Notes From the Director

By Elizabeth A. Povinelli

In one of its last acts of 2010, the US Senate repealed “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the innocuous sounding paraphrase of Public Law 103-108, 10 U.S.C. 654 which prohibited people who “demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts” from serving in the armed forces of the United States, because their presence “would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability.” The downtown queer cabaret performer and activist, Justin Bond quipped soon after that now that homosexuals could openly serve in the military, maybe queers could go back to protesting against war.

Over the last two years, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender has been sponsoring sustained conversations on topics that examine the critical theoretical and political edges of emergent social phenomena. In November 2009, IRWaG sponsored a workshop and public lecture on the “Embodiments of Science” which

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Feminist Interventions: “Stages of Thought: Women’s Work in Susan Glaspell’s Trifles”

By Elizabeth A. Povinelli

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 Fall 2010 Feminist Interventions, Katherine Biers, Assistant Professor, English and Comparative Literature, presented a lecture on the early 20th century feminist author Susan Glaspell. William Worthen, Chair and Alice Brady Pels Professor in the Arts (Dramatic Literature, Performance Theory), Barnard College provided a spirited response which started a lively discussion on feminist history, textuality, and interpretation.

Biers began the late afternoon talk with a provocative re-reading of Glaspell’s groundbreaking play Trifles in which two women investigate a murder in a lonely farmhouse in the midst of a male-dominated official investigation. Biers argues that in Trifles Glaspell provides us not with a feminist epistemology but a feminist ontology, showing that all feminist ways of knowing the world are ultimately grounded in women’s ways of being in the

Biers, Continued on Page 14

Katherine Biers
EMBODIMENTS OF SCIENCE LECTURE SERIES

Rebecca Herzig’s “Suffering, Choice, And the History of Hair Removal”
By Nikolas Oscar Sparks

Thursday, October 28th marked the highly anticipated return of the Embodiments of Science series. In the fall of 2009, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWaG) co-organized and co-sponsored a two-day workshop bearing the same name. This year, headed by Associate Professor Alondra Nelson (also of Sociology), the series takes the form of several lectures delivered over the course of the year by distinguished faculty from universities around the world.

Professor Rebecca Herzig, Chair, Program in Women and Gender Studies, Bates College, delivered the first lecture of the season. Specializing in 19th century American History, Professor Herzig received her Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s department of Science and Technology Studies. The chapter she read came from her forthcoming book on the history of hair removal.

Rebecca Herzig, Continued on Page 10

Alondra Nelson and Rebecca Herzig

“The Short-Sighted Brain: Neuroeconomics and the Politics of Future Discounting”
By Alondra Nelson

Anthropologist Caitlin Zaloom, Associate Professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at NYU visited IRWaG to share reflections about how the fields of biology, psychology, and economics are being drawn together into the field of neuroeconomics and the implications of this new interdisciplinary endeavor. It was the third talk in the Embodiments of Science series.

The presentation was based on ethnographic research that Zaloom conducted with MIT professor Natasha Schull over the last several years. Zaloom’s talk had two foci: on one hand, she described the emergence of this field and the use of new technologies such as fMRI toward the end of predicting human decision-making. On the other hand, she discussed how claims about human decision-making, in particular, illuminate whether and to what extent actors are...

Zaloom, Continued on Page 11
Ester Saletta:  
From Modern to Post-Modern Gender Theory:  
The European Union’s “Equal Opportunities”  
in German Language Literature  

By Anne Montgomery  

On November 22, 2010, IRWaG hosted Dr. Ester Saletta, a scholar of English,  
German, and Italian literature and currently a fellow at the Italian Academy for Advanced  
Studies at Columbia.  

Speaking to an interdisciplinary audience of students and faculty, Saletta’s talk wove together examples drawn  
from art, literature, gender theory, and statistics concerning the balance between the sexes in the European Union.  
Shortfalls in the EU’s campaign for equal opportunity, she explained, are marked by continued—even deepening—gender imbalances in the percentage of female members of European Parliament and cabinets of several EU countries.  

Saletta theorized these inequalities through a lively exploration of the shift from modern to post-modern gender theory in art and literature. Drawing on Edgar Degas, Arthur Schopenhauer, Cesare Lombroso, Otto Weininger, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir and Arthur Schnitzler, Saletta demonstrated that conceptions of gender in the European Union’s political approach “reproduce the masculine orientations of the past” and “describe the female subject as the personification of masculine expectations.”  

Saletta concluded by suggesting that equal opportunities can only be realized when the EU’s narrow focus on equality is replaced by concern for a more expansive set of gender-related issues such as social policy, immigration, intersectionality, and the body.  

IRWaG offers graduate students the opportunity to earn a certificate in women’s studies. Two courses are required as part of the certificate, so interested students should register their intention to pursue the certificate while doing coursework.  

Professors: Please tell your students about it.  

Students: For more information, please visit www.columbia.edu/cu/irwag/programs/main/graduate
Aranye Fradenburg: The Minds of Animals

By Nadine Vassallo

On December 6, 2010, a crowd gathered in IRWaG’s seminar room to hear Aranye Fradenburg, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California Santa Barbara, deliver a talk entitled “The Minds of Animals.” This lecture clearly demonstrated Professor Fradenburg’s position at the forefront of medieval studies, psychoanalysis, and sexuality studies.

Drawing on texts including the wyclified Bible and animal taxonomies, Professor Fradenburg presented a short history of pre-modern thought on sentience, the mind, and the environment. She drew on Kristeva’s term chora to describe the inherent connection between mind, body, and environment, rejecting the notion of a separation between interior- and exteriority.

Turning her focus to animals, Professor Fradenburg stated that human beings possess a monopoly on neither sentience nor pleasure, affect, and aesthetic experience. Professor Fradenburg argued that “all animals prefer a rich environment” over a dull one and that all prefer to thrive rather than merely survive in their environment. She drew on a multitude of examples from the animal kingdom, including animals’ expressions of pride and grief, social rituals, sexual diversity, awareness of familial relationships, and enjoyment of music.

Professor Fradenburg ended her lecture on an explicitly instructive note, concluding: “Living is an art; let’s play our parts brilliantly.” Thriving rather than merely surviving, she suggested, elevates life to an art form for humans and animals alike.

Following the lecture, a lively debate arose amongst visitors from the Department of English and Comparative Literature, IRWaG, and NYU’s Medieval Forum.

Theorizing Native Studies

By Elizabeth Povinelli

As part of the continuing conversation, Audra Simpson, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, with generous support from IRWaG, organized the public symposium “Theorizing Native Studies.” “Theorizing Native Studies” was the second of a two-part workshop, the first, “The Governance of the Prior,” sponsored by IRWaG and the Borders and Boundaries Group at the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference.

The symposium sought to intervene in a dominant strand of Native Studies that holds that “theory” is derivative of Western ways of thinking and, as such, its utility is limited to the West. The interdisciplinary Theorizing Indigenous Studies project, members of which presented in the symposium, neither refused nor accepted this theory of theory. Instead, they attempted to demonstrate how ways of conceptualizing such theoretically saturated concepts like sovereignty, nationalism, and colonialism are already suffused with the deflected knowledges of indigenous and native life-worlds. And the ways that, in the hands of indigenous and native scholars and their interlocutors, western theory is “nativized.” Through a process of explicit theoretical engagement with post-structuralism, semiotics, Iroquois and other Indigenous political philosophies, Marxists, and anti-colonial existential philosophers, panelists expanded what Native Theory and enacted a displacement of the West.

The last session of the day was of particular interest to feminist, gender, and queer scholars. Three scholars presented selections of their work, followed by a comment by Elizabeth A. Povinelli. Scott Morgensen, Assistant Professor in the Gender Studies Department at Queen’s University, explored how native theory might deepen our
Graduate Colloquium: Research Fridays

By Emily Cersonsky

“Dancers in the Cold War”

This semester’s Graduate Colloquium began with an exciting double-header, as Victoria Phillips Geduld and Joanna Dee, both graduate students in Columbia’s Department of History, presented beautifully complementary papers on the role of female American choreographer-dancers during the Cold War. Phillips Geduld and Dee deftly brought together a consideration of the intersections of race, politics, and gender in mid-20th Century dance history in front of a standing-room-only audience which included established choreographers, government scholars, Columbia professors and students, as well as a class of student-dancers from the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance.

According to the “Research Friday” workshop format, Phillips Geduld and Dee distributed their papers to the audience prior to the event so that all would be able to participate in the discussion. Phillips Geduld’s paper on “The Politics of Performance: Women, Pill Box Hats, and Pearls at Congress Hall in West Berlin, 1957” focused on the work of the Martha Graham Dance Company in post-war Berlin, delving into the interactions of dance with American democratization and anti-communist efforts in Germany, particularly the role of female figures and politician’s wives, such as the Berlin commissioner Eleanor Dulles. Dee, by contrast and complement, presented on “The Scientist-Seductress on Tour: Katherine Dunham vs. The State Department,” discussing the famous African-American choreographer Katherine Dunham’s ultimately unsuccessful effort to gain funding from the US State Department to take her dance company to post-war Berlin—precisely the opportunity that had allowed Graham to perform at Congress Hall. Together, Phillips Geduld and Dee—both former dancers and choreographers themselves—illuminated a facet of the American reconstruction and anti-communist effort which has hitherto been little discussed.

After Phillips Geduld, Dee, and Prof. Edwards had presented their thoughts, the audience was eager to add its own questions and comments. These ranged from a desire for further historical contextualization in the Civil Rights Movement, to a discussion of Graham and Dunham’s different views (Dunham was quoted as calling Graham the “high priestess of the velvet girdle”), to a query about whether Dunham’s voluptuous body might have impacted her luck with the State Department. With such diverse expertise throughout the room, the discussion was enlightening and enlivening for all involved.

Research Fridays, Continued on Page 10

Topics in Law and Sexuality: Gay Marriage

This fall Professors Katherine Biers (English/Comparative Literature) and Katherine Franke (Law), at left, taught a new interdisciplinary seminar on Gay Marriage in which they read literary and legal texts on the history of marriage, culminating in the Perry v. Schwarzenegger case (Prop 8 case). The seminar drew grad students from Arts and Sciences, Law, Human Rights, and Social Work, and deepened IRWaG’s commitment to interdisciplinary teaching, study and research.
CCASD News

By Laura Ciolkowski

CCASD Presents The Future of Disability Studies

CCASD is proud to announce the launch of a new working project: The Future of Disability Studies, directed by Rachel Adams.

The study of disability engages some of the most pressing debates of our time, questions about the beginning and end of life, prenatal testing, abortion, euthanasia, eugenics, accommodation in schools, public transportation and the workplace, technologies for the medical correction and “cure” of the non-normative body, disease, wartime injuries, post-traumatic stress, and healthcare. These questions could not be more relevant, given that people with disabilities are the largest minority group in the United States, and that everyone who lives long enough will eventually become disabled. But beyond the numbers, the study of disability matters because it forces us to interrogate charged ethical and political questions about the meaning of aesthetics and cultural representation, bodily identity, and dynamics of social inclusion and/or exclusion.

The Future of Disability Studies approaches disability as an embodied condition, a mutable historical phenomenon, and a social, political, and cultural identity; it explores some of the key debates within Disability Studies and will identify new directions for the future of the field. Among other questions, we will ask: How might we complicate the opposition between medical and social models of disability? What are the grounds for productive dialogue and intersection between Disability studies and Medical Humanities? How can we reconcile a commitment to the autonomy and self-representation of people with disabilities with the commitment to include people with the severest forms of intellectual and physical disability? How can Disability Studies further understand its relationship to other phenomena of embodied identity, such as race, ethnicity, and gender? How should Disability studies approach scientific developments in genetics, new reproductive technologies, augmentative communication devices, prosthetics etc.? How can the study of disability cast light on political debates over about healthcare, war, and education policy? And how is our consideration of these dynamics complicated and enhanced by putting them in historical and/or transnational perspective?

For more information, please visit www.socialdifference.org.

CCASD Keywords: Interdisciplinary Roundtable Conversations

CCASD Keywords: Interdisciplinary Roundtable Conversations is a new series inspired by the innovative interdisciplinary scholarship promoted by the Center. The series draws participants together from a wide range of disciplinary homes in order to explore the various ways we think about fundamental critical/theoretical ideas and to generate new vocabularies and new methodologies.

The first fall program on the topic of “ethnicity” featured Mamadou Diouf, Director, Institute for African Studies; Frances Negron-Muntaner, Director, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race; Mae Ngai, Professor of History and Lung Family Professor of Asian American Studies; and Elizabeth Povinelli, Director, Institute for Research on Women and Gender. The second program on the topic of “intersectionality” featured Katherine Franke, Director, Center for Gender and Sexuality Law; Neferti Tadiar, Chair, Women’s Studies Department, Barnard College; and Kendall Thomas, Director, Center for the Study of Law and Culture. Spring 2011 Keywords conversations will include “labor” and “the Politics of ‘Post’”.

For more information, please visit www.socialdifference.org.

CCASD, Continued on Page 9
Events Around Campus

Danke Li: “Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China”

On Monday, October 11, 2010, IRWaG and the Weatherhead East Asian Institute co-sponsored an exciting and informative lecture from Danke Li, Co-Director of Women’s Studies at Fairfield University, on “Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China.” Professor Li’s work is a collection of annotated oral histories from twenty Chinese women who lived in the provisional capital of Chongqing during the Sino-Japanese War of World War II. Her discussant was Professor Madeleine Zelin, Dean Lung Professor of Chinese Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University.

“Denaturalizing Gender and Sex”

The Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP) held a lively panel discussion on “Denaturalizing Gender and Sex” on Wednesday, November 10, 2010. The panel was moderated by Seth Holmes, Robert Wood Johnson Health & Society Scholar, Anthropology and Public Health, Columbia University, as part of the “Ethnography and Social Change” Lecture Series. The presenters were Elizabeth A. Povinelli, Professor of Anthropology, Director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, Columbia University; Danielle Lindemann, Post-Doctoral Research Scholar, Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, Columbia University; Michael Warner, Seymour H. Knox Professor of English Literature, American Studies, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Yale University; and Justin Bond, Singer-songwriter, Performance Artist. What ensued was a lively and eclectic conversation on sexuality and gender embodiment that stretched from the question of nature and the natural, to endurance and new social imaginaries, to the economies of bondage and the performativities of transgender.
Columbia Law School’s Center for Gender and Sexuality Law and Columbia University’s Institute for Research on Women and Gender present

SPRING 2011

QUEER THEORY WORKSHOP

QUEER MORPHOLOGIES: KINSHIP, FRIENDSHIP, INTIMACY

January 25, 2011
‘MY SPIRIT’S POSTHUMEITY’ AND THE SLEEPER’S OUTFLUNG HAND: QUEER TRANSMISSION IN ABSALOM, ABSALOM
Kevin Ohl, English, Boston College

February 8, 2011
UNDERDOGS: ON THE MINOR IN QUEER THEORY
Heather Love, English, University of Pennsylvania

February 22, 2011
JUST THE FACTS: THE PERILS OF EXPERT TESTIMONY IN GAY RIGHTS LITIGATION
Libby Adler, Law, Northeastern University

March 8, 2011
TRANSCENDENT HOMOSEXUALS AND DANGEROUS SEX OFFENDERS: SEXUAL HARM AND FREEDOM IN THE JUDICIAL IMAGINARY
Joseph Fischel, Political Science, University of Chicago

March 29, 2011
WHY ARE THE DRAG QUEENS LAUGHING
David Halperin, English, University of Michigan

April 12, 2011
QUEER THEORY, QUEER CHILDREN, AND KID ORIENTALISM: THE SEXUAL CHILD IN A RACIALIZED WORLD
Kathryn Stockton, English, University of Utah

Tuesdays,
4:20 p.m.–6 p.m.
Columbia Law School
Case Lounge, Room 701
Jerome Greene Hall
435 W. 116th St. (at Amsterdam Avenue)

The Spring 2011 Queer Theory Workshop will focus on Queer Morphologies and reflect on the current state of Queer Theory. Queer Theory emerged as a way of thinking about the social and cultural condition that cut diagonally across Feminist, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies, which quickly proliferated into a series of theoretically and disciplinarily inflected approaches. Queer Morphologies asks what conceptual, topical, and rhetorical forms have emerged over the last decade—and why these? What is the history of present queer approaches to social, political and cultural life, and what might be their legacies? We are particularly interested in reflections on Queer Theory’s contemporary focus on affect, friendship, intimacy, and kinship and the rhetorical forms these seem to demand or solicit, particularly in light of the prominence of marriage debates in the West, the emergence of Islamophobia in North, and portraits of sexual colonialism in the South.

For more information, visit http://www.law.columbia.edu/center_program/gendersexuality
or contact Vina Tran at 212.854.0167 or vina.tran@law.columbia.edu
Save the Date!

The CCASD Black Women’s Intellectual and Cultural History Collective (BWICH) spring conference on black women’s contributions to black thought, political mobilization, creative work and gender theory will be held on April 28-30, 2011.

The conference will explore black women as intellectuals across a broad geography including Africa, the Caribbean, North and South America, and Europe. CCASD BWICH aims to piece together a history of black women’s thought and culture that maps the distinctive concerns and historical forces that have shaped black women’s ideas and intellectual activities. Conference topics will include the genealogy of black feminism, the patterns of women’s leadership and ideas about religious culture and politics, the scientific work of black women, the economic ideas of black women, the politics of black women’s literature, and the history of black women’s racial, sexual or social thought.

The CCASD Engendering Archives project announces Injured Cities/Urban Afterlives, an international conference to be held on October 14-15, 2011. The conference will feature panel discussions, performances, exhibitions and other events on the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001. Featured speakers include: Nina Bernstein, Teddy Cruz, Ann Jones, Dinh Q. Le, Shirin Neshat, Walid Ra’ad, Rebecca Solnit, Clive van den Berg, and Eyal Weizman. Injured Cities/Urban Afterlives is organized in partnership with the Columbia University Oral History Research Office, the Columbia University Office of the President, the Hemispheric Institute for Performance and Politics, and the Yale University Public Humanities Program.

For more information, please visit www.socialdifference.org.
Professor Herzig’s presentation, “Suffering, Choice, and the History of Hair Removal,” situated the history of hair removal—as both cosmetic practice and military torture—within the critical framework of post-structuralism. Using the examples of Guantanamo Bay prison and cosmetic procedures for hair removal, Herzig uses Michel Foucault’s distinction between systems of domination and practices of freedom to illuminate the somewhat troubling history of this practice. While at once the practices of hair removal have been associated with cosmetics, at the same time, hair removal has been implemented in the service of U.S. Empire.

After framing the argument with these opening remarks on the history of hair removal, Professor Herzig, through Foucault, examines the contemporary medicalization of cosmetic hair removal. As Herzig describes, the evolution of cosmetic practices has evolved from the use of in-home methods to the more specialized practices performed by medical technicians, (i.e. waxing, laser, etc.). The current state of technological development in this field is such that genetic manipulation is conceivably the next step. However, many big pharmaceutical companies are unwilling to pursue such areas of research.

According to Herzig, in spite of a clear market incentive to produce such technologies, the stigma attached to devoting research funds and efforts for a cosmetic procedure outweigh the potential profits companies are likely to gain. This stigma, Herzig argues, emerges from a neo-liberal rationale concerning what is crucial/critical for the body.

The packed conference room remained engaged throughout the talk. And after Professor Herzig had completed her lecture, a lively discussion ensued around such topics as gender normativity and hair removal, aesthetics, sensuality and desire, and a number of other points of interest. After a question and answer session that lasted nearly as long as the initial presentation, a grateful Professor Herzig thanked her equally appreciative audience.

Herzig, Continued from Page 2

This semester’s second Research Friday session took on something completely different than the first, with equal success and interest. Sara Murphy, a graduate student in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, presented a chapter of her dissertation on the lesser known 17th Century autobiographer Anne Halkett, discussing Halkett’s multiple courtships and exilic wanderings in Scotland in the context of her troubled familial relationships, particularly her relations with her mother. Professor Martha Howell of the Department of History responded to Murphy’s paper, lending her expertise in contemporaneous European familial, marital, and economic structures.

Murphy’s chapter, entitled “Romancing the Stranger: Surrogate Natal Families in Anne Halkett’s Autobiography,” took a different tack than that of most Halkett critics, focusing on Halkett’s turbulent love life (including a flirtation with bigamy) in the context of her equally rocky family life. Murphy explained that Halkett’s search for noble patronage and protection in Scotland may be construed less as a search for a marital partner than as a reconstruction of the support which she lacked in her natal family. Halkett’s mother, who Murphy painted as alternately combative and compassionate, seems to have stood as a driving figure at the back of Halkett’s life from her first, failed courtship to her eventual marriage and economic and political stability.

Howell’s comments on Murphy’s work illuminated the interesting ‘sub-plot’ of Halkett’s later difficulties with her siblings, and the potential connection of these ties with her maternal relationship. Audience members joined in the conversation, asking about Murphy’s claims as to the autobiography as a hybrid romance-infused text, as well as the possibility for understanding this text as an edited document, one which Halkett shaped in order to foreground her desired narrative. Though not all audience members were familiar with 17th Century autobiography or Halkett’s work, Murphy and Howell produced such a clear basis for their discussion that the workshop was intriguing for scholars and students of all backgrounds.
able to hold off immediate gratification (be it money, food, etc.) for great future gains (higher interest yield, better looking or healthier body, etc.). Neuroeconomists use the metaphor of the grasshopper and the ant. The ant is one whose decision-making is apparently guided by the brain’s pre-frontal region and is thus “future-oriented” and provident. The grasshopper decision-maker is driven by the limbic system and makes decisions based on short-term emotions; therefore, this actor “discounts” the future.

Zaloom described how assumptions about how human actors think about the future are now being marshaled into myriad public policies. Moreover, there are different policy implications and possibilities for intervention based upon assumptions about one’s type of brain and, therefore, orientation to the future. How do we make policies around “problems of the future” such as debt and obesity based on the fact that human decision-makers can be ants or grasshoppers? Zaloom then turned to a short discussion of Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler’s best selling book Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness.

Zaloom’s presentation on the convergence of biologistic-behavioral theories of economic decision-making raised many questions that were addressed in the vigorous discussion that followed her talk. For example, to the extent that ants and grasshopper’s map on to stereotypical ideas about male and female characteristics, how might we think about this work as a type of gendering work? We also discussed how peoples’ conceptualization and aspiration for the future (and thus, decision-making) might be based on their socioeconomic status; a poor single mother, for example, may not have the luxury of delaying immediate payoff when it concerns urgent matters in everyday life, from the food one is able to buy to one’s ability to save. As Zaloom noted, it matters considerably what one thinks their future might be.
brought together scholars of science and
science practitioners to critically discuss the
social and political dimensions of the
bodies, identities, and destinies emerging
from the contemporary neurological,
genetic, and epigenetic sciences. This
lecture series is interested in new
approaches to embodiment and the
psyciatric and psychoanalytic sciences that
take, as a central focus, the social life of
theory in science. In continuation of this
series Professor Alondra Nelson has
welcomed two speakers, Rebecca Herzig,
Chair and Professor, Program in Women
and Gender Studies, Bates College, who
spoke on “Suffering, Choice, and the
History of Hair Removal” and Caitlin
Zaloom, Associate Professor, Department of
Social and Cultural Analysis, New York
University, who spoke on “The Short-sighted
Brain: Neuroeconomics and the Politics of
Future Discounting” (see INSIDE).
This upcoming semester, IRWaG and
the Queer Theory Workshop at Columbia
Law School will be sponsoring a lecture
series reflecting on the current state of
Queer Theory. Queer Theory emerged as a
way of thinking about the social and cultural
condition that cut diagonally across
Feminist, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies,
which quickly proliferated into a series of
teoretically and disciplinarily inflected
approaches. This lecture series asks what
conceptual, topical, and rhetorical forms have emerged over the last decade—and
why these? What is the history of present
queer approaches to social, political and
cultural life, and what might be their
legacies? We are particularly interested in

Queer Theory emerged as
a way of thinking about the
social and cultural condition
that cut diagonally across
Feminist, Lesbian, Gay and
Bisexual Studies.

I am thrilled that Beck Young, Assistant
Professor of Women’s Studies at Barnard
College, will be presenting the Spring
Feminist Interventions Lecture. Young was
one of the original organizers of the
Embodiments of Science Workshop. Her
research focuses on social epidemiology,
studies of HIV/AIDS, and critical
evaluation of biological work on sex,
gender and sexuality. She will be
discussing how queer theory might
evaluate recent scientific studies correlating
sexuality and brain morphology.

This last semester has been equally
intellectually exciting. Katherine Biers,
Assistant Professor of English and
Comparative Literature, presented the Fall
2010 Feminist Interventions lecture on
“Stages of Thought: Women’s Work in
Susan Glaspell’s Trifles” (see Page 1).
Audra Simpson, Assistant Professor of
Anthropology, sponsored “Theorizing
Native Theory,” a continuation of IRWaG’s
efforts, alongside the Center for the Study
of Ethnicity and Race and Department of
Anthropology, to expand Indigenous/
Native Theory at Columbia.

I am quite excited to close with two
announcements. While IRWaG is still
mourning the loss of Vina Tran (who has
moved across Amsterdam to the Center for
Gender and Sexuality Law), I am very
pleased to welcome our new Coordinator,
Nadine Vassallo. Please come by and say
hello to her. And, Rachel Adams, Associate
Professor of English and Comparative
Literature, has received a prestigious
Lenfest Distinguished Faculty Award. The
Faculty of Arts and Sciences gives this
honor annually to junior and senior faculty
members who have shown exceptional
merit in scholarship and dedication to
teaching. On my count five faculty with
close association with IRWaG have
received a Lenfest Award. Of course, none
of this would be possible without all the
effort that goes on behind the scenes,
especially the dedicated work of Page
Jackson, Assistant to the Director; Eleanor
Johnson, Director of Undergraduate
Studies; and Marianne Hirsh, pitching in
as Director of Graduate Studies.
$250 Prizes Money

All Columbia, General Studies, and Barnard College undergraduates are invited to submit their best papers for consideration. Papers from every discipline, on any topic within “women’s and gender studies”—broadly defined—will be judged anonymously by an interdisciplinary committee of Columbia and Barnard faculty and graduate students.

Deadline for Submissions:
Noon, Monday, April 25th, 2011

The Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Columbia University is proud to present the Women’s and Gender Studies Award.

This prize is meant to honor an undergraduate student for his or her excellence in research and writing in the fields of women and gender studies. (There is another prize for Queer Studies.) Its purpose is twofold: to recognize undergraduate students—who often have few opportunities for such recognition—for their superb intellectual achievement, and to provide students interested in women’s and gender studies with institutional support for their work.

Critical and political understanding of settler colonialism and global health—especially how it might help us develop a way of decolonizing expert knowledge in indigenous AIDS organizing. Mark Rifkin, Assistant Professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, presented a theoretically sharp, legally grounded critique of the racial limits of tribal sovereignty. What are the stakes of making tribal people into a “population”? How might native ways of practicing and conceptualizing kinship provide a difference—perhaps the difference—to dominant forms of nationalism and sovereignty? Andrea Smith, Associate Professor, Department of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California, Riverside, provided a robust, spirited, defense of a Marxist-feminist anti-racist account of the horizon of death that seems to surround the ethnographic study of native peoples. Slicing across native theory, sexuality studies, gender, and race critique, Morgensen, Rifken, and Smith powerfully made the case that so-called “western theory” is hardly the province of the West.
All Columbia, General Studies, and Barnard College undergraduates are invited to submit their best papers for consideration. Papers from every discipline, on any topic within “queer studies”—broadly defined—will be judged anonymously by an interdisciplinary committee of Columbia and Barnard faculty and graduate students.

Information & application packets are now available at:

Institute for Research on Women and Gender
at 763 Schermerhorn Extension
and our website:

For more information, call the Institute at 212.854.3277 or email questions to irwag@columbia.edu

Deadline: Noon, Monday, April 25th, 2011

Biers, Continued from Page 1

...they gradually come to understand the injustice of women’s domestic confinement and their subordination to men.

view that men and women have separate ways of knowing. The play argues in its staging that these feminist epistemologies are ultimately grounded in an ordinary ontology crowded with objects and language that are merely tools to think with, and as such, by definition, anyone’s to use.

The clarity and power of Biers’s presentation was matched in the response. Worthen focused his comments on how critics of theater might approach the status of objects and “thought” in late nineteenth and early twentieth century theater. Following this line of questioning, audience members asked about the difference between Glaspell’s theatrical plays and her short stories, especially her short story, “A Jury of her Peers,” which drew on much the same historical material. What are some of the implications for teaching both—in and out of the context of feminist politics/pedagogy? This query opened up broader questions of how to think about the location of the stage, actors, and objects when the primary focus of Trifles is on the relationship between a subject and her everyday interaction with the thing-ideas through which she knows the world. If habits and embodiments are the way we come to know the intentional states of others—such as the two women come to understand the interiority of the accused—then how might a playwright bridge the divide between actors staging this encounter and the audience merely viewing this staging? Is there a feminist philosophy of mind that can be staged as an encounter with being rather merely a way of seeing?
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### Spring 2011 Undergraduate Courses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Points</th>
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<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>V3111</td>
<td>Feminist Texts I</td>
<td>11031</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>L. Ciolkowski</td>
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<td>V3112</td>
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<td>BC2530</td>
<td>Global South Women Film Directors</td>
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<td>Unheard Voice's: African Women</td>
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<td>Y. Christianse</td>
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<td>E. Bernstein</td>
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<td>Colloquium in Feminist Theory</td>
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### Spring 2011 Graduate Courses

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<td>08742</td>
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