Scholars from several disciplines and nations will discuss the idea of genius in modern societies, beginning with the concept’s emergence in the eighteenth century and paying particular attention to the complex role of the genius figure in democratic culture.

SATURDAY, MAY 19, 2012

9:00 Registration & Coffee

9:30 Session 3 Ars et Ingenium

Moderator: John Brewer (California Institute of Technology)

David Bates (University of California, Berkeley)
“Genius and Obsession. Do You have to be Mad to be Smart?”

Lennard Davis (University of Illinois, Chicago)
“Genius and Obsession. Do You have to be Mad to be Smart?”

Janet Browne (Harvard University)
“Inspiration or Perspiration. Francis Galton’s Hereditary Genius in Victorian Context”

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Session 4 Genius and the Avant-Garde

Moderator: Kevin Gilmartin (California Institute of Technology)

Irina Sirotkina (Institute for the History of Science and Technology, Moscow)
“Cultivating Genius in a Bolshevik Country”

Lucy Delap (Cambridge University)
“Genius must do the scullery work of the world: New Women, Feminists, and Genius, c. 1880-1920”

3:30 Roundtable

FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2012

8:30 Registration & Coffee

9:30 Welcome

Steve Hindle (The Huntington)

Remarks

Joyce Chaplin (Harvard University)

Darrin McMahon (Florida State University)

Session 1 The Problem of Genius

Moderator: Jacob Soll (University of Southern California)

Darrin McMahon
“Genius, Exception, and Evil”

Nathalie Heinich (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales)
“Genius vs Democracy: Excellence and Singularity in Post-Revolution France”

John Carson (University of Michigan)
“Equality, Inequality, and Difference. Genius as Problem and Possibility in American Political/Scientific Discourse”

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Session 2 Prometheus Bound and Unbound

Moderator: Margaret Jacob (University of California, Los Angeles)

Joyce Chaplin
“Genius in Bondage”

Victoria Dewitt (University of Virginia)
“Varieties of Genius Forms of Political Consciousness in Capitalist America”

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Session 3 Promethean Bound and Unbound

Moderator: Margaret Jacob (University of California, Los Angeles)

Joyce Chaplin
“Genius in Bondage”

Victoria Dewitt (University of Virginia)
“Varieties of Genius Forms of Political Consciousness in Capitalist America”

3:30 Roundtable

This conference is funded by

The USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute and
The William French Smith Endowment.
