

Feminist News

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
Institute for Research on Women and Gender

Volume 23
January 2005
Columbia University
New York

Jean Howard Appointed Vice Provost for Diversity Initiatives

IRWaG is delighted to announce that Jean E. Howard, William E. Ransford Professor of English and former director of IRWaG (1996-1999), has been appointed to the newly-created position of Vice Provost for Diversity Initiatives at Columbia. A distinguished scholar of early modern literature, Professor Howard is the recipient of Guggenheim, NEH, Mellon, Folger and Newberry Library fellowships. She has taught at Columbia since 1988 and began her three-year term as Vice-Provost last fall.

In her new role, Professor Howard will lead the University's efforts to expand the diversity of Columbia's scholarly community. Together with the university administration, department chairs, professional school deans, and the Affirmative Action Office, she will develop strategies to recruit new faculty and to increase the number of students from traditionally underrepresented groups who matriculate in Columbia's programs.

While Columbia has long recognized the importance of these goals, the



Jean Howard

need for a more active stance became clear after the release of a study in 2001 on the advancement of women faculty through the academic ranks of the Arts and Sciences. Conducted by the University's Commission on the Status of Women (chaired by Professor Howard), the report revealed that while progress toward gender equity has been made, it has been slow and uneven. In 1990, women represented 30.8% of the tenure-eligible faculty; by 2000, this number had risen only to 33.3%. Over the same time period, however, representation of women among the tenured faculty rose from 13.2% to 19.9%.

This study identified a number of "leaks in the pipeline": choke points in the Columbia system that prevent women from making the same progress as men do in attaining Ph.D.'s, entry-level jobs, and tenure. It revealed that in Columbia's graduate programs, more female students drop out than men, and that in many fields Columbia attracts substantially less than its share of female applicants to entry-level junior faculty jobs compared to national availability pools. When it comes to tenure, the study also found that while Columbia's promotion process has helped improve the gender balance of the tenured faculty, the process of hiring from outside directly into tenure has not. This imbalance has been particularly bad for "targets of opportunity" hires (applicant pool of one) within the Natural Sciences: eleven male and zero female scientists were hired as "opportunity hires" in the 1990s. This is important, the study noted, because fully half of all new appointments to tenure come from outside Columbia—

and hence have not been subject to the gender equity criteria of the internal promotion process.

In academic year 2003-04, feminists and faculty of color formed a committee to urge President Bollinger to take more concrete measures to ensure the diversity of Columbia's academic community. Student protests against racist incidents on campus added further momentum to these efforts. The President and Provost ultimately decided to create the new position of Vice Provost for Diversity Initiatives to intensify the university's efforts to diversify the faculty and upper administration. Professor Howard was the unanimous choice of the faculty committee advising President Bollinger on this issue. As former Director of IRWaG and chair of the Commission on the Status of Women here at Columbia, she has already devoted much effort in the past

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FEMINIST NEWS

is published by the
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ON WOMEN AND GENDER**

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The Institute for Research on Women and Gender is the locus of interdisciplinary feminist scholarship and teaching at Columbia University. We administer the undergraduate Women's Studies major and help develop courses for graduate students that supplement their own disciplinary studies on gender. In addition, we organize workshops, seminars, lectures, conferences, and research projects concerning various issues in feminist scholarship and teaching.

Director's Column

By Lila Abu-Lughod

Weighed down by the pessimism of our political times—including, close to home, political attacks on the life of the academy—I remain buoyed by the optimism and energy of the faculty and students involved in IRWaG and those from among us who have moved into positions of responsibility in the administration and who may help reshape the culture of the academy at Columbia.

Looking back on what I said last spring when I outlined my hopes for what we might accomplish, I see that my visions were not so far-fetched. Reading this newsletter, you will get a sense of the diverse activities we have supported. But behind the scenes, we have also been hard at work. First, we are about to launch a faculty seminar, open to a small number of graduate students as well, that has been funded by ISERP (the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy) and that we hope will develop into a full-fledged international project in the future. The seminar, called "Gender and the Global Locations of Liberalism" will explore critically the global locations and applications of discourses of women's rights and/as human rights. Our focus will be on the challenges scholars and theorists have been developing to the liberal underpinnings and transnational institutional circuits of this form of politics and policy-making (for more details, see the story on this page). Second, given all **Director's**, continued on page 8

Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy joins IRWaG in Sponsoring New Faculty Workshop

A new interdisciplinary faculty workshop on "Gender and the Global Locations of Liberalism" will be convened this spring by Lila Abu-Lughod (Director, IRWaG) and Anupama Rao (History, Barnard). The workshop will explore critically the global locations and applications of discourses of women's rights and/as human rights. Our focus will be on the challenges scholars and theorists have been developing to the liberal underpinnings and transnational institutional circuits of this form of politics and policy-making. While acknowledging the emancipatory intent of humanitarian and women's rights discourse and the useful legal gains it makes possible, scholars with deep knowledge of particular regions and cultural traditions now question both the universalism of the concepts of "the human" and "woman" and the self-representations of liberalism (e.g. examining how and when it comes to be applied to disadvantaged groups, what talk of "rights" and even

"tolerance" might hide in terms of systemic inequality, structural violence, and imperial relations; and what a serious study of "illiberal" religious traditions can contribute to relativizing liberalism and locating it historically and culturally). What would deep historical and social scientific study and an interrogation of the uneven geopolitical distribution of liberalism contribute to understanding the dilemmas faced by those working for women's rights transnationally, or in national settings outside the West?

Spring 2005 speakers: Wendy Brown, Professor of Politics, University of California at Berkeley, on *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Mahmood Mamdani, Discussant); Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, Wolfson College, Oxford (Paper title TBA); and Christine Walley, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, MIT, on *The NGO-ification of Transnational Feminism: A Case Study from Tanzania*.

If you are interested in participating please contact the coordinator, Nadia Latif, nl2021@columbia.edu. For the full schedule, check the ISERP website, <http://www.iserp.columbia.edu/news/workshops/> or the IRWaG website, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irwg> ■

New Voices at Columbia: Frances Negrón-Muntaner

This semester, IRWaG will be hosting a lecture by award-winning filmmaker, writer, and scholar Frances Negrón-Muntaner as part of our "In The House" series.

The recipient of Ford, Truman, Scripps Howard,

Rockefeller, and Pew fellowships, Professor Negrón-Muntaner is currently a joint appointment in the Department of English and Comparative Literature and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race. Since joining the Columbia community in Fall 2003, she has expanded the university's curriculum with a series of new courses on American Latino and Caribbean diaspora literature, culture, and film. Her talk on January 27, titled "Luisa Capetillo's Closet," draws from this cultural heritage to examine the relationship between fashion, modernity, and politics through the life and work of the Puerto Rico-born anarchist and feminist Luisa Capetillo. Although arguably the first Caribbean feminist writer and a respected international labor organizer, Capetillo became famous for being the first woman to wear pants in Puerto Rico and was even tried for this "offense" in Cuba.

Professor Negrón-Muntaner's work stands at the intersection of arts, politics, and cultural criticism. Whether in scholarly writing, journalism, film, or poetry, she explores the construction of ethnic identities, and how these identities are represented and transformed within the experience of migration, the culture of the diaspora, or the stereotyped depictions of North American media. Often, these explorations are linked by a focus on the body as the site upon which these tensions concerning cultural identity and visibility are projected—in inevitably ambiguous and conflicting ways. For example, Professor Negrón-Muntaner's 1989 film *AIDS in the Barrio* (which won a Gold Award at the John Muir Festival



Frances Negrón-Muntaner

in 1990), portrays the impact of drugs, poverty, and traditional gender roles on the spread of AIDS in a Latino community in Philadelphia. At that time, public officials and the media considered AIDS and the risk of its transmission as problems only relevant to homosexuals. Other kinds of bodies afflicted by AIDS were thus invisible within the cultural landscape, even as communities such as the one Professor Negrón-Muntaner chronicles were increasingly ravaged by the disease.

More recently, Professor Negrón-Muntaner has examined the flipside of this logic in her book *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture* (2004). *Boricua Pop* analyzes the politics of Puerto Rican celebrity over the past decades—that is, it looks at those Puerto Ricans who are *most* visible. In examples ranging from *West Side Story* to Jean-Michel Basquiat to Ricky Martin, Professor

What results from the commodification of these stars and their consumption by different Anglo-American and Latino audiences, Professor Negrón-Muntaner observes, is a complicated mosaic of investments that makes it difficult to classify specific phenomena as liberating or regressive. She devotes the third section of *Boricua Pop*, for example, to the recent "mainstreaming" of Latino culture, which she argues has entailed a fragmentation of Latino bodies—Jennifer Lopez's butt, Ricky Martin's hips—into markers of excessive sexuality. When it comes to the politics of Latino self-representation, she says, the meaning of these fragments is difficult to resolve. They shatter Latino bodies into a compilation of fetishized parts and yet their nonetheless offer alternative standards of beauty and desirability that challenge Anglo-American norms.

Professor Negrón-Muntaner asks the costs and contradictions of this visibility, particularly for a population for whom the shame of feeling stigmatized simultaneously inhibits and fuels the desire for recognition.

Negrón-Muntaner asks the costs and contradictions of this visibility, particularly for a population for whom the shame of feeling stigmatized simultaneously inhibits and fuels the desire for recognition.

Other genealogies of ethnic incursions into American popular culture tend to read the mere fact of cultural visibility as a marker of progress—a sign of "contribution" and "enrichment" to American culture. *Boricua Pop* instead looks at how public discourse is organized to speak about race and the value of Latinos, and how this intersects with internal discourses of shame to frame the way that Puerto Ricans are talked about and perform themselves in public, particularly to American audiences.

Professor Negrón-Muntaner's forthcoming book of poetry, *Anatomy of a Smile: Anorexic Poems* (2005), similarly examines the body as the site for enduring all kinds of metaphorical fragmentation—from gender discourses to the effects of the diaspora. Originally written twenty years ago, some critics consider it to be the most famous unpublished book of poetry in Puerto Rican letters; Professor Negrón-Muntaner has also previously edited and contributed to the poetry collection *Shouting in a Whisper: Latino Poets in Philadelphia* (1994).

Whether in poetry, film, journalism, or scholarly writing, questions of cultural and ethnic identity thus run throughout Professor Negrón-Muntaner, *cont. on page 11*

institute for research on women + gender
presents

WRITING A FEMINIST'S LIFE: academics and their memoirs

a conference in honor of
Carolyn G. Heilbrun

Leila Ahmed
Charlotte Pierce Baker
Mary Ann Caws
Shirley Geok-lin Lim
Deborah McDowell
Nancy K. Miller
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

www.columbia.edu/cu/irwg

columbia university

february 11, 2005

9:30 to 6:00

301 philosophy hall

irwag@columbia.edu



Luce Irigaray and “the Greeks”: Genealogies of Re-writing

Last October, IRWaG was glad to help support the Program in Hellenic Studies and the Center for French and Francophone Studies in organizing “Luce Irigaray and ‘the Greeks’: Genealogies of Re-writing,” a conference held at the Maison Française. Organized by Elena Tzelepis (Hellenic Studies) and Athena Athanasiou (Social Anthropology, Panteion University, Athens, Greece), the conference explored the work of feminist philosopher and rebel psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray, currently director of research at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, Philosophy Commission) in Paris. Best known in the United States for her books *Speculum of the Other Woman* and *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Irigaray is widely read in many branches of the humanities, and has had a significant impact on Anglo-American psychoanalytic and social theory.

Irigaray’s work offers a critique of Western thought and philosophy from Greek antiquity to modern psychoanalysis. Using particular tactics of writing (“*écriture*”) such as quotation, mimicry, and displacement of canonical texts, her work reveals how the production of Western origins simultaneously produces sites of unintelligibility—of constitutive exclusion—figured as feminine, racialized Others, and other unspeakable modes of humanness.

The goal of October’s conference was to examine how Irigaray’s re-writing of ancient Greek texts has not only marked contemporary criticism but also has transformed the body of Western discourse. How does Irigaray *read* the classic discourse of metaphysics and how in turn *is she read* within and against the discourse of metaphysics? What questions about positionality, representation, language, and politics does the Irigarayan mimesis raise? And what kinds of refigurations of the theoretical and the political emerge from reading Irigaray in an Irigarayan way?

As a critical project, the conference thus had an uncanny relation to what “Modern Greek Studies” stands for in the contemporary United States academic framework. As Professor Tzelepis explained in her opening remarks, the name “the Greeks”—stereotypically invoked to denote “ancient Greek civilization”—still evokes echoes of the authoritative production of “Western” origins. But it also signifies the marginal disciplinary subfield of “Modern Greek studies” today. For the conference, “the Greeks” thus functioned as a point of entry for critical inquiry: its ambivalence, Professor Tzelepis said, forces us to question how we define “inside” and “outside,” “included” and “excluded,” and “center” and “periphery,” in national, sexual, discursive, and institutional terms. What are the theoretical, cultural, and political implications of the monologic emphasis on the Greek classical past? How do we read “Western” canon from the margins? And how can we trace its routes of re-writing and translatability into various contemporary identities?

Scholars from five countries (the United States, Greece, France, Canada, and England) and numerous disciplines (Philosophy, French, Comparative Literature, English, Gender Studies, Anthropology, Psychoanalysis, Political Theory, Modern Greek Studies, and Classics) took up these challenges in a three-day series of panels. Fellow organizer Karen Van Dyck, Professor of Hellenic Studies here at Columbia University, joined Professor Tzelepis in introducing the conference and welcoming the participants. She also spoke briefly on how women’s Greek poetry since the 1970s has developed as both a response to and a parallel play with Irigaray’s work. The conference then opened with introductory remarks on Irigaray’s contributions to contemporary theory by Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Director of the Center for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia. Professor Spivak reflected upon the ways Irigaray’s work has “resonated,” affecting Spivak obliquely, but striking a profound chord in her own projects.

In the presentations and discussions that followed, the theme of “resonance” reappeared as speakers made indirect or unexpected connections to Irigaray’s thought. Several demonstrated ways to advance Irigaray’s theory and methodology, particularly her strategic play with Plato’s (and Platonic) mimesis and her radical rethinking of Greek myth. One of these speakers was Judith Still, Professor of French at the University of Nottingham, who has worked closely with Irigaray on these “Greek” themes. Her presentation was on the topic of “hospitality,” an issue that has become a particularly heated and pressing subject of public debate in contemporary France, albeit usually

phrased in terms of ethnicity and migration. Professor Still took up the question of “Homeric hospitality” and the alternatives suggested by Irigaray in order to re-insert the question of sexual difference more forcefully into the debate.

In her presentation, “Mourning (as) Woman: Irony, Catachresis, and the Boundaries of the Political,” conference organizer Athena Athanasiou, addressed Irigaray’s appropriation of Antigone. As an ambiguous figure of protest and lamentation, she argued, Antigone embodies the disruptive irony that is sustained as a condition of possibility for the community and yet must be expelled from its legality and legibility. Connecting Nicole Lorau’s work on women’s mourning voice with the ways in which the feminist and anti-militarist movement *Women in Black* de-familiarizes mourning as language-in-the-feminine, Professor Athanasiou suggested that, “the figure of Antigone becomes the poetic horizon in which to explore the aporias of the textual and political strategy of irony, but also the aporias of mourning as the ‘other of politics’ that denotes the perennial site of women’s propriety and women’s erasure at once.” Similarly, Emmanuelle Berger, Professor of Romance Studies at

Irigaray, continued on page 8

Irigaray’s work offers a critique of Western thought and philosophy from Greek antiquity to modern psychoanalysis.

Islamic Feminism: Convergence or Contradiction?

Last November, IRWaG, The Middle East Institute, and Qanun—The Middle Eastern Law Students Association hosted a “Brown Bag” seminar by Qudsia Mirza, Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of East London and currently Kate Stoneman Visiting Professor of Law and Democracy at Albany Law School in New York. The author of numerous publications on critical race theory and discrimination law, Professor Mirza has recently turned her attention towards new interpretive methodologies in contemporary Islamic feminism. In her forthcoming edited volume, *Islamic Feminism and the Law*, she examines these methodologies and asks their implications for law and the creation of gendered legal rights.

Professor Mirza began her talk to a packed room of students and faculty by explaining that Islamic feminism is based upon the belief that gender equality can be achieved within an explicitly Islamic framework. Theoretical developments in Qur’anic exegesis (the “new epistemology” movement) have enabled Islamic feminist scholars to interpret these non-discriminatory legal rights as the authentic “ethical voice” of Islam that was lost in classical jurisprudential thought and subsumed within a pragmatic sexual hierarchy which privileged men. Thus, for these feminist scholars, achieving sexual

equality and equal social, economic, and political rights for women represents a return to the “true” Islam as it was first revealed, rather than historical or religious innovations within Islamic law.

Professor Mirza’s talk critiqued some of the theoretical developments in the “new epistemology” movement, as well as the optimism they have inspired in contemporary Islamic feminism. The discourse of authenticity, for example, she argued, represents a discomfiting point of convergence between conservative Islamist renditions of the “purity of Islam’s origin” and feminists’ reliance upon the “true” ethical voice of Islam to support their claims to equality. Not only are these two groups’ conceptualizations of women’s rights diametrically opposed, but also this very notion of purity of origin and of an “authentic” Islam does not bear up to scrutiny even with the most cursory historical analysis.

She continued by noting that there are also two important implications of arguing that gender equality can be achieved within an exclusively Islamic framework. First, this polarizes the relationship between “Western” feminist theory and Islamic feminism. Given Western feminists’ history of ignoring or marginalizing the concerns of Muslim women, it is perfectly understandable that Islamic feminists in turn would dismiss Western feminist discussions and innovations as irrelevant. Nonetheless, the most innovative work now being produced in Qur’anic exegesis depends upon a notion of equality that has so far gone untheorized. Instead, equality is simply assumed: the notion of spiritual equality makes sexual difference immaterial, and women and men are assigned corresponding and commensurate spiritual and devotional duties. In other words, the concept of equality rests upon a “mirroring” between men and women in their sameness to each other.

Western feminist theory offers a useful interrogation of this concept of equality, and has explored the implications of basing equality on sexual difference or sameness.

Second, Islamic feminists have countered orthodox interpretations of the Qur’an by highlighting how sexual difference has been deployed historically to justify the establishment of lesser rights for women. But when and to what extent is the very idea of sexual difference itself acceptable within scripture? This is a question that these feminist writers have not addressed.

Islamic feminism thus locates the production of difference in an external site—Western feminism—rather than incorporating it within its own theorizations. In so doing, Islamic feminism projects itself as truly indigenous and authentic, untainted by Western concepts. But by failing to incorporate the notion of difference, Islamic feminism conveniently bypasses the need to take the ethnic and religious heterogeneity of Muslim societies into account, and thereby denies the concerns of women constructed as politically marginal.

This refusal of difference may well serve strategic ends. In order to exercise political power for achieving legal and social rights for women, feminists may need to create a coherent feminist position within the frame of Islam, or to advance a homogenized Islamic framework, particularly in countries in which Islamists wield considerable power. One might also argue that this emphasis on the sameness of experience, culture, and religion in contemporary Islamic feminism is a necessary stage in its development—it helps to construct a sense of community and strengthen its theoretical coherence.

Nevertheless, Professor Mirza warned, there is a danger that this uniformity of concerns will lead to what Chandra Mohanty has called a “debilitating ossification of difference,” which arrests the development of an internal critique in Islamic feminist scholarship.



Qudsia Mirza

Recognizing diversity among women, as well as the concerns of women marginalized by current feminist explorations in Islamic scholarship, Professor Mirza concluded, is essential in opening a new phase in the politics of feminist theorization in Muslim societies. There are, she pointed out, Muslim women who do not fall easily within the definitions that Islam has for them in that they are not wives or mothers, nor heterosexual. Can scriptural exegesis allow for the inclusion of such women?

The discussion afterward ranged widely. The first questions were about what is actually meant in Muslim societies today when "tradition" or "the past" is invoked and how one might think differently about "authenticity" and claims to authenticity. These were followed by more concrete questions about a variety of issues concerning women in particular parts of the Muslim world, including a question about the significance of the constitution being written in Afghanistan. Although Professor Mirza had defined carefully the topic she was to address as the interpretive methods used by those defining an Islamic feminism, the desire for expertise and guidance in how to think about Muslim women more generally was apparent. ■

Regulating Teenage Abortion in the United States: Politics and Policy

Last semester, just days before the U.S. presidential election, IRWaG's informal seminar series "In the House" hosted a timely presentation by Carol Sanger, Barbara Aronstein Black Professor of Law and an active participant at IRWaG. Winner of a Columbia University Presidential Teaching Prize, Professor Sanger engaged a full room of students and faculty from various departments and classes in the Arts and Sciences, Sociomedical Sciences, and the Law School with a paper titled "Regulating Teenage Abortion in the United States: Politics and Policy."

Although her teaching areas include contracts and family law, as well as gender and law, this paper is part of her ongoing scholarship on the regulation of maternal conduct, minors and abortion, and law's relation to culture.

Thirty-four U.S. states, Professor Sanger explained, currently require pregnant minors either to notify their parents or get their consent before having a legal abortion. The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of these statutes provided that minors are also given an alternative mechanism for abortion approval that does not involve parents. The mechanism used is called the "judicial bypass hearing" at which minors must persuade judges that they are mature and informed enough to make the abortion decision themselves. While most minors receive judicial approval, the problem Professor Sanger pointed to most vividly was that the hearings intrude into the most personal aspects of a young woman's life. Studies have shown that the hearings, while formally civil in nature, can be punitive in tone. Parental involvement statutes are often couched in the language of family communications and protecting minors.

What makes these statutes politically popular is that they offer politicians the opportunity to appear pro-life, pro-choice, and pro-family all at once. Professor Sanger's paper, however, argued to the contrary: parental involvement statutes are less concerned with developing nuanced policies to improve the quality of teenage health or decision making than with securing a set of political goals aimed at restoring parental authority, making abortion less accessible, and punishing girls for sexual activity. ■



Carol Sanger

transparent A open get to know the institute for research on women and gender
WHAT apparent **WEAK** true **BARRIER** pellucid **IS** manifest
clear **WHEN** **IT STANDS** visible **IN THE** obvious **TRUTH** candid
frank blocked **OF** corruption **AN** opaque **HYPOTHESIS!** origin **WAY** obtuse
 (Mary Wollstonecraft, 1792)

Director's, continued from page 2
 the new faculty who are becoming involved in IRWaG and our closer ties to the Barnard Women's Studies Department, not to mention new links to SIPA and the Law School, we have been taking a fresh look at the curriculum as well. Exciting pedagogical changes will be emerging. Third, concerned about our interface with the public, we have also taken on the task of making our website (www.columbia.edu/cu/irwg/) into a better resource. This new website is a work in progress and we welcome all suggestions. Finally, aware that our efforts over the past ten years have concentrated on teaching and public programming, we have also begun discussions with the Institute for Research on African-American Studies and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race concerning ways to develop into a research institute in more than name. In the twenty-first century, any such plan must be shaped by awareness of the importance of internationalizing communities of knowledge. We welcome suggestions and ideas toward this end.

All this hard work could not have been done without the dedication and talents of the Institute staff. I want to thank Page Jackson and Amalia Zarranz for making my transition into this new position both manageable and pleasurable, and helping me laugh at the insanity of bureaucracy.

This spring semester, I invite you all to participate in the conference honoring the founder of IRWaG, the late Carolyn G. Heilbrun, on February 11. We also hope to see you at our "Feminist Interventions" lecture and our "In the House" series, where you can be introduced to the exciting work of new faculty at Columbia: Professor Elizabeth Povinelli and Assistant Professors Patricia Dailey and Frances Negrón-Muntaner.

As always, we look forward to discussing with you ideas and suggestions concerning how IRWaG can become a vehicle for all those—faculty and students and the wider Columbia community—who recognize gender and sexuality to be fundamental to life and scholarship. ■

Irigaray, continued from page 5
 Cornell University, addressed Irigaray's vexed relationship to metaphor, emblemized in the way Irigaray both uses profusely and condemns "veils" in her work.

For these scholars, as Lynne Huffer, Professor of French Studies and Director of the Program for the Study of Women and Gender at Rice University later noted, situating Irigaray's work in the context of "the Greeks" allowed them to bring out the extent to which her work both draws on and challenges ancient philosophy and the myths and dramas that constitute the founding narratives of Western culture. Dianne Chisholm, Professor of English at the University of Alberta, extended this analysis to

other scholars, artists, and mediums. Her presentation discussed the impact of Irigaray's work upon performance artist Kathy Acker's last production, "Eurydice in the Underworld," made in 1997 when she was dying from breast cancer. Part drama, part diary (Acker's own reportage of her treatment for the disease), and part epistolary fiction, "Eurydice in the Underworld" restages the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, with the operating theater of modern Western medicine as a reproduction of the cave/speculum of Plato's founding allegory of Western metaphysics. "Eurydice" performs an Irigarayan reversal of the history of enlightenment, Professor Chisholm

Irigaray, continued on page 12

**Spring 2005 @
 the Institute for
 Research on Women &
 Gender**

C O L U M B I A U N I V E R S I T Y

**Save the dates! January 27, February 11, March 1,
 April 7**

*** Feminist Interventions**

**ROTTEN WORLDS: THINKING SEXUALITY IN THE
 POSTCOLONY**

Elizabeth Povinelli, Professor of Anthropology & INSTITUTE FOR
 RESEARCH ON WOMEN AND GENDER
 Discussant: Janet Jakobsen, BARNARD CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON
 WOMEN

Tuesday, March 1, 7:30 p.m., TBA

***IN THE HOUSE: Work in Progress**

Thursdays 4-5:30, 754 Schermerhorn Extension

**SIGHT UNSEEN: FIGURE, MATERIALITY, &
 LANGUAGE IN THE VISIONS OF
 MEDIEVAL WOMEN MYSTICS**

Patricia Dailey, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE
 LITERATURE

January 27, 4 p.m.

L U I S A C A P E T I L L O ' S C L O S E T

Frances Negrón-Muntaner, CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
 ETHNICITY AND RACE and DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

April 7, 4 p.m.

Student Organizations at Columbia: Alliance, Awareness, Activism

In this issue, IRWaG highlights four student groups organized around issues of gender and sexuality. From the oldest gay student organization in the United States to a gender equity group formed just last spring, they address questions of equal access and social justice from a variety of perspectives. If you would like to suggest an organization for inclusion in a future issue of *Feminist News*, please contact us.

POW!

POW! (Productive Outreach for Women) was founded three years ago by Columbia College seniors Andrea Sung, an English major, and Vanessa Carr, an Environmental Biology major. The organization is an outgrowth of their non-literary journal DRIVE, which they created in order to feature interesting and provocative acts of production by local New York women. For Sung and Carr, "production" includes not only traditional modes of expression such as the visual arts, but also activism, teaching, and community-building. With this in mind, they began POW! as a way to house not only DRIVE but other forms of creativity.

POW! has a three-fold agenda: self-education; activism and the support of outside producers; and production within the group. The shape of the organization, however, changes from year to year. This is because, Sung explains, unlike other undergraduate feminist organizations, POW! does not emphasize a specific topic or program. Its goal, rather, is to provide space and support for "the instinctive surge we believe women have to produce and create things that are innovative, precise, potent, and sensitive to the time." Thus, while the weekly planning meetings, discussion sessions, and work on DRIVE remain consistent, the meetings themselves may be multimodal presentations (with film clips, visiting speakers, slides, presentations, etc.), activist efforts, or curriculum-based self-education and panels, depending on the interests of the members.

Sung notes that the diversity of POW's interventions presents the biggest difficulty when it comes to explaining the organization and its

"point." But this has also made POW! sustainable and attractive to a diverse group of students, as well as enabled an impressive array of events and activities in the three years since POW!'s inception. Events with faculty have included the International Reproductive Health seminar with Susan Purdin and Therese McGinn from the School of Public Health, and "Feminism, the Academy, and Social Change:" a panel discussion with Lila Abu-Lughod, Alice Kessler-Harris, Jean Howard, Carol Sanger, and Christia Mercer. POW! has also begun an oral history Professor Interview Project, and they are looking ahead to forming a partnership in this venture with the Oral History Research Office and the new interdepartmental faculty committee concerned with race and gender in hiring.

In terms of activism, POW! has organized clothing drives for homeless youth and postcard

mailings with Students for Choice. They also initiated a feminist film series and held a joint show with Barnard's radio station to feature some female musicians appearing in DRIVE. In addition, Sung is also proud to report that

POW! has inspired several spin-off projects, most notably the Female Musician Network website, which Carr initiated to provide women in New York with a venue to connect with each other and create music, and FemSpace dinners, organized by another member.

As POW's financial resources continue to grow with each funding cycle, Carr and Sung plan to expand the scope and frequency of their programming. Future plans include a feminist journalism workshop, a series of product-oriented web design classes, as well as setting up a moderated website. And, this year, POW! finally has the resources to print DRIVE.

POW! meets weekly on Sundays at 9pm. Those interested in subscribing to their announcement list can email pow@columbia.edu or pow-subscribe@lists.riseup.net.

SAGE

SAGE (the Student Alliance for Gender Equality) is dedicated to providing a forum for discussion and activism on a range of gender equality issues, including those that touch the Law School directly as well as broader legal and social issues. The group is open to all law students and hopes to enable women and men to use the law as a lens for analysis and a tool for action.

Chairs Emily Mathieu and Courtney Weiner, both second-year law students, were inspired to create SAGE last spring when the March for Women's Lives (the pro-choice demonstration in Washington, DC) was approaching and no other law school group was

"I would like to see improved communication among [feminist/gender/sexuality] groups so that we can better publicize our events and... work together on some university-wide issues..."

organizing students to attend. "We were really surprised," Mathieu says, "that there was no law school student organization dedicated to feminism or other gender issues."

Since being granted official recognition by the Student Senate, SAGE has not only organized students to attend the March, but also held several other events over the past spring and fall. These have ranged from forums on same-sex marriage, sexist language, gender equity in the workplace, and women and the 2004 election; to co-sponsorship of a self-defense class and a panel on rape shield laws; to social events to build

Organizations, continued on page 10

Organizations, continued from page 9
community among feminists at the law school. This spring, SAGE is planning an event to highlight pro-choice views within religious organizations in the United States.

One of Mathieu and Weiner's future goals for SAGE is to build a better network among feminist/gender/sexuality groups in all parts of the University. "I would like to see improved communication among these groups so that we can better publicize our events and perhaps try to work together on some university-wide issues," says Mathieu, who is also on the editorial board of the *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*. "For example, we worked with the undergraduates at Barnard and Columbia and students from the Health Sciences campus to organize for the March in D.C., and this coordination was a key element of our success."

To subscribe to SAGE's announcement list, please email Emily Mathieu at ejm2106@columbia.edu.

GLOBAL AIDS AWARENESS WEEK (COLUMBIA GLOBAL JUSTICE)

Last year marked Columbia's second annual Global AIDS Awareness Week (November 29-December 3). Organized by Columbia Global Justice (CGJ—the Student Global AIDS Campaign chapter), the week coincides with World AIDS Day and has become a campus wide opportunity for education, outreach, discussion, and fundraising.

CGJ is an organization of students who are dedicated to fighting for the rights of all people in the world to health care and medical treatment. Founded in the winter of 2002-2003 after Jeffrey Sachs came to Columbia to head up the Earth Institute, it works to promote awareness of HIV/AIDS and the societal inequities that shape AIDS as a biosocial phenomenon. These include structural poverty, racism, gender inequality, and cultural biases against groups stigmatized by sexuality, profession (commercial sex workers), or addiction (injecting drug users). CGJ also works against other global killers, such as malaria and TB. Because the fight for health care is so linked to social and economic inequality, these issues, as well as environmental, civil,

and political rights, are also important to their mission.

This year's week adopted the same theme as international awareness day: "Women, Girls, HIV, and AIDS." It focused its outreach and events on the current HIV/AIDS epidemic among women and its devastating effects on this ever-increasing and vulnerable population. Although the HIV/AIDS epidemic first appeared in the United States among the male homosexual population, it has now evolved into a worldwide epidemic in which young heterosexual women have higher risks and rates for disease transmission than any other demographic group. Columbia's events were thus designed to highlight ways to prevent HIV infection among women, while also exploring the key obstacles to slowing and stopping the spread of HIV.

The week began with a panel discussion at the Health Sciences Campus in which faculty experts examined current and pressing issues on Women and AIDS. The following day featured a short film screening of *In Women's Hands: A film about women and HIV prevention*, which portrays the obstacles to preventing HIV infection and advocates the development of microbicides as the best prevention technique because it requires little or no negotiation between the user and her partner. Other events throughout the week included a fundraiser, Jazz Against AIDS; two additional film screenings depicting the needs of women around the world; and many campus-wide consciousness-raising events.

It is both a sad and hopeful time to be a woman in the fight against AIDS, observes Columbia College student Alexandra Hartman, a senior Women's and Gender Studies major and organizer of this year's Global AIDS Awareness Week. It has taken too many years and millions of infections and deaths for the global community to begin to respond to women's needs and vulnerabilities. What's more, there are still many more questions and obstacles to women's HIV prevention than there are solutions and resources. Yet as last year's World AIDS Day demonstrated, international and local attention to the HIV epidemic is finally focusing on

women's lives, with a global response and collective commitment to changing the epidemic's trajectory and stopping the spread of HIV among women. This is a crucial step for the future of women's health, rights, and recognition, Hartman says, and she is optimistic that women now are achieving not only the place, but the power to create effective change. "I am hopeful because women are not and will not be the victims of HIV," she concludes, "but rather the leaders of its defeat."

To subscribe to CGJ's mailing list, send an email to majordomo@columbia.edu with "subscribe globaljustice" as the body. You can also email CGJ at globaljustice@columbia.edu

COLUMBIA QUEER ALLIANCE

CQA is the primary social, political, and educational organization for lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgendered and questioning students at Columbia College, the School of Engineering, and Barnard College. It is the oldest gay student organization (GSO) in the world, founded as the Student Homophile League in 1966.

Although CQA is officially an undergraduate group, they also work closely with the LGBT groups from Columbia's graduate schools and reach out to other campus organizations in the NYC area. Similarly, they have their own programming, but also act as a resource and umbrella group for many of the smaller queer campus organizations. Membership is open to all.

In addition to their famous First Friday Dances, CQA also hosts a number of events for Queer Awareness month each October: film screenings, faculty lectures and discussions, and career panels. CQA's mission also includes identifying and fighting discrimination against the LGBTQ community (such as in CQA's recent advertisement campaign against the ROTC's petition to establish themselves on campus), and bringing queer artists and musicians to campus to display and perform their work.

To subscribe to CQA's mailing list, send an email to majordomo@columbia.edu with "subscribe qsc" as the body. You can also email CQA at qsc@columbia.edu. ■

Negrón-Muntaner, cont. from page 3
Muntaner's work. Indeed, she observes, her cultural background is apparent in the very breadth of these interventions. "There's not such a strict division of [intellectual and creative] labor in Puerto Rico as in the United States," she says. "I've now lived in the United States longer than I did in Puerto Rico, but I'm still bound to this idea of being a 'creative person': someone who has to use whatever means available. That's my main identity."

Different media enable her to reach different audiences, Professor Negrón-Muntaner explains. More importantly, they also provide different ways of learning about and encountering the world. Professor Negrón-Muntaner left Puerto Rico at nineteen, and her first years in the United States were spent trying to understand the phenomenon of migration—both its personal impact upon her and what she calls the "massiveness" of this process. Her early films, shot in Puerto Rican communities in Philadelphia, gave her "a very compelling way to exchange and share and visualize what I was experiencing and learning." Whether documenting the impact of AIDS or spending three months going to a homeless encampment on an almost daily basis, making films "made me talk to a wide range of people" and gave her a way to explore issues of

diaspora, race, and gender. "Film is part of my contact with life," Professor Negrón-Muntaner concludes. "I use it to explore things that are very intimate, even if the film itself doesn't take an intimate shape." Her films have been screened throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Latin America, as well as broadcast on many public television stations; *Brincando el charco: Portrait of a Puerto Rican* (1994) was chosen for the 1995 Whitney Biennial, the Audience Award at the 1995 San Juan CinemaFest, and a Merit Selection at the 1995 Latin American Studies Association Film Festival.

Here at Columbia, Professor Negrón-Muntaner also phrases her theory of teaching in epistemological terms. "Education is not just the passing on of information," she says. "I want my students to cultivate a sense of voice and what they're interested in and their own ways of knowing." And while Professor Negrón-Muntaner earned an M.F.A. in Visual Anthropology from Temple University, and later a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Rutgers University, she recognizes that most of her students will not follow a similar career path. "This doesn't mean I'm anti-intellectual or uncritical—to the contrary, I give a lot to read and I emphasize theory and method. But I'm interested in them coming up with

their own conclusions, and I want to give them as much space as possible to do that."

Indeed, Professor Negrón-Muntaner's commitment to providing such creative "space" is also visible in the organizations she has helped found to support the Latino film community. As founding board member and current chair of NALIP, the National Association of Latino Independent Producers, she helps to create mentorship programs to further the professional development of upcoming producers. She is also the founder of the Miami Light Project's Filmmakers' Workshop, which seeks to promote independent filmmaking in South Florida.

Currently, Professor Negrón-Muntaner has a number of events and projects planned. She is organizing the annual conference for the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, titled "Sovereignty Matters: An Interdisciplinary Conference on Sovereignty in Native American, Pacific Islander, and Puerto Rican Communities." Scheduled for April 15 and 16, the conference will examine the multiple meanings and discourses of sovereignty and to what extent they define studies of these communities. "Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Puerto Ricans, who share so much and so little, rarely come together to
Negrón-Muntaner, cont. on page 13

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women states in Article 1:

"the term 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

It states in Article 2:

"Violence against women shall be understood to be limited to, the following:

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs."

General Recommendation 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women states that:

"Gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general international law or under human rights conventions, is discrimination within the meaning of article 1 of the Convention."

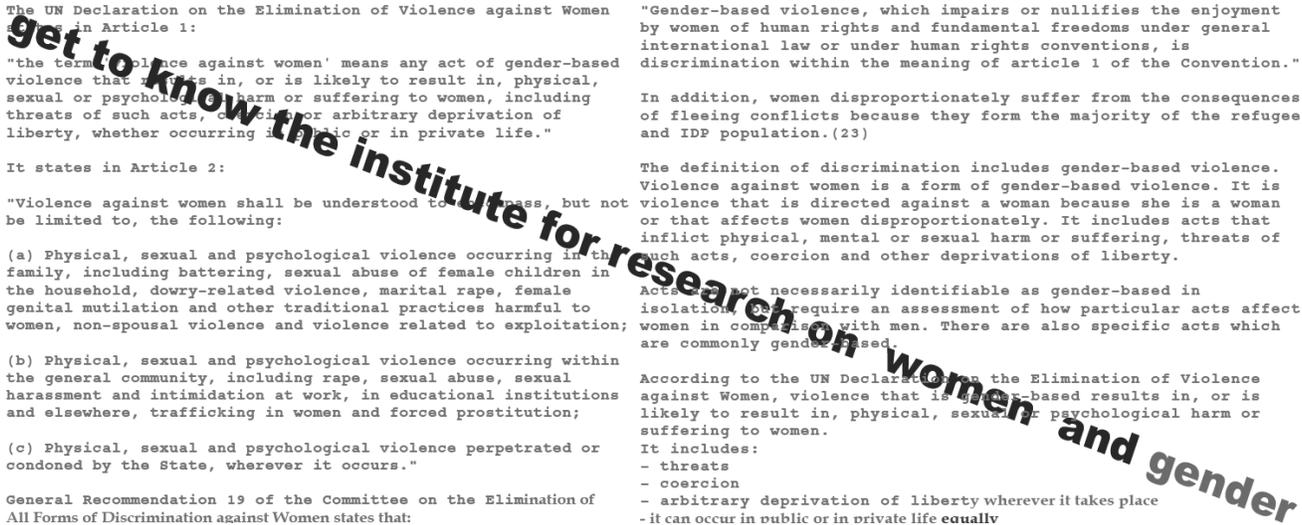
In addition, women disproportionately suffer from the consequences of fleeing conflicts because they form the majority of the refugee and IDP population. (23)

The definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence. Violence against women is a form of gender-based violence. It is violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

Acts do not necessarily identifiable as gender-based in isolation, but require an assessment of how particular acts affect women in comparison with men. There are also specific acts which are commonly gender-based.

According to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, violence that is gender-based results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women.

It includes:
- threats
- coercion
- arbitrary deprivation of liberty wherever it takes place
- it can occur in public or in private life equally



Irigaray, continued from page 8 argued, by privileging the first mimesis of a perception of the world that arises from the subject's embodied situation over the second mimesis of an idealized conception of a perception of the world that arises from the subject's embodied situation but that appears to transcend its material source. That is, the hystera/cave/underworld grave forces Eurydice to look death in the eye from the perspective of her embodied situation. Professor Chisolm explained, and to see "the mortifying girl-killing institutions of patriarchy and the mortality she must live as a creaturely subject."

The conference closed with a lecture by Luce Irigaray presented live via digital-television from a studio in Paris. Irigaray spoke on "The Return": a theme that Professor Chisolm later praised as "a new return to a very old,

very ancient, lost and forgotten cultural respect for the mother and for mother/nature which through the ages has been increasingly dangerously devalued." This intervention into current philosophy and global politics through a detour to the ancient Greeks, Professor Chisolm said, is needed now more than ever to set our world on what she termed a "radically other geo-loving versus geo-devastating trajectory."

Speaking "virtually in the dark and into the void," to an audience on the other side of the Atlantic, Irigaray's virtual presence was "surprisingly moving," commented Madeleine Dobie, director of Center for French & Francophone Studies, who found the extraordinary attendance at this Sunday morning session evidence of the vibrancy of the conference's ongoing discussion. Elizabeth Grosz, Professor of Women's Studies at Rutgers University, concurred.

"Irigaray is the most conceptually brilliant of all the feminist philosophers. Her intellectual complexity and range is rarely matched, and the consistency of her political vision is truly remarkable. Her presentation showed all the originality and acumen of her other writings, with all their methodological and conceptual twists and turns."

Conference organizers Professors Tzelepis and Athanasiou brought together a stunning and distinguished panel of scholars whose work was shaped by a long-term and serious engagement with Irigaray. As Professor Dobie later commented, a "conference on Irigaray held at this juncture could easily have been conceived as a bland retrospective, relegating to the past Irigaray's bold attacks on the 'phallogentrism' of psychoanalysis and philosophy. A conference on 'Irigaray and the Greeks' in particular could

have unfolded a bland retrospective, offering a predictable account of how Irigaray, like Nietzsche or Heidegger, reread Greek philosophy." "Instead," she continued, "Elena Tzelepis and her co-organizers invited a group of speakers, diverse in nationality and discipline, to reflect on the multiple genealogies of this rewriting. This reflection involved, notably, attentiveness to recent Greek literature and philosophy, an emphasis that resists the polarity of ancient and modern, Greek and German/French, as well as the prevailing tendency to hypostasize Greek culture. Many of the expected and important debates over sex and gender, binarism and essentialism, law and affect, were joined during the course of the conference, but these questions were raised in new ways and in connection with new texts and issues."

Indeed, several participants later highlighted what they termed the critical "untimeliness" of contemporary feminist philosophy's rapport

recognition

ambiguity

complexity

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with the ancient Greeks, and the conference's role in promoting that line of inquiry. Such "untimeliness" freed participants "from the often market-driven imperative of timeliness, up-to-datedness, and other cutting-edge fantasies," as Professor Berger explained. Instead, it offered what fellow panelist Elizabeth Weed, director of the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown University later called, "the experience of being drawn doubly backward"—back to Irigaray and back to "the Greeks." As such, she said, it provided an unexpected move forward, casting old questions of reading, writing, alterity, and politics in new light.

The Hellenic Studies Program, as well as organizers Tzelepis and Athanasiou, gratefully acknowledges the many sponsors of the conference besides IRWaG. These included the Center for Comparative Literature and Society and the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University and the Department of Women's Studies and the Barnard Center for Research on Women at Barnard. Major funding was provided by the Sterling Currier Fund, the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, and the Greek Ministry of Economy. Special assistance was also provided by the Department of Social Anthropology of Panteion University, Athens, Greece.

This gratitude echoes Irigaray's own spirit of appreciation, quoted by Professor Still during her introduction to Irigaray's video presentation. "We lack a rich discourse for giving thanks," Irigaray said, in an acceptance speech she gave when awarded an honorary degree at the University of London in Summer 2004. "For criticism we even have an academic degree, but for giving thanks we are really weak. If a degree in gratitude did exist, something in our world certainly would work better. We are still far away from that! And yet gratitude is an essential gesture to preserve the two partners in an exchange; gratitude is also the first gesture towards founding a real democracy."

(With thanks to Dianne Chisolm and Madeleine Dobie for their assistance.) ■

Negrón-Muntaner, cont. from page 11 talk," Professor Negrón-Muntaner says. "Yet all of them have had specific issues in relationship to United States' nation-building processes."

She also has a forthcoming edited volume, *None of the Above: Puerto Rican Contemporary Culture and Politics* (2005), which takes its name from the results of the non-binding 1998 plebiscite held to determine Puerto Rico's political status. Offered four choices (statehood; status quo as a United States commonwealth; quasi-independence as a "free association" with close ties to the United States; or independence) over fifty percent of the voters chose to reject all of them—thus elevating "none of the above" to the status of a political category. Professor Negrón-Muntaner solicited contributions that would theorize from the space of this rejection and ask what it might mean as a position towards globalization. What does it mean to refuse all the dominant categories offered? Is ambiguity possible as a political location? The different contributors to the volume took up this challenge by considering the politics of ambiguity in terms of not only political sovereignty, but cultural and political nationalisms, gender and sexuality, and consumer culture as well.

One key tension, as Professor Negrón-Muntaner highlights in her "Afterword," is whether the refusal of available categories enables new forms of identity and voice, or whether the ambiguity produced by this refusal can also result in forms of disempowerment that are all the more easily overlooked. She cites the case of Jose Padilla, the alleged "dirty bomber," whose self-professed identity as an African-American Muslim (Abdullah Al Muhajir) has been at odds with how he has been perceived and portrayed by the media and government authorities. Professor Negrón-Muntaner's essay explores how the gap between these coordinates links to Padilla's incarceration. Although Padilla has been held indefinitely as an "enemy combatant" without specific charges brought against him, the racial politics of the troubled post-9/11

cultural landscape have prevented his case from being viewed as a civil rights violation.

Professor Negrón-Muntaner examines similar themes in the two documentaries she is currently completing for television: *For the Record: Guam and World War II* and *Regarding Vieques*. Both address the militarization of everyday life: when political concerns and personal concerns become the same. "It is something we in the United States are only experiencing now, but for the past one hundred years, people in military territories have been living this way."

Finally, Professor Negrón-Muntaner has several newer projects in the works. She plans a comparative investigation of contemporary film, oral, and literary narratives of migration under extreme conditions across the Americas, Europe and Northern Africa. There is a fiction film about which she is hesitant to talk—"I don't want to jinx it." And, much like her talk on "Luisa Capetillo's Closet" that we at IRWaG look forward to hearing this semester as part of our "In The House" series, Professor Negrón-Muntaner is at work on a study of another famous Puerto Rican: Nuyorican writer, actor, and icon Miguel Piñero. Piñero, whom she describes as almost a "mythical character," was one of the founders of the Nuyorican Poets' Café and one of the first Latino playwrights to have any real critical attention to his work. He also, however, had a lengthy criminal record and acted in the film *Fort Apache, The Bronx*, which was subject to the largest Latino boycott in the history of Hollywood. Piñero's writings have been neglected and there are no scholarly analyses of his work—a lacuna which Professor Negrón-Muntaner attributes in part to the fact that he did not give "good face" to Puerto Ricans seeking to affirm their worth as a group. With her book on Piñero, Professor Negrón-Muntaner will thus not only remedy this oversight, but also add to her important body of commentary on the politics of Puerto Rican visibility, identity, and cultural impact. ■

Howard, continued from page 1 years to expanding the University's resources for and about women. In addition, Professor Howard has also chaired Brown University's Trustee Committee on the Status of Women, which undertook a major study of the impact on students and faculty of the decision to merge Pembroke and Brown into a fully coeducational institution. She was recently appointed to Brown's Presidential Advisory Council on Diversity, as well.

As Vice-Provost, Professor Howard will focus on hiring. "This is not supposed to be another affirmative action compliance position," she explains. "The emphasis is on initiatives: we want to jumpstart the University's attempts to increase the number of tenured women and other under-represented groups, such as African-American, Asian, and Hispanic scholars." Her role is both to support departments and schools in their efforts to hire faculty from under-represented groups and to establish the structures that will enable such scholars to advance in their careers at Columbia.

This year, Professor Howard is concentrating her energies on Arts and Sciences, but she soon plans to extend her efforts to the professional schools as well. She looks forward to working with individual deans to design strategies suited to the particular circumstances of each school. "Different parts of the university require strategies tailored specifically to their circumstances. For example, in some areas there are very few minority or female candidates in the pipeline. Developing the pipeline therefore becomes an important part of the work to be done. In other cases, there are women and minorities in the applicant pools, but for some reason they are not being hired. In those situations, we have to figure out why and how things can change."

Although most initiatives are still in the planning stages, Professor Howard has a number of possibilities in mind. An initiative on race, gender and the sciences, chaired by Professor Norma Graham, will, among other things, consider ways to increase the number of minority graduate students in science programs at Columbia in order

to eventually increase those available for hiring into assistant professor positions. Howard's diversity advisory committee is also considering ways to make search and hiring processes at Columbia yield better diversity outcomes. "Too many searches are fairly passive affairs. Ads get placed and then search committees sort through the applications, picking out candidates largely

on the basis of the graduate program from which they have emerged. There is often very little active seeking out of candidates from under-represented groups or attempts to write job descriptions that will signal an interest in candidates from such groups. Other schools have figured out ways to make searches more diversity proactive, and we should learn from them."

Howard spoke very positively of the support she has been getting for her work from the Provost and from Nicholas Dirks, the Vice President for Arts and Sciences. Dirks has, for example, encouraged the Academic Review Committee in Arts and Sciences to examine the diversity profile of departments as one of the factors to be considered in making recommendations about a unit's future development and growth. Each department is reviewed by the ARC approximately every seven years, and the reviews carry a great deal of weight in determining the allocation of university resources. "The decision making bodies are already in place," Professor Howard says. "We simply need for them to take on diversity issues in a more direct way than they have in the past."

Professor Howard also suggests providing incentives to encourage departments to actively recruit under-represented faculty, particularly in the early stages of their careers when they have their most productive years ahead of them. Her committee is thinking about ways to structure such incentives, perhaps by encouraging the

"The emphasis is on initiatives: we want to jumpstart the University's attempts to increase the number of tenured women and other under-represented groups, such as African-American, Asian, and Hispanic scholars."

hiring of a cluster of faculty from under-represented groups who would form a cohort as they move through the institution. As an example of an innovative program already in place, she points to the \$4,000,000 NSF Institutional Transformation Grant obtained last spring by Professor Robin Bell of the Lamont Doherty Observatory. It is aimed at recruiting, retaining, and advancing the careers of women, including minority women, in the earth sciences at Columbia and has provisions for innovative mentoring, networking, and leadership training programs.

Some critics, Professor Howard notes, suggest that such measures will lead to a lowering of standards and that hiring practices need to be "truly color-blind." "But the problem is not the quality of the pool of under-represented faculty," she emphasizes. "These are truly outstanding women and minority candidates." The issue, rather, is the transformation of an institutional culture in which traditional hiring practices produce a faculty more white and male than is warranted, given the range of talent available. At Columbia, female tenure-eligible faculty have for a decade remained at only about 30% despite women forming a much larger percentage of hiring pools. And things are even worse with regard to minority faculty. There are a very small number of African-American and Hispanic scholars among the Arts and Sciences faculty, and no Native Americans. New initiatives are crucial in order to redress this imbalance, Howard

stresses, because universities depend upon diversity in order to maintain their intellectual vitality. "Excellence and diversity go hand-in-hand."

With this in mind, Professor Howard will also work to strengthen and support the university's curriculum. Area studies programs and interdisciplinary research institutes including IRWaG, the Institute for Research in African American Studies, the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, and the Center for Comparative Literature and Society have been at the forefront of advancing scholarship on race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and religious difference at the University. Professor Howard hails these achievements, and she says that one key aspect of her new position is to advocate for these centers and institutes. "They need more space, more faculty, and more research arms connected with them." At the same time, however, she also notes that they have been asked to carry a disproportionate burden of the curricular load in terms of the University's commitment to diversity, and that it is crucial that this responsibility extend to traditional departments as well.

Meanwhile, Professor Howard is finishing her next book project, entitled *Theater of a City*, which she largely wrote last year as an Avery Distinguished Fellow at the Huntington Library in Pasadena, California. *Theater of a City* examines the relationship between emerging Early Modern concepts of geography and space and the development of Tudor-Stuart stage genres. Professor Howard's earlier books include *Shakespeare's Art of Orchestration* (1984); *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, edited with Marion O'Connor (1987); *The Stage and Struggle in Early Modern England* (1994); with Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (1997); *Marxist Shakespeares*, edited with Scott Shershow (2000); and four generically organized *Companions to Shakespeare*, edited with Richard Dutton (2001). She is also co-editor of

The Norton Shakespeare (1997), General Editor of the *Bedford Contextual Editions of Shakespeare*, and she is a member of the editorial boards of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Studies*, and *Renaissance Drama*. In 1999-2000, Professor Howard served as President of the Shakespeare Association of America.

With *Theater of a City* in its final stages of revision, Professor Howard looks forward to writing essays for the next couple of years before taking on her next book-length project. And she is excited about her new mandate as Vice-Provost, which enables her to help redress imbalances within the Columbia faculty and administration. Such initiatives are crucial, she

maintains, to retaining Columbia's competitive standing among peer institutions. She notes, for example, that women administrators have risen to top positions at other universities: Shirley Tilghman has been recently appointed President of Princeton, while at Brown, President Ruth Simmons has been making huge strides in diversifying Brown's faculty, student body, and administration. Without a commitment to hiring and promoting women and under-represented groups, Columbia risks falling behind other universities in promoting intellectual equity and excellence. "There's a lot of goodwill here at Columbia," Professor Howard concludes. "It just needs to be translated into forward movement." ■

Writing a Feminist's Life: Academics and Their Memoirs

A Conference in Honor of Carolyn G. Heilbrun

February 11, 2005, 301 Philosophy Hall

Why have so many late 20th century academic feminists turned to the memoir? In what ways is the genre of the memoir suited for feminist appropriation? What is its relationship to feminism's politics of the personal? Does the memoir offer feminists another way of writing theory or feminist historiography? What narratives of feminism do these memoirs tell? How do differences in generation, race, class, ethnicity, or sexuality inflect feminist memoirs?

Eight feminists will read from their memoirs and comment on the relationship between the writing of memoir and the writing of feminist criticism and theory.

LEILA AHMED (Harvard Divinity School)

A Border Passage: from Cairo to America—A Woman's Journey

CHARLOTTE PIERCE BAKER (Duke University)

Surviving the Silence

MARY ANN CAWS (CUNY Graduate Center)

To the Boathouse

SHIRLEY GEOK-LIN LIM (University of California, Santa Barbara)

Among the White Moon Faces: An Asian-American Memoir of Homelands

NANCY K. MILLER (CUNY Graduate Center)

But Enough About Me: Why We Read Other People's Lives and *Out of Breath*

DEBORAH MCDOWELL (University of Virginia)

Leaving Pipe Shop: Memories of Kin

EVE KOSOFSKY SEDGWICK (CUNY Graduate Center)

A Dialogue on Love

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK (Columbia University)

If Only...

Spring 2005 Undergraduate Courses

| | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|--------|---------------|---|-------------|
| V3111 | Feminist Texts I | 4 pts. | C. Cynn | R | 11a–12:50p |
| V3112 | Feminist Texts II | 4pts. | T. Sheffield | T | 2:10–4:00p |
| BC3117 | Women and Film | 3 pts. | P. Romeu | M | 6:10–8:30p |
| BC3132 | Gendered Controversies | 4pts. | M. Weisgrau | R | 2:10–4:00p |
| BC3134 | Unheard Voices: African Women | 4 pts. | C. Ogunyemi | M | 4:10–6:00p |
| V3312 | Theorizing Women’s Activism | 4 pts. | J. Jakobsen | W | 2:10–4:00p |
| V3313 | Feminist Inquiry | 4 pts. | K. Gravdal | W | 4:10–6:00p |
| V3521 | Senior Seminar I | 4 pts. | L. Abu-Lughod | M | 12:10–2:00p |
| V3522 | Senior Seminar II | 4 pts. | T. Szell | W | 4:10–6:00p |
| V3590 | Theorizing Civic Engagement | 4 pts. | M. Weisgrau | T | 2:10–4:00p |

Spring 2005 Graduate Courses

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|--------------|---|--------|------------------------------|---|------------|
| G4000 | Genealogies of Feminism: Transnational Locations and Women’s Rights | 3 pts. | L. Abu-Lughod and D. Siddiqi | T | 4:10–6:00p |
| | G4000 is a seminar open to selected graduate students only. | | | | |
| W4300 | Advanced Topics in Women and Gender Studies | | | | |
| | W4300 is a seminar directed toward students with previous work in feminist scholarship <i>but open to all majors.</i> | | | | |
| | Section 005—Gender and War | 4 pts. | E. Castelli | M | 2:10–4:00p |
| | Section 008—Gender, HIV, and AIDS | 4 pts. | A. Swarr | T | 11a–12:50p |
| W4320 | Thinking Sexuality: Queer Theories and Histories | 4 pts. | A. Chasin | M | 2:10–4:00p |

Feminist News

**institute for research on
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