



Jewish Feminist Tree by Flora Lark Baily

University of Virginia Studies in Women and Gender

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Director's Note:

How Have Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Programs Weathered the Economic Crisis?

by Kath Weston

During the economic crisis that shook the world from 2008 to 2010, rumors began to circulate about how the crisis had affected women's, gender, and sexuality studies programs in the United States. Some said these programs were being slashed to the bone, more so than disciplinary departments that could claim a longer lineage in academic institutions. Some worried that colleges and universities were using the crisis as a justification to gut interdisciplinary programs whose worth had never properly been appreciated. Given the historical challenges that faculty who work in these areas once had to face to get their subjects systematically incorporated into the curriculum, perhaps it should not come as a surprise that many feared the worst. But with the economic crisis (or at least its first wave) now behind us, how accurate were those fears? The "New Majorities, Shifting Priorities Summary Report" recently released by the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW) can help answer that question.

In the fall of 2010, the CSW worked together with the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality at New York University to conduct an electronic survey with the goal of improving understanding of "the relationships, structures, and challenges affecting academic and curricular units related to gender, LGBT, sexuality, women's, ethnic, and post-colonial studies." The survey went out to faculty, including chairs, of programs and departments in these areas at both public and private colleges and universities in the U.S. UVA's SWAG program was one of the survey respondents.

The majority of respondents reported that their programs had come under "increased scrutiny and budget cuts" in the course of administrative attempts to cope with the economic crisis. Loss of faculty lines, reduced course offerings, increased class sizes, staff cuts, pay freezes, furloughs, and mergers (sometimes forced) with other units were just some of the many impacts registered. The form taken by these cuts might seem familiar to anyone working in higher education today, but respondents described the cuts as disproportionately affecting interdisciplinary programs such as women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

(continued on page 3)



Mulberry Tree, c1889
Vincent Van Gogh

Mulberries and Chador

She would spread her chador
under the mulberry tree, and gently
hit the branches with a long pole.

Sitting on the edge of her cotton chador
I thought my grandmother was a magician.
Giddy with joy I'd watch

the mulberries drift and dance
like flattened snowflakes
into my cupped receiving hands.

*Harder, grandma, I would plead,
hit harder, and she'd laugh, and say,
"We can't hurt pregnant trees,"*

and twirl her wand into its blizzard
of decades, oceans I've yet to travel
beyond the hem of her mulberry-studded dreams.

Farzaneh Milani
(Atlanta Review, Spring/Summer 2010)

Spring SWAG Events

"Women's Studies SWAG Alumni Panel" with Candace
Burton, Susan Miller, Ken Nguyen, and Carly Romeo

Tuesday, March 29, 2011



"Faith and Dancing: A performance lecture on mapping
femininity, missing America, and other natural disasters."
with Lois Weaver, Professor of Contemporary Performance
Practice at Queen Mary University of London and Artistic
Director of Split Britches Company

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Director's Note continued...

When respondents attempted to secure adequate levels of resources for their programs, they sometimes had to contend with the attitude that interdisciplinary fields are less “real” than disciplinary ones or that interdisciplinary programs were not essential to the “core” mission of their respective institutions. Administrators often argued that students could equally well study subjects such as gender with faculty located in more “traditional” departments. While that might be the case in some instances, as one respondent pointed out, “Although much of the course material could and should be taught within traditional departments, unfortunately, it is not. Without many of these units, these courses and/or faculty who teach them would not be supported. This is especially true during difficult financial times when class sizes increase and resources are diminished, as these types of courses are not usually considered a priority within more traditional disciplines.” Respondents also pointed out the benefits of the focused institutional presence that interdisciplinary programs provide by serving as centers for intellectual inquiry and by training students to move across boundaries.

One of the more striking findings of the report concerns the creativity with which a minority of institutions has worked to ensure that their interdisciplinary programs thrive. (Interestingly, quite a few of these institutions are located in the South.) Instead of decreasing interdisciplinary teaching and programming support, Johns Hopkins increased it. American University is proceeding with its WGST research initiative. The College of William and Mary had the foresight to establish an endowment for its Women’s Studies program years ago, which has mitigated the impact of budget cuts. The University of Richmond expects to expand its interdisciplinary programs, with an emphasis on international studies. Although Women’s Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth now has larger class sizes, it also expects to be granted departmental status within the year. Pan-African Studies at the University of Louisville has secured administrative backing for a new Ph.D. program. The WGS program at the College of Charleston, a public institution located in a state that faces significant fiscal challenges, continues to grow nonetheless. While these examples might be the exceptions that prove the rule, they are also reminders that when institutions truly understand and value the contributions of their interdisciplinary programs, they are not forced by tough times to place them on life support. Instead, they can work together with program faculty to come up with innovative ways of providing *meaningful* support so that faculty can get on with what they do best instead of perpetually scrambling to develop patchwork solutions to keep underfunded programs alive.



Kath Weston
Director, Studies in Women and Gender
Professor of Anthropology and Studies in Women and Gender

A Tale of Two Murders

Gabrielle Plotkin, B.A. Government and Studies in Women & Gender, Class of 2010



The 2009-2010 academic year at the University of Virginia was marred by two tragedies: in the fall, the killing of Virginia Tech student Morgan Dana Harrington and in the spring, the slaying of our own classmate, Yeardeley Love. These events were devastating for everyone at UVA; however, they hold a special significance for the SWAG community because they offer us an occasion to reflect on our experiences and to assess our roles as representatives of this group.

When I declared my Studies in Women and Gender major, I heard countless jokes about how I would be “basically unemployable” and how I chose a major that only requires students to “talk about their feelings.” Although these comments were made in jest, they are indicative of a more frustrating phenomenon: women’s studies as a discipline is often not taken seriously. As a recent graduate in the job market and in light of the deaths of Morgan and Yeardeley, I find this particularly troubling. I am a staunch defender of my choice of studies—so much so, that during a recent interview on Capitol Hill, I argued that my SWAG major made me even *more* valuable than my degree in Politics.

Having taken eleven SWAG-counting courses, from “Gender and Sexuality in Pop Culture” to “Gender and Human Rights,” I now consider what the sum of these parts really is. How have classes like “Queer Theory” and “Feminist Methodologies” sculpted the way I think and act? Is it really any different than any other liberal arts education? My answer to these questions is an unequivocal “yes.” The way I see it, the SWAG curriculum endows its students with certain skills—tools, if you will—that give us a one-up on our contemporaries from the conventional disciplines. There are three of these tools that I would like to enumerate here, as I believe that they are critically important:

Intellectual exercise: SWAG students are challenged to think in unorthodox ways, step outside of our comfort zones, and open our minds to alternative systems of thought and practice, even when we are content with our own. Only in a SWAG classroom was I required to understand the human body as a series of lines of chi, rather than the complex intersection of cells, veins, and organs that we learned at a young age. Having trained our brains to work in different ways, we are people that can feel comfortable in diverse environments and with all kinds of people.

Critical thinking: SWAG makes us ask difficult questions of ourselves and of others. The program requires us to identify the structural roots of everyday problems and to analyze data accordingly by considering the politics behind what is given and what is missing. Only in a SWAG classroom was I asked to understand gross domestic product not only as a useful market indicator, but also one that does not account for women’s work in the home, thereby making that work to insignificance. SWAG students are assets to any team because we ask different kinds of questions and take no answers for granted.

Commitment to activism: All studies conducted in SWAG are the means to an end, from figuring out how to increase access to clean water to ruminating on the ways to mitigate the effects of heteronormativity. This sort of academic work has a progressive edge to it that may be considered taboo or a breach of objectivity in other departments. Only in a SWAG classroom was I assigned the task of making changes in my lifestyle to bring it closer to my feminist values and then asked to write a paper about it. We are a group of people inculcated with the passion and courage to stand up for what we believe. We are not afraid to be associated with the other f-word: feminism.

The murders of Ms. Harrington and Ms. Love were harrowing events that turned the University's attention to women's safety issues, but for the SWAG community, those issues had been a matter of concern for a long time already. For this reason, we were able to generate a quick and powerful response as a united front that manifested itself in the form of the White Ribbon Campaign during Final Exercises. Within a few days, the SWAG community mobilized by identifying its allies, creating a space for dialogue, making reasonable demands of the University for reform, and creating awareness, in part through the distribution of 25,000 ribbons. I attribute the success of this campaign to the aforementioned tools. As SWAG majors and minors, we have envisioned a world where we are safe not only in our bedrooms, but also out on the street at night. This vision has caused us to reject the inevitability of sexual violence and to devise innovative and comprehensive strategies for combating it. This vision has also inspired us to take action when opportunity presents itself—in the wake of a fallen sister, for instance.

Our feminist foremothers fought long and hard to make this world a better place for women, from the pursuit of enfranchisement to the reform of societal structures at large. We live in an age when many fear radicalism without knowing much about it or pausing to distinguish between the different forms that radicalism can take. In this context, it is challenging yet important to cultivate and defend the healthy, wholesome radicalism of many feminist thinkers. The education I received does not allow me to be complacent with the status quo because with the status quo, one in four American women experiences sexual violence in her lifetime.

Personally, the deaths of Yeardley Love and Morgan Dana Harrington served as reminders of why I chose to major in SWAG, but this validation should not come only when tragedies arise. Let us all as SWAG alumni commit to the defense and promotion of women's studies as a legitimate and vital discipline, for it has made us better thinkers and better people. Lastly, let us not allow Morgan and Yeardley's memories to fall into oblivion. Continue to advocate for sexual safety—in Charlottesville and wherever it is that your SWAG education takes you.

Studies in Women and Gender is grateful to friends of the program for your support:

Sarah Brazelton
Erin Rickard
Stephanie Seymour

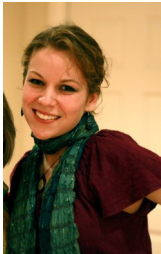
To support SWAG please visit <http://www.virginia.edu/womenstudies/support.html>.

SWAG at UVA is on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2223226750>

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Undergraduate Essay Winner

The Virgin in Ottonian Art

Lydia Paine, B.A. Art History, Class of 2010



Though we tend to associate the cult of the Virgin with later Gothic art, the Council of Ephesus sanctioned the cult of the Virgin as Mother of God in 431 CE, and indeed images of the Virgin have played a central role in Western devotional art since early medieval times. In asking “Why Mary?” one quickly reaches the conclusion that there is no simple, finite explanation for her prominence in Christian imagery. Born through Immaculate Conception, Mary represented a level of purity that was inherently unattainable for medieval women; her divine conception of the Son of God merely added another layer of unfeasibility to her paradigmatic existence. And yet Christianity has encouraged the female religious to emulate her chaste example so that they might overcome their innate lustfulness and physical inferiority to men. For men of the Middle Ages, the Virgin was the sole woman that was worthy of adoration, but given the highly exceptional circumstances of her existence, one could argue that she was not woman at all.

In this paper, the author focuses on representations of the Virgin in Ottonian devotional art, which were the products of a ripening cultural synthesis of multiple forces, from a revived interest in humanism that reached Germany through Byzantine cultural exchange, to the Ottonian inheritance of the art of the Carolingian court, to the continued Late Antique influences in Italy. Examining how the devotional objects of this period forged spiritual bonds with their viewers reveals that in Ottonian Germany, the Virgin was uniquely powerful. Indeed she possessed an unprecedented level of iconographical force. Yet in serving as a model of chastity and service to God for her followers, her worship reinforced the system of sexual control into which all women were born. The objects discussed in this paper speak to the multitude of cultural influences that made the Ottonian Virgin worthy of worship in her own right while simultaneously bolstering the social constraints placed upon women.



Gender and the Journey of Life: An Historical Perspective

Corinne Field

Lecturer of History and Studies in Women and Gender, UVA

I would like to begin today by underlining what a remarkable group of young people these SWAG majors are. Along with all the graduates gathered on the Lawn today, they completed a rigorous course of study at a leading university, but beyond that they chose a major that required them to tackle the most challenging questions about their world and themselves.

When they decided on this major, they probably read the following in the course catalog: “Studies in Women and Gender is an interdisciplinary program in which students study gender relations with an emphasis on transnational perspectives.” Sounds interesting enough, but what does this mean in practice?

First, it means that these graduates are intellectually versatile. They move with ease between literary analysis, social science, political theory, and history. It’s remarkable to watch. Second, they are brave. They are not afraid to question their most fundamental assumption about what it means to be a man or a woman, about what defines meaningful work, social justice, or romantic love. Third—and this may be their most significant achievement—they respect different opinions. The transnational focus of the curriculum has immersed them in the study of cultures radically different from their own. Further, the culture that they have built here, in their SWAG classes, has taught them to learn from others while also defending their own convictions. This is a major achievement, given the bombastic polemics that pass for debate in much of our popular culture. In short, these graduates have developed a balance of expertise, courage, and compassion that will serve them well in whatever they decide to do next.

I also want to acknowledge the contribution of Ann Lane, the former director and enduring heart of the SWAG program. Ann first came here in 1990, hired to build the women’s studies program only twenty years after UVA accepted its first female undergraduates. Today, women are a majority—55% of all undergraduates—and they are much more welcome, thanks in no small part to Ann’s tireless commitment to gender equity. Her creed has been to “make trouble”—by which she means to stir up issues that others would prefer to ignore, to hold people to their best ideals, and to cause all this mischief with great humor and immense charm.

Graduation Speech

May 2010



*“The future belongs
to those who believe
in the beauty of their
dreams.”*

*-Eleanor Roosevelt
(1884-1962)*

Roosevelt was a widely respected author, United Nations delegate, and chair of the first Presidential Commission on the Status of Women in the United States.

Her current book project is a typical example of making trouble. She is writing about sexual relations between faculty and students—a topic that unmask issues of gender and power right here, in her own workplace, and forces her colleagues to confront how people, usually students, get hurt by relationships that most people pretend don't exist. Further, she not only researched this topic but pushed for new regulations that would provide greater protections to students.

Ann is a model of the scholar activist, someone with a lifelong commitment to understanding the relationship between gender, race, class, sexuality, and power, and to furthering the cause of social justice. As you leave UVA, you could not have better inspiration to take with you.

For my talk today, I want to consider the significance of graduation as a major milestone within the ongoing journey of life. Graduation speeches typically focus on this moment as a major turning point, a key transition to adult independence, the start of the rest of your life—and it is all this. But I want to point to another way of understanding the significance of graduation, an understanding that would have been more common two hundred years ago, and that is to view higher education as one phase in the gradual unfolding of human faculties over the course of life.

Today I ask you to look back to the first generation of American women's rights activists, those who came of age in the 1830s and 1840s, to explore how their understanding of adulthood differed from our own. They fought long and hard to open the nation's leading colleges to women, to make graduation ceremonies like this available to young women and men on equal terms. But they placed even greater emphasis on women's capacity for intellectual development over the entire course of life. Further, they did this for an explicitly political purpose: to challenge restrictions based on gender, race, and class. They used the metaphor of life as a journey to challenge restrictive claims that white women should remain in a particular "sphere" while black men and women should remain in their "place." While we cannot and should not return to earlier strategies, I ask you—on this momentous day of transition—to consider what can be gained by thinking of life not as a series of stages but as an ongoing journey, voyage, or unfolding that spans many years, and how this viewpoint might lead to new strategies achieving gender and racial equality. I want you to consider the goal that black abolitionist Charlotte Forten set for herself in the 1850s: what she described as "the growth and improvement of my mind from year to year." For Forten, a lifelong dedication to pursuing intellectual growth "year to year" both enabled and justified challenging restrictions based on race and gender.

Antebellum American feminists lacked our vocabulary of gender analysis, but they nonetheless explored how artificial customs, corrupt social relations, and oppressive laws constrained the lives of men and women. In particular, they pointed out that white men tended to imagine their lives as a journey unfolding over time, often reaching a peak of achievement in middle age, while white women were encouraged to remain within "woman's proper sphere" and black men and women were expected to remain in servile positions throughout their lives. In short, white men's lives were defined by a temporal metaphor measuring individual development over the course of life while black men's and all women's lives were constrained by spatial metaphors of limited spheres or lowly status.

White women's rights activists repeatedly challenged the metaphor of woman's sphere with new metaphors that defined womanhood, like manhood, as a path, pilgrimage, or voyage during which women would discover their full potential. For example, in 1851, Oberlin graduate Lucy Stone proclaimed, "Laying her hand upon the helm, let woman steer straight onward to the fulfillment of her own destiny." Still other activists relied on metaphors of physiological maturation as when health reformer Paulina Wright Davis declared, "I ask only freedom for the natural unfolding of [woman's] powers, the conditions most favorable for her possibilities of growth." This effort to redefine womanhood as a process of development unfolding over time was, I am arguing, central to early feminism. Freeing women to make the journey of life was a general goal that encompassed more specific demands such as access to higher education, paid work, sexual freedom, or the vote.

Black men and women often felt that their particular concerns were slighted by white woman's rights activists, but a shared commitment to individual development enabled activists to reach across the color line. Frances Harper grew up to become the most famous African American poet of the nineteenth century, but when she graduated from school the only job she could find was as a domestic servant. Making the best of this, she decided to work for a Quaker bookseller who opened his library to her. Later Harper wrote about how youthful struggles could unfold mature capacities. For example, when describing an unmarried, middle-aged woman who had long worked to support herself, Harper observed, "The bloom of her girlhood had given way to a higher type of spiritual beauty . . . Her inner life had grown beautiful, and it was this that was constantly developing the outer." When Harper collaborated with white women's rights activists, this shared commitment to inner growth—to spiritual and intellectual development over the course of life—provided a common goal.

This focus on life's journey also helped to unify older and younger women. Current feminists often emphasize generational differences between women. Organizations and books are directed at young women (the fourth wave) or older women (the Raging Grannies—check out their website; they're staging great events). These age-specific groups can be very effective, but at the cost of acknowledging what women of different generations can learn from one another.

Finally, the goal of freeing each individual to make the journey of life facilitated mutual respect between housewives and wage-earning women. While praising women who succeeded in fields not typically considered part of woman's sphere—the first female doctors, lawyers, editors—women's rights activists also wanted marriage and motherhood to become paths to public leadership. Antebellum women explored the possibilities of sequentially moving through education, motherhood, and public work—an idea premised on the notion that experience gained in raising children in the home should have public value in the world of paid work, politics, and social reform. Abby Price, for example, looked forward to a time when "experienced and virtuous matrons, who have passed through years of domestic duties with fidelity and care, shall sit in the Councils of the Nation wisely to control and direct their deliberations." Elizabeth Cady Stanton pointed to the life of Lucretia Mott, a mother and reformer in her late fifties: "There is no such thing as a sphere for sex . . . The same woman may have a different sphere at different times. . . . Lucretia Mott married early in life and brought up a large family of children. . . . Her children settled in their own homes, Lucretia Mott has now no domestic cares . . . Who shall tell us that this divinely inspired woman is out of her sphere in her public endeavors?"

A "different sphere at different times"—this is a way of thinking about a woman's life choices that receives little attention today when we tend to speak about "choosing" or "balancing" between career and motherhood and doing both on a fairly rigid schedule.

Let me ask you a question: How many of you SWAG majors worried about graduating on time? This is a pressing question for most of us, when school and work have become more rigidly organized by age. Today, admissions committees, human resources managers, and bosses all consider age when evaluating a person's suitability for graduate school or a job. This concern with age scheduling has now spread to reproductive choices as women are often told to listen to their "biological clocks" ticking. The problem, which no one has yet solved, is that the biological clock and the career clock often demand key transitions at the same time. No one of you can change this, and you face a world in which you experiment with life scheduling at your own risk. Bureaucracies will often pit older workers against younger.

You will need to negotiate these realities, but in doing so, it may be useful to think about whether our contemporary focus on life stages defined by age, on transitions between steps in career and family life, makes sense for anyone—and particularly for women. Would a renewed focus on life's journey lead to innovative solutions to the problem of combining paid and unpaid work for both men and women? On this graduation day, as you celebrate this major transition in your own life, I urge you to experience all the joy of having completed one phase masterfully. I also urge you to see this as just one step on a much longer journey.

The White Ribbon Campaign



On May 3rd, 2010, Yeardeley Love, a 4th year UVA student, was found brutally beaten and murdered in her apartment. The aftermath of this tragedy resulted in a tremendous effort by UVA students and staff and Charlottesville community members to raise awareness regarding domestic violence. In the days following this horrific event, I and many others felt that the University was not responding to Yeardeley's death in the manner most conducive to allowing the UVA campus and community to discuss, react, and grieve.

A week after Yeardeley's death, a group of students, faculty, and community members convened to discuss what action could be taken to raise awareness about issues that were not being addressed by UVA's administration. At this meeting, we discussed various prospects, including possible grassroots events, publications, media contacts, and a general dialogue about our feelings and desires for action. After some discussion, the White Ribbon Campaign was suggested by Professor Denise Walsh, who teaches in SWAG and the Department of Politics. As vehemently as she has tried to place credit elsewhere, she was a true driving force behind the campaign, constantly providing us with information, answering emails and phone calls at all hours of the night, and giving us encouragement when our tasks seemed too daunting. She wishes to remain out of the spotlight, without taking any responsibility for the momentum of the campaign, but there is no way it would have been successful without her incredible support and guidance.

In the meeting, Professor Walsh explained how the White Ribbon Campaign originally began in Canada as a men's movement rejecting violence against women, but has since become an international campaign, adaptable to any country or culture. We discussed how there were no official days of school left, but that graduation would be an ideal platform for an event. We then began to draft a letter to President Casteen, requesting his support of the White Ribbon Campaign, urging him to discuss the tragic death of Yeardeley Love in his final address on graduation day, and to make a verbal pledge rejecting violence, as well as a personal financial pledge to the UVA Women's Center, which is still struggling financially. We received a reply from Vice President of Student Affairs Pat Lampkin, politely declining President Casteen's participation in our requests on graduation day. However, we realized that graduation was our time to act.

Alumni Insight

Contributed by
Caitlin Donaghy
B.A. Studies in
Women & Gen-
der, Class of
2010

With the help of many other SWAG students, UVA faculty, and community members, within a week we launched an incredible website, ordered 25,000 white ribbons, wrote and sent out press releases, conducted media interviews, and spread the word to thousands of students via Facebook regarding our plans for the White Ribbon Campaign, which included the distribution of those white ribbons on the day of graduation ceremonies. The campaign thrust me, as well as my classmates, into the world of grassroots organizing. Alongside Holly Grant, a fellow fourth-year Politics major who participated in the SWAG Senior Seminar this past semester, we organically fell into the roles of co-coordinators of the White Ribbon Campaign and worked alongside countless others to ensure the success of the campaign.



On the day of the campaign, we had a fantastic team of volunteers distribute the 25,000 ribbons on grounds at various checkpoints. They asked people to wear the ribbons in rejection of domestic violence. It was a remarkable sight to see so many people wearing the ribbons in support of the White Ribbon Campaign.



Organizing the campaign was an incredible experience. It taught me how difficult it is to plan a grassroots event and how crucial it is for every single volunteer, teacher, staff member, community organizer, student, and reporter to play a part in this intricate web. A main part of the White Ribbon Campaign was to get people talking. We wanted our friends and families to pause for a moment on the day of graduation and realize how prevalent violence is in our society, and to understand that none of us are immune to it, no matter our race, ethnicity, or social class. We wanted to urge people to support the institutions in our communities that provide incredible services, like the UVA Women's Center and the Shelter for Help and Emergency (SHE). We wanted to encourage everyone to think about our relationships, to think about the relationships of those around us, and to refrain from silence.

I think that is the core of what I learned from this experience. To never remain silent. To speak up, to make my voice heard, even when I am told to be quiet. We live in an unjust world, in a world where women are beaten and killed every day for no reason at all. Whether it is in a country thousands of miles away or right in our Charlottesville community, we must always keep the memory of women like Yeardley Love in our minds and hearts. SWAG majors, past, present, and future: this is why we study what we study, why we read and write and breathe women's rights, rejecting violence, united by these core beliefs of feminism and equality.

Alumni Corner

Below is a summary of the wide variety of fields in which UVA SWAG and Women's Studies alumni currently work. Thank you to all who contributed to our survey earlier this fall. Additional inquiries may be emailed to lk9a@virginia.edu.

Elizabeth Adams (Psychology and SWAG '04) is interning at Children's National Medical Center and a Ph.D. candidate in the Clinical Psychology Program at Gallaudet University.

Kathryn Bigus Berry (SWAG and History '00) is an attorney for domestic relations and estate planning.

Anna (Ginny) Barrett (Cognitive Science and SWAG '03) works in a wine consignment house and is pursuing a Master's degree in Library & Information Science at Dominican University.

Katherine Barrett (SWAG and Psychology '06) is currently a stay-at-home wife by choice. She worked for Say Yes to Education and the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Elyse Beffa (Women's Studies '98) has her own practice as a licensed acupuncturist.

Sarah Blackwood (English and Women's Studies '98) is an Assistant Professor of English at Pace University in New York.

Sarah Brazelton (SWAG and Spanish '09) works for a local non-profit, Piedmont Housing Alliance, as a housing counselor.

Elizabeth Beauvais (Women's Studies and Foreign Affairs '98) is a self employed consultant who helps international non-profits develop growth strategies and advises corporations on corporate social responsibility issues.

Candace Burton (Women's Studies and English '96) is completing her PhD in nursing at the University of Virginia and works in an emergency department as a staff nurse and forensic nurse.

Bonnie Carlson (SWAG and American Studies '09) is in law school at George Washington. She also interns at the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

Giovanna Chesler (Anthropology and Women's Studies '96) is an Assistant Professor of Communication Arts, Director/Producer of G6 Pictures, member on the Board of Directors Society for Menstrual Cycle Research, and a Media and Research Fellow at the Center for Social Media at American University.

Genevieve Cohoon (German and SWAG '07) is in her final year of law school at Fordham Law.

Caitlin Corcoran (SWAG and Psychology '07) is working as a Program Associate in public health, specifically HIV/AIDS.

Morgan Cosby (SWAG and Anthropology '04) just completed her MA in Counseling Psychology, and is interning as a Marriage and Family Therapist.

Caitlin Donaghy (SWAG '10) is the Development Coordinator for MADRE: Demanding Rights, Resources & Results for Women Worldwide.

Kara DelVecchio (English and Women's Studies '99) is the Executive Director of a company that does best practices research.

Nicole Centers Eisenzopf (Psychology and SWAG '04) works for the US Department of Education, Office of Inspector General, Technology Crimes Division as an Investigative Analyst.

Nicole Eramo (Political & Social Thought and Women's Studies '97) is an Associate Dean of Students at the University of Virginia. She also chairs the Sexual Assault Board, works with the student advocacy groups around education about sexual assault and sexual violence, and volunteers at the Shelter for Help in Emergency.

Rebecca Fall (English and SWAG '07) is in the English doctoral program at Northwestern University.

Courtney Fenner (SWAG '03) teaches middle school at the Young Women's Leadership School.

Maura Garrity (Civil Engineering and SWAG '06) is a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and serves as the Navigator onboard her vessel.

Sarah Gazillo (SWAG and Psychology '02) is currently working towards a Masters in Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Jesse Gilliam (Women's Studies and Economics '99) works in the nonprofit field for Big Brothers Big Sisters as the Director of Advocacy and Community Engagement.

Justin Giroux (English and Women's Studies '92) is a high-school English and theatre teacher.

Rebecca Givens (American Studies and SWAG '08) is a local church pastor for the United Methodist Church.

Elizabeth Grim (Psychology and SWAG '09) studies Community Psychology at Georgia State University.

Katherine Hendricks (SWAG '02) spent six years as a Marine officer before pursuing her degree in Health Promotion. She is now a health and fitness professional, yoga teacher, and wellness coach.

Tara Hudson (SWAG and History '00) is an academic advisor at North Carolina State University and a doctoral student at North Carolina State's Department of Leadership, Policy, and Adult & Higher Education.

Jamie Jennings (SWAG and History '05) works in scheduling/programming for the Discovery Channel.

Mindy Johnston (SWAG '09) recently started a job as a Sexual Assault Advocate at an organization called SAFE which provides services to abused families.

Jennifer Jones (Psychology and SWAG '03) is a Psychology doctoral student at Rutgers, the State University in New Jersey.

Rebecca Kaye (History and Women's Studies '00) is the Director of Policy Development and Government Relations for the Atlanta Public Schools.

Larissa Kravanja (Foreign Affairs and SWAG '05) is currently in law school at NYU Law. She previously managed the employee affinity groups, such as women's and LGBT networks, for Merrill Lynch.

Julianne Koch (SWAG and Global Public Health '08) is currently the Assistant Director of the Charlottesville Victim/Witness Assistance Program in the Commonwealth Attorney's Office.

Alyssa Lederer (SWAG, Echols, and Jewish Studies '04) since graduation has followed a path of health education and advocacy. She is now a doctoral student in Health Behavior at Indiana University.

Becky Levin (Women's Studies '94) is a lobbyist for a labor union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, on issues such as education, social security, and work/family leave.

Tracey Livesay (Women's Studies '95) is now a stay at home mom with three kids after completing her law degree and working as an attorney.

Victoria Long (SWAG '06) is currently participating in a Japanese exchange and teaching program. She previously worked for a domestic violence agency.

Elesha Mavrommatis (Rhetoric and Communication Studies and Women's Studies '94) works in fundraising as a development officer.

Julia Mackaronis (SWAG, Psychology, and Art History '06) is currently working towards her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Utah.

Susan Miller (Women's Studies and English '96) works in the field of education, as a writing and poetry instructor at Rutgers University in New Brunswick.

Gretchen Zimmerman Montesanto (Psychology and SWAG '05) works in mental health as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Katherine Moody (English and SWAG '06) works in interior design as an office/project manager.

Brennan Nardi (Women's Studies and History '93) is the editor of the city-regional magazine, *Madison Magazine*.

Kaeshia O'Neal (Economics and SWAG '03) works in interactive media as the Senior Account Manager of Client Services.

Gabrielle Plotkin (Government and SWAG '10) is interning with the Council of World Women Leaders at Aspen Institute.

Devon Ercolano Provan (SWAG '00) is the Assistant Dean of Development and Alumni Relations at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation.

Jill Raney (SWAG '06) specializes in integrating online and on-the-ground grassroots organizing as a professional activist in Washington, DC.

Amy Rardin (Government and Women's Studies '94) is a writer/producer for television and film.

Jordy Rodakis (Political and Social Thought, SWAG, and Philosophy '09) promotes intellectual and language exchange as an Assistant Language Teacher in the JET Programme.

Carly Romeo (SWAG and Architecture '08) works for Soapbox, Inc: Speakers Who Speak Out, a feminist speaker's bureau based in New York City.

Mary Ryan (SWAG and Psychology '08) currently works in customer service/sales for the Teaching Company.

Ann Sahli (Psychology and Women's Studies '97) is an outpatient mental health therapist specializing in treatment of eating disorders.

Sehrish Shaban (SWAG, Foreign Affairs, and Technology Management & Policy '06) is a multimedia journalist at Reuters in New York.

Katherine Shrum (SWAG and English '05) is a middle school English Language Development teacher.

Jennifer Silvers (Psychology, Cognitive Science, and SWAG '05) is a Ph.D. student studying cognitive neuroscience and researching psychology at Columbia University.

Meghan Tertocha (SWAG and English '09) works for the Carbon County Action Committee for Human Services as the Family Economic Success Project Manager.

Zora Neale Hurston Graduate Essay Winner

“What Queen Do You Think You Are?": The Queer Southern Belle in *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Alison Caviness Gibson, Ph.D. candidate in English

This essay argues that Tennessee Williams re-conceptualizes the Southern belle as queer in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). Fusing queer theory and regionalism, I show how Williams depicts Blanche DuBois as a sexual and regional “other” both in her hometown of Laurel, Mississippi, and in the more modern Elysian Fields in New Orleans. In Laurel, Blanche’s queer desires for her homosexual husband, Allan, and teenage boys defy the gender code of the South, thus rendering her “out-of-bounds” in her own region. In Elysian Fields, Blanche’s campy performance of the belle—including extravagant clothing, poetic language, and chivalry—reveals the artifice of southern femininity and of gender roles more generally. The belle, Williams shows, is a camp version of normative womanhood. By depicting Blanche’s femininity as camp, Williams invokes an oppositional gay male aesthetic and re-presents Allan’s sexuality as well as his own. Male homosexuality and white southern womanhood, though seemingly unrelated, are shown in this play to be overlapping, interconnected, and mutually constructed, not least because both the “fallen” southern woman and the gay man are victimized by heterosexual men and treated as sexual outcasts who must be exiled. Thus, the play depicts a great irony of white southern femininity: the very role designed to normalize the southern woman, that of the belle, can be a queer practice.



Jennifer Tickle (Psychology and Women’s Studies ’96) is an Associate Professor of Psychology at St. Mary’s College of Maryland.

Jennifer Vermillion (SWAG ’00) is the Director of Educational Technology for an all-girls’ pre-K to 12th grade school.

Cristina Wallace (Spanish and SWAG ’01) is an attorney for United Educators. Prior to her current position, she worked with the National Organization for Women.

Elizabeth Walsh (English and SWAG ’10) is attending law school.

Tuere Wiggins (History and Women’s Studies ’99) works in business strategy and transformation consulting as a Senior Consultant.

Katie Graff Wright (Psychology and Women’s Studies ’96) is the Director of Adult Services for a busy community mental health agency.

C. Tyler Zang (English and SWAG ’09) is Copy Editor at a music magazine and works with a children’s publishing group.



Contributed by
Laura Mellusi,
 Studies in Women &
 Gender Staff

Motherhood in SWAG

The phone rings; it's my childcare provider. The challenge for the day; how to get to work? My husband has an all day board meeting two hours away. I call a friend and mother, she just started a new job. I call our emergency contact; she's in New York. I finish getting dressed, pack extra clothing, diapers, and food, and load my three young children in the van. When I turn the key, nothing happens. The neighbor helps me re-energize the battery and off we go. The kids are excited; I'm stressed.

I pay extra to park in the on-grounds garage to keep from having to maneuver my three bags and three children on and off the bus. I put my youngest in a pouch, swing the bags over my shoulders, and hold a little hand in each of my own. Together we trek up and down dozens of stairs in search of the giant building called Minor Hall. We are greeted with smiles and amazement at how much the little ones have grown. The mother who cares for our children takes her youngest and my oldest two children outside to play ball for half an hour while I call the back-up childcare service from my office. As I wait for an answer, my youngest starts screaming and everyone returns from outside. I give up waiting on the childcare service, especially since the last time I called for back-up help, the service couldn't find anyone. The office has a TV and VHS player, so in goes the video and small faces become absorbed watching cartoon characters.

I now have twenty minutes of calm, intense productiveness. When the movie ends, my desk becomes a chest of treasures for little explorers, my office a daycare with crayons, paper, teddy grahams, and running bare feet. I answer the phone, respond to email, and gather paperwork in the midst of my family. Our director arrives for her office hours, and all continues as if finding my children in the office is normal, and it should be. I didn't bring lunch so we venture to the closest place for pizza. With three slices of pizza, two drinks, a bag of goldfish, one baby, and two toddlers, I make my way to the check-out. The pizza crew stacks each slice so I can manage one tray. A retired professor insists on carrying my tray to the table. My youngest falls asleep as we eat our pizza amidst a busy crowd of university students.

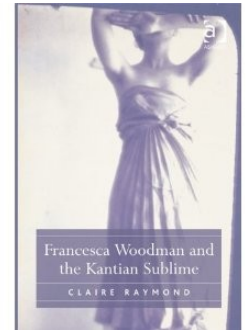
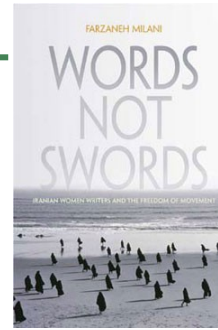
Time to go back to work and no naptime today.

The scene of a mother with her children at work is not typical, especially within a university. I am grateful I had the option to bring my children, but it remains uncomfortable. Traditional expectations of the workplace environment do not include toddlers coloring on the chalkboards while Mommy sets up for a reception. I know many parents struggle silently to meet the needs of both family and career. I have quickly learned this balance is not done alone. I am constantly relying upon the help and support of many. Thank you to the SWAG students, faculty, and guests for supporting me during my motherhood days.

SWAG Bookshelf

Book Publications by SWAG faculty

Farzaneh Milani, Professor—*Words, Not Swords: Iranian Women Writers and the Freedom of Movement* (Syracuse University Press, 2010) and featured guest on PBS Newshour. Milani examines the writings of Simin Behbahani, one of Iran's most renowned and prolific female poets, amid the recent political turmoil that has affected her own life.

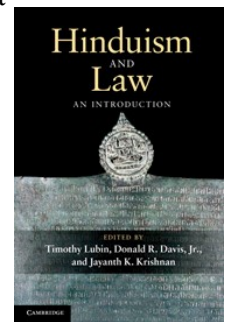


Claire Raymond, Lecturer—*Francesca Woodman and the Kantian Sublime* (Ashgate, 2010) and featured poet for the 20th edition of *Tiger's Eye*, a feminist oriented literary journal.



Denise Walsh, Assistant Professor—*Women's Rights in Democratizing States: Just Debate and Gender Justice in the Public Sphere* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) draws on deliberative theory to offer a new explanation for why women's rights vary in democratizing states. Walsh then tests that explanation through a series of structured, focused comparisons in Poland, Chile, and South Africa, and finds that the quality of democracy is crucial for advancing gender justice.

Rina Williams, Assistant Professor—*Law and Hinduism* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) examines how Hindu religious laws have been changed and reformed in independent India. In the chapter called "Hindu Law as Personal Law," Williams argues that over time, gender became the site on which Hindu laws have been constructed and the modern state became the institution through which these laws must be negotiated.



Book Recommendations from SWAG Affiliated Faculty

Deborah McDowell, Professor—Bruce Western's *Punishment and Inequality in America* examines the multiple effects of mass incarceration on poor black men, who are imprisoned at rates strikingly disproportionate to their numbers in the population overall. Western argues that the self-sustaining character of mass imprisonment is the engine of social inequality and has become a significant feature on the landscape of American poverty and race relations.

Karen Ryan, Professor—Irina Reyn, *What Happened to Anna K*, is a rewriting of Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" in the context of 21st-century Bukharian immigrant culture in New York. Lara Vapnyar, *There Are Jews In My House*, is a collection of thought-provoking stories, some set in the author's native Russia and some set in her adopted homeland of the United States.

New SWAG Courses

~ 2010-2011 ~

SWAG 2559: Food and Gender
SWAG 3559: Gendering the Global South in Popular Media
SWAG 3559: Men and Masculinities
SWAG 4300: Risky Business
SWAG 4559: Protest Cultures

~ 2011-2012 ~

SWAG 2500: Gendering Cold War Culture
SWAG 3559: Presenting and Representing African American
Women in Twentieth-Century Visual Arts
SWAG 3559: Food: Gender, Race, Class, Community

Please refer to our online Program Course Directory for additional information:

<http://www.virginia.edu/womenstudies/courses.html>.

Sharing SWAG Resources



The Studies in Women and Gender program has a library of over 1600 books, DVDs, videos, and journals. These resources are available to SWAG students and faculty. During a recent inventory, we removed duplicate copies and donated the extra paperback titles to a local female institution and the hardcover publications to the African Women's Studies Center at the University of Nairobi.



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