

Pembroke Center Associates

Newsletter

Commencement Forum Panelists Explore Impact of Health Care Reform



Cecile Richards'80, David Bowen'86 PhD, Terrie Wetle, PhD

Before the dust had settled on the fierce political battle to pass sweeping health care reform legislation, the Pembroke Center Associates and the Brown Medical Alumni Association teamed up to develop a commencement forum to delve into the significance of the new law and try to explain how the legislation will affect individuals. David Bowen '86, PhD, former staff director for health of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, and Cecile Richards '80, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, shared their insights on the landmark legislation. Richards was on campus to accept an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters during the University's commencement ceremony the next day.

Terrie Wetle, PhD, associate dean of medicine for public health and public policy and professor of community health, moderated the forum.

She observed that Brown medical school students have been following the winding path of health reform and participating in research that has informed the debate.

Cecile Richards stated that she believed this was "one of the most historic laws that has been signed" in her lifetime in

terms of advancing health care in this country. Richards shared that one in four women in America have been to Planned Parenthood at least once in their lifetime and that her organization is the largest single provider of reproductive health care and reproductive health education in the United States. She noted that with the election of President Obama, Planned Parenthood realized there was a tremendous opportunity to rewrite health care policies and open up access to health care, but also that there were risks for women as well.

Richards said that Planned Parenthood had two goals for health care reform. First, they wanted to make sure that any woman who had an insurance card could access services at a family planning clinic or an HIV/AIDS clinic. Second, the organization wanted to make sure that women would not lose their right to purchase insurance that covered all of their health care needs, including

abortion care. "We knew that was going to be a controversial issue," said Richards, "but I had no idea how controversial an issue it would end up being, and any of you who followed the play by play over the last year and a half will know that it actually ended up being the biggest issue." Richards added that there has been a marginalization of women's health care – not just abortion services but the reluctance to even talk about family planning. A coalition of more than sixty organizations worked together to protect women's rights and was able to defeat an abortion ban and ensure that women can continue to purchase insurance coverage that covers all of their needs.

David Bowen observed that this legislation was unique "in terms of scope, in terms of the degree to which it took over the political agenda for a year, and in terms of complexity and difficulty." He described the motivation for the committee staff coming from the emotional backdrop of the late Senator Ted Kennedy's terminal illness and his desire to shepherd the bill into law. From Senator Kennedy's perspective, the reform effort was galvanized by the need to expand coverage.

Bowen described how the bill became a series of interlocked policy pieces. "If you want to have decent coverage for people," Bowen explained, "you have to have insurance reforms and the requirement to offer coverage." Before legislation was drafted, staff met with a wide range of stakeholders from across the political spectrum including labor unions, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the pharmaceutical industry, and consumer groups. There was remark-

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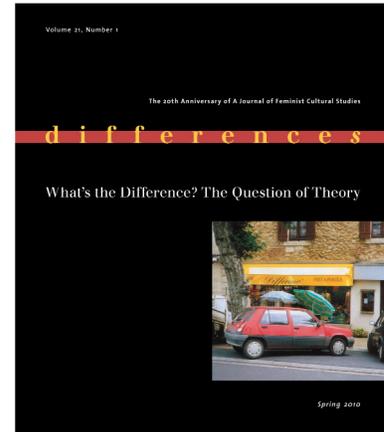
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Celebrating *differences*

The spring issue of *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the journal. On this anniversary, one naturally wonders how a journal founded in 1989 fares today. The changes of the two decades are, in fact, considerable. As we describe it on the Duke University Press Website, the journal first appeared “at the moment of a critical encounter—a head-on collision, one might say—of theories of difference (primarily Continental) and the politics of diversity (primarily American).” Hence the italicized *s* of the title, graphically inviting debate. In twenty years, concerns and interests have changed, theoretical and political questions are more dispersed, the academy is in a different place. Contributing to this are the technological developments that have made possible online publication and interactive communication. Academic debates can be more immediate, open to more people, less constrained by editorial processes.

In some respects, *differences* remains rather old-fashioned, benefiting from online exposure while not (as yet) staging its own sites of digital debate. It holds to the conventions of the most traditional editorial standards and takes seriously its graphic design and print quality. And yet there are ways in which the journal might be seen to be a little ahead of its time, or at least as having a critical role to play in these times. For reasons that are idiosyncratic—but no less theoretical—*differences* has always avoided the kind of editorial control that aims to guide the way one reads it. Rarely are there introductions more than a few para-

graphs, never print abstracts. Occasionally thematic issues will contain an essay that doesn't quite seem to belong. These are theoretically inflected editorial decisions based—stubbornly perhaps—on theories



of reading that are both dated and, I would argue, more relevant than ever. On the one hand, we have today the technological means for immediate and expanded debate. On the other hand, the abstract—that blurb that tells you what you are going to read—seems to have generalized as a genre. In this context, there has to be ample room for a journal that allows one to be a bit puzzled, a bit surprised, and even unsettled by what one doesn't already know in advance.

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Nandini Jayakrishna Receives Ruth Simmons Prize in Gender and Women's Studies



HANK RANDALL

Simmons Prize recipient Nandini Jayakrishna '10

Established by President Ruth Simmons in 2008, this prize at the Pembroke Center annually recognizes an outstanding honors thesis having to do with women or gender. This spring, the Center invited faculty from all fields to nominate theses for the prize. Nandini Jayakrishna, a senior International Relations concentrator, has received the honor.

Jayakrishna's thesis, entitled "A Critical Convergence: Gender Development Theory and the Practice of Women's Empowerment in the

Indian Informal Sector," illustrates the ways in which the philosophy and practice of a successful grassroots organization in India converge with an internationally known theoretical framework informing women's development. This convergence sheds light on the extent to which the framework is a viable mechanism to study and approach women's development in other parts of the world. In December 2009, Jayakrishna visited the headquarters of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and interviewed several of its leaders and members for her thesis. The experience was invaluable, she said, not just academically, but because it gave her insight into the tremendous strength and resilience of poor women working in the informal economic sector. Jayakrishna said she now has first-hand knowledge of a world that she would never have experienced otherwise.

José Itzigsohn, associate professor of Sociology, nominated Jayakrishna's thesis for the prestigious prize. He observed that Jayakrishna's research makes a great contribution to the analysis of gender and development, as well as to the understanding of the politics of women's empowerment.

Upon learning of the Simmons Prize, Jayakrishna said, "It is such an honor to receive this prize, especially because it bears the name of a person I have admired since I arrived at Brown four years ago. Writing this thesis was one of the most challenging, yet satisfying, experiences of my Brown career and receiving the prize is the perfect way to end it."

This summer, Jayakrishna will work as a general assignment reporter at the *St. Petersburg Times* in Florida. She hopes to attend law school in the future.

Maya Judd Honored with Marie J. Langlois Dissertation Prize



Langlois Prize recipient
Maya Judd

Maya Judd, a graduate student in Anthropology, has earned the Marie J. Langlois Prize for an outstanding dissertation in the area of

feminist studies. Judd's dissertation is entitled "Gendering Men: Masculinities and Demographic Change in Contemporary Italy."

Judd's dissertation uses a gender lens to explore contemporary low birthrates in Italy, a nation which had one of the lowest fertility rates in the world in the 1990s. Over a decade of research into demographic behavior in Italy, and the rest of Europe, has led to a number of theories seeking to account for the low fertility. Surprisingly few studies, however, have looked at the ways that assumptions about gender affect European demographic patterns. Even fewer have

explored the changing nature of male identity and heterosexual masculinity. Judd's dissertation examines the underlying factors shaping Italian male identity, masculinity, and gendered modes of interaction in Padua, Italy, and how these, in turn, influence demographic outcomes such as fertility rates. She shows the ways new forms of masculinity are embedded within the particular socio-cultural context of Italy, where we find the peculiar combination of rejection of a patriarchal gender order and the continued and even enhanced commitment to the "strong Italian family." Judd's dissertation broadens scholarly discussions of gendered understandings of men and masculinity, demographic theories of low fertility in Italy and Southern Europe, and the links between the two.

Provost David Kertzer nominated Judd for the Langlois Prize and predicted that the publications that will flow from the dissertation will appear in the very best social science journals and quickly put Judd on the

international scholarly map in anthropology and gender studies.

"I'm so pleased and honored to have received the news that I have been chosen as the recipient of this year's Marie J. Langlois Prize," said Judd. "Gender and feminist studies has long been a topic of great interest to me, and my dissertation represents the culmination of many years of work on gender related issues. To receive this particular prize is therefore very meaningful, and something I will always cherish."

Judd's research melds easily with her personal life and future plans. Her husband is not only Italian, but they are expecting their first child in June. Both received their PhDs from Brown this May. They plan to move to Paris this summer, where he will begin as professor of Economics at the Paris Institute of Political Studies. Judd plans to continue her research endeavors in the area of gender and feminist studies.

Your Membership Dollars at Work to Preserve Women's History

It was with great pleasure this May that the Pembroke Center Associates announced that it had completed the digitization of the *Pembroke Record*, which documented and commented upon life at Pembroke College in Brown University. Although the *Pembroke Record* ceased publishing decades ago, it is a valuable archival resource and an irreplaceable part of the history of women at Brown.

The Pembroke Center Associates partnered with the Brown University Library's Center for Digital Scholarship to digitize the *Pembroke Record*. The physical newspapers were removed from their bindings, photographically imaged, and saved as digital files. Those files have been extensively coded and can now be searched online. We are pleased to share this invaluable resource that provides a window into an important period of Brown University's history.

We urge you to visit the digital

archives of the *Pembroke Record*: <http://pembrokecenter.org/associates/history.html> and search through the more than 1500 issues that were published over the years. Notable topics found in the *Pembroke Record* include:



Extensive coverage in 1968 of the Black student walkout;

A 1962 article on President Keeney advocating for bomb shelters to protect students from a "totalitarian war";

Coverage about Mary Hagan '49, a Brown alumna who was convicted of spying for Syria in Israel;

A 1943 article on Pembroke's Air Raid Defense Organization and its first blackout drill;

Dean Margaret Morriss's 1941 notice prohibiting Pembroke students from wearing "slacks" anywhere on campus, and a supporting editorial by the paper;

A response to an editorial published in 1935 by the *Brown Daily Herald* that called for separate commencement ceremonies for Brown and Pembroke;

A 1923 editorial exhorting university women to get involved in politics.

This digitization project was funded by membership gifts to the Pembroke Center Associates. We are grateful for the generosity of the many alumnae/i who supported this project to make the *Pembroke Record* digitally accessible to scholars and alumnae/i and preserve it for future generations.

Commencement Forum

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able agreement around the need for insurance reforms because these stakeholders concurred that it was unacceptable that people could be denied coverage or have coverage written around their pre-existing conditions, or that older people could be charged twenty to thirty times more than younger, healthier people.

Insurance reforms only work, Bowen added, if you make it so that everyone is in the pool. Otherwise, only sick people will get insurance and their rates will skyrocket. To achieve these changes, there had to be mechanisms put into place to make sure that insurance was affordable, so cost-control measures and tax credits were written into the legislation. And finally, Bowen noted, along with all these changes to insurance coverage and costs, there were also a variety of measures enacted to try and improve the quality of health care. He cited examples such as a focus on wellness and prevention, efforts to try and reward quality over quantity of care in the structure of Medicaid payments, and programs to address the workforce that will be needed to care for the newly insured.

Cecile Richards acknowledged that the bill was far from perfect, but cited the biggest achievements of the legislation from her perspective. Thirty-two more million Americans will now be covered by health insurance. Four and a half more million women will be eligible for Medicaid. Gender rating will now be banned for individuals and small business owners – which means insurers can no longer charge women more for health insurance than

they can charge men. Women will no longer be denied coverage for pre-existing conditions such as having had a baby, having had breast cancer, or having been a victim of sexual violence or assault, all of which had been used as reasons for denying women insurance coverage.

Bowen said he was enormously proud of the fact that, with a small asterisk, "the United States will now be able to say that it has universal coverage for every American in 2014." In addressing what he found disappointing in the legislation, Bowen said he was disappointed about the compromises they had to accept on women's reproductive rights and on undocumented immigrants. He said that if the votes were different, those pieces would have been done another way, but that these "unlovely" compromises were necessary to win passage.

Richards noted that there will be "an enormous amount of work going forward to make health care reform a reality." Women's preventive care will now be provided for by all insurance plans at no cost. "This has enormous repercussions," said Richards. "It is obvious that breast exams and pap smears will be covered. What we believe at Planned Parenthood is that there is no more preventive care than family planning. Our campaign over the next year and a half will be to make the argument that covering family planning services for the millions of women who can't afford them now would be the single best thing we could do for this country to reduce unintended pregnancy."