From the Director

Perhaps having grown up in a large boisterous family, the sound of heated conversations about newly discovered or imagined worlds is deeply comforting. In the new normal of continual belt-tightening, the comfort of seeing the Institute’s renovated seminar room constantly hosting, at full capacity, lively debates from a host of partner Institutes and Centers as well as the departments that thrive on the Institute’s intellectual riches is perhaps more profound. As well as its own rich array of events, the Institute provided a space for a wide variety of interdisciplinary discussions including a workshop co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race on the “Governance of the Prior” in Critical Indigenous Studies and talks by eminent professors such as Professors Tani Barlow.

IRWaG Wins Prestigious Award

By Elizabeth Povinelli

I am proud to announce that the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWaG) has received the Emerging Center Award from the National Council for Research on Women (NCRW). The National Council for Research on Women (www.ncrw.org) is a network of 120 leading research, policy and advocacy centers. NCRW’s Emerging Center Award is given annually to a new center or one that has experienced significant change in mission or growth within the last five years. IRWaG received the award at the NCRW Annual Conference on June 11-12 in New York City.

In its award notice, the NCRW recognized the new and creative directions at IRWaG including a substantial growth in faculty and intellectual scope; the dynamic leadership its members have provided to the wider university; and its instrumental role in the foundation of a uniquely collaborative advanced study center, the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference. The NCRW noted that by building on a strong foundation of faculty and student commitment, as well as institutional support from the highest levels of the administration, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender has transformed itself in the past five years. It has appointed four distinguished scholars with joint positions in the Institute and several departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences, to bring the permanent faculty to six. Faculty associated with the Institute have taken leadership roles across the university, including in Columbia’s successful Diversity Initiative. The Institute’s most significant achievement is its contribution to a collaborative effort to establish the new Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference. The NCRW noted that by building on a strong foundation of faculty and student commitment, as well as institutional support from the highest levels of the administration, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender has transformed itself in the past five years. It has appointed four distinguished scholars with joint positions in the Institute and several departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences, to bring the permanent faculty to six. Faculty associated with the Institute have taken leadership roles across the university, including in Columbia’s successful Diversity Initiative. The Institute’s most significant achievement is its contribution to a collaborative effort to establish the new Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference.

IRWaG Spotlight:

Eleanor Johnson, Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature

CCASD News

The Battle for Gay Marriage—In the Classroom

IRWaG Senior Essays

Fall 2010 Courses
Ken Corbett on Fantastic Phallicism
By Emily Cersonsky

Lured by an irresistibly alliterative title, students, professors, and members of the Columbia community gathered in Schermerhorn on April 1 to hear the practicing psychoanalyst and scholar Dr. Ken Corbett speak about “Fantastic Phallicism,” a chapter from his recently published book, Boyhoods: Rethinking Masculinities. Corbett, who is currently teaching as a clinical assistant professor of psychology at NYU and who earned his doctorate at Columbia, presented his work as a bid to balance out the last half-century’s post-Freudian focus on “re-imagining” femininity by showing equal consideration to the ways in which masculinity is developed and constructed from childhood through adulthood. Together with an earlier lecture by Jonathan Metzl, Corbett’s talk was presented as part of the ongoing “Embodiments in Science” lecture series sponsored and organized by IRWaG.

In his lecture, as in his similarly titled chapter in Boyhoods, Corbett represented the role and interplay of “phallic narcissism” in male development through the interweaving of case studies involving an eight-year-old boy and a young adult man.
By Nikolas Oscar Sparks

It was obvious after the first panel of the conference, “The Governance of the Prior,” that the central question of indigeneity—the constituting elements of who, where, when, how—would be the site of contention. The conversations that took place over this two-day workshop engaged a variety of questions. Ranging from land rights, developing strategic pedagogy, comparative sovereignties, and the state of the discourses on indigeneity and sovereignty, panelists and audience members left few foundational concepts uninterrogated. While at moments, differences of opinion inserted quite rigid divides, no one could deny the generative qualities of the workshop.

Emerging out of the “Borders and Boundaries Project” in the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference, the “Governance of the Prior” sought to engage with plurality of temporalities and spatialities that ground and organize society.

Emerging out of the “Borders and Boundaries Project” in the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference, the “Governance of the Prior” sought to engage with plurality of temporalities and spatialities that ground and organize society.

Audra Simpson addressing Governance of the Prior panel

By Nikolas Oscar Sparks

Throughout the course of the semester, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender sponsored ongoing conversations around graduate students’ work. Developed by and for graduate students as a forum to discuss timely topics in gender and feminist studies, the Graduate Colloquium, is intended as a space for graduate students and faculty studying women and gender to meet across disciplines in a relaxed, collegial environment. It aims to promote interdisciplinary community and to foster intellectual connections with new colleagues by asking where feminist politics and scholarship intersect?

During the Spring semester, IRWaG hosted three “Research Fridays,” organizing a conversation around the dissertations of Rachel Van from the History department, Adela Ramos from the English and Comparative Literature department, and Lisa Uperesa of Anthropology.

As another semester comes to a close, the success of these events, again, displays IRWaG’s unwavering commitment to fostering a productive and beneficial working environment for faculty and graduate students alike. These three meetings, which were all incredibly successful, provide a small taste of the work being done daily by graduate students, and the conversations they are having with a committed and caring faculty.

Graduate Colloquium: Spring 2010 Research Fridays

Audra Simpson addressing Governance of the Prior panel

News Briefs:

IRWaG congratulates the following faculty on their awards:

Jean Cohen, who has been awarded the Nell and Edward Singer Chair in Contemporary Civilization and Political Theory; Jean Howard, for giving the Columbia Leonard Hastings Schoff Memorial Lectures on “Staging History/Imagining the Nation” that dealt with Shakespeare, Tony Kushner, and Caryl Churchill; Beck Jordan-Young; who received a grant from the Foundation for Worker, Veteran, and Environmental Health for a project on “Transdisciplinary Understanding and Application of Gender Theories to Health”; Eugenia Lean, who was awarded the ACLS/Charles A Ryskamp Research Fellowship for 2010-2011; Rosalind Morris, who was awarded a visiting fellowship at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, in South Africa (May 2010); Frances Negrón-Muntaner, who was named one of New York’s most accomplished Latinas by El Diario La Prensa as part of the annual “Mujeres Destacadas” awards, which honors 25 distinguished Latinas in the Tri-State area (past winners have included Supreme Court Judge Sonia Sotomayor, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, and anchor Soledad O’Brien); Susan Pedersen, who has been awarded a fellowship at the School of History, Institute for Advanced Study, at Princeton, next spring; and Anupama Rao, who will be a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, during the academic year of 2010-2011, working on “Dalit Bombay: Caste, Labor, and Everyday Life in Urban South Asia,” thereafter, she will be in India on a Senior Fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies, for Fall 2011.

Graduate Colloquium: Spring 2010 Research Fridays
Carol Sanger on “Stillbirth: Birth and Death and the Problem for Law”

By Christine Varnado

On February 25, the IRWaG Graduate Colloquium hosted Carol Sanger, Barbara Aronstein Black Professor of Law at Columbia Law School, for a new kind of intellectual event: a discussion in which, rather than presenting a talk, Sanger solicited ideas and input for a book chapter still in its early stages of development. Sanger is investigating changing legal practices around the event of stillbirth—namely, the policy recently adopted in several states allowing parents to file for a birth certificate rather than a death certificate for stillborn children—and their implications for contemporary cultural and political ideologies of personhood, parenthood, and citizenship. As a unique kind of “reproductive event that at once combines birth and death,” Sanger pointed out, stillbirth occupies a particularly fraught position, where intensely personal cultural phenomena, such as mourning rituals and individuals’ experiences of grief and identity, have the potential to intersect with the highly-charged political and legal question of how the state decides what constitutes a person.

In search of feedback about her approach to this topic, Sanger contacted the Institute for Research on Women and Gender to convene a group of graduate students and professors from a wide range of departments outside of her home in the Law School to discuss her ideas. The resultant gathering included representatives from anthropology, English, comparative literature, demography, economics, public health, and history—as well as guests from NYU and the nonprofit/government sector, and scholars working in time periods from the Renaissance to the present day. The attendees were eager to take up Professor Sanger’s challenge to analyze the issuing of birth certificates in stillbirths through a variety of conceptual frameworks: parallels were raised—and subsequently critiqued—between the stillbirth question and American debates over gay marriage, “covenant marriage,” illegal immigration, late-term abortion, ultrasound laws, and penalties for infanticide; as well as India’s bifurcated legal system of civil and religious courts, and Japan’s customs of mourning for miscarried and aborted fetuses.

The vigorous theoretical exchange that ensued over Professor Sanger’s feminist legal intervention into these questions was a new form of discussion for the Graduate Colloquium, one which will hopefully set a precedent for future collaborative discussions of feminist scholars’ new ideas. Anyone interested in convening an interdisciplinary group for such a conceptual discussion of a project in its formative stages should contact the current IRWaG Graduate Fellow, Emily Cersonsky, efc2106@columbia.edu.

Felicity Nussbaum’s “Actresses and Patrons: A Jury of their Peers”

By Mashinka Firunts

The 18th-century was not the age of the author, but of the actress, asserted Felicity Nussbaum, Professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles, redeploying a phrase coined by British literary scholar Allardyce Nicoll. The lecture following this provocation, “Actresses and Patrons: A Jury of their Peers,” was delivered to a packed audience in the seminar room of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender on January 24th in 754 Schermerhorn Extension. The event was co-sponsored by IRWaG in cooperation with the Columbia University Department of English and Comparative Literature.

Professor Nussbaum’s paper was excerpted from her forthcoming book, Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Her talk exemplified Professor Nussbaum’s notoriety as a specialist in British literature (1660-1800), postcolonial and Anglophone studies, and gender studies, with such publications as The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century (Cambridge University Press, 2003). Nussbaum’s opening gambit cut to the quick of her argument. For some time, scholars have argued that the 18th-century belonged to the action: and it has been gentlemen players, managers, and playwrights who
Tani E. Barlow’s “Girls in Society: ‘Asia,’ Colonial Modernity, and the Place of Vernacular Sociology in Consumer Culture”

By Mashinka Firunts

In the Spring 2008 issue of the Journal of Women’s History, Tani E. Barlow explains the methodological approach employed in The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism. She writes, “The theoretical cannot fully index the historical without reference to histories outside the domain of philosophy.” Regions of subject matter typically excluded from the topography of theoretical discourse on history—namely material ephemera—also governed Professor Barlow’s February 11th presentation at Columbia University.

Entitled “Girls in Society: ‘Asia,’ Colonial Modernity, and the Place of Vernacular Sociology in Consumer Culture,” the lecture was delivered in 754 Schermerhorn Extension to an interdisciplinary audience of faculty and students. This interdisciplinary audience mirrored the wide range of co-sponsors who helped bring Professor Barlow to Columbia, including the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, the Department of Anthropology, the Weatherhead Institute, and the Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture. In addition to serving as Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Professor of Asian Studies at Rice University, Professor Barlow is Director of the Chao Center for Asian Studies and founding senior editor of the journal positions: east asia culture critiques published by Duke University Press. In critical ways Barlow returned to the inaugural issue of positions, published in the Spring of 1993 and devoted to exploring the meanings of colonial modernity in East Asia. The Modern Girl, a critical figure of East Asian colonial modernity reflected an early preoccupation to which Barlow returned in her February 11th IRWaG appearance.

In response to the forces of colonization and a weakened sense of nationhood, interwar vernacular sociology—here defined as the set of popular ideological trends circulating throughout the metropolises of early 20th-century China—was chiefly concerned with issues of social evolution and eugenics. Moreover, the prevailing view of the “work of sociology” was the “determination of which factors bring about the rise of ‘fit nations’,” noted Professor Barlow. It was in this sociopolitical context that the Modern Girl emerged, both

Feminist Interventions:
Rachel Adams’ “Pregnant Silences: Genetic Testing and Fetal Disability”

By Nikolas Oscar Sparks

The Feminist Interventions lecture series provides Columbia University faculty members associated with the Institute for Research on Women and Gender an opportunity to discuss work in progress with colleagues and students in a dynamic round-table format. For the spring semester, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature Rachel Adams presented her paper, “Pregnant Silences: Genetic Testing and Fetal Disability.” Responding to her paper was Barbara Aronstein Black Professor of Law Carol Sanger. What followed was a productive and provocative discussion that ranged from the politics of class and reproduction to the desire of national futures and personal legacies.

Professor Adams’ proposed a variety of questions in the paper circulated prior to the event. One of the most striking was: What is the place of the disabled fetus and the mother who carries it? With the advancements in genetic and pre-natal testing, the health of a fetus can now be diagnosed through a variety of required and optional tests. However, as Professor Adams argued, there is quite a profound ethical dilemma present in the implementation of these tests.

Professor Adams identified what she understands as the “normative narratives” of pregnancy and birth, and how these normative narratives inform the notion of a healthy child. Of particular interest to Adams are narratives focusing on the
Faculty Publications

Writing
Women’s Worlds: Bedouin Stories
By Lila Abu-Lughod

Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory
By Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer

Reflections on the History of an Idea: Can the Subaltern Speak?
By Rosalind C. Morris

Christmas Tales and Stories by Louisa May Alcott
By Laura Ciolkowski

Commerce before Capitalism in Europe, 1300-1600
By Martha C. Howell

The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India
By Anupama Rao

The Eve of Spain: Myths of Origins in the History of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Conflict
By Patricia E. Grieve

Sovereign Acts
By Frances Negron-Muntaner
(Forthcoming)

Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)
By Neferti Tadiar, Stanley Fish, and Frederic Jameson

The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV
By Jennifer S. Hirsch, Holly Wardlow, Daniel Jordan Smith, and Harriet M. Phinney

Feminismo em Movimento (Feminism in Movement)
By Lia Machado

The Greek Poets: Homer to the Present
By Peter Constantine, Rachel Hadas, Edmund Keeley, and Karen Van Dyck

Contemporary Women’s Writing: Vol 3, Num 2, December 2009
Introduction—Gracy Paley
Writing the World
By Marianne Hirsch

Photographies East: The Camera and Its Histories in East and Southeast Asia (Objects/Histories)
By Rosalind C. Morris, Nicholas Thomas, Nickola Pazderic, and Patricia Spyer
IRWaG Spotlight:
Eleanor Johnson, Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature

By Nikolas Oscar Sparks

Some might say that being a first-year assistant professor at Columbia results in a full-time commitment to the Columbia Core Curriculum, with time for little else. Do not tell that to Assistant Professor Eleanor Johnson. Johnson, Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature and a member of the Executive Committee at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, has managed to remain quite active in spite of her new professional responsibilities. The first year faculty member has already published two books of poetry, The Dwell (Scrambler Books, 2009) and Her Many Feathered Bones (Achiote Press, 2010), while currently working on a book manuscript entitled Sensible Prose and the Sense of Meter. Johnson, who received her PhD from the English department at the University of California, Berkeley, while simultaneously receiving her MA in poetry, will also take on the position of Director of Undergraduate Studies at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender this coming fall.

Johnson’s most recent collection of poetry, Her Many Feathered Bones, developed while she was still living in Berkeley. The collection, a collaborative effort with Oakland-based visual artist Jessica Serran, mixes Johnson’s poetics with Serran’s illustrations. The project, which developed over a sustained period of time, became an experiment in different modes of expression, with each author responding to the poem or drawing sent to them by their collaborator. Johnson described the dialogic process as a “backing and forthing, extended aesthetic dialogue...ended up being a weirdly non-narrative love story between my poetry and her drawings.” The text displays Johnson’s uncanny ability to mold traditional poetic form in order to explore the boundaries of her own creative process.

While Johnson has kept busy with her poetry and teaching Columbia College undergraduates, she continues to diligently work on a manuscript that combines a multitude of her scholarly interests: literary theory, England, Medieval law, mysticism, and philosophy. Johnsons locates the origins of literary theory in late 14th-century England, noting its emergence from a set of conversations contemporary authors and philosophers were having with Boethius’ Consolation of Philosophy. This text, which switches back and forth between prose and meter, works as a protreptic. Johnson explains, “A protreptic is meant to stage a transformation of the soul in its narrator and also model [a transformation] for its reader.” Johnson believes in the importance of this concept precisely because of its intent on transforming the reader. Much like her own poetry, there is a profound investment in the transformative possibilities of the literary. Consolation of Philosophy is scheduled to come out early next year.

Not surprisingly the Institute is thrilled to have Johnson as DUS and leader of the 2010 fall semester senior seminar in which IRWaG undergraduates begin their senior thesis. As a committed teacher, Johnson revels in the thought of working closely with a select few students committed to a singular goal. And while she understands that with this added opportunity that academic life will only become more chaotic and challenging, this is a workload that will surely benefit an already outstanding educator and scholar.

CCASD News

Joan Scott and Mary Louise Pratt on “Social Difference and Contact Zones” @ the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference

Professor Joan Scott, a founder of the Pembroke Center for Research on Women at Brown University and Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University, and Professor Mary Louise Pratt, a founder of the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis and Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and Social and Cultural Analysis at NYU were featured in the May 4th panel “Social Difference and Contact Zones: Reflections on Intellectual and Institutional Innovation,” organized by the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference (CCASD). Professors Scott and Pratt shared some of their thoughts and reflections on intellectual and institutional innovation, a topic that is at the heart of CCASD’s efforts to build a center promoting interdisciplinary scholarship on the global dynamics of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race. Please explore CCASD’s website (www.socialdifference.org) to learn more about the Center and its projects.

CCASD News, Continued on Page 12
The Battle for Gay Marriage—In the Classroom

Controversial college courses about same-sex unions are a much-needed lesson in critical thought

By Katherine Franke and Katherine Biers

Reprinted from Salon.com’s Broadsheet
www.salon.com/life/broadsheet/
2010/05/26/gay_marriage_101

Many people regard marriage rights for same-sex couples as the civil rights issue of this generation. Indeed, you’d be hard-pressed to find anyone who doesn’t have strong feelings one way or the other on this issue: Should courts recognize the marriage rights of lesbian and gay couples as a matter of dignity and equality, or should we respect opposition to same-sex matrimony based in religion and traditional morality?

This issue has taken a new turn in recent weeks as Seton Hall University political science professor King Mott was notified that the class he was planning to teach in the fall, titled “Gay Marriage,” might be canceled by the university’s governing board when it meets on June 4. Newark Archbishop John J. Myers said the course conflicts with the teachings of the Catholic Church (Seton Hall is a Catholic university). “This proposed course seeks to promote as legitimate a train of thought that is contrary to what the Church teaches,” Archbishop Myers said in a statement. “As a result, the course is not in synch with Catholic teaching.”

We have taken a special interest in Professor Mott’s class because we too are scheduled to teach a new class titled “Gay Marriage” this fall at Columbia University, through the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. The flier we put together to advertise the class poses two views of the marriage issue: One image captures gay rights demonstrators protesting laws that preclude them from marrying, while the other image, from the group Dyke Action Machine, asks: “Why Be Boring for a Blender? You Might as Well Be Straight.”

Gay Marriage, Continued on Page 9
The Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Columbia University

is pleased to announce the winners of this year’s Queer and Women’s and Gender Studies Awards.

The winner of the 2010 Queer Studies Award is Anna Steffens, “‘Another Androgynous Freak Show’: The ‘Pregnant Man’ and Transgender Politics in American Pop Culture.” (American Studies, Barnard College)

The winner of the 2010 Women’s and Gender Studies Award is Chloe Smith, “Ladies and Females: Women’s Missionary and Educational Work in Nineteenth-Century India.” (History, School of General Studies, Columbia University)

The committee also awarded an Honorable Mention to Buck Ellison’s “Re-reading Schiele: Elke Krystufek, Photography and Viennese Modernism.” (Visual Arts, Columbia College)

Julie Crawford, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, would like to thank the members of this year’s Awards Committee: Professor Katherine Biers, Emily Cersonsky, Annie Holt, Professor Elisabeth Ladenson, Professor Rosalind Morris, and Christine Varnado.

Gay Marriage, Continued from Page 8

Unlike professor Mott, we have little worry that officials from our university will step in and cancel our class for ideological or moral reasons. But that doesn’t mean that we are immune from ideological criticism of the material we will cover in our course. Oddly enough, that criticism may come from the LGBT community itself.

The Catholic Church has an official line on same-sex marriage—totally against it—and by and large the official gay community has one too—totally for it. But there are more than a few people within the lesbian and gay community who have questioned the wisdom of the political and legal strategies pursued by the leading gay rights organizations to make marriage the most important issue of the day. Why would a movement founded by sex radicals, transvestites and lesbian-feminists set their sights on assimilation to and inclusion in such an outmoded, sexist and heterosexist institution? (This is where the blender critique comes in.)

The respectability that marriage would confer on same-sex couples is exactly what they don’t want. Not surprisingly, the movement’s lawyers who have elevated same-sex marriage to issue No. 1 have not taken kindly to this criticism.

This kind of intra-community debate is not new. Recall that when the NAACP and other civil rights organizations made racial integration their top priority in the 1950s, some parts of the black community objected. The dissenters felt that it was more important to push for greater resources for the black community than to fight for black children to win the right to sit next to white children in school. That was a difficult and principled disagreement between factions within a community, and we’re having a similar one now in the gay community about marriage.

It’s the richness of this debate that renders it such a likely and important subject of academic study, not the fact that the professors teaching the course have a particular political agenda they want to advance with their students. Marriage has a rich and complex history in the United States, one that is tied up in evolving notions of equality, liberty, dignity and citizenship, as well as family, respectability, love and what it means to be an adult. What’s more, almost all recent welfare reform initiatives have included funding for programs that would encourage poor people to marry and teach them how to stay married. Underlying these initiatives isn’t romance and warm and fuzzy feelings about the family, but the state’s interest in privatizing the costs of paying for poor children.

Treating gay marriage as a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” issue both fails to grasp the complexity of this particular political issue and deprives students of the opportunity to think critically about how the world is changing and why it should. In the end, some or many Seton Hall students might come to agree with official church doctrine on marriage for same-sex couples, but doing so as a matter of orthodoxy rather than critical reflection defies the whole idea of what it means to receive a higher education.

Katherine Franke is a professor of law and director of the Center for Gender & Sexuality Law at Columbia Law School; Katherine Biers is an assistant professor in Columbia’s English and Comparative Literature department.
IRWaG Senior Essays

By Nikolas Oscar Sparks

As this past Spring Semester started, the majority of seniors had their eyes set on graduation. A requirement here, a final paper there, and they would know the highly overrated feeling of life after college. However, for three Women’s and Gender Studies seniors, the road to graduation went right through Professor Julie Crawford’s senior thesis seminar. Anna Couturier, Ashley Silver, and Beth Skipp spent the final months of their respective college careers crafting what would be the culmination of multiple classes, research trips, translations, and lived experiences.

Professor Crawford’s course focused on the complex nature of researching and writing an academic paper, as well as the professional skills one needs in the academy. Professor Crawford describes the class as follows: “In addition to providing a forum in which students can conceive of, plan, research, develop and write a substantive research project, the senior seminar also provides a supportive framework—both professorial and peer—for that work, and, in its final weeks, a forum in which to develop, and practice delivering, a succinct precis of the project from genesis to thesis.” Out of this supportive framework emerged three projects that were as diverse as they were insightful.

Anna Couturier’s project, under the diligent tutelage of Anthropology Professor Elizabeth Povinelli, emerged largely out of her experiences interning with the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) and time spent in Turkey with Lambda Istanbul. Her project, “The Impact of International Human Rights Discourse on Local LGBT Advocacy: The Case of Turkey,” examines what Couturier considers to be the large-scale exporting of a U.S. centric discourse on global LGBT rights. At the same time, Couturier takes seriously a praxis that simultaneously locates the production and contradictions of these discourses within neoliberalism and human rights projects and the possibility of implementing a productive political project from within localized LGBT communities.

Ashley Silver’s project, “Yalta and Beruriah: The Power of Knowledge in Rabbinic Literature,” incorporates her knowledge of Jewish law and her skills as a translator acquired at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Under the direction of her advisor, Marjorie Lehman, Assistant Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics, Silver examines particular passages on the Talmud in which named women appear in relation to rabbinic discussions of Jewish law. Silver describes her project less as a feminist reading of Talmud passages, which she translated herself, than an inquiry into the production of knowledge and the subsequent levels of access allowed by gender and its production under the law.

Finally, Beth Skipp’s final project “It’s NOT Just a Hustle...’: Flo Kennedy, Feminist Historiography, and the Question of Style” examines the legacy of lawyer, activist, civil rights advocate, and feminist Florynce Kennedy. Skipp examines Kennedy’s unique legacy and how it might lend itself to a particular narrative of feminist history. Noting the lack of work on Kennedy’s life, with the notable exception of Color Me Flo: My Hard Life and Good Times, Skipp hopes to engage some of the absences left by this lack of engagement with a truly important feminist figure.

The final step in this long process occurred Thursday, May 6, with the presentation of their final projects. As Crawford says, “it serves as a useful training for highlighting, epitomizing and presenting their work. The senior seminar presentations are thus the final stage in the process.” And for these three seniors, this was one of the last hurdles before they began their long awaited sabbatical from academia. That is, until they apply for graduate school.
IRWaG was thus thrilled to have been awarded the Emerging Center Award from the National Council for Research on Women for its new and creative directions. Not only has IRWaG been a central force in the creation of the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference, along with the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, the Institute for Research on African American Studies, and Barnard Center for Research on Women, it has also witnessed a significant expansion of its faculty over the last five years. The cacophony of intellectual debate focused on the scholarship and politics of embodiment will, then, hardly abate anytime soon.

The lovely thing about the Spring semester, of course, is that we witnessed the graduation of our seniors and concentrators. They might have last minute regrets leaving their cramped New York quarters and cramped subway lines, but we wish them all the best as they take the skills and knowledge earned in Women’s and Gender Studies into their post-graduate lives.

We also wish our colleagues who have earned a break from the pleasures of teaching and administration a productive summer of research and writing. And as they depart, I would like to thank Professor Lila Abu-Lughod for her stellar leadership of the Graduate Program, a task she took up even though she was also serving as the Director of the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference. It will take three of us to replace her next semester—Professor Marianne Hirsch and I will serve as Director(s) of Graduate Studies and Professor Alice Kessler-Harris will be leading the pedagogy seminar in Spring 2011.

I would also like to expend a heartfelt thanks to our two fantastic Directors of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Katherine Biers who gallantly stepped into the breach for the Fall semester and Professor Julie Crawford who returned for her last tour in the Spring. They are truly irreplaceable creative and scholarly voices at the helm. I am not the least surprised that Professor Crawford was awarded a Lenfest Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award. Except of course, we have a new fabulous Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Eleanor Johnson (see article on pg. 7). Professor Johnson joins us from the Department of English where she specializes in late medieval English prose and poetry, medieval poetics and philosophy, law and literature in the Middle Ages, early autobiography, and vernacular theology.

We also bid farewell to our graduate fellows, Emily Cersonsky, Rachel Van, and Christine Varnado, and welcome our new fellows, Kitana Ananda, Emily Cersonsky, Anne Montgomery, and Sonali Thakkar; and our newsletter writers, Mashinka Firunts and Nikolas Oscar Sparks; and our teaching fellows, Emily Cersonsky and Annie Holt. The Institute cannot run without their constant, diligent, and creative energy. Some of us remain, of course. And thank goodness for that. Page Jackson remains our Managing Director. And, I am very pleased to announce, that Vina Tran was promoted to Program Coordinator. IN
Metzl, Continued from Page 2

counterpart even though according to
genetic science, there is no racial basis
for this disease which affects 1 in every
100 Americans, regardless of race. The
perception of schizophrenic personalities
also changed during this time, from the
introverted “white male genius” to the
“unduly hostile and violent” black male.
Metzl pointed out that schizophrenia
actually decreases the likelihood of
violent behavior in its victims. So what’s
with the dramatic and biologically
unsupported shift?

Metzl offered a cultural narrative to
t contextualize the clinical data. Pre 1960’s
famous Caucasians such as writer T.E.
Lawrence and first lady Mary Todd
Lincoln were glorified as historic
schizophrenics. Schizophrenia was a
popular trope used in women’s
magazines to decry the pressures of
being perfect housewives as a source of
white, middle class woes. Caucasian
models posed in pristine white hospitals
for anti-psychotic medication
advertisements in medical journals.

During the civil rights movement of
the 1960’s, the representations of
schizophrenia in pop culture mass media
changed entirely, claiming the crazed
black man as its new poster child. With
the desegregation of hospital wards,
clinical studies could be performed on
black patients for the first time, and these
could be compared to studies of white
patients. The anti-psychotic ads featured
deranged black men with threatening,
clanched fists in prison cells and used
tag-lines such as, “Assaultive and
Belligerent?” Schizophrenia—the disease
of the “split mind”—became a metaphor
for race in both mass media and in the
speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to
represent a country split along racial
lines. It also acquired a protest identity; it
was the disease of black America’s
“psychotic repudiation of white society.”

Metzl stressed that he was not
suggesting that psychiatric diagnostic
manuals suddenly adopted a language of
violence to characterize the symptoms of
schizophrenics in order to target and
over-diagnose black men during the civil
rights era. However he did conclude with
a statistic demonstrating the
criminalization of the mental illness: a
schizophrenic today has a 5 to 1 chance
of ending up in a prison rather than in a
hospital. Metzl concluded by stressing the
need for “cultural humility training” to
dismantle the racial and behavioral
stigmas that schizophrenia continues to
carry today.

Reprinted from Bwog post,
“LectureHop: The ‘Black Disease’”

CCASD News, Continued from Page 7

Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference:
“Rethinking the Disciplines:
Intersectionality and Social Difference”

The Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference (CCASD)
is an advanced study center that promotes innovative scholarship on
the role of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race in global dynamics of
power and inequality. The Center’s goals include sharing cutting-edge
research, mentoring junior scholars from across the world,
contributing to public debate, and formulating comparative research
agendas for the future. The Center is the research arm of the Institute
for Research in African-American Studies, the Center for the Study of
Ethnicity and Race, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender,
the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, and the Barnard
Center for Research on Women.

CENTER FOR THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

On May 5th, the Center held its 2010 retreat, with the generous
support of the Mellon Foundation. Participants from CCASD’s
existing working projects (“Engendering the Archive”; “Towards an
Intellectual History of Black Women”; “Borders & Boundaries”;
“Liberalism and its ‘Others’”) and five constituent centers joined in
discussion of some of the innovative interdisciplinary work at the
Center. Please explore CCASD’s website (www.socialdifference.org)
to learn more about the Center and its projects.
concepts of sovereignty and the indigenous. The range of paper topics, as well as the guiding questions of the conference, lived up to the high expectations of conference organizers Professor Elizabeth Povinelli, (Anthropology and Director of IRWaG) and Assistant Professor Audra Simpson, (Anthropology).

A variety of scholars, the majority of whom specialized in indigeneity, sovereignty and post-colonial theory, came from a multitude of locales from the United States and Canada. Participants included: Ned Blackhawk, Professor of History and American Studies at Yale University; Kevin Bruyneel, Associate Professor of Politics at Babson College; Jessica Cattelino, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles; Glen Coulthard, Assistant Professor in the First Nations Studies Program and Department of Political Science at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver; Sandy Grande, Associate Professor and Chair of the Education Department at Connecticut College; J. Kéhaulani Kauauni, Associate Professor of American Studies and Anthropology at Wesleyan University; Robert Nichols, Assistant Professor of Political Theory and Philosophy at the University of Alberta; Andrea Lee Smith, Assistant Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California, Riverside; and co-organizer Audra Simpson, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Columbia.

The first day got off to a blistering start with Blackhawk, Kauauni, and Grande raising the concept of comparative sovereignties: what remained of sovereignty and the Indigenous once placed in a deep historical and comparative context. On the second day of the conference, Simpson placed the economies of sovereignty in the economics of affect, arguing, “The cost of justice is pain in an economy of sympathy.” Sovereignty, she argued, could not be approached without simultaneously addressing the unavoidable aspects of an originary injury. For Simpson the concept of indigeneity is both a claim for rights and state of injury. Echoing similar critiques of liberal conceptions of freedom and redress, Simpson argued for an alternative to traditional gestures of restoration. For Simpson, the attempts at redress for indigenous populations have largely been marred by the conflation of compensation with redress.

Kauauni made a similar point in her presentation on the question of indigeneity in the case of Hawai’i. The category of the prior or indigeneity is never merely a temporal configuration. In the case of Hawai’i, the violent consolidation of island rulers by King Kamehameha troubles the temporal narrative of sovereign displacement and the removal of indigenous peoples through practices such as settler colonialism, as was the case in mainland North America.

While not all of the papers took this particular approach to the question of indigeneity and the prior, what was reflected in the conversations and concerns that emerged over the course of these two days was a deep investment in unsettling any fixed or homogeneous understanding of the term. The movement towards

“The cost of justice is pain in an economy of sympathy.”
Rachel Van, History

Rachel Van, a PhD candidate in Columbia’s History department, presented the fourth chapter of her dissertation titled, “The ‘Woman Pigeon’: Mobility, Domesticity, & Discourses of Civilization in the Trading Ports of Canton & Macau.” Eugenia Lean, Associate Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures, served as Van’s interlocutor for the day.

Van describes the chapter as follows: Prior to the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, Chinese law prohibited the presence of foreign women in Canton (Guangzhou). Ladies who made the journey to China from the Atlantic lived in a small enclave 80 miles to the south in the Portuguese colony of Macau. From 1800 when the East India Company allowed women to travel in the berths of Company ships to 1842, a mixed-sex community developed in Macau that was particularly tied to the English and American-dominated trade of Canton. While considerable research has been done on the “China trade” during this period, far less is known about the relationship between Canton and Macau. This paper shows that examining the two sites together is critical to understanding how sexuality and family life shaped trade and foreign relations prior to the Treaty of Nanking.

Van examines the domestic life and everyday workings of American ex-pat life in Canton and Macau in order to unpack the new forms of sociality emerging in the colony. Using a collection of letters as her archive, Van explores the capacity of this genre (the letter) to knit together the intersecting social dynamics of this particular time and space creating new languages and practices of intimacy, sexuality, and family.

In her commentary on the chapter Professor Lean examined the incredibly productive and expansive aspects of Van’s chapter, while also providing insight on developing certain underutilized aspects of the chapter. Leading to a lively exchange between Lean and Van, a packed room offered comments and questions on topics ranging from colonial discourses to the nature of male domestic life in these particular settings.

Adela Ramos, English and Comparative Literature

By Emily Cersonsky

On April 9, graduate student Adela Ramos of the Department of English and Comparative Literature and Professor Madeleine Dobie of the Department of French and Romance Philology joined an enthusiastic crowd to conduct a stimulating discussion of Ramos’ dissertation chapter entitled “Species Fellowship: Women and Animals in Mary Wollstonecraft’s A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.” Ramos and Professor Dobie’s discussion was part of the IRWaG Graduate Colloquium’s “Research Fridays” series, which seeks to join graduate students and junior faculty in consideration of new scholarly work. In the case of Ramos and Professor Dobie, this was certainly an enlightening pairing.

Ramos began the discussion with an overview of her chapter, which had been distributed to the audience prior to the event. She outlined the different ways in which animals and humans were represented in eighteenth-century literature, namely, how they were differentiated from one another, or how they came to represent each other through anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, or animal narratives. In the case of Mary Wollstonecraft, Ramos argued that this differentiation functioned mainly through the term “species,” which Wollstonecraft appropriated from contemporary natural history as a mode of separating women from animals, so as to place the former on the same plane as men. Ramos made a cogent argument for the various ways in which Wollstonecraft’s Vindication of the Rights of Women yielded a view of the intersection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century debates over women’s and animal rights, and as well as the way in which this argument fits into her larger dissertation project, which looked at the role of animals in literature throughout this period.

In response to Ramos’ chapter, Professor Dobie presented a critique which focused on those parts of the chapter that she
Graduate Colloquium, Continued from Page 14

wished to see highlighted or expanded in future work. She expressed her interest in the connections Ramos had made to contemporary debates regarding the possibility of linking human, animal, environmental, or even corporate rights, and she wondered if these might be brought more to the fore. She also stressed the importance of ideas such as materialism of the soul or “genre” as helping to differentiate humans and animals in the eighteenth century, as well as the ways in which these terms might be used differently in a contemporaneous French writer like the Comte de Buffon. True to her crossinter-disciplinary perspective, Professor Dobie wondered, too, whether a consideration of Wollstonecraft’s relation to Continental thinkers like Jacques Rousseau or Olympe de Gouges might enrich a discussion of women’s and animal rights during the Enlightenment.

The conversation that followed Professor Dobie’s insightful commentary led in a variety of fascinating directions. Professor Susan Crane asked about the connection between animals, women, Genesis, and Eden, via an 18th-century translation of Linnaeus which discussed classification as a “beginning.” Another question turned to the peculiarly British focus on societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, which led to a further query as to whether pre-Enlightenment, contrasting uses of land tenures in France and England might have served as the origin for this national difference. Yet another question led to a discussion of the evolution of first-person animal narratives across the eighteenth century. The audience was filled with students and scholars from a variety of disciplines, and the conversation could easily have continued well past its appointed time. We look forward to continuing it at future events in the Graduate Colloquium.

Lisa Uperesa, Anthropology

Lisa Uperesa, also a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology, presented the fourth chapter of her dissertation at the final Research Friday of the year. An engaged group of participants listened and responded intently as Uperesa and Professor Neferti Tadiar, of Women’s Studies at Barnard, discussed the chapter “Gridiron Capital.”

Uperesa’s project undertakes a historical analysis of social changes in Samoa since the 1960’s. This particular chapter examined the aspirations of relationship between Samoans and aspirations towards success in American professional football. Through a mix of ethnographic and historical analysis, Uperesa deftly outlined the relationship among capitalism, militarism, and the Samoan desire to dominate in American football. At the center of the chapter was a deep ethnography as a way of experiencing and understanding the localized effects of these relationships. Setting the foundation for much of her theoretical work, these ethnographies moved deftly across the voices of Samoans directly involved in, or those attempting to become a part of, these instances of transnational commerce.

Professor Tadiar offered numerous comments that propelled the conversation forward and opened numerous new avenues for Uperesa to explore. Amongst the pertinent comments Professor Tadiar offered, what seemed most pertinent was that Uperesa drew out the relationship between sports and the military relationship between the U.S. and Samoa. Tadiar pushed Uperesa’s conceptualization of the Samoan body within this transnational economy, where the intelligibility of the other’s body—similarly to historical instances of imperial and colonial relationships—depends on its particular capacities for labor. Uperesa points out the configuration of these relationships as they occur through the spectacles of sports and war.

Furthermore, Uperesa engages in extensive ethnographic work to understand the localized effects of these relationships. Setting the foundation for much of her theoretical work, these ethnographies look to involve the voices of Samoans directly involved in, or those attempting to become a part of, these instances of transnational commerce.

Conclusion

As another semester comes to a close, the success of these events, again, displays IRWaG’s unwavering commitment to fostering a productive and beneficial working environment for faculty and graduate students alike. These three meetings, which were all incredibly successful, provide a small taste of the work being done daily by graduate students, and the conversations they are having with a committed and caring faculty.
Barlow, Continued from Page 5

as nude spokesperson for race-revitalizing “eugenics tonics”, and as personification of a possible renewal of national vitality. Her sexual subjectivity and purposively provocative visual identity effectively aroused heterosexual desire, a step toward satisfying a primary precondition for the success of eugenics: reproduction.

Barlow’s argument was clear: The familiar figure of the eroticized, Marcel-waved Modern Girl represents a radical repositioning of female subjectivity in interwar China. In “Girls in Society,” Professor Barlow proceeded to reframe the Modern Girl as a historical catachresis, a neologistic signifier that lacks an accurate referent at the time of its coinage, but eventually generates this referent by codifying perception through cementation in the cultural lexicon. Through a methodological approach amalgamating historiography, theoretical examination, and archival investigation; the genesis of the Modern Girl in East Asia was traced to the collision of the colonial modernity, consumer advertising, and vernacular sociology.

Illustrative imagery of interwar advertising accompanied the lecture, all of which uniformly relied upon the logics of Social Darwinism to stimulate the consumer impulse. “Product campaigns succeeded when evolutionary sociology was stressed” and the notion of “futurity” given pride of place, Professor Barlow outlined. In her formulation, these advertisements function not only as archives of consumer marketing in the interwar period, but rather as markers of the intersectionality of commodity culture and social philosophy within the framework of colonial modernity and its ubiquitous counterpart, industrial capitalism. As “Girls in Society” demonstrated, it was at the largely unmined site of material ephemera that the historical catachresis of the Modern Girl was produced.

Corbett, Continued from Page 2

Though these studies could be seen to present the usual self-reinforcing stereotypes of male narcissism and aggression (“boys will be boys”), Corbett argued that they also showed the ways in which so-called “phallic narcissism” could serve as a creative tool for boys to connect to other males through emulation, competition, and creative collaboration. Or as Corbett writes in his book: “To see big. To seem big. To feel big. To be big in relation. To expand toward another and within another through phallic narcissism, and the fantastic mutuality found therein. To fantastically construct a body in relation to another.”

The key word here, as in the title of Corbett’s lecture, is “fantastic.” For Corbett, the word comes to mean not only bigness and greatness, but also the ways in which play and imagination serve as modes for exercising and practicing “phallic narcissism.” In his lecture, Corbett explained this through the story of his eight-year-old patient Robert, with whom he discussed the boyish desire to “pummel” other boys (namely, his brother) even though Robert knew that this would mean mutual pummeling-back. Corbett experienced this mutual exercise of “phallic narcissism” through the guilty joy he took in winning Robert’s game of “Crash Car Derby.” Though Robert’s hand became injured in the course of the game, and though Corbett began to feel guilty for this injury, Robert insisted on continuing to play, and was disappointed when Corbett seemed more distanced from the competition. Corbett understood this as Robert’s and his own desire for a mutual loss in “phallic narcissism,” in the game’s violent fantasy.

Corbett described this experience of “losing oneself” (Eminem had figured earlier in his talk) as a prefiguration of the later phallic experience of sex. He discussed “the hope and dread of the erection” which may result in either mutual recognition of narcissism. In response to a question from the audience, he explained that, as in “Crash Car Derby,” sometimes the desire for sex is not a desire for mutual recognition, but instead for a loss in narcissistic abandon—“sometimes you want to be lost…sometimes you want to be run over.”

Though his book and lecture focused mainly on how “mutuality” and “narcissism” function in masculinity and male-male relationships, the questions following his discussion led Corbett toward a complementary discussion of ongoing reconsiderations of femininity. For this he turned to Lady Gaga and Beyoncé’s recent music video “Telephone,” suggesting that the audience look to it for a glimpse of “a different idea of what women are now…who they can be.” This wrapped up an enlightening lecture on the breadth of new psychoanalytic research in gender studies, and completed an exciting semester for the “Embodiments of Science” series.

Reporting contributed by Megan McGregor for Bwog, (bwog.net/2010/04/02/lecturehop-fantastic-phallism).
mental prognosis of the child. While the majority of these narratives seem to use the blanket term of mental retardation, they tend to neglect the specificity of a mental condition. Professor Adams pointed to the case of infants with Down syndrome. While Down syndrome can be readily detected with current pre-natal testing, these tests cannot tell us what kind of mental condition the child will have—whether it will be “mild” or “severe” or what quality of life the child will have irrespective the degree of cognitive development. The absence of “knowing” in this instance spurs a set of questions that move from the medical to the social arena, questions such as, What is the place of the Down syndrome child in a given social order? Why do we value cognitive levels above other kinds of social values? What genetic hierarchies are we participating in when we decide to keep or abort a pregnancy based on a genetic diagnostic?

Professor Sanger and the rest of the audience took the occasion to explore the boundaries of these questions, posing a variety of questions and counter-points to Professor Adams. Several members of the audience wondered how Professor Adams would flesh out the relationship between the “disabled” fetus and the family who cares for the child. These questions led to a broader discussion of class and health care in nations like the U.S. and Canada. In what ways are these genetic decisions also based on conscious and unconscious calculations about levels of support available to care for a child? Other members of the audience wondered whether there was some relationship between the ethical dimension to not participating in an economy of genetic hierarchy, and the surplus of information now available through testing and what constitutes a healthy, fulfilling life. Who knows what and when? How is what various people know shaped by a host of political agencies, and especially those political and governmental agencies engaged in debates over abortion and motherhood?

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the certificate while doing
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Studies, Marianne
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for more information, or visit
www.columbia.edu/cu/irwg/
programs/main/graduate/

Governance, Continued from Page 13
undoing or understanding the originary violence or injury that so many of the panelists alluded to functioned as a quasi goal, or vision for much of the work done in the conference room. These sentiments were perhaps best encapsulated by Professor Povinelli’s closing remarks.

Povinelli concluded with several questions and main points that left those at the conference with both a sense of accomplishment and one of purpose.

To begin, Povinelli urged everyone to consider how this new contextualization may enable us to think about the specificity of particular indigenous histories and socialities at the same time we attempt to understand the modular forms that address them. How might this allow us to write a comparative analysis of settler colonialism and empire more generally? What sort of differences/similarities can be fleshed out between Anglo-American, Portuguese, and Spanish empires? Finally, how do we think about the concepts of “power and maneuver” when we look at the temporal and spatial discourses that organize the indigenous and the settler as a social division rather than a settled fact?

With Povinelli’s final remarks, the workshop participants left with a new set of questions to ground the wealth of insight and knowledge shared over the course of these two days. With the hopes of this event eventually turning into a conference, the Governance of the Prior workshop was one more example of the multiple new and engaged spaces the Institute for Research on Women and Gender regularly helps to produce on this campus.

NCRW, Continued from Page 1

Difference (www.socialdifference.org). This center for advanced study, launched in spring 2008, was conceived in a historic partnership with four other Centers and Institutes at Columbia to promote interdisciplinary scholarship on the global dimensions of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity.

As Director of IRWaG, I would like to thank the labor of the executive committees of the other Centers and Institutes that make up CCASD which worked tirelessly to establish the CCASD: The Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, the Institute for Research on African American Studies, and Barnard Center for Research on Women. And I would like to thank the previous and current Directors of CCASD: Jean Howard, Neferti Tadiar, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Marianne Hirsch.
have occupied the lion’s share of the spotlight in scholarly inquiry into the field of 18th-century British theater. Professor Nussbaum quickly complicated this formulation, positing that in actuality the actress occupied both literal and sociopolitical center stage.

A diagrammatic illustration was offered by way of A Critical Balance of the Performers at Drury-Lane Theater, a 1765 broadsheet reflecting the Enlightenment urge to quantify through a numerical rating system of players’ dramatic talents. Areas of assessment included figure, grace, low and genteel humor, elocution, and “noise.”

The highest cumulative ranking awarded any male or female thespian at Drury-Lane Theater was that of Mrs. Yates, with a perfect score in each category, followed closely by Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard.

The historical preoccupation with the actress extended far beyond the category of “noise” or artistic mastery. Rather, the figure of the 18th-century actress functioned as a site of contested meaning and a marker of cultural transformation. “Actresses were the first of their sex to craft their way in the world,” Professor Nussbaum noted with regard to both financial autonomy and the establishment of new subjective possibilities in the public sphere. Moreover, the actress operated as a metonym for an emergent culture of celebrity, as well as the incarnated desire it represented within the framework of a newly secularized society. This position of cultural prestige immunized against “being beholden to the standards of virtue of the 18th-century,” enabling actresses to carve out non-normative sexual subjectivities with impunity.

Of paramount importance was the actress’s singular ability to cross class boundaries and destabilize systems of social stratification. This phenomenon was the product of a budding trend toward female patronage by “ladies of quality” like those in the 1737 Shakespeare Ladies Club, whose resulting interactions with actresses effectively served to level the social playing field. “The power of women of the court and upper gentry became more obvious after the turn of the 18th-century,” Professor Nussbaum remarked, adding that female patrons wielded tremendous authority over dramatic productions and thus “were actively engaged in negotiating public representations of modern female subjectivity.” Manifestations of this power included commanding repeat performances of beloved productions, requesting the staging of specific plays at whim, and ensuring the success of a venture by purchasing any number of seats necessary. While women of means were precluded from pursuing careers in theater by prevailing standards of aristocratic propriety, the privileged distinction enjoyed by actresses nevertheless remained an attractive prospect. For this reason, female patronage was fueled in large part by the “hope of contracting an infectious transmittable celebrity,” as Professor Nussbaum observed, constituting a curious instance of ladies of quality seeking to reposition themselves downward in the class structure, vicariously moving from private box to center stage.

Columbia University’s Muslim Students Association (MSA) and IRWaG hosted Hijabi Monologues on February 15th, in Lerner Hall. Hijabi Monologues is about creating a space for American Muslim women to share their voices. Through the power of storytelling, Hijabi Monologues help transform distinct and often personal narratives into universal experiences that transcend religion, gender, and culture.
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Please support the Institute by becoming a “Friend of IRWaG.” We need your help to continue developing innovative public programs, lectures and conferences, and to support the kind of cutting-edge feminist scholarship that has been a hallmark of the Institute throughout our 21-year history. As a friend of IRWaG, you will receive our newsletter in both print and electronic form, you will be invited to special events at the Institute and at Columbia, and you will be involved with New York City’s leading center for the scholarly exploration of women and gender.

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We are also interested in your comments and suggestions for programming and teaching at the Institute:

Name: _________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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Email: _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Connection to IRWaG: ____________________________________________________________________________________________
### Fall 2010 Undergraduate Courses

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<td>Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies</td>
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<td>Interpreting Bodies</td>
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### Fall 2010 Crosslisted Courses

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<td>J. Hirsch</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2:00–3:50pm</td>
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### Fall 2010 Graduate Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Call#</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W4301</td>
<td>20th U.S. Jewish Women Writers Part I: 1900–1939</td>
<td>05986</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I. Klepfisz</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>4:10–6:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W4307</td>
<td>Sexuality and the Law</td>
<td>04398</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>P. Ettelbrick</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4:10–6:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>G6001</td>
<td>Theoretical Paradigms in Feminist Thought: Meanings of Motherhood</td>
<td>13250</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A. Kessler-Harris &amp; C. Sanger</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>4:20–6:10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>G8010</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Feminist Theory: Feminist Perspectives on the Traffic in Women</td>
<td>00910</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>E. Bernstein</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>2:10–4:00pm</td>
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**Feminist News**

**Institute for Research on Women and Gender**

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