studies) delivered a talk at Center on Halsted, Chicago’s LGBT Community Center on “Love on Halsted Street: A Contemplation on Jane Addams.” She also contributed entries on Jane Addams and Gloria Steinem to the *International Encyclopedia on Revolution and Protest* (forthcoming from Blackwell-Wiley, 2009).

**Phyllis Lassner** (Writing Program) is hosting the tenth annual conference of The Space Between Society: Literature and Culture 1914-1945 at Northwestern this summer. Her essay “The View from a Crevice: Isaiah Spiegel’s ‘Bread’” was published in *The Call of Memory* (Ben Yehuda Press, 2008) and her essay “‘Words That Can’t Be Spoken’: Lesbian Love in the Third Reich” was published in *War-Torn Tales: Literature, Film and Gender in the Aftermath of World War II* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2007).

**Jeffrey Masten** (Gender Studies and English) was awarded a fellowship at the Folger Library in Washington, D.C., for work on his book *Spelling Shakespeare and Other Essays in Queer Philology*. This spring he presented the paper “Glossing and Tugging/Glossing and T\*\*ping: Sexuality and Race in *Othello*,” at the annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America.

**Fran Paden** (Gender Studies and Writing Program) published “Emblematic Sculptures: The Artwork of Felix Gonzalez-Torres” in *Teaching Life Writing Texts* (Modern Language Association Press, 2008), an essay inspired by her teaching of the course “Gender and Autobiography.” In collaboration with Northwestern faculty member Bill Paden (French and Italian), Paden presented on their recent book, *Troubadour Poems from the South of France*, at Northwestern and at the Newberry Library, and delivered a paper entitled “Translating Desire in Troubadour Poems” at the International Medieval Congress.

**Julia Stern** (English) was named Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence, Northwestern’s highest teaching honor.

**Sandi Wisenberg** (Visiting Scholar) was a keynote speaker at the Examined Life: Writing and the Art of Medicine conference held at the University of Iowa. Her blog-based book, *Cancer Bitch*, has been accepted for publication (University of Iowa, forthcoming). In addition, excerpts from the forthcoming book and her essay on marching with Code Pink to protest the war in Iraq were both recently aired on WBEZ, Chicago Public Radio.

entitled “Him, Timmy, She’s *The Ugliest Girl in Town*: Commodified Countercultures and the Industrial Production of a Transgender Subject” at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference, a paper entitled “Is There a Queer Closet?: Quality Sitcom Straight Men and the Question of Self-identification” at the Console-ing Passions conference, and co-organized the Radio, Television, and Film Department’s Queer Media Symposium this spring.

**Maxine Oland** (Anthropology) organized a forum for the 73rd annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, entitled “Motherhood, Institutional Change, and the Future of Women in Archaeology.” The forum stimulated a discussion about how motherhood plays into women’s equity in the archaeological profession.

## If *Brokeback* was Black

by Kelby Harrison

On February 25, 2008, University of Maryland Assistant Professor of American Studies and Women’s Studies Jeffrey Q. McCune, Jr. gave a talk entitled “If *Brokeback* was Black.” A recent Ph.D. graduate of Northwestern’s Performance Studies Department and a recipient of the Gender Studies Graduate Certificate, Prof. McCune spent his graduate years thinking about “the down-low”—African-American men who live public and family lives as heterosexuals and engage in private sexual lives with other men. Prof. McCune’s talk directly engaged questions of race, the down-low, passing, read alongside images of same-sex sexual desire in the recent film *Brokeback Mountain*.

How do we understand ourselves as sexual subjects? This is a guiding question for McCune’s research. In a post-Stonewall world, being “out” is understood as an absolute criterion of liberation. As the recent disclosures of public figures that have passed as heterosexual may suggest (McCune cited Rep. Mark Foley, Rev. Ted Haggard, and Gov. James McGreevey), our modern sexual identities take shape as sexual subjects



through a moment of confession that divides a subject temporally between past lies hidden away in closets and present truths.

The down-low, McCune argues, is subsumed by the closet in our modern rhetoric. This isn’t satisfactory. In McCune’s analysis, the down-low does not have a time narrative associated with it. There is no goal of “coming-out.” The narrative of the closet, however, has too often subsumed the down-low as duplicitous behavior and describes it as “passing.” But rather than “passing,” McCune argues that the down-low must be understood as a positionality, one way of understanding how sexual subjects place

themselves within the complex racial and sexual dynamics of contemporary culture.

McCune argued that the down-low is always racial. He also clearly stated that he can envision the down-low as white. The narrative of *Brokeback*, he argued, illustrates a positionality of the white down-low. He demonstrated this through a close reading of a particularly acute scene, where Ennis and Jack are reunited after four years and entwine in a passionate embrace outside and down below the apartment home of Ennis, his wife and daughter. The scene is both visually metaphorical of the positionality of the down-low and framed by their love story as the appropriate temporal and spatial location of their passion.

Our modern rhetoric of sexual identity would describe Ennis and Jack as passing. However, as McCune argued, they do not want to be liberated from their respective closets; they do not want their love to be publicly exposed; they are content to live their lives together on the white down-low.

Prof. McCune’s talk was followed by a vigorous question and answer session. ●●

## Julia Serano Presents “Transsexual and Transfeminine Perspectives on Sexism”

by C. Nern Ostendorf ’09



photo: Kristina Ogilvie

On May 15, the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board enthusiastically welcomed Julia Serano to Northwestern. Serano is a renowned transgender activist, in addition to being a biologist, a spoken-word performer, and a musician.

In her recent book, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* (Seal Press, 2007), Serano examines how the sexualization of trans women and a more general devaluing of femininity intersect in the present moment. Her consideration of how these attitudes shape our conceptions of gender, sexuality, and identity is both keenly intelligent and accessible to diverse audiences.

During her visit, Serano met with Northwestern students and

faculty at a brown-bag lunch event to discuss and dismantle the theory of *autogynephilia*, a term coined by Canadian sexologist Ray Blanchard.

In her evening lecture, “Transsexual and Transfeminine Perspectives on Sexism,” Serano laid out the diverse types of sexism and examined how each works to oppress and marginalize particular groups. Her analysis went beyond the common critique of mass media and popular culture, critiquing feminist scholarship that discredits femininity as a passive concession to societal pressure as well. At the same time, however, Serano argued that trans-activism needs to be firmly rooted in feminism.

With a full lecture hall of over forty eager listeners, Julia Serano’s visit was a great conclusion to the full program of events that the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board has organized this year. ●●

## Graduate Student Updates

**Katy Chiles** (English) has accepted an appointment beginning this fall as Assistant Professor of English at the University of Tennessee. This spring she presented her work on Hendrick Aupaumut’s “A Short Narration of My Last Journey to the Western Country” at the Society of Early Americanists annual meeting and at the Newberry Library Seminar in Early American History and Culture.

**E. Corzo-Duchardt** (Screen Cultures) presented a paper entitled “Three Transitions: Race, Gender, and Spatial Continuity in *A Florida Enchantment*” at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference in March.

**Hollis Griffin** (Radio/Television/Film) had his article, “Your Favorite Stars, Live On Our Screens: Media

Culture, Queer Publics, and Commercial Space,” accepted for publication in the journal *The Velvet Light Trap*. This spring he presented papers at the Console-ing Passions conference and at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference.

**Angela Maione** (Political Science) is currently a Chateaubriand fellow and enrolled in Northwestern’s dual Ph.D. program with Sciences-Po, Paris.

**Margo Miller** (Radio/Television/Film) has been awarded the Sarah Pettit Dissertation Fellowship from Yale University’s LGBT Studies Program for 2008-2009. Miller published her article entitled “*The Bob Cummings Show*’s ‘Artists at “Work”’: Gender Transitive Programming and Counterpublicity” in the journal *Spectator*. She also presented a paper



## GENDERED CONNECTIONS

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**January 28, 2008** “Troubadour Poems from the South of France,” a reading and discussion with translators William D. Paden and Frances Freeman Paden, cosponsored with the Writing Program, the Center for Writing Arts, and the Medieval Colloquium

**February 25, 2008** Jeffrey Q. McCune, Jr., “If Brokeback was Black,” cosponsored with the Departments of Performance Studies, African American Studies, and Radio/Television/Film (see page 5)

**February 28, 2008** Michelle Citron, lecture and lunch discussion, “Narrating Identity,” organized by the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board (see page 7)

**April 11-12, 2008** “Race, Sex, Power: New Directions in Black and Latina/o Sexualities” Conference at the University of Illinois at Chicago, cosponsored with the Performance Studies Department and universities throughout the Chicago area

**April 18-20, 2008** Black and Latino Queer Performance Festival, cosponsored with the Performance Studies Department

**April 21, 2008** “Actor Slash Model,” film clips, talk, and performance, organized by the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board (photo, right)

**April 25-26, 2008** “Queertopia!: An Academic Festival and Graduate Student Conference,” organized by the Queer Pride Graduate Student Association (see page 1)

**May 8, 2008** John Bracey, lecture and lunch discussion, “Black Student Revolt at Northwestern: Reflections After 40 Years,” cosponsored with the Departments of African American Studies, Art Theory and Practice, and the Peace Project

**May 15, 2008** Julia Serano, lecture and lunch discussion, “Transsexual and Transfeminine Perspectives on Sexism,” organized by the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board (see page 5)

**May 22, 2008** Anthony Rapp, Rainbow Week keynote speaker, cosponsored with the Rainbow Alliance

**June 13-14, 2008** “The Space Between Society: Literature and Culture 1914-1945” Conference at Northwestern, organized by Phyllis Lassner

## Faculty Sabbatical Research

### Farewell to Maternalism?

by Prof. Ann Shola Orloff

In the United States, as across the rich, developed democracies more generally, we are in the midst of what might be called a “farewell to maternalism,” a change in the gendered logic of our system of social provision from supporting women as full-time caregivers (in households headed by breadwinning men or as single mothers) to requiring and supporting employment for all.

Today, motherhood is no longer a basis for making entitlement claims in the U.S. welfare state, whatever its considerable remaining cultural and political-discursive power. Systems of social provision and regulation are being restructured to encourage “activation” and economic self sufficiency, often with reference to increasing levels of women’s – and mothers’ – employment. Both men and women are expected to be employed, but with cross-nationally varying levels of accommodation for the “difference” of care.

This is an epochal shift in social policy, politics and gender relations. I spent the 2006-07 academic year as a fellow at the Russell Sage Foundation researching my book manuscript, “Farewell to Maternalism,”

which aims to describe and to explain this shift; to understand its implications for future policy possibilities; and to assess the gains and losses for feminism in maternalist policy and in the employment-based policies that have replaced it.

The book focuses on the United States, but will include the experiences of several

other countries—Britain, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Italy—to highlight the “roads not taken” by Americans and to deepen our understanding of the promise and problems of the distinctive U.S. policy approach.

Where much of my past work documented and explained the gendering of systems of social provision, I am turning in this project to understanding the sources of a moment in which the possibilities for degendering entitlement are greater than ever before.

Of course, the potential for re-inscribing gender difference also remains, and gender inequalities may mix in new ways with racial and class inequalities. But I argue that – by understanding the dangers and opportunities of both employment- and care-based strategies, as revealed in our policy history – feminists and other advocates of social justice can turn away from nostalgic and utopian calls to improve on the maternalist policies of the past and instead work to expand the opportunities in the shift to employment.

In a political context in which citizenship has always been linked to employment, perhaps we will gain from leaving the entanglements of maternalism behind us. For the costs of maternalism were high; the inadequacies of welfare were not only its lack of generosity, restricted coverage, or onerous eligibility requirements, but also its reinforcing of gender difference and its restriction of women to a narrow range of life possibilities. Could freeing women from the policy-mediated link to mothering open the range of possibilities for women while opening caregiving more fully to men?

The book will provide answers to three questions. First, how can we characterize current policy shifts in the US and other rich democracies? Are we bidding “farewell to maternalism”? Second, if we are seeing the demise of maternalism – as I contend we are – why have these changes occurred? Third, what are the political openings for advocates of women’s emancipation, social equality, and racial justice in the turn toward “employment for all”? ●●



“Actor Slash Model” (April 21) (photo: Kristina Ogilvie)

## Seniors Conduct Honors Thesis Research

*Annually we present abstracts of senior honors theses written by Gender Studies majors. This year Katherine Gorringer received honors in Gender Studies; additionally, Rikki Stern received honors for her thesis in Sociology and Science in Human Culture and participated in the Gender Studies thesis seminar. Thesis writers are assisted by their individual faculty advisors and by thesis-seminar instructor and Honors Coordinator Amy Partridge. Congratulations to these honors-achieving thesis writers!*

**KATHERINE GORRINGER** (Gender Studies and Music '08) “WHEN SHE SINGS, I HEAR THE REVOLUTION: RADICAL FEMINIST DEMANDS ON WOMEN IN POPULAR MUSIC, 1969-1973”

In the late 1960s, as radical feminist activists began to organize, newly emerging female singer-songwriters represented a significant shift in women’s cultural production.

Unlike the previous generation of female musicians—Doris Day, Patti Page, Peggy Lee, Judy Collins—women singer-songwriters such as Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, Buffy Sainte-Marie, and Carole King wrote and sang their own music. In many ways, we would expect feminists of the period to see these women artists—independent women exercising control over their lives and artistic careers—as exemplifying the values of the broader feminist movement. Interestingly, self-identified radical feminists celebrated female artistic expression but did not embrace these musicians as representative of movement goals and aspirations. This dismissal of Baez and other, similar, artists calls into question radical feminist interpretations of existing musical forms. My thesis begins with the question of why radical feminists rejected these female singer-songwriters in order to then examine what cultural forms movement participants demanded, why these forms were privileged over others, and what music and musicians ultimately fulfilled these demands.



**RIKKI STERN** (Sociology and Science in Human Culture '08) “SEMENTICS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CREDENTIALLED AND EXPERIENCE-BASED EXPERT CONSTRUCTIONS OF MALE-FACTOR INFERTILITY”

Drawing on data from the blogs of physicians and infertile men, my research compares how infertile men and doctors make sense of male-factor infertility and demonstrates the extent to which medical models, dominant cultural frames, and economic realities shape this mode of knowledge production about male-factor infertility. I interrogate the functions of this discourse produced by physicians and infertile men and argue that it reduces infertile men to merely the sum of their biological processes and privileges biogenetic connections over other forms of parenting. I then to turn to an examination of how infertile men attend to repeated medical failure in treating their infertility and attempt resolve their reproductive difficulties through social parenthood. Importantly, my data suggests that infertile men, who are unsuccessful in their quest to form biogenetic families, tend to inscribe these alternative family forms with assumptions about biologically determined gender and racial differences.



“Narrating Identity”:  
A Talk by Michelle Citron  
by Sharlyn Grace '08



Prof. Michelle Citron at lunchtime discussion. (photo: Kristina Ogilvie)

On February 28, the Gender Studies Undergraduate Board welcomed Professor Michelle Citron back to Northwestern for a two-part presentation. Prof. Citron taught at Northwestern for 28 years, from 1978 to 2006. Since her departure, she has served as chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Arts at Columbia College, Chicago.

During her visit, Citron discussed her work at a brown-bag lunch and delivered an evening lecture. At the lunch event, Citron discussed *Home Movies and Other Necessary Fictions* (University of Minnesota Press, 1998) and her current project on lesbian identity and community in Chicago with about 20 students, faculty, and staff. Together, the participants debated issues of narration, identity formation, truth, and fiction and their intersection with issues of surveillance, ephemerality and mortality.

In the evening lecture, Citron talked about her work as a visual artist. She described the intentions that informed and the techniques that she used in her latest multimedia pieces, showing clips from *Jewish Looks* (2002), and *Mixed Greens* (2004) to an audience of over 30. This event was co-sponsored by the Departments of Performance Studies; Radio, Television and Film; and Art Theory and Practice.

## Alumnae/i Updates

**Sheetal Prajapati** (2002) was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of Dog and Pony Theatre Company in Chicago, which was founded by Northwestern alum Krissy Vanderwarker (2001) and her associate Devon de Mayo.

**Sara Rubin** (2006) is living in Las Vegas and teaching first grade as a Teach For America corps member. She will continue to teach at the same school next year and plans to attend a graduate program in educational policy in the near future.

**Dana E. Weiner** (Graduate Certificate, 2007) has accepted an appointment as Assistant Professor of History at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. She presented a paper at the Newberry Library Seminar in Rural History entitled “Forged in Conflict: Abolitionists and Old Northwest Hospitality, 1830-1861.”



Clockwise from upper left: Queertopia! organizers Theo Greene (left) and Kelby Harrison (right) with sermon-competition winner Shannon T.L. Furness Kearns; Gender Studies seniors Cora Leech, Mindy Yahr, and Sharlyn Grace at spring awards banquet; Gender Studies majors Marissa Faustini and C. Nern Ostendorf; senior Katherine Gorringer and thesis advisor Prof. Tessie Liu. (photos: Kathleen Fitzgerald and Kristina Ogilvie)

## identities

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Gender Studies at Northwestern is an interdisciplinary program, with faculty affiliates drawn from more than twenty-five departments across four of the University's schools.

Phone: 847.491.5871

Email: [gender@northwestern.edu](mailto:gender@northwestern.edu)

Web: <http://www.wcas.northwestern.edu/genderstudies/>

Program Director & Director of Graduate Studies: Jeffrey Masten

Associate Director & Director of Undergraduate Studies: Amy Partridge

Program Assistant: Katy Weseman

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