

# The Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality at New York University



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## From the Director

Carolyn Dinshaw

Is gender a topic of study in itself, or is it, rather, an optic for seeing society and culture? A similar question was raised by Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman in our recent panel on sexuality: topic or lens? At the CSGS gender and sexuality are both.

This duality was recently tested as a proposal for a new NYU department including Gender and Sexuality Studies made its way through intensive discussions with the Faculty of Arts and Science deans. This new department would combine existent interdisciplinary programs (Africana Studies, American Studies, Asian/Pacific/American Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Metropolitan Studies, and perhaps the incipient Latino Studies) into one “broadband” department (to steal a term from linguist Melinda Chen). Many details still await negotiation, and nothing is set in stone. I cannot stress this enough. Still, as we go to press, I can say for sure that big changes for Gender and Sexuality Studies at NYU are on the horizon.

In my last column, I wrote about changing our name from “Women’s Studies” to “Gender and Sexuality Studies,” and I discussed that linkage of gender and sexuality. If we are including both gender and sexuality because they are not isolated from each other or from other social divisions, I asked, why stop with just those two? Why not add race, for starters, and ethnicity, class, and nation? “My responses here,” I wrote, “are practical and institutional: in all our core courses, we subject the terms [‘gender’ and ‘sexuality’] to exactly this kind of interrogation, and we strive to articulate our course offerings with those of other programs at NYU that investigate race, ethnicity, class, ability, and other social divisions.” The proposed new department will allow us to pursue this integrative, intersectional approach and, moreover, our insistently transnational framing of the issues. We don’t study gender or sexuality on their own, since they never appear that way empirically; even if our goal is to theorize about gender or sexuality, we must consider these formations as we come upon them: in specific locales, in particular bodies, in precise material conditions. Now these facts about our approach will be administratively affirmed and pedagogically elaborated.

The array of programs within this proposed new department might appear too heterogeneous or downright incoherent when Gender and Sexuality Studies is viewed as a set of topics or an array of issues; the other programs are delineated in spatial/geographic, racial, or ethnic terms. But when Gender and Sexuality Studies is understood as a lens for

**The prospect of a new department that looks beyond ethnic studies or area studies toward new analytical paradigms is enormously exciting.**

seeing all of society and culture, one can perceive our departmental fit. Faculty and students in various programs involved in this departmentalization have long recognized this: Gender and Sexuality Studies enlarges and

makes even more complex the analytical frameworks for materials that have been geographically, nationally, racially, and/or ethnically delineated. For starters: Gendered categories are always already racialized; racial categories are always already gendered.

We plan to keep the name “Gender and Sexuality Studies” for the undergraduate major and minor degrees (and for our forthcoming Advanced Graduate Certificate), just as the other programs involved plan to keep their names for their degrees. The new department will administer academic programs in each of the interdisciplinary areas, and each of those areas will have its own section in the College Bulletin. At the moment, the proposed curriculum would require a two-course series of integrated core courses for all students

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choosing to major in the department, but thereafter would allow students to focus on Africana Studies, for example, or Gender and Sexuality Studies. (Again: nothing here is set in stone. As I write, we are working on these very issues.)

There is much to sort out in the coming months with regard to the structure of the new department at NYU. How will the specificities of gender and sexuality (the unique histories of these categories, the particular logics and politics of their elaboration) be taught if there is an integrated curriculum? How will resources be allocated in a department with such a complex set of agendas? How can we be

sure that gender and sexuality will not be lost in this large formation? However burning these questions, it is nonetheless clear to me that the intellectual gains for all the programs involved (the recognition and development of our shared research agendas, the nurturing of our pedagogical commitments) will be considerable. The prospect of a new department—one that in fact looks beyond ethnic studies or area studies toward genuinely new analytical paradigms—is an enormously exciting one.

I would be very interested in hearing your thoughts about this proposal:  
Carolyn.Dinshaw@nyu.edu

## Comings and Goings at CSGS

**Rabab Abdulhadi** came to the CSGS in fall 2001, having previously taught at the American University in Cairo. In addition to teaching core courses in Gender and Sexuality Studies, Professor Abdulhadi has been working with Carolyn Dinshaw as a primary organizer of the December 2003 international workshop in Cairo, "Gendered Bodies, Transnational Politics: Modernities Reconsidered."

New Orleans native **Bernadine Cidranes** recently celebrated her fourth anniversary as a CSGS staff member and New Yorker. As the Center's Administrative Aide, Bernadine helps students make their way through the complicated processes of choosing a major, registering for classes, and preparing for graduation.

**Kate Collier** joined the CSGS staff as a work/study student in September 2002 and is very sad to be leaving NYU. As a December 2003 graduate with degrees in Gender and Sexuality Studies and Journalism, she is a new employee of Gay Men's Health Crisis.

CSGS founder and director **Carolyn Dinshaw** is also a professor of English at NYU. She teaches the undergraduate course "Queer Literatures," as well as a variety of medieval literature courses. Her research focuses on sexuality and East/West cultural contact in both medieval and current contexts.

Although she has been teaching gender- and sexuality- themed courses as a program affiliate for years, Professor **Lisa Duggan** formally became a CSGS faculty member in fall 2003. She recently published *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Beacon Press) and taught the class "Queer Histories" during the fall semester.

CSGS Associate Director **Lynne Haney** has been working on the Advanced Graduate Certificate Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies. Professor Haney is the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Gender and Sexuality, as well as a professor in the Sociology Department. Her current research examines how gendered categories are constituted and enacted in a California prison for women and their children.

**Wilson Jacob** was a Teaching Assistant for the fall semester "Introduction to Gender and Sexuality" course. He came to us from the joint program in History and Middle East Studies. In addition to teaching, he is currently finishing his dissertation on masculinity in Egypt. A version of the first chapter of his dissertation will be appearing in the anthology *African Masculinities* (Palgrave, forthcoming). He hopes very much to graduate this May.

**Richard Kim** is a Ph.D. candidate in the American Studies Program. He writes frequently on sexual politics and popular culture for *The Nation* magazine, where he is also the Internship Director. This fall, Richard taught the course "AIDS Activism and Queer Publics."

**Ricardo Montez** is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Performance Studies at NYU. He is also Managing Editor of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, a quarterly journal housed at the Center and published by Duke University Press.

As the CSGS administrator, **Ann Neumann** oversees the day-to-day operations of the Center, which means she does everything from maintain the budgets to produce and plan events. This is her second year on the CSGS staff.

**Khary Polk** was a Teaching Assistant for the fall semester "Introduction to Gender and Sexuality" course. He is a doctoral student in the American Studies program who also works as a writer; his work has recently appeared on Nerve.com and in *Think Again*, a collection of essays rethinking the relationship between HIV and black men.

Newsletter managing editor **Sriya Shrestha** joined the CSGS staff as a work/study student in fall 2003. Sriya is a senior working to complete majors in both Gender and Sexuality Studies and Metropolitan Studies. She will be graduating in May.

NYU welcomed Professor **Judith Stacey** in fall 2003, making her the newest addition to the CSGS faculty. She is also a member of the Sociology Department here at NYU. Professor Stacey taught the course "Sexual Diversity in Society" in the fall and will be teaching "Topics in Gender and Sexuality Studies: Queer Families" in the spring.

## Town Hall Meeting, May 2003

by Melia Amal Bouhabib

At a May 1 town hall meeting, professors and students took time from their exam schedules to explore gender-related aspects of the US-led war with Iraq. Monitored by CSGS professor **Rabab Abdulhadi** and Middle Eastern Studies graduate student **Sherene Seikaly**, a dynamic discussion questioned the gendered and sexualized clichés, media representations and realities of war.



Professor Rabab Abdulhadi

"I just want to raise some questions on my mind," said Abdulhadi in her opening statements. "Like the cliché that men are war-makers and women are peacemakers. What does this mean for men? For masculinity?"

At the center of the vibrant discussion was the story of Jessica Lynch, the young American soldier who was captured in an ambush and later rescued to the delight of millions of viewers, Americans. **Shouleh Vatanabadi**, a professor in the General Studies Program, pointed out, "There was a Native American woman captured and an African American woman. They were erased from the picture."

**Linda Gordon** from the History Department noted that Jessica Lynch came from an "extraordinarily poor family" and that while the army served as her source of income, the war itself was covering for extreme rollbacks by the administration that primarily threaten poor and minority communities.



Emily Apter, José Muñoz, Julia Elyachar, and Shouleh Vatanabadi

**Timothy Mitchell**, a professor of Political Science, thought the Lynch episode had even further-reaching implications. One of the difficulties in convincing people to support this war, he said, as opposed to the Afghanistan war, is that "it can't be portrayed as saving women. Jessica Lynch recuperated that image."

Some audience members said that women, in spite of their glaring absence from wartime discussions, were at the heart of this war. One student recalled her aunts and mother explaining their pro-war stance as driven by a fear of "invasion by foreign men," and described the nation as living "in fear of being violated."

At the heart of the discussion was something far more urgent, however, than cerebral challenges. "What do we do next?" said a visiting professor. "In the diversity of thinking about the war, how do we then think about teaching the feminist progressive agenda, the anti-racist, anti-elitist, anti-classist agenda? How do we carve a different vision?"

*Melia Amal Bouhabib is a graduate student in the Journalism Department.*

## Renewing the Radical Potential of Queer Theory

Comments from "Queer Studies Now and Then" on February 11, 2003, by David M. Halperin.

There is a generational irony in the current disciplinary situation of queer studies. The people who invented lesbian/gay studies two decades ago, and who went on to introduce queer theory into the academy, were motivated by an impulse to transform what could count as knowledge as well as by a determination to transform the practices by which knowledge functioned within the institution of the university. Students nowadays enroll in graduate school intending to work in the already-existing field of queer theory. Whatever their political background or ambitions, they seek less to revolutionize the university than to benefit from what the university currently has to offer them. They also seek to create a space for themselves and their work within the field of queer theory as that field is now constituted.



That is not a bad a thing in itself. It is after all what many queer academics have struggled for: to make it possible for queer students, and others, to integrate the analysis and critique of gender and sexuality into their professional lives, into their identities, into their scholarly practices. Still, nothing in my own background has prepared me for the kind of disciplinary relation to queer theory that consists not in working with students to create possibilities for critical reflection that have never previously existed but in drawing on my long experience to *train* students in queer theory as if it were any other established field ("B+: you made good use of Sedgwick, but you neglected to mention Michael Moon.") If queer theory is going to have the sort of future worth cherishing, we will have to find ways of renewing its radical potential and by that I mean not devising some new and more avant-garde theoretical formulation of it but, quite concretely, reinventing its capacity to startle, to surprise, to help us think what has not yet been thought.

*David M. Halperin is an editor of GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies as well as Professor of English at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.*

**Lok Siu** gave a lunch talk on *Cultures of Geopolitics: Race, Gender and Diaspora* that looked at the cultural-political formation of Chinese in Panama through the lens of geopolitics and its intersection with race and gender.



*Marketplace of Desire: Sex Tourism, Race, and Commercial Culture in New Orleans, 1890-1920* was the title of **Jasmine Mir's** lunch talk discussing the role of the segregated vice district in New Orleans' commercial culture at the turn of the 20th century.

On December 12-14, 2003, at The American University in Cairo, a three-day international workshop **GENDERED BODIES, TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS: Modernities Reconsidered - Focus on the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia** was held as the first in a CSGS international workshop series on "Gender and Sexuality Studies in the Global South."

The workshop explored the complexities surrounding gender and sexuality in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia and brought together a diverse, international group of scholars working in (a) women's studies in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia; (b) transnational feminism; and (c) gender and sexuality studies. We reexamined the ways dominant discourses on modernity - along with dominant sociopolitical maps of space and place in the postcolonial world order - have critically informed women's and gender studies over the past few decades. Sponsored by the CSGS and the Institute for Gender and Women's Studies at The American University in Cairo. Workshop participants from NYU included *Rabab Abdulhadi, Mary Coffey, Carolyn Dinshaw, Lisa Duggan, Wilson Jacob, Hanan Kholoussy, Sherene Seikaly, David Slocum, and Shouleh Vatanabadi.*



Neloufer de Mel (University of Colombo, Sri Lanka), Dicle Kogacioglu (Brown University) and Esra Özyürek (University of California, San Diego)



Nadia Maria El Cheikh (American University in Beirut, Lebanon), Martina Rieker (American University in Cairo, Egypt), Sondra Hale (University of California, Los Angeles), and Radhika Chopra (University of Delhi, India)

## "(Ad)Dressing Egyptian Modernity: Empire, Nation, and Masculinity, 1860 - 1919"

*Excerpt from paper by Wilson Jacob for Gendered Bodies, Transnational Politics: Modernities Reconsidered, an international workshop organized by the CSGS and the Institute for Gender and Women's Studies (IGWS) at The American University in Cairo*

Within Egyptian cultural debates of the 1920s, the tarboush (also known as the fez) was simultaneously a sign of the modern and the non-modern, the national and the foreign. As the form of headdress worn mainly by a certain class of men - the effendiyya - the tarboush was also the signifier of



a particular kind of bourgeois masculinity. In the 1930s, it became invested with the additional signification of being a consumer item supporting the nationalist cause. I argue here that the tarboush was a contested site for the production of new cultural meaning and a site through, or against, which new masculine desires and anxieties were expressed. In the contests over the tarboush concepts such as the nation and the modern were invested with new and sometimes contradictory signification while simultaneously constituting new masculine subjectivities.

*Wilson Jacob is a Ph.D. candidate in History and Middle Eastern Studies. He was a teaching assistant for Introduction to Gender and Sexuality in fall 2003.*

On Thursday, September 25th, the CSGS and The Center for Media, Culture, and History sponsored *LOOKING BACK, LOOKING BEYOND: Women Speak on Art, Politics, and Exile-Middle East/USA* featuring internationally celebrated visual artists *Shirin Neshat* (Iran-USA) and *Emily Jacir* (Palestine-USA), and NYU cultural critics *Ella Shohat* (Iraq-Israel-USA) and *Shiva Balaghi* (Iran-USA). More than 350 attendees joined us for this panel discussion on the ways artistic creativity in exile is shaped by temporal, spatial, socio-political, religious, and cultural contexts.



Shirin Neshat

The death of Edward Said the day before colored the event, increasing the poignancy of the discussion.

Congratulations to  
**GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies**  
awarded **2003 Best Special Issue** by the  
Council of Editors of Learned Journals  
for volume 9, nos. 1-2

***Desiring Disability: Queer Theory Meets Disability Studies***

## Lesbian Representation in Film

Lee Wallace, Senior Lecturer in Women's Studies at the University of Auckland, was a visiting fellow with the Center In January 2003. While with us, she presented a lunch talk on "The Lesbian Mise-en-Scène," relating to her current research project on cinema and lesbian representation. Commenced in 2000, Wallace's research project, "The Sexual Life of Apartments," considers the role of cinematic space in the articulation of female homosexuality on screen. The project analyses five film texts (*The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *The Killing of Sister George*, *Single White Female*, *Bound*, and *Mulholland Drive*) in which the lesbian narrative is dependent on the apartment space in which it unfolds. With this project relatively advanced, Wallace now has a strong sense of the argument her work articulates. The cinematic apartment, in particular, is crucial to the representational history of lesbianism in the twentieth century. In an essay published in *Screen* on the Wachowski Brothers film, *Bound*, Wallace advances the claim that lesbian identity on screen is an outcome of a particular practice of space, a representational effect associated with the peculiar formal technologies of cinema as they present fictional apartments. Her larger project is designed to re-conceptualize the relations assumed between female homosexuality, visibility and space, in order to understand better the terms by which lesbianism has historically been legitimated as a visual spectacle. Wallace's book, *Sexual Encounter: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities*, has recently appeared with Cornell University Press.



Vice Provost of University Life and Interdisciplinary Initiatives **Linda Mills** discussed the assumptions that govern responses to domestic violence, developing alternative methods that recognize intimate abuse as a dynamic, in her lunch talk, *Insult to Injury: Rethinking Our Responses to Intimate Abuse*.



**Rusmir Music and Faisal Alam** discuss issues of sexuality and Islam at *Creating a Queer Vision of Islam*, a lunch talk held in March 2003.



**Don Kulick, David M. Halperin, Annamarie Jagose, and Carolyn Dinshaw**, editors of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, discussed the field at *Queer Studies Now and Then*.

## Yael Feldman on the Gender of Peace and War

Excerpt from *The Gender of Peace and War: Gilman, Woolf and Freud*, a presentation by Yael Feldman, Abraham I. Katsh Professor of Hebrew Culture and Education

Virginia Woolf advocated gender (rather than sexual) difference—an argument that establishes her as the “mother” of constructivist gender theory. But does her psycho-political analysis of the gender base of aggression lead to the logically analogous inference that pacifism is female based?

Unlike her WWI predecessors, Woolf rejected this essentialist inference, precisely as some contemporary feminists do. Let us recall that in order to escape the essentialist fallacy recent scholarship has suggested replacing the correlation between “women and peace” with “pacifism as a feminist problem.” This replacement stems from the need to escape the connotation of passivity attached to womanhood and maternity in biologically based perceptions. Biology is therefore replaced with a willful act of political choice, an act that is a necessary condition for a feminist position as much as for a pacifist one. The emphasis is on choice, not on the force of nature.

This was precisely Woolf's stance in *Three Guineas*. Her critique of masculinism may at times remind us of Charlotte Gilman's critique of androcentrism, yet this is not the case with her view of women. Concealed within her critique of militarism is a rejection of maternalist feminism. Finding an ally in Bertrand Russell, she totally ridicules the idea that masochism, passivity, and endurance are typical female characteristics. Neither does she delude herself – as did Gilman and Schreiner and their cohorts



Carolyn Dinshaw and Yael Feldman

-- that the maternal instinct is natural and strong enough to withstand the pressure of military socialization. Implied then in Woolf's multi-layered argument is a conclusion that traveled well down the last war-torn century, clearly setting the stage for contemporary agendas: Women would perhaps be women (and mothers), but they need to be educated, in politics as much as in feminist consciousness, in times of peace and war alike.

*This spring Professor Feldman will be teaching The Gender of War and Peace for the Gender and Sexuality Studies Program; it is cross-listed with Hebrew and Judaic Studies. Her essay on this subject is forthcoming soon in Partiaial Answers: Journal of Literature and History of Ideas.*

For more information about the CSGS  
please visit our website at  
<http://www.nyu.edu/fas/gender.sexuality>

## 2003 Joan R. Heller Award Winners Emphasize Anti-violence and Public Service

Last May, CSGS announced the recipients of its annual Joan R. Heller Dissertation Award and Undergraduate Scholarship.

The Joan R. Heller Dissertation Award of \$500 has been given to Christina Hanhardt, a doctoral candidate in the Program in American Studies at NYU. Hanhardt's dissertation, "Safe Space: Sexual Minorities, Uneven Development, and the Politics of Anti-Violence," is a powerfully original study of



Dissertation Award Winner  
Christina Hanhardt

the concept of safe streets in the LGBT communities in New York and San Francisco from the 1960s to the present. A complex and urgent project, this dissertation offers the first sustained analysis of anti-violence campaigns among U.S. sexual minorities that sees these campaigns not only as part of lesbian and gay community histories but also as part of "broader urban debates about

uneven development, crime, and social order." This engaged scholarship contributes to our understanding of "modern" lesbian, gay, and transgender identities" as well as "modern" cities and their policies.

Two students have earned an Honorable Mention for the Joan R. Heller Dissertation Award: Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman (Department of English) for "The Erotics of Race: 'Queer' Sexuality and One Hundred Years of (Black) American Writing," her dissertation on "sexuality as a crucial component



Honorable Mention  
recipient for Scholarship  
Kavita Mehra

in the creation and representation of racial difference in American literature and culture," and Jane Rothstein (Departments of Hebrew and Judaic Studies and History) for "Pure Women and Sacred Baths: Family Purity, Sexuality, and American Jews, 1900-1945," which focuses on the "public discourse and practice of family purity" among American Jews in the first half of the twentieth century as a means of exploring the



Scholarship Recipient  
Guido Sanchez

important intersections between gender, sexuality, and religion in twentieth-century America.

The Joan R. Heller Undergraduate Scholarship, for students majoring in Gender and Sexuality Studies, has been awarded to two students: Kate Collier and Guido Alexander Sanchez. Both students have done exemplary scholarship and public activism concerning national and international gender and sexuality issues.



Honorable Mention recipient for  
Dissertation Award Aliyyah Inaya  
Abdur-Rahman

They will share the \$1,000 prize. Honorable Mention has been awarded to Kavita Mehra, also a Gender and Sexuality Studies major.



Honorable Mention  
Recipient for  
Dissertation Award  
Jane Rothstein

Now in its second year of competition, the Joan R. Heller Awards aim to foster and promote scholarship in the area of Gender and Sexuality Studies. The awards are presented with the generous support of Joan R. Heller.



Scholarship recipient  
Kate Collier

Once again, NYU alumna  
**Joan R. Heller**  
has generously offered two awards to be  
presented in the Spring of 2004!

**\$1000 Joan R. Heller Scholarship**  
awarded to an NYU undergraduate major in  
Gender and Sexuality Studies

**\$500 Joan R. Heller Dissertation Award**  
presented to an NYU graduate student  
doing work in the interrelated fields of  
Gender and Sexuality Studies

For application information and materials  
contact CSGS  
phone: 212-992-9545  
email: [gender.sexuality@nyu.edu](mailto:gender.sexuality@nyu.edu)

**Submit by April 1, 2004**

**Keywords: Bridging the Humanities/Social Science Divide in Gender and Sexuality Studies** is a series of six workshops, funded by the NYU Humanities Council and administered by American Studies graduate student **Christina Hanhardt**, that examines particular terms as they are used interdisciplinarily. Faculty and graduate students from across NYU have gathered three times during the fall semester to discuss the terms **transgender**, **reproduction**, and **power** and three more sessions are scheduled



Professors José Muñoz, Lisa Duggan and Carolyn Dinshaw

for the spring to discuss **communities**, **punishment**, and **inequalities**.

## Sexuality: The View from NYU

by Aliyyah I. Abdur-Rahman

I've had the distinct privilege this year of being both recognized by the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality in the 2003 Joan R. Heller Dissertation Award competition and invited to participate in the CSGS panel, "Sexuality: The View from NYU." The panel was convened in conjunction with the annual Fellows Conference of the Social Science Research Council's Sexuality Research Fellowship Program in order to share with those fellows, with the NYU community, and with the greater public the innovative and important work in the field of Sexuality Studies that is being undertaken here at NYU. The panel assembled scholars working in such diverse fields as Psychology, History, American Studies, Sociology, and English who provided fascinating sneak peeks into their current works.

Half of my own excitement, I must admit, in addition to sharing a panel with scholars whose work has been both an influence upon and an inspiration to mine, was hearing up close the new projects they are cooking up. And apparently, I am not the only one who felt this way, as the turnout for the event was simply huge. Participants included **Phillip Brian Harper** (English and American Studies), **Judith Stacey** (Sociology and Gender & Sexuality Studies), **Hirokazu Yoshikawa** (Psychology), and **Lisa Duggan** (American Studies, History, and Gender & Sexuality Studies). The new work of Phil Harper, who published the widely acclaimed *Are We Not Men?* and the later *Private Affairs*, takes his interests into new areas by considering the relation of aesthetic abstractionism and representations of race and resistance within African American communities and within African American cultural criticism. **Judith Stacey**, author of *Brave New Families* and *In the Name of the Family*, is now engaged in an ethnographic study of kinship networks within gay communities in Los Angeles. She is studying a diverse population of gay men and the social and sexual practices and networking systems that enable them to organize and sustain families. **Hirokazu Yoshikawa**, who teaches in both the Doctoral Program in

Community Psychology and the Developmental Psychology Concentration at NYU, discussed his work, "The Ecology of Social Discrimination and HIV Risk among Asian & Pacific Islander Gay Men." Continuing his commitment to HIV prevention in gay communities of color, Professor Yoshikawa studies the effect of racial discrimination and homophobia on safe-sex practices among Asian and Pacific Islander gay men and works to increase prevention programs targeted to gay communities of color. Lisa Duggan, who has published *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture* and *Sapphic Slashers*, returns with another important critique of 20<sup>th</sup>-culture and politics, entitled *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy*. In this recently published book, Duggan demonstrates how neoliberalist politics and rhetoric preserve social inequities across racial, gender, class, and geopolitical lines and, further, work to nullify the socially progressive movements of gay activists, women, and people of color. Finally, I discussed my dissertation, which investigates the interrelation of race and sexuality within the structures of identity and difference in U.S. culture and in the making of American literature.

Throughout the evening, as panelists discussed their independent projects, a recurring theme and common concern weaved together their various comments: what, in fact, is the study of sexuality? In this moment of the field's development, sexuality studies has diverse meanings to a diverse body of practitioners—depending, in part, on disciplinary affiliation and political intent. For some scholars, it is the object of empirical study, and for others, it is a methodology that shapes interrogations of identity, history, politics, economy, and race. But whether sexuality is itself the site of inquiry; or a hermeneutic, as suggested by moderator **Carolyn Dinshaw**; or a conceptual framework, Sexuality Studies retains its value and usefulness because it analyzes the deepest part of the human subject (where identity, desire, and dominance meet), and it provides a way of seeing and reading the human subject and her cultural products that exceeds the traditional bounds of academic inquiry.

*Aliyyah Inaya Abdur-Rahman is a student in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences studying English and American literature.*



**Carlos Decena's** lunch talk, *Tacit Subjects: Towards a Critique of Compulsory Disclosure*, discussed the sexuality of a group of Dominican immigrant men living in New York City who maintain same-sex relations but do not "come out" in ways celebrated by mainstream U.S. gay culture.

At the reception following *Who Owns Diversity?*, a panel discussion on the institutionalization of "diversity," **JJ Jackson** discusses the event with **Nitin L. Malla**, President of the International Economics Honor Society and an Economics undergraduate, and alumni **Charles Liu** and **Liu Chen**. [See pgs. 8-9 for details.]



**Kyra Gaunt** presented a lunch talk on April 15 on the construction of gender in the world of jazz, entitled *Gender and Jazz (or Singers vs. Musicians): Muscial Socialization and Other Constructions of Difference in the NYC Jazz Scene*. She also treated attendees to a bit of her singing.

## Judith Stacey: A Profile

by Lisa Duggan

“Gay and lesbian families are here; All our families are queer; Let’s get used to it!” This is the message of new CSGS Professor Judith Stacey’s research on the sociology of the postmodern family. Appearing as a chapter title in her influential 1997 book, *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family*



*Values in a Postmodern Age*, this point is now being expanded in Stacey’s forthcoming book on gay men’s relationships, focused on interviews conducted in Los Angeles during the past few years. The results of this new project were recently presented at an October 23 CSGS sponsored forum at NYU [see pg. 7 for details], and will begin appearing in articles during 2004, including “Cruising to Familyland:

Gay Hypergamy and Rainbow Kinship,” forthcoming in *Current Sociology*. Stacey surveys the kinship forms and sexual partnering practices of gay men for the benefit of us all—she argues that they are in many ways the pioneers for postmodern family forms in the new millennium.

Professor Stacey comes to NYU from the University of Southern California, where she was the Streisand Professor of Contemporary Gender Studies. As a highly visible feminist sociologist—well, how else does one come to occupy the (Barbra) Streisand chair?—she is the author or editor of a string of widely cited books and articles, including *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late Twentieth-Century America* (1990); *Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China* (1983; winner of the American Sociological Association’s Jessie Bernard Award), and *And Jill Came Tumbling After: Sexism in American Education* (co-edited with Susan Bereaud and Joan Daniels, 1974). Here at NYU, she is Professor of Sociology as well as of Gender and Sexuality Studies. During fall 2003, she is teaching an undergraduate course called “Sexual Diversity in Society.” During spring 2004, she’s slated to offer a graduate course in gender and sexuality, and an undergraduate seminar, “Queer Families.”

Hailing from Irvington, N.J., Prof. Stacey is not new to the New York region. After her long residence on the left coast—she was a professor of women’s studies at the University of California at Davis before her arrival at USC—she is delighted to be back in the city, residing with her hefty cat companion, Chase, in a stunning loft overlooking Astor Place in the East Village. The mother of a recent NYU alumnus, she also is not new to the university. As she settles in at CSGS and the Sociology Department, she is preparing not only to teach and continue her academic research and writing, but to expand her participation in public debates about gender, sexuality, intimacy, parenthood and “family values.” She is already a veteran of Primetime Live on ABC-TV, NPR Radio, The O’Reilly Factor on Fox News, and The Love Chronicles on A&E.

*Lisa Duggan is a professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies, History, and American Studies at NYU. She is the author of The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy.*

## “Who Owns Diversity?”

by Sherene Seikaly

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality held a roundtable discussion about the meanings, deployments, and effects of the term “diversity.” The discussion was a particularly apt one, coinciding with the attention to the affirmative action Michigan Law School cases, *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*, argued before the US Supreme Court on April 1.

**Carolyn Dinshaw**, CSGS Director, introduced the event as part of a series of CSGS discussions around the disciplinary and institutional claims to key analytical and political terms. Spring 2002 saw the first such panel on “Who Owns Gender?” The ongoing debates around affirmative action’s purported irrelevance informed this year’s choice, as did the profound segmentation of diversity in the academy that resonates with experiences in public policy.



Sherene Seikaly

**Catharine Stimpson**, Dean of the Graduate School, offered reflections on the University of Michigan’s affirmative action lawsuit. The Supreme Court in many ways was at that moment deciding who owned diversity and how it would be shared. Without recognition of diversity, she maintained, the world will continue to be a harsh place, yet this recognition should be based on an ethic of respect that will allow diversity to be collectively owned.

**David Slocum**, Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, cited diversity as the semantic beacon of our time. The function of this beacon is to reveal disciplinary divides and illuminate historical and perspectival approaches to new words and meanings. Slocum added that while the academy constitutes a site and space distinct from but reflective of society, it is important that it reconnect to broader post-millennial, post-cold war, geopolitical and political economic figurations. This includes the current war on Iraq and the homeland security apparatus.

**Rabab Abdulhadi**, Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies, discussed the homogenization of images of Palestinian and Arab women as either hapless victims or masochistic demon lovers, either misguided in their anti-colonial struggle or naïve about their nationalism. Abdulhadi pointed out that Palestinian women in actuality encompass a diversity of differences in class, religious backgrounds,

The CSGS congratulates  
Associate Professor and CSGS Associate Director

**Lynne Haney**  
winner of the

**2003 American Sociological Association  
Award for Outstanding Book in  
Sex and Gender**

and degrees of religiosity, or lack thereof, as well as political positions. In addition, diversity in a context of freedom differs radically from contexts of asymmetrical relations. Thus, under Israeli occupation a call for homogeneity against an occupying force was one of the ways that Palestinianness itself was sustained. Abdulhadi also reflected on the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> and post-Iraq war political reality which requires a shift in the production of knowledge vis-à-vis Arab, South Asian, and Central Asian communities.

**Lennard Davis**, Professor of English at the University of Illinois at Chicago, contributed the perspective of biocultural constructions that confuse and confound categories of inclusion into “diversity.” Born to working class, Jewish, deaf parents, Davis discussed the personal trajectory that allowed him to broaden notions of diversity and liberation. Davis’ theorizing of disability problematized “normality” as a social construction and connected disability to political systems as well as to race, identity, and genetics. The inclusion of disability, mental and cognitive disorders, intersexuality, transgender, queerness, and other single-generation or late-acquired identities complicates normative categories and is necessary for any concrete sense of diversity.

**Christine Harrington**, Professor of Politics and Law & Society, discussed the rise and fall of “diversity” in the constitutional life of equality. Harrington presented diversity as having a short juridical life with only remedial policies. Neither the movements for legal “colorblindness” nor the Reparations Movements take racial equality as a basis for diversity as they are centered around compensation for injuries, rather than bringing about equality. While in the past jurisprudence explicitly protected white power, today racial injustice is cloaked in the subtlety of neo-liberal jurisprudence and remains far from the reach of constitutional equality.

Associate Provost for Institutional Engagement **JJ Jackson’s** relationship to diversity began as the child of sharecroppers in rural North Carolina. Jackson relayed her experiences within racially segregated social and educational systems, explaining how they inspired her commitment to diversity in educational systems. While institutions assert a desire for ethnic diversity, there is little institutional embrace of diversity’s richness or value. Yet, at the same time, while popular admonition has it that commitment to diversity has to “come from the top,” the responsibility for and ownership of diversity must be taken and shared by all.

**Robin D.G. Kelley**, Professor of History and Africana Studies, discussed the loaded term “diversity” and what it has come to signify in neo-liberal political discourse. Kelley acknowledged Abdulhadi’s comments on diversity in contexts of asymmetry. He asserted that creating diversity is not simply about recognizing difference, but about how such difference relates to power, privilege, and justice. Thus the very categories for inclusion in “diversity” were and continue to be produced by slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and new forms of subordination. “Whiteness” has been constructed as a universal norm and diversity has functioned to keep that category in place. Thus, diversity cannot simply be a process of racial integration; it has to be about desegregating power.

**Mary Louise Pratt**, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literatures, discussed the erosion of

affirmative action and its replacement with “diversity.” Affirmative action was an active correction focused on the members of excluded groups whose right of access to institutional resources had been denied. But in contrast, diversity is an idea, highly compatible with commodified, free market thinking. Pratt discussed the dangers of recent utilizations of diversity on both right and left that work to reify structures of subordination. If a justice-driven diversity is to succeed, it will necessitate a change in knowledge, in methodology, and in the dynamics of daily life.

**John Kuo Wei Tchen**, Director of the Asian/Pacific/American Studies program and Institute, began with a discursive analysis of “ownership” as the most provocative and contested term of the evening’s roundtable. He traced “ownership” as a historical prerequisite for white male citizenship. Tchen discussed the ways in which the matter of becoming, of self-ownership, was and continues to be controlled by the state and historical practices. Tchen fluctuated between four different voices – the theoretical, the dialogical, the community-based organizational, and the biographical. He thus reflected on how we can tell all four stories together without reifying the posture of the white intellectual, leaving the audience to question the production of knowledge and what is valued as knowledge.

As the number of college-age people of color grows and their representation in institutions diminishes, as the policies of a “New American Century” seem bound only to expansion, and as civil liberties are eroded at home, this panel was and continues to be a timely discussion of historical trajectories, current realities, and future possibilities.

*Sherene Seikaly is a graduate student in Middle Eastern Studies.*

## Meet Ricardo Montez Managing Editor of *GLQ*

As managing editor of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Ricardo Montez is a vital part of the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality.

A doctoral candidate in Performance Studies, he is writing a dissertation that considers the performance of cross-racial desire in the work of Keith Haring. Ricardo has been managing editor since September of 2001. His work with *GLQ* and in the CSGS office provides him with a connection to an intellectual community committed to looking at issues of gender and sexuality. Moreover, he is able to

see the complex processes and many transformations through which academic articles go on their way to publication. Ricardo not only studies the work of others, but also produces his own videos, including the documentary *Tress: A Stylin’ Documentary on Downtown Hair*. This video was created through the Program in Culture and Media, a joint program in Anthropology and Cinema Studies. Through his extensive studies of performance and visual culture, Ricardo brings into the journal as well as the Center an understanding and analysis of art as integral to academic discourse.



## Bloody Women: A Report on the “Menstruation: Blood, Body, Brand” Conference

by Jane Rothstein

I received a variety of reactions from people when I told them that I was traveling from New York City to present a paper at a conference in Liverpool, England, on menstruation. Everything from “Hmm. How... interesting...” to “Oh, international conferences are great!” to “I wish I’d never asked” to “Blood and eggs! I love it!” In retrospect, these responses seem to me to be indications of our society’s conflicting approaches to menstrual etiquette: avoidance or embarrassment on the one hand and celebration on the other. As the organizers of my conference [<http://www.iftr.org.uk/news/2003/menstruation.html>] put it: “The ‘menstrual’ is one of the last taboos of both cultural and academic discourse. A recurrent motif in specifying the body marked female, menstruation has been a subject of interest for the feminist second wave.”

How are we to understand the biology, culture, history, and politics of menstruation? The conference set out to provide a forum in which researchers from many fields in the humanities and social sciences could discuss this question, learn from each other’s work, and begin to trace the contours of a field most often based in the biomedical sciences.

“Menstruation: Blood, Body, Brand” convened at the Liverpool Medical Institution, part of the University of Liverpool, on January 24-26, 2003, and was sponsored by the Institute for Feminist Theory and Research (IFTR). Andrew Shail, the conference organizer, is working on a fascinating Ph.D. in the School of English at the University of Exeter on the 1920s British advertising of Kotex, an American brand of sanitary napkins. In opening the conference, Andrew related that he had long garnered bemused looks from colleagues due to his interest in menstruation and planned the conference in part simply to suss out interest in the field. Amazingly, what Andrew and the IFTR directors initially envisioned as a one-day conference attracted 64 speakers – faculty, graduate students, independent scholars, artists, and activists – from 14 countries, who gave 57 presentations and put on three art exhibits, over the course of nearly three days.

Literary scholars, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, artists, activists, and cultural studies scholars shared work that spanned Western history, from pre-literate societies to ancient Greece to contemporary marketing and politics. While focused primarily on the West, papers also addressed menstrual images and practices in Africa, India, China, and Native America. They shared views of menstruation from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They analyzed menstrual images in fiction, poetry, drama, advertising, sacred texts, medical textbooks, philosophy, film, television, correspondence, journalism, children’s literature, and educational pamphlets.

Shail called “Blood, Body, Brand” the first international conference on menstruation and hoped that it would be the first of many. Conference organizers are currently talking with a publisher to bring out a collection of the presentations.

Jane Rothstein [[jane\\_rothstein@mindspring.com](mailto:jane_rothstein@mindspring.com)] is a doctoral candidate in a joint program in NYU’s Department of History and Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. She is writing a dissertation entitled “Pure Women and Sacred Baths: Family Purity, Sexuality, and American Jews, 1900-1945.”



**Khary Polk**, teaching assistant in the fall semester for *Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies*, working hard at his desk.



CSGS welcomed **Tova Rosen**, professor of Hebrew Literature at Tel Aviv University, to discuss her new book, *Unveiling Eve: Reading Gender in Medieval Hebrew Literature*.



**Dilek Cindoglu** (Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey) presented the lunch talk *Cyberspace Encounters: The Prospects for Intimacy in the 21st Century*, discussing the potential for emancipation and alienation in supra-social intimate cyberspace encounters in terms of gender, self, and empowerment in sexualities.

### NEW YORK UNIVERSITY ASSISTANT PROFESSOR/FACULTY FELLOW THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

The Faculty of Arts and Science of New York University invites applications for an appointment as Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow in the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, pending budgetary and administrative approval. The initial appointment will be for one year beginning September 1, 2004, renewable annually for a maximum of three years. Candidates must have completed a Ph.D. no earlier than three years before the date of appointment, have a strong commitment to teaching, and be active in research on any aspect of Gender and Sexuality Studies in either the humanities or social sciences. Special consideration will be given to candidates whose research focuses on international or transnational issues. The candidate is expected to teach three courses, the nature of which will in part depend on the candidate’s qualifications. The CSGS sponsors an active schedule of public events and long-term projects, and the candidate should be willing to plan, promote, and participate in such events and projects.

Please send a letter of application, a curriculum vitae, a 20-page writing sample, a sample syllabus, and 4 letters of reference by March 12, 2004, to: Carolyn Dinshaw, Director, Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, New York University, 285 Mercer Street, Third Floor, New York, NY 10003-6653.

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## Gender and Sexuality Education in Career Settings

by Kate Collier

When you are a student of Gender and Sexuality Studies, there are ample opportunities to put what you learn to use in career settings. The Gender and Sexuality Studies internship program gives students the chance to explore the practical applications of what they learn in the classroom. I completed a credited internship at Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund in spring 2003. Lambda Legal is a national non-profit organization that works to protect the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, the transgendered, and people living with HIV and AIDS. Lambda Legal has been in the spotlight recently, having won the landmark Supreme Court case, *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas*, in which the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional state sodomy laws that criminalize private, consensual sex acts between both same-sex and opposite-sex adult partners. When I interned at Lambda, I worked in the Education and Public Affairs Department, which coordinates outreach and education efforts.

Since June, I have been working as an intern at Gay Men's Health Crisis, a non-profit, volunteer-supported and community-based organization that provides an enormous array of services to those affected by HIV and AIDS. GMHC was founded in 1981, making it the oldest AIDS service organization in the country. I currently work in the Communications and Marketing department, and I have learned more about the history of the AIDS epidemic.

Both of these internships built upon the knowledge I have acquired in my Gender and Sexuality Studies classes. Because activism, legalism, and public policy work have led to major shifts in the way that we are able to think about and study gender and sexuality, it was easy to make connections between what I learned in an academic setting and what I learned in the workplace. Those interested in finding out more about Lambda Legal and Gay Men's Health Crisis can visit their respective websites at [lambdalegal.org](http://lambdalegal.org) and [gmhc.org](http://gmhc.org).

*Kate Collier, an undergraduate student in Gender and Sexuality Studies and Journalist, graduated in December 2003.*



**Jami Weinstein** from Vassar College's Women's Studies Program and **Robert Reid-Pharr** from the English Department at the CUNY Graduate Center facilitated a workshop *Master Class on Teaching Judith Butler*, in the "Lesson Plans" series on teaching gender and sexuality co-presented by CSGS and CUNY's Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS).

## CSGS Spring 2004 Featured Events

*Monday, February 2, 7 – 9 p.m.*

### **THE POLITICS OF BLOOD**

The FDA's policy on blood collection prohibits any man who has had sex with another man since 1977 from donating blood. Is this medically justifiable caution or homophobia? This panel discussion will bring together people involved in policy, activism, and research (legal, medical, sociocultural) in order to examine historical and political issues surrounding blood solicitation and donation, both in the U.S. and beyond U.S. borders.

*Kimmel Center for University Life, 60 Washington Square South, Room 905-907.*

Co-sponsored by the Office of LGBT Student Services, American Studies Program, Queer Union and Students for Social Equality.

*Tuesday, March 2, 12:30 -1:45 p.m.*

### **BHAGIRATHA, SON OF TWO MOTHERS: Female-Female Sexual Union and Miraculous Reproduction in Premodern Indian Texts**

*Ruth Vanita* (Liberal Studies and Women's Studies, University of Montana)

Part of Vanita's ongoing work on premodern antecedents of same-sex marriage in India and the West, this presentation examines sacred texts produced in the fourteenth century in eastern India. In an incident Vanita argues is unique, two co-widows have a divinely blessed relationship and produce a heroic child together.

*19 University Place, Room 222.*

*Tuesday, March 23, 6:30 – 8 p.m.*

### **The Abbasid Harem in Tenth-Century Baghdad**

*Nadia Maria El Cheikh* (Department of History and Archaeology, and Director of the Center for Arab and Middle East Studies, American University in Beirut, and CSGS International Visiting Scholar)

The narratives pertaining to the reign of the Caliph al-Muqtadir (295-320/908-932) are particularly rich for an investigation of the Abbasid harem. During his reign the power struggle between various factions at the court allowed his mother, Umm al-Muqtadir, along with a number of harem women and the eunuchs, to exercise political power and influence. The lecture will examine politics, gender, and the interpretation of the past.

*19 University Place, Room 222.*

*Thursday, April 15, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.*

### **6 YEARS AFTER THE NEA 4:**

**Karen Finley, John Fleck, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller**

For the first time, all of the respondents in *National Endowment for the Arts v. Finley et al.* will be in the same room to discuss how their 1998 Supreme Court case and subsequent events have affected their art practice and the arts in general. Is art more "decent" now? Has there been a chilling effect, particularly on work addressing sexuality and race? Have coalitions formed around instances of censorship, particularly post 9/11, and what might that tell us about coalition politics in the U.S. today? The discussion will include cultural critic C. Carr and other guests.

*Rosenthal Pavilion, Kimmel Center for Student Life, 60 Washington Square South, Tenth Floor.*

Sponsored by The Fales Library and the CSGS; co-sponsored by the American Studies Program.