The Five+ Sexualities
By Julie Nicol ’07

In 1993, Anne Fausto-Sterling published a tongue-in-cheek yet pioneering article that transformed how many groups, from feminist theorists to the medical community, conceive of sex as a biological category. It is essential to note first that sex and gender are two very different, although interconnected concepts. As the World Health Organization defines them, sex is the “biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women” whereas gender refers to “the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.”

Fausto-Sterling proposed that we expand our dichotomous two-sex system into a paradigm that more accurately reflects the reality of human physiology. Thus she suggested including merm, herm, and ferm, in addition to man and woman, as designations of sex. Herms, or “true” hermaphrodites have both an ovary and a testis, or a combined gonad called an ovo-testis. Ferms, or female pseudohermaphrodites, have testis but feminized external genitalia. Merms, male pseudohermaphrodites have external male genetalia and ovaries. These five categories more accurately reflect the reality of human genetics and development than the dualistic two-sex system.

However, the terms ‘hermaphrodite’ and ‘pseudohermaphrodite’ are misleading and greatly stigmatizing. Sex expression varies along a

Queerness and Performance Art
By Dominic Vendell ’09

Queer. Everyone has their own opinion about what it means, whether it should be used. Everybody seems to have a very personal reason for supporting or objecting to the word, and consequently, common ground is difficult to find. My experience with the word may resonate with others’ experiences and forms an essential component of the empowerment I have discovered at Carleton.

For me, “queer” will always be tied to the performance art I discovered as part of the Queer Theater class I am taking this term. Performance art, which has always aimed at subverting the mainstream and forging a new method of artistic expression, seems to me to be inherently tied to the notion of queerness. Since its reclamation in the second half of the twentieth century by activist groups working on issues such as HIV/AIDS, “queer” has been used to describe the outside experience of LGBT people. A queer space is one that is not normal, but instead empowered and alive in its otherness. This sense of the word beautifully complements the consciously differentiated, subversive spirit of performance art.

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Five+ Sexualities cont.
continuum and those between the ‘traditional’ definitions of man
and woman are perhaps better termed “intersex.” When gender
identity is taken into account, we are left with a veritable mé-
lange of sex-gender identities and classifications.

In recent decades, the concept of fluid and dynamic sex and gen-
der identities has taken firm hold among feminist and queer theo-
rists, and to a certain degree, among mainstream society. A simi-
lar flexibility has been afforded to sexuality, defined here as the
orientation of a person’s sexual attraction. However, as individu-
als endeavor to explore their sexuality, they are met with pres-
sure, from both within and outside of the queer community, to
label and limit their sexuality.

People who are coming out, and even people who have been out
for years, are met with the expectation that they must delimit
their particular brand of gayness. There are many reasons behind
this compulsion to name, but it is the least insidious that I am
focused on in this article: ease of dating, desire to accurately ex-
press one’s identity, and desire to connect with others similar to
yourself in minority status. Yet, lately I have noticed a dearth of
language surrounding sexuality that hinders the ability to name
their identity. As such, I hope that while these terms may (or may not)
be useful in your daily life, that you don’t take them all too seri-
ously.

Obviously several problems arise from this linear continuum.
First is the issue of categorization. I believe that sexuality is fluid
and dynamic over time. As such, I would prefer to conceive of
sexuality, as well as sex and gender, in boundless terms. However, our
culture as a whole, including the queer community, has not yet
reached this stage. As such, I think it
be useful in your daily life, that you don’t take them all too seri-
ously.

Secondly, and more importantly, this linear continuum presup-
poses the dichotomous existence of two mutually exclusive
sexes/genders. It is perhaps more useful to conceive of identity
as, in the words of Leah Entenmann, “a magical glowing orb.”
But, again, the vast majority of people think of identity in terms
of axes, which are usually expected to run parallel to one another.
In this case, I am more hesitant to espouse this deterministic lan-
duage for fear that it works to reinforce current conceptions of
identity. As such, I hope that while these terms may (or may not)
be useful in your daily life, that you don’t take them all too seri-
ously.

1. I have intentionally abandoned the term “bi-curious” because I think it has too
much baggage and is past the point of reclamation.
2. Bisexual is also a term loaded with preconceptions and negative stereotypes.
However, I think it is too historically important to abandon, and so I take it to
mean anything and everything between the two extremes of the (artificial)
continuum, that is, from heteroflexible to heterocurious.
3. What bisexual is sometimes, and inappropriately, taken to mean.

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**3rd annual LGBT Family Reunion!**

**October 6-8, 2006**

Many events throughout the weekend for alums, friends and current students.

**Mark your calendars!**
“Journey to Safety” Brings Theater and Human Rights Together
By Leah Entenmann ’06

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is an internationally known non-governmental human rights organization based in Minneapolis. Their Women’s Program has done documentation and fact-finding to produce human rights reports at the requests of women’s organizations all over the world, including projects in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and elsewhere. Although Minnesota Advocates also runs various education and advocacy programs in Minnesota, their first report on domestic human rights issues came out only recently. Women from various Minneapolis and St. Paul immigrant organizations came forward to request an investigation into the ways police, judges, and policy respond to gender-based violence in immigrant and refugee communities. The report, entitled “The Government Response to Domestic Violence against Immigrant and Refugee Women in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area,” details how the particular ways women’s immigrant status exacerbates difficulties in access to protection and assistance when they are in danger.

Becky Palmer, a staff attorney at the Women’s Program, says that although the report took researchers twice as long as they had anticipated to compile, the real challenge is in using this information to raise awareness and affect change in Minnesota systems. The report is long and technical, and the urgency of its message is often lost in the reading. Luckily, Pangea World Theater, a multicultural production company that has worked with Minnesota Advocates in the past, took on the task of adapting the report into an engaging and powerful play. Meena Natarajan, along with six actors and an artistic director, read the entirety of the report to find key themes and quotations to incorporate into the script. Natarajan's script involves several vignettes highlighting the difficulty of sorting through paperwork in another language; misunderstanding by police in an emergency situation; hostility from government officials; misrepresentation by interpreters; pressures from community members; and the exacerbating effects of complicated immigration and residency policies. Pangea and Minnesota Advocates are using “Journey to Safety” to reach broader audiences and make the issue more salient for all who see it.

Queerness and Performance Art cont.

Queer performance artists have capitalized on these similarities between the two movements and emphasized other overlapping qualities for their own benefit. For example, Carmelita Tropicana’s Milk of Amnesia depicts the salvation of Tropicana’s Cuban memory from American assimilationist forces, placing itself within queerness and performance art’s celebration of difference and galvanization of this difference. Tropicana is able to accomplish this feat through the creation of a new identity that balks the social forces of her adolescence. Such a creation of identity is a significant component of what LGBT people attempt to do throughout their lives.

Tropicana’s work also exemplifies a quality that performance art and queerness share and that is particularly important in the upcoming work of all activists. Multiplicity shines through all of Tropicana’s work in that she never retreats from addressing her identities as a Cuban, as a woman, and as a lesbian. Rather than suppressing one of these identities for another, she affirms all of them, realizing that their interactions are essential to her overall identity. This recognition of multiplicity that is inherent to queerness is for me especially attractive because it reflects the whole reality of identity, oppression, and resistance.

Taken together, these features of queerness, which are shared by the medium of performance art, transform “queer” from a mere descriptor, a potentially wince-inducing term, into an ambiguously defined space into which all people can fit. Even those like performance artist Holly Hughes who grow up in oppressive, stifling households can discover this space for their greater self-discovery, empowerment, and eventual resistance. In the words of author Jill Dolan, “Queerness becomes a place to which people can travel, to find pleasure, and knowledge, and maybe (or maybe not) power.” So now when I think of myself as queer, I am pleased with the newness and strangeness of the world that I inhabit. This space, while initially frightening and fraught with many obstacles, is one in which I can fit with pleasure and with pride.
Two-Thirds of Ivy League Adopt Gender Protections
Almost two-thirds of the nation's most elite institutions of higher education have added "gender identity" and "gender expression" to their non-discrimination policies within the past four years. Last week, Princeton University joined fellow Ivy League schools Brown, University of Pennsylvania, Cornell and Harvard in formally banning discrimination based on gender identity. Yale University, whose student government approved a resolution calling on the administration to include gender identity and expression in the University's official nondiscrimination policy, is poised to become the sixth Ivy to adopt the protections. Ivies Dartmouth College and Columbia University do not include gender-based protections as part of its current non-discrimination policies. (gpac.org)

U.K. Muslim Appeals Conviction
A 28-year-old gay Muslim imprisoned on a grievous bodily harm charge has launched an appeal, claiming he was wrongly convicted. The man, identified by London media as Mohamed S., received an eight-year jail sentence in 2002 after he was subjected to a predawn homophobic hate attack at his east London home. Mohamed says he was framed by the men who attacked him. New evidence suggests Mohamed was the victim, not the perpetrator, and the Criminal Cases Review Commission has accepted his case for review. "Mohamed appears to have been subjected to a vicious homophobic hate attack by five Asian men who had been previously threatening to kill him and his male partner, Junda," Peter Tatchell said. (planetout.com)

Kansas Attorney General to Appeal Ruling on Teens' Sexual Behavior
Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline on Tuesday appealed a US District Court decision against requiring health care providers to report on the consensual sexual behavior of minors. Kline had suggested that under state law, anyone under 16 (the age of consent) who sought contraception, STI-testing, or any other form of reproductive health service was a victim of abuse and should be reported to the state. His interpretation of the law sparked an outcry among health care professionals, who feared that such strict requirements would discourage young adults from seeking necessary health care. The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services also decried the interpretation, saying that the dramatic increase in reports would overwhelm their office with cases that they would not normally investigate, and would not have the resources to look into. Last month, Judge J. Thomas Marten of Federal District Court in Wichita blocked Kline's interpretation of the law, ruling that the law in question allowed health professionals to exercise their discretion in reporting cases of abuse. The appeal will go to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Denver. (feminist.org)

Pop Singer Makes Slaving For Beauty Seem Ugly
She leans over the sink in the bathroom of a hot nightclub, sticks a toothbrush down her throat and vomits while screaming, "I want to be skinny!" This is just one scene of the action-packed music video for "Stupid Girls," first aired on MTV Jan. 26, as the first single released from pop star Pink's most recent album, "I'm Not Dead." Pink—born Alecia Moore on Sept. 8, 1979, in Doylestown, Pa.—has built a reputation for being sassy since her debut album, "Can't Take Me Home," in 2000. Early sales figures reveal a fan base hungry for her message. "I'm Not Dead" will most likely compete with her previous successes. Played over and over on MTV, the "Stupid Girls" video parodies conspicuous consumption, cosmetic surgery, eating disorders and vacuous celebrities. One refrain also raises a puzzling political question: "What happened to the dreams of a girl president?" "Stupid Girls," which is the top debuting single of 2006 so far, has spilled beyond the usual TV and Internet margins of pop music. It has been taken up by bloggers interested in pop culture and feminism and has been discussed in high schools, colleges and families across the country. With a broadcast range of 169 countries and 28 languages, the "Stupid Girl" video on MTV resonates internationally. "I am just glad that the girls from my classes (who are having a hard time growing up and finding their way) can listen to your songs," an English teacher in a German high school posts on Pink's site. "We sometimes talk about your lyrics in class." On Oprah, Pink explained what she means by stupid. "My definition of stupid is wasting your opportunity to be yourself." (women's e-news)

Supreme Court Denies Second Gay Parenting Case
For the second time, the Supreme Court on Monday shied away from getting involved in a child custody fight between a San Diego woman and her former lesbian partner. The birth mother, known as Sharon S., is trying to prevent her former partner from adopting one of the two children the women were raising together. Sharon S. and her partner Annette F. separated after an incident of domestic violence that Sharon blames on Annette. The California Supreme Court rejected the attempt by Sharon to prevent the adoption, which she consented to by signing an adoption petition in August 1999. The following July with the lengthy adoption process still pending, Annette struck Sharon in the face, injuring her, it was asserted in the case. This prompted Sharon to request dismissal of the adoption petition. The U.S. Supreme Court had declined the case in March 2004 without comment. Sharon argued that her constitutional rights would be violated if an unrelated person were allowed to adopt her child over her objections. In a response to Sharon's latest petition for U.S. Supreme Court review, lawyers for Annette said that Sharon's main argument is identical to the one made in her last petition. (365gay.com)
Saudi Arabia’s King Asks Newspapers Not to Publish Images of Women

At a recent meeting with newspaper editors, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, who has previously been seen as a modernizer, asked that Saudi papers reverse their recent trend of publishing pictures of women. According to Reuters, newspapers have been including photographs of women, though all women shown were wearing headscarves with their faces visible. The King reportedly commented to editors, “One must think, do they want their daughter, sister, or their wife to appear in this way. Of course, no one would accept this…The youth are driven by emotion…and sometimes they can be led astray,” according to the Associated Press (AP). The AP reports that King Abdullah also asked editors to censor any stories that are critical of Saudi Arabia, a request that will not go ignored in a country where all media is subject to governmental control.. (feminist.org)

BYU Decides Not to Expel Five Students Who Joined Equality Ride Protest

Five students at Brigham Young University who took part in last month's Equality Ride protests will be reprimanded but not expelled. During the Soulforce Equality Ride's stop in Utah, more than two dozen college-age participants in the cross-country gay Christian protest were arrested, along with the parents of Ride co-director Jacob Reitan. The BYU Honor Code Office conducted an investigation of five students at the Mormon-run university who participated in the Equality Ride demonstrations. Four were among the 29 people arrested, and the fifth was involved in a protest outside the university's grounds. While the BYU honor code does not prohibit gay students, it does forbid students from advocating a "gay lifestyle" and all five students could have faced expulsion. Instead, BYU announced that the students will be placed on probation. (advocate.com)

Clergy Condemn Anti-Gay Federal Amendment

As the US Senate prepares to vote on a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage several dozen Christian and Jewish leaders made the rounds on Capitol Hill Monday lobbying senators to reject the measure when it comes up for a vote about two weeks from now. At a news conference the Reverend Paul Simmons said the amendment "has the smell and feel of Salem," comparing its supporters to the colonial Puritans who burned witches. The Reverend Kenneth Samuel, a Georgia pastor and NAACP officer, said many black pastors oppose gay marriage because they've been "bought out" with faith-based initiative money. The largest branch of Judaism also is urging senators to vote against the measure. "The Reform Jewish Movement calls on Senators to oppose the Federal Marriage Amendment when it comes to the Senate floor," said Rabbi Marla Feldman. "The Federal Marriage Amendment constitutionally fetters an entire community of Americans, relegating them to second class citizenship," said Feldman in a statement. "Religious institutions have the right to decide which partnerships they will and will not sanctify in their houses of worship. The government, however, should not codify the religious views of some, nor should it deny equal rights to all of its citizens." Feldman said that rabbis and members of Reform congregations nationwide will lobby senators in advance of the vote. (365gay.com)

Bloomington Second Indiana City to Provide Gender Identity Protections

Bloomington has become the second Indiana city to provide civil-rights protections based on gender identity. This change means that Bloomington city code will treat "gender identity" as a category protected against discrimination, just like race, religion, disability, sex and sexual orientation. The Bloomington City Council vote was preceded by two years of broad community advocacy. The April 19, 2006 vote by the Bloomington City Council provides for voluntary mediation to address complaints of gender-identity discrimination. The ordinance also allows the Bloomington Human Rights Commission to pursue gender-identity complaints the power to enforce compliance. (transgenderlaw.org)

Queer Peers Program

Connect with new students!

Make the queer community bigger, better, and stronger!

Learn more about the new queer peers program by e-mailing zimmermd or calling the GSC at x5222.

Want to have a mentor? Queer Peers is not just for new students!
Erika

During my first few days as a freshman, I thought that being gay at Carleton was going to be like living through that nervous dream that everyone occasionally gets but can’t explain – that dream where you suddenly find yourself in the cafeteria of your old elementary school, only to realize that you made the grievous error of forgetting to put on pants. In my version, my peers were staring at me and snickering with their neighbors as I tried to pull my shirt down as far as it would go.

But if I continue this metaphor even further throughout my first term, I slowly began to realize that not many people, if any, had noticed that I forgot my pants in the first place. Those snickering kids in the corner were only figments of my own anxiety and nervousness about being different.

In fact, much of my freshman year was coming to terms with my own internalized homophobia. I soon realized that my sexuality wasn’t something that I constantly needed to defend or even apologize for when I was around my friends, the majority of whom were straight. I realized that I didn’t have to be so illusive around my roommates when I snuck off to CIAO meetings, or went to a “gay” event. I can say now that my own anxiety with coming out to my friends was not because of their attitudes, but my own.

For the past three years I’ve had the opportunity to work at the Gender and Sexuality Center, in part because I wanted to influence how Carleton thought about LGBT issues. Now Carleton, by no means, is an overtly homophobic campus, just like I would argue that it’s not an overtly racist or sexist or classist community either. And besides the occasional “Did you know that she was a lesbian?” or more recently, “hey man, don’t go Brokeback on me!” comments that I’ve overheard, this college is a pretty accepting place. But it’s these kinds of comments that lead me to believe that even a place as accepting as Carleton has a ways to go. It’s one thing to accept a person for who they are, and yet another to try to understand that person’s perspective in relation to the perspective of the majority. But as I’ve worked and gotten inspiration from friends in the rising classes, I believe that things will only get better.

I’ve been incredibly fortunate in my four years here. I am extremely thankful for my friends and coworkers, who all challenged my beliefs and introduced me to ideas more valuable and significant than I could have learned in any classroom.

Dana

Coming to Carleton, I was already a baby feminist. I knew that I wanted to pursue that as hard as I could when I came to college. And for two years, I did. But as time went on, my mind opened up to more things, which is the beauty of Carleton and of the GSC. I was still involved in CWI and women’s issues, but I also became more interested in LGBT and ally issues, as well as more personal things, such as body and sex positivity.

I’ve only worked here at the GSC for the last year, but I couldn’t have loved it any more. Through the GSC, this year and all my previous ones, I’ve met some truly amazing people, and realized that I can actually make a difference about things I really care about, be they as small as reminding people that fat discrimination is everywhere, or as large as helping with the Vagina Monologues. The thing I will miss most about the GSC is the people, the amazing, dedicated people that both work in and with the GSC, and the people who do their own individual activism. It’s that spirit of activism that the GSC is leaving with me.

Alisa

Ah, ground Scoville – the place on campus I feel most comfortable, where there are plants and kind people and candy. I have spent hours upon hours in the Gender and Sexuality Center in ground Scoville, for student meetings and comfy napping and working as a Center Associate. There are magazines and posters and people who affirm who I am and the kind of world I want to be a part of. Above all I appreciate the deep conversation that pushes me to go beyond where I am but never questions who I am. There are difficult conversations at times, but never confrontations that I cannot be as I am. Through these conversations – casual times with friends, on the job – I learn to better articulate my experience. Likewise, I learn from other people here. I understand gender and sexuality in a more nuanced, beautiful way than before Carleton and the GSC.

In conclusion, I love the GSC. Having a place where I know I am always welcome has made my experience at Carleton.
C.J.

Carleton was a utopia when I first came to campus four years ago. High school had been a place where I was the only one out as gay, and I was the only voice on these issues — which was absurd, considering the size of my school, and my own inexperience. Arriving in Northfield, I quickly realized that I was an amateur, and I had a lot to learn from the students around me. There were so many concepts that I didn’t understand, and because I was comfortable with my own position, I had no idea what it meant when people rejected labels and wouldn’t settle on any one identity for themselves. People who lived in gray areas frustrated me, and it took most of my time here to acknowledge the legitimacy of not being able to describe yourself in a word or two. In reality, we’re all that complicated. It’s difficult to come up with a better lesson I’ve learned in the past four years at Carleton, and it’s certainly one that will stick with me.

Rachel

My parents always told me that I would make my best friends in college, that I would meet people who shared my interests and passions there, people who were like me. Of course, they were right. I ventured down to the GSC my first week at Carleton, and since then it has become a home for me and the people of the GSC have become my friends and family.

The GSC has provided a backdrop for much of my personal growth here at Carleton. As a first year student, I became involved in feminist activism with the Collective for Women’s Issues. Helping to organize my first Take Back the Night, I learned about sexual violence and the major impact it has on college students. I was saddened to learn that some of my friends were survivors of sexual violence, but so impressed with their strength. I came out in my sophomore year, and I am still grateful for the warmth and support I received. Unlike so many, my coming out experience was entirely positive, and I have my friends and all those involved with the GSC to thank for that. In my junior year I began working as a Center Associate at the GSC, and I relished the chance to take on a larger role in the GSC’s programs and issues. Organizing the Vaginal Monologues was one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. There’s something indescribably wonderful about a stage full of women talking openly and proudly about their vaginas. Becoming a leader in the GSC in my senior year I have been heartened to see the enthusiasm and creativity of those who will remain here after I leave. This year has challenged me to examine the way I think about feminism and identity. I have had many good discussions that have led me to be comfortable in the fluidity of the way that I label my sexuality. I have thought long and hard about the changing nature of the issues feminists face and how best to tackle these issues. Looking forward to the future, I wonder what life will be like for me as a queer feminist. But I know that the GSC has taught me the power of community and given me tools to find and develop community wherever I go.

The Gender and Sexuality Center has changed and grown during my time at Carleton, and I am proud to have been a part of that growth. Interest in particular issues can wax and wane, but the Center as a whole is here to stay. I have been inspired by the passion of my peers and the commitment so many people have shown to make Carleton, and the world, a better place.
CONTACT INFORMATION AND EDITORIAL POLICY

The Gender and Sexuality Center publishes this newsletter monthly for the campus community and friends. Information in the newsletter is based on the best available information at the time of publication. Items in the newsletter are provided for informational purposes only, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Gender and Sexuality Center or its employees, nor do they represent the views of the students, staff, faculty, or administration of Carleton College.

Please submit articles, calendar entries, letters and news to the Gender and Sexuality Center or via e-mail to: vallens@carleton.edu. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and space.

Newsletter Team: C.J. Griffiths, Julie Nicol, Dana Reinoos, Rachel Vallens, Derek Zimmerman

GSC Graduation Picnic

Congratulations Seniors!

Please join us as we celebrate the class of 2006. Graduating and continuing students, faculty, staff, alumni, family and friends are all invited.

Friday, June 9, 11:30-1pm
RSVP by e-mail to kwilliam or by calling x7180

Lunch will be provided.