Legal Realities, Political Stances
Discussed During Lunch Lecture

By IRAM PARVEEN BILAL

On Wednesday, April 7th, the clear and sunny afternoon at Steel House welcomed a discussion on a topic that has been all over the news recently - Gay marriage. The talk, titled “Gay Marriage: the law, the policy, the politics” was led by Professor Nan D. Hunter and Prof Chai Feldblum, both of whom have a remarkably active history in the gay and civil rights movement.

The talk was divided into two parts. The first part of the discussion revolved around the legal arguments for not restricting marriage to the opposite sex only. She backed her argument with both the federal and state constitutions. The highest court in the state, she informed, was the supreme court of the State and not the U.S. Supreme Court whereas the highest court in the U.S. was the U.S. Supreme Court.

She mentioned this difference to highlight the separate laws of state and country and how cases can be strategically maneuvered to use these differences. In fact, Feldblum highlighted that the Massachusetts cases were brought under the state court to avoid the interference of the Supreme Court.

Arguing for the permission of gay marriage on the grounds of fundamental rights and equality, she said, “The U.S. court says none of us can be deprived of life, liberty and property without due process of law.” This was extended in the 1920s, to the US S. C saying that certain rights could not be taken away, no matter what due process was used. This substantive due process theory included, she argued, the right to marry, the right to raise children, to worship God and all the basic rights that one should have, even if the Government desires to the contrary.

In the following years, many other rights like the right to abortion, the right to use contracep-
tions, the rights for inter-racial marriage were debated upon. Under 1966, the act of sodomy was considered wrong by the U.S. Supreme Court. Feldblum argued that this was only a value judgment of the court because it did not fit the fundamental lists of rights from cases in the past. Massachusetts told that the U.S. Supreme Court that the people who were asking for rights to sodomy were in effect asking for the right to use contraceptions.

That is, a species which would be more closely with the IHC.

But while Avery nails down the lingering logistical details that doomed its measure to a one-year delay, the IHC is regrouping for a renewed stand against a plan it has long opposed in either form. Members of the IHC don’t think this is a done deal,” said Page President Jason Quinney ’05. “This definitely is a fight worth fighting.”

The eight-member coalition of home presidents met last night to flesh out plans for a survey demonstrating the extent of undegraduate opposition, added Quinney. “A survey would be the most accurate way of knowing where we stand,” he said. IHC Chair Kim Popendorf ’06 confirmed last week that the survey, previously planned for ordination “in large part will depend on the response of the students. Our goal really is to be representative of the students.”

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Hominid Fossils Hold Promise for Scientists

For the past twenty years, the search for a different possible link has been ongoing one.

Since the 1980s, Dr. Asfaw has been leading excavations in the Ethiopian Rift Valley, where a relatively large number of early human remains have been found. Until the early 1990s, however, the team was working on excavations on the West bank of the Awash River, where fossil-containing sediments occur over a relatively small area and all human remains found were very fragmentary; thus it could not be determined whether or not they came from any previously unknown species.

This seemed like nature’s mockery of the anthropologists’ hard work, as the fossils found were about the right age for the expected transition between Australopithecus and Homo. A skeleton of about the same age was found about 20 meters from the skull and was tentatively attributed to the same species, now named Australopithecus garhi. The skeleton shows more human-like proportions between the arms and legs, but the lower arm is significantly longer than the upper, as in earlier species.

Another interesting find was animal bones with cuts and bones made by stone tools, in the “skel­leton horizon,” thus surprisingly showing the small-brained A. garhi to be the earliest hominid to use stone tools, though tools themselves were not found. As Dr. Asfaw says, the find is significant because it shows that “for the first time, the hominids have left their marks that they used stone tools to access animal flesh.”

For the present, A. garhi is accepted as one of the most prob­able links between Australo­pithecus and modern humans. Further research, one day it may be possible to understand the whole course of human descent, from our earliest roots, through the path of history and of evolutionarily-dead-end and success. Dr. Asfaw’s presentation of the topic was very interesting; his goal, as he said, was “to spend the maxim­um time to tell [how we go to the field and how we find these fossils], and the result was a very enjoyable lecture.” A third lecture of the Leakey Series will be given on May 19 and hopefully, it will prove as good as this.

Sudden Poll Thought Unnecessary; Faculty Board Decision Upcoming

Student Houses Cathy Jurca Ruddock resident Michael Priolo continues to disagree with hav­ing freshmen in Avery, but thinks another year could change that.

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SWE Holds Competition to Inspire Young Girls to Enter Engineering

By KRISTIN SHANTZ

On the morning of Friday April 2nd, 17 teams of girl students with rubber-band powered airplanes arrived on the Caltech campus. They were about to compete in the 1st annual “Caltech Jr. Engineering Design Competition—Girls Only,” an event hosted by the Caltech Society of Women Engineers and made possible by a generous $10,000 contribution from the Donald Strauss Public Service Scholarship Foundation.

The girls had been anticipating this day for many months. Back in January, all the girls participating in the competition attended an orientation meeting, where they were told what they would have to do to win the competition: working in teams of two or three, they would have to design and construct a rubber-powered airplane that would fly the farthest and straightest using nothing except a provided kit of parts and tools. The teams were competing for the top prize, an all-expenses-paid trip to the Sally Ride Science and Engineering Camp, a one-week camp at Stanford University.

The prospect of winning this prize really excited all the participants. Each team acted as a mentor for one middle school class. This year's competition took place on April 2nd.

“A very big part of this competition is the mentorship program,” said Sarah Zortman, and Nyssa Thompson from Preetha Sinha, Kristen Shantz, and Kristin Shantz.

The winning team launches their rubber-band powered airplane during the competition.

In the competition, each team flew their plane five times, and the distances of these flights were averaged to determine the team's final score. The girls were kept in suspense since that girls perform just as well as boys in subjects such as science, engineering, and design.

“Spirit and Enthusiasm” award, field. The Strauss Foundation was generous $10,000 contribution to fund public service projects and education.

This full day of competition a strong, lifelong commitment to what people who are interested in the physical world.

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“One of the winning teams said it best: ‘I always thought that building things was a man's job, but today I learned that girls can do it too.’”

SWE hopes to raise money to be used to provide airplane parts and tools for all the teams and award a $10,000 scholarships each year to fund public service projects that benefit the community.

The Strauss Foundation was created as a memorial to the late Don Strauss, who demonstrated a strong, lifelong commitment to public service and education. SWE hopes to raise money to be able to continue this worthwhile competition in future years. The inaugural competition was a success and undoubtedly encouraged the enthusiastic participants.

One of the girls from the winning team said it best: “I always wanted to build things, so I worked on a project that I thought that building things was a man's job, but today I learned that girls can do it too.”

There has been a lot going around about freshman living in Avery (or not), and it's an important issue in the Caltech community. So, I'm going to make a mockery of it, because things that aren't boring are always better than things that are. I’ll give you the (ish of the Avery/Freshman/Nuclear Arms Reduction issue in a few just, so you won’t have to trouble yourself with what people who know what they’re talking about have to say in the midst of a hot debate.

Basically, Avery wants freshmen to keep their influence in Southern California.

B.F. #2- The IHC is a group that consists of the presidents of the seven houses, as well as elected officials[3] and generally tries to represent student opinion.

L.L. #2- IHC may or may not be an acronym for Illegal Hungarian Corporation, which would be an extremely relevant for a punk band.

B.F. #3- On June 26, 1834 Mr. Southard, from the Congressional Committee on Naval Affairs, reported the following bill, which was read, and passed to a second reading: A Res. That the Relief of Thomas Southard be continued indefinitely.

L.L. #3- Avery would react both to occupation by a coalition army and the addition of troops from the seven houses with guerrilla tactics against both the occupying army and the physical plant.

So, as you can see the issue is still hotly contested. But before I let it rest, I’d like to pose some immediate questions on either side that seem to be ignoring. First, If Avery became a house, what would we call members? I would have to suggest “Birds,” but apparently that only makes sense if the house were named Aviary, and that may not be popular with residents.

Another choice would be “distinguished and honored residents of the Avery Dormitory” but that’s just plain silly. Another important question is if Avery were allowed to have freshmen, would Bush still have been elected president in 2000, seeing as how the vote was so close and all?

Now that you’ve been given the real facts[4] I think the truth is miscalciable. A vote allows the community to expand its influence in a very democratic way. And if you say different you’re wrong.

1) Proof: I like interesting stuff. Also, you like interesting stuff. Or, I don’t care what you think. Therefore (by induction), interesting stuff is better. Q.E.D.

2) At last, so that joke isn’t misses its point, both sides seem to have stopped me before.

3) These include people like the IHC Chair, the IHC Table, and The Pope.

4) No, not in this article, but it’s bound to be somewhere in the paper.
By PARAG BHAYANI

Since John Kerry effectively wrapped up the Democratic nomination for president, national poll numbers for the race have been tightening. Whereas right after Super Tuesday Kerry was up by eight to ten points in most polls, he and the President are now statistically tied in nearly every nationwide survey. A recent poll commissioned by the L.A. Times showed Kerry in the lead by merely three points. What was more revealing about the survey, though, was the animus of voters towards the war in Iraq and the testimony of Richard Clarke. The vast majority of voters who lean-left and lean-lefting moderates opposed the war and believed Clarke, the ex-Clinton White House official, to be correct. The opposite position was taken by Republicans and right-leaning voters. In the face of such a highly polarized electorate, a few thousand voters could decide the next President. In the eyes of the undecided voter, each candidate retains his “pet” issues. Kerry is almost universally favored on domestic matters such as health care and job creation. Bush is perceived as the stronger man in national security policy.

The Bush campaign’s $40 million barrage of advertisements over the last few weeks, Kerry’s campaign’s $24 million lead in domestic policy concerns (although this has fallen from the рейтинг the Bush campaign had immediately after Super Tuesday), and Kerry’s $13 million advantage favored nearly two to one on national security. Kerry will likely not have to grief the upper hand on this latter topic (unless God forbid, another catastrophe like September 11 occurs). But, as commentator Ed Cone writes, “National security is the immediate concern in 2004 elections...If Kerry has a serious position on security he can take the fight to Bush.” It’s Bush’s [italics] palpable weaknesses on domestic alone.

What the Kerry campaign should do at this point is offer persuasive and efficient solutions to problems relating to national security and foreign relations and not dwell too much on past failings of the current government. While I feel that the invasion of Iraq was unwinnable and that the Bush administration could have done a better job of working to prevent the 9/11 attacks, commentators are correct in saying that these are now moot points. One of the main questions now is whether or not we should have gone in, but what to do in order to get out as fast as possible. At this point, blaming the other side for unwise actions will only get one so far. Of course, in the game of politics, the winner is often the one that slings the mud fastest.

Perhaps this is why the incumbent Bush has started his negative campaign so early in the race, and also why he has spent as much time expounding upon his positives. But at this early stage in the campaign, with seven months to go...

“...What the Kerry campaign should do at this point is not dwell too much on past failings of the current government.”

Kerry has promised his support for environmental regulations and has proposed a plan for alternative fuel development as a way to reduce our nation’s dependence upon foreign oil and to help clean up harmful emissions by vehicles and factories. (Last anyone that regulates contrivances are detrimental to the economy, recent studies have shown that the cost of pollution in terms of lost productivity and health problems outweigh economic costs to companies by three times to five.)

Thus far Kerry has declared intentions to rebuild bridges broken with other Western nations in order to effectively prosecute a global war on terror and has promised to maintain or increase troop levels in Iraq. Being a self-proclaimed foreign policy wonk, he will likely be able to accomplish the former task, but it is more ambitious. Additionally, the leaders of Saudi Arabia, great friends to the Bush family, may have close links to terrorists (note that fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 terrorists were Saudi, and so is bin Laden). Governments like those of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan must be held accountable; they cannot be given a free pass for high quality aggression simply because of some help they have provided to the American government. As a candidate in what appears to be one of the closest presidential elections in over, John Kerry can turn the tide of the electorate in his favor with a well-conceived and well-articulated program on national security. Without such a plan, there is no point in running for office.

“Riding on a wave of disapproval is not the proper way to to assume the nation’s highest office.”

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The Associated Press

April 12, 2004

Commentary

Parag Bhayani is an independent political analyst.

The Kerry campaign may have the Democratic nomination in the bag, but the fight for the presidency will be a close one. To strengthen his campaign, Kerry needs to focus on offering persuasive solutions to our problems of national security.

In 2005 federal budget requested $446 million to improve port security; meanwhile, "September 11, 2001 was an unprecedented threat ... To better protect our country against the threats of today and tomorrow..." Kerry has pledged his support for foreign policy wonk, he will likely be able to accomplish the former task, but it is more ambitious. Additionally, the leaders of Saudi Arabia, great friends to the Bush family, may have close links to terrorists (note that fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 terrorists were Saudi, and so is bin Laden). Governments like those of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan must be held accountable; they cannot be given a free pass for high quality aggression simply because of some help they have provided to the American government. As a candidate in what appears to be one of the closest presidential elections in over, John Kerry can turn the tide of the electorate in his favor with a well-conceived and well-articulated program on national security. Without such a plan, there is no point in running for office.

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ASCIT Minutes: Formal, BBQs, Committee Sign-Ups This Week

April 6, 2004

Present: Ann Bendfield, Rya Former, Jenny Fisher, Shawnee Lee, Kelly Lin, Galen Loram, Claire Walton, Corinna Zygoura-

Absent: Kim Popendorp (meeting)

Guests: Elin Boyle, Coach Mandy Gamble, Coach Clinton Dodd, Coach J. D’Auria. Lydia Ng

Introduction:
1. Call to Order, 12:05 PM

New/Open Positions:
2. The IRC will post committee sign-ups that will be held for the following committees:
   Freshman Admissions, Financial Aid, Webpage, and Financial and Housing and the central Catalina
   Apartment.

Upcoming Events:
3. Mark your calendars! The ASCIT annual meeting will be held on May 26 at the MOCA (LA’s Museum of Contemporary Art). Tickets will be available at the door.

Money Requests:
4. Submit your requests for funding allocation after this Saturday’s budget meeting.

Other Business:
5. Elin Boyle, of the Alumni Fund, meets the BoD. Ms. Boyle runs the Student Program, Student Initiatives Program, and serves as the liaison to the Fund. The Alumni Fund organizes the Wrap for the freshmen, the C4 dinner for the sophomores, an event for the juniors, and the class gift for the seniors. Ms. Boyle also mentions that she is happy to help students with their fundraising for their events, parties, etc. She can be contacted at eboyle@student.caltech.edu if you have questions.

Attention all undergraduate students on Financial Aid: The last day to request revision of loan to work study, or work study to loan, for your 2003-04 financial aid award, is Friday, May 7, 2004. Requests for 2003-04 changes made after May 7 will not be considered. Please contact the financial aid office at ext. 6280 if you have any questions.

Meet Your Elected Officials Day on Saturday, April 17 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Hosted by Pasadena Young and Young Adults to meet their elected officials, including Cali-

Financial Aid: The Mary A. Earl McKinney Prize is awarded each year for excellence in writing. Only full-time students officially registered at Caltech as undergraduates are eligible to enter the competition. This year, prizes will be given in three categories: poetry, prose, and fiction. All submissions must be typed and double-spaced. Each entry must include your address and phone number. In the poetry category, entrants may submit up to three poems. Submissions of prose fiction should not exceed 12,000 words. Each entry may be an essay for the humanities class or any good piece of original writing on any topic relevant to the humanities. The prize in each category will be $500. Each entrant is entitled to enter one entry per category. Contestants should submit hard copies of their essays to Professor Jenijoy J. LaBelle, Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, 228-77, no later than April 20, 2004.

Attention Writers! The Literature Faculty is pleased to announce the 58th Annual McKinney Competition.

The Mary A. Earl McKinney Prize is awarded each year for excellence in writing. Only full-time students officially registered at Caltech as undergraduates are eligible to enter the competition. This year, prizes will be given in three categories: poetry, prose, and fiction. All submissions must be typed and double-spaced. Each entry must include your address and phone number. In the poetry category, entrants may submit up to three poems. Submissions of prose fiction should not exceed 12,000 words. Each entry may be an essay for the humanities class or any good piece of original writing on any topic relevant to the humanities. The prize in each category will be $500. Each entrant is entitled to enter one entry per category. Contestants should submit hard copies of their essays to Professor Jenijoy J. LaBelle, Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, 228-77, no later than April 20, 2004. The winning entries will be: most of the fun comes from buying into its twisted internal logic and the paradoxes associated with it. The movie was probably intended as a romantic comedy, though the outcome is closer to a meditation on the nature of love. Back to earth, the film comes with a pinch of sci-fi, in the premise that the memories can be selectively erased. Is it possible to find forgetful bliss? If our memory were wiped clean of the painful past, would we be able to start on a different path? If you believe the answer is yes, check out the available holiday specials for the memory-deleting procedure at http://www.lacanachem.com.

By ANDREEEA BOCA

Eternal Sunshine’s Twisted Logic, Warm Characters, Entertaining

The recent recipe for critical acclaim these days seems to be casting against type. Take for instance Bill Murray in Lost in Translation, Charlie Theron in Monster, and now Jim Carrey in Charlie Kaufman’s latest creation, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. We feel like giving extra credit to one who makes an exorcising effort to distort him or her­self; acting becomes a matter of heroes, and not one of how convincing the final product turns out. The most remarkable thing about Jim Carrey’s performance in Eternal Sunshine is that it’s Jim Carrey who de­livers. It wouldn’t do to rush the Oscar to him just because it’s the same guy who did Bruce Almighty.  

The Swinging West: A mix of Joel’s world, played by Kate Winslet. She car­ries most of the movie’s weight as Joel’s lover Clementine, whose personality is as brilliant, lively and unpredictable as the of­ ten-coloring colors of her hair. In order to sort its love story is fol­lowed along an unconventional, memory-driven timeline reminiscent of movies like Memento or Solaris; but mercifully, it doesn’t take as much mental contorsion to reassemble the plot in its proper time order. While the writer’s previous scripts, Being John Malkovich and Adaptation, may have been more shockingly original than Eternal Sunshine, the characters there came off as cold, cynical, alien and just plain weird. In contrast, Joel and Clemen­tie are plausible and pulsating with life, and their meeting is one of the most relatable of Kaufman’s characters so far.

Director Michel Gondry uses his camera in a sleight of hand fashion, to achieve low budget, yet persuasive special effects. No Marris-type, digitally enhanced, or glossy props are used here. Instead, there’s real ice and snow, a cut-scenes helmet copying a real device used by neurosurgeons, and even an elephant parade that was not com­missioned but just happened to be in town during the shooting. This lack of premed­itation allows the movie to flow naturally and to focus on the characters and their in­ternal struggles.

Eternal Sunshine is entertaining in the same way that a compelling painting might be: most of the fun comes from buying into its twisted internal logic and the paradoxes associated with it. The movie was probably intended as a romantic comedy, though the outcome is closer to a meditation on the nature of love. Back to earth, the film comes with a pinch of sci-fi, in the premise that the memories can be selectively erased. Is it possible to find forgetful bliss? If our memory were wiped clean of the painful past, would we be able to start on a different path? If you believe the answer is yes, check out the available holiday specials for the memory-deleting procedure at http://www.lacanachem.com.

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Just call Matt Fourhnan at (626) 795-9517 or e-mail him at mfourhnan@pasadenacal.com. If your group decides to meet in Pasadena, you could be eligible to receive one of several fabulous prizes!

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THE CALIFORNIA TECH COMMENTARY APRIL 12, 2004 5
Koch and Crick Study Zombie-like Behavior

By ROBERT TINDOL

PASADENA, Calif.—When you’re close to that woman you love next Valentine’s Day, her fragrance may cause you to say to yourself, “Hmmtm, Chanel No. 5,” especially if you’re the suave, sophisticated kind. Or if you’re men of a missing link, you may even say to yourself, “Me want woman.” In either case, you’re exhibiting a zombie behavior, according to the two scientists who pioneered the scientific study of consciousness.

Longtime collaborators Christof Koch and Francis Crick (of DNA helix fame) think that “zombie agents”—that is, routine behaviors that we perform constantly without even thinking—are so much a central facet of human consciousness that they deserve serious scientific attention. In a new book titled The Quest for Consciousness: A Neurobiological Approach, Koch writes that while the concept of zombies has nothing to do with fiction, much less the supernatural, Crick, who for the last 13 years has collaborated with Koch on the study of consciousness, wrote the foreword of the book.

The existence of zombie agents highlights the fact that much of what goes on in our heads escapes awareness. Only a subset of human activity gives rise to conscious sensations, to conscious feelings. “What is the difference between neuronal activity associated with consciousness and activity that bypasses the conscious mind?” asks Koch, a professor at the California Institute of Technology, and head of the Computation and Neural Systems program.

Zombie agents include everything from keeping the body balanced, to unconsciously estimating the steepness of a hill we are about to climb, to driving a car, riding a bike, and performing other routine yet complex actions. We humans couldn’t function without zombie agents, whose key advantage is that reaction times are kept to a minimum. For example, if a pencil is rolling off the table, we are quite able to grab it in midair, and we do so by executing an extremely complicated set of mental operations. And zombie agents might also be involved, by way of smell, in how we choose our sexual partners.

“Zombie agents control your eyes, hands, feet, and posture, and rapidly translate sensory input into stereotypical motor output,” writes Koch. “They might even trigger aggressive or sexual behavior when getting a whiff of the right stuff.”

“All, however, bypass consciousness,” Koch adds. “This is the zombie in you.”

Zombie actions are but one of a number of topics that Koch and Crick have investigated since they started working together on the question of the brain basis of consciousness. Much of the book concerns perceptual experiences in normal people, patients, monkeys, and mice, that address the neuronal underpinnings of these phenomena.

As Crick points out in his foreword, consciousness is the major unsolved problem in biology. The Quest for Consciousness describes Koch and Crick’s framework for coming to grips with the ancient mind-body problem. At the heart of their framework is discovering and characterizing the neuronal correlates of consciousness, the subtle, flickering patterns of brain activity that underlie each and every conscious experience.

Childhood Expert To Discuss Being Playful

By JILL PERRY

PASADENA, Calif. - David Elkind wants to play. The Tufts University professor of child development will give a speech titled "The Disappearance of Play" at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 1, in Ramaud Auditorium at the California Institute of Technology. Admission is free and is open to the public.

Elkind has written 13 books, including the upcoming No Time for Play: Growing Up Stressed Out, as well as The Hurried Child, All Grown Up and No Place to Go, and Miseducation. He is the author of more than 400 articles and book chapters, as well as several children's stories published in Jack and Jill magazine. In addition to appearing in academic texts and journals, his work has been published in special sections of the Boston Globe Magazine.

Elkind is a contributing editor to Parents magazine. He lectures throughout the United States, Canada, as well as and has appeared on The Today Show, The Oprah Winfrey Show, 20/20, Donahue, and The Boston Globe Magazine.

The presentation is sponsored by the Child Education Center, Caltech, and the Jet Propulsion Lab, and cosponsored by Bank of American, Kidspaced Children's Museum, in recognition of the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Week of the Young Child.
to marry but the Supreme Court declined, contending that this was not true.

Also, the S.C. argued that gay people had the right to marry like everyone else, but not to the same sex. Massachusetts, on the other hand, argued that marriage is the intimate, exclusive union of two people and that it does not need to be between a man and a woman.

In addition to the fundamental rights argument, Feldblum highlighted the institution through equality. Quoting Massachusetts, she said that one couldn’t be deprived equal protection under law. Since opposite-sex couples were allowed to benefit from the institution of marriage whereas same-sex couples were not, they were in clear violation of equality. However, she did mention that this rhetoric had other consequences but did not elaborate on them.

The talk continued with Prof. Hunter elaborating on the confusion around the issue. “My co-speaker has just talked of the issue but I am here to confuse you again!” she playfully remarked. This confusion had to be a part of the issue, she argued, because of the implications of allowing gay marriage in the future.

There was no jurisdiction currently in New York, Hunter informed, for same-sex couples to marry until May 17th, when the MA law takes effect. She said, “There is confusion in terms of the law. How do we want to structure the future?”

The first confusion, she stated, would be the question of the division of marriages. Owing to different state laws, a marriage license issued in one state, for instance Massachusetts, would not be recognized in other states. She gave examples of current laws with such nature. She mentioned that Vermont adopted a legislative scheme of the “civil union” which is a scheme that provides for all the rights of marriage and can be dissolved only by divorce. She also presented the argument under the union civil died in a car accident in another state, for instance New York, that state should consider that person’s partner as his legal spouse. New York said that civil union is a contract that they would consider it under the law of the state.

Hunter commented on Presi­dent Bush’s recent announcement for a constitutional amendment. She informed the audience that Bush was proposing to assert that marriage is “only between a man and a woman”; Hunter claimed that it is a rule but that there would be a vote for the amendment this summer. She remarked, “This thing is just going into the stratosphere of politics, where it has never been before. Bush has just met the campaign, the presidential campaign.”

She presented on the existence of confusion even if the amendment passes Congress, as it would have to go on to the States after that. She said that the main argument of the opposition to gay marriage was that “it was confusing” and countered it by saying, “That is baloney! It would be nice if everything was clear under the law but it is not. Civil rights movements in the past have not been clear on numerous occasions.”

She also emphasized Feld­blum’s earlier point of equality. “The most important is the condition of equality. What is the definition of marriage?” This question gives us the opportunity to think about the law of personal relationship. We all live in different family structures and hence, the law should be as flexible as it can be. It can be flexible by allowing gay marriage.

She continued, saying that the primary issue was that of choice. As long as one was excluded from an institution that has ben­efitted one, one was being treated as a second-class citizen. Hunter said that everyone should have the choice of who their closest relationships are, who they want to be their guardian and so on and so forth. She remarked that for most people these questions were answered by marriage but about other people. She claimed, marriage does not work for everyone but people who don’t choose to be married should not be penalized.

The talk was followed with numerous questions and answers ranging from the different state and federal law to the existence of trans-genders. With reference to different laws, Feldblum remarked that the def­ault rule was “if valid where enacted, then we will recognize it.” An interesting question posed was about the proposition that marriage should be divided as a religious and civil institution to better solve the issues that Hunter addressed. Her response was, “I like that.”

Nan D. Hunter is Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School. She is the co-author with William N. Eskridge, Jr. of the casebook Sexuality, Gender and the Law (Foundation Press 2nd ed. 2003) and the author of numerous articles in the areas of constitutional law, civil rights and health law. Chui Rachel Feldblum is a Professor of Law and Director of the Federal Legislation Clinic at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. Pro­fessor Feldblum graduated from Harvard Law School in 1985, clerked for Judge Frank Coffin on the First Circuit Court of Ap­peals and for Justice Harry Blackmun on the U.S. Supreme Court, served as the lead lawyer drafting the Americans with Disabilities Act from 1988-1990, and joined the Georgetown Law faculty in 1991.

Marriage Amendment

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David Silverman, Animation Director for the Simpsons, displays an earlier animation of Homer dur­ing his lecture last Wednesday.

McEwan Shares Excerpts, Ideas; Fields Questions, Praise for Work

Continued from Page 2, Column 2

Many of his life and work, McEwan eloquently delivered a talk that discussed the interplay of fiction and non-fiction in his writing. The talk itself reflected this theme as McEwan cleverly combined his commentary with excerpts from his works to produce a surprisingly coherent presentation.

He started by citing a question posed by an audience member from one of his previous talks. When asked whether he was a novelist who wrote fiction or non-fiction, McEwan answered that he wrote in both genres and that the distinction between one and the other was not as clear as their literal meanings would imply.

McEwan spent most of his talk presenting examples of his use of real-world experiences in his works of fiction. Two such examples are afflicting one of his fictional characters with vascular dementia, an ailment that took the life of McEwan’s mother and having a neurosurgeon in his current novel after observing an actual neurosurgeon at work.

Pointing at these cases, McEwan argued that non-fiction is often incorporated in fiction, giving the writing a sense of reality but not allowing the author the chance to include surreal elements.

Towards the end of the talk, McEwan turned his focus to writ­ing in general. He said that the novel provides a medium through which the writer can give a per­sonality, life and mind to a char­acter but yet incorporates many of the features seen in the real world. He also emphasized that the novel presents an opportunity to con­nect the inner self to the outside world, to connect the private with the public.

After his talk, the floor was opened for questions and comments and one member of audi­ence told McEwan that the ending of Atonement appeared to him, and McEwan replied, “I’m glad you’re surprised I had to fulfill your expectation.”

However, the evening was not without its controversy. At the very beginning of his talk, McEwan discussed his incident at the U.S.-Canadian border. He was appar­ently detained briefly regarding some improper paperwork for his visu. McEwan stated, rather insensitively, “The border guards are making the U.S. borders safe from British writers.” Though eliciting some laughs from the audi­ence, the timing and use of this topic did not seem appropriate for such an occasion. Nevertheless, the audience was undeterred, as many stayed and attended the book signing by McEwan that concluded the evening.

Ian McEwan explains his method of combining non-fiction with fiction to give stories a sense of reality.

Students, faculty and staff enjoy lunch before the talk.