From the Director

Over the last twenty years, IRWaG has been strongly committed to encouraging feminist scholars to venture more deeply into an analysis of the global dynamics of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity. Within the confines of the university, however, the fields of gender studies, critical studies of race, ethnicity and globalization have worked in relative isolation.

In response, IRWaG has taken the lead in a historic partnership with the Institute for Research in African-American Studies, the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, and the Barnard Center for Research on Women to found the Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference, an advanced studies center promoting cutting-edge interdisciplinary scholarship on the global dimensions of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity. CCASD will energize the work of scholars in various disciplines across the university, sometimes by disrupting their core assumptions about the work they do, but more often by offering new methodological and theoretical tools for exploring the local and global dimensions of inequality and social difference.

Q&A with Emma Kaufman, Marshall Winner

Emma Kaufman recently received the Marshall Scholarship, a prestigious award that gives students the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom at any university of their choice. A double major in philosophy and women’s and gender studies, Kaufman is interested in the relationship between gender, disenfranchisement and criminal justice. Earlier this year, she received a Guggenheim Fellowship for research in criminal justice and has since worked as a fellow at the Correctional Association of New York, where she interviews inmates, monitors prison conditions and advocates for reform in prisons across the state. As a Marshall scholar, Kaufman, 21, will pursue a master’s degree in criminology at the University of Oxford. Feminist News recently asked Emma to explain her evolution as a student and scholar.

1. How have your academic interests and pursuits evolved since you began your studies at Columbia? How did you initially become interested in prison reform and criminology?

I came to Columbia interested in politics and committed to feminist advocacy, but it wasn’t until I took Professor Christia Mercer’s “Philosophy and Feminism” course during my freshman year that I realized I could—and wanted to—think critically and academically about feminist questions. Over the course of my first two years I migrated from history and political science to gender studies and philosophy; I declared my double major at the end of my second year.

Criminology and criminal justice came into the picture by way of “Theorizing Women’s Activism,” a course with Janet Jakobsen for which I worked as an intern in the Juvenile Defense Division of the Legal Aid Society. That internship was the first time I’d thought about foster care, incarceration, and probation as feminist issues. I went on from there to an

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Emma Kaufman

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Spring 2008 Courses
Who Has the Right to Speak?
Elizabeth Jelin on Kinship and Legitimacy after Argentina’s Dirty War

By Katie Gradowski

For anyone working on human rights in the Southern Cone, Elizabeth Jelin’s work is likely already familiar. For over 20 years, Jelin has dedicated herself to issues of gender, memory, and human rights in Argentina. Her work has been instrumental in drawing attention to the status of survivors in Argentina in the aftermath of the Dirty War, blending issues of labor, migration, and feminism, while at the same time raising important questions of hierarchy and legitimacy of victims’ rights.

Jelin addressed this topic at length in a lecture “Whose Voice is Legitimate Enough?” co-sponsored by IRWaG and the University Seminar on Cultural Memory on the anniversary of 9/11. Taking a controversial stance, Jelin criticized the familialism of Argentina’s memory culture, including the strategies of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a well-known activist group in Argentina that has been instrumental in accounting for people who were “disappeared” during the brutal military repression of the 1970’s and early 1980’s.

The Madres, along with a parallel organization, the Abuelas (“Grandmothers”), have been highly influential in bringing attention to political disappearances and human rights violations, calling for justice and initiating DNA tests for illegally adopted babies. Their success, Jelin pointed out, has been premised on an idealized image of the family—specifically, the image of the mother attempting to be reunited with her lost child, which emphasizes the corresponding importance of kinship ties.

Without diminishing the accomplishments of the group, Jelin criticized this emphasis on kinship in Argentina’s memory discourse, arguing that it depoliticizes memory and grants excessive importance to the private sphere. By linking the voice given to the victim to kinship ties, she pointed out, the Madres displace more productive forms of citizenship with an exclusive emphasis on blood relations. Jelin argued that this inhibits a broader collective consciousness, making it difficult to integrate the memory of the Dirty War within a larger conception of Argentine citizenship. Instead of pointing to a collective loss, she noted, groups like the Madres create a hierarchy of victimhood, whereby those who lost family, who suffered directly, and who rebelled against the repressive regime as family members are held in higher esteem than those who did not.

Elizabeth Jelin is a sociologist and researcher at CONICET (National Council for Science and Technology) at the University of Buenos Aires. She is the director of the program “Collective Memory,” a collaborative effort to coordinate scholarship on political repression in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Her most recent book in English is State Repression and the Labors of Memory, published in 2003.

Elizabeth Jelin

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.
Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock’s Countermemorials

By Katie Gradowski

For artists Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock, cultural memory is literally an issue of contested space. Over the past 20 years, the pair has reconceptualized the memorial landscape of Germany, revamping urban sculpture in Berlin, Munich, and other cities to challenge the public’s relationship to the Holocaust. Their memorials are provocative and political, and are meant to openly ignite debate. Stih and Schnock returned to Columbia on September 27 to discuss their work, presenting past projects as well as some surprising new ideas.

Among the more well-known projects discussed was the pair’s 1994 memorial signs in the Bavarian Quarter of Berlin, which commemorated the Jewish community that had been driven out during World War II. To memorialize the persecution of the Jews, Stih and Schnock erected 80 street signs paraphrasing Nazi social laws and regulations, updating the text of anti-Jewish edicts and placing them in prominent places throughout the neighborhood. Outside a supermarket, they placed a sign saying “Jews are not allowed to buy bread after 4 o’clock.” Near the Bayerischer Platz, a sign read “Jews may no longer keep pets. 31 March, 1935.” The project generated immediate controversy, with members of the local community confusing the signs for current anti-Jewish propaganda and local police officers confiscating parts of the exhibition.

Stih views the controversy—and the ensuing media outcry—as a positive thing. “You must start a public project with a scandal!” she said, noting that the point of the memorial itself is to spark debate. Subsequent projects have dealt with hot-button political topics, including a campaign against art collector Frederick Flick and a fascinating project on the siege of Sarajevo. In the latter case, Stih and Schnock culled obituaries from Sarajevo victims in 1995 and republished them in contemporary German newspapers, effectively turning the paper itself into public memorial.

The pair describes their research method as a process of active experimentation: not merely planned on paper, but intimately linked with the dimensions of public space. “It’s first psychological, we go into a place and look around,” Stih said. “Then we try to figure out the aesthetics—how we would place things in there, because there is always a logic to it.” Their exhibits are expansive, often involving pedestrian traffic, public transportation, or other physical movement within a public zone.

Stih contrasts this with the fixed framework of traditional museum exhibitions. “When you go inside museums, everything is more calmed down, everything has a certain structure and is well organized,” she said. “Our work is to place it in society...an ideal forum for public and social sculpture.” In this respect, Stih and Schnock are firmly aligned with the countermemorial movement of the 1980s and 1990s—a movement among artists and sculptors to contest the traditional definitions of memorialization, to encourage social intervention, and to break down the boundaries between art and public life.

Some audience members raised concerns over memory fatigue among the younger generation in Germany (which Stih fervently insisted was not a problem among any students she knew). Overall, however, the response was very positive. “They are obviously interested in critical theory, and integrated it at the level of real life,” remarked Ling Tiang, who works at the Neue Galerie in New York. “There are so few artists who care about catering to a wider audience. They are putting it out there for anyone to see, to have reactions to.”

Their work is based on disagreement,” Stih declared. “It’s about objects that lose their aesthetic innocence. You bring them back into this relationship with the knowledge of history, what it is, and the object itself, where it comes from.”

Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock are currently working on a project “Life-Boat,” a show on boats and utopia that will explore our ongoing obsession with the sea. This talk is part of the “Engendering Archives” project of the new Center for the Critical Analysis of Social Difference. It was co-sponsored by the University Seminar on Cultural Memory, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, Deutsches Haus, Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, and the Departments of Art History (Barnard and Columbia), English and Comparative Literature and Architecture.
As the lecture hall filled with students, professors and visitors, Emma McGlennan could barely contain her excitement.

“Adrienne Rich has been one of my favorite poets for a long time,” said McGlennan, a Columbia College freshman. “She’s a tremendous lyrical poet, and her activist spirit is amazing.”

Indeed, McGlennan’s sentiments reflected those of many attending an October 1 reading by Rich of her new book of poems Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth.

Through her poetry, Adrienne Rich “tries to provide a blow-by-blow of what it’s like for a contemporary woman to be fully conscious in the present,” said poet Hugh Seidman, as he introduced the author at the reading, which was sponsored by IRWaG, the Heyman Center for the Humanities, Columbia University Libraries, and the Barnard Center for Research on Women.

Rich, Seidman explained, is at once a prolific, decorated poet, and a committed social and political activist. She has received a litany of awards since her first book, A Change of World, was published in 1951—the Yale Younger Poets Prize, the National Book Award, the Pulitzer Prize, and the National Poetry Association Award for Distinguished Service to the Art of Poetry, to name just a few—but she is not fueled by recognition.

“For more than 50 years I have been writing, tearing up, revising poems, studying poets from every culture and century available to me,” Rich wrote in the Los Angeles Times in March 2001. “I have been a poet of the oppositional imagination, meaning that I don’t think my only argument is with myself. My work is for people who want to imagine and claim wider horizons and carry on about them into the night, rather than rehearse the landlocked details of personal quandaries or the price for which the house next door just sold.”

At the October 1 reading, Rich read in her forceful, melodic tone to a packed lecture hall. Some in the audience closed their eyes to envision her words: “I saw you walking barefoot…naked in your dark hair…” Some sat on the edge of their chairs, chuckling at her sardonic humor, savoring meticulously chosen words about activism, artistry, and politics.

Reading one of her recent works, “Collaborations,” she described impressions of an American military hospital in Germany, where wounded soldiers are sent from Iraq: “You come back from war with the body you have…”

Born in Baltimore in 1929, Rich cites a range of political influences, including a socialist Radcliffe professor, the Civil Rights movement, the anti-war movement, the women’s movement and the lesbian and gay rights movement. In the 1980s, at the height of Reaganomics, she turned to the writings of Karl Marx.

Art and literature, she explained to Michael Klein of the Boston Phoenix in 1999, “have given so many people the relief of feeling connected—pulled us out of isolation. It has let us know that somebody else breathed and dreamed and had sex and loved and raged and knew loneliness the way we do.”

In July, 1997, Rich famously turned down the National Medal of the Arts. It was, she explained, an overtly political act.

“Art—in my own case, the art of poetry—means nothing if it simply decorates the dinner table of power which holds it hostage,” Rich wrote in a July 3 letter to the National Endowment for the Arts. “The radical disparities of wealth and power in America are widening at a devastating rate. A President cannot meaningfully honor certain token artists while the people at large are so dishonored.”

Rich’s visit prompted a heated debate among Columbia students. Many older participants responded to the “shrinkage of creativity” in the feminist movement, arguing that the disavowal of radical politics has prevented contemporary feminist poets from pursuing meaningful social change. Others pointed to the institutionalization of feminism in the university. “It’s become an academic movement,” said one student. “A theory that’s not on the street so much.”

Rich brushed off these criticisms, rejecting the notion that feminist poetry has gone awry since the hey-day of the 1970’s and 1980’s. “This country consists of little communities,” she stressed. “Within those communities there are poetry readings, poetry workshops.” As Rich sees it, these pockets are way of “responding to the stereotype that poetry ‘should not be political.’”

“The kinds of space a political movement can create [to foster] creative thinking of all kinds is an incredibly important space,” she said. She emphasized, though, that political activism is still alive and well. “But,” she added, “you have to go looking.”
The Past and Future of Women’s Friendship: “The Female World of Love and Ritual”
Feminist Classics

By Jessica Adler

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg’s 1975 essay, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” began with a declaration: “The female friendship of the nineteenth century, the long-lived, intimate, loving friendship between two women, is an excellent example of the type of historical phenomena which most historians know something about, which few have thought much about, and which virtually no one has written about.” Published in the inaugural issue of the journal, Signs, the essay suggested “an alternative approach to female friendships—one which would view them within a cultural and social setting rather than from an exclusively individual psychosexual perspective.”

Smith-Rosenberg’s piece went on to become “one of the most important feminist essays ever written,” according to Sharon Marcus, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia.

Marcus was one of three scholars to join Smith-Rosenberg for a roundtable discussion on “The Past and Future of Women’s Friendship: ‘The Female World of Love and Ritual.’” The November 26th event was part of the Feminist Classics series, which revisits scholarly, artistic and activist works that have shaped second wave feminism, and is sponsored by the Institute for Research on Women and Gender and the Barnard Center for Research on Women.

Farah Jasmine Griffin, Columbia Professor of English and Comparative Literature and African-American Studies, and Ivy Schweitzer, Professor of English and Chair of Women’s and Gender Studies at Dartmouth College were fellow panel members. Marcus, Griffin, and Schweitzer discussed the general and personal influence of Smith-Rosenberg’s work, and their own scholarly work on women’s friendship.

“Carroll’s essay gave me the foundation for contextualizing friendship…and the significance of women’s personal lives,” said Griffin, who noted some scholarly parallels between Smith-Rosenberg’s work and her own Beloved Sisters and Loving Friends: Letters from Rebecca Primus of Royal Oak, Maryland, and Addie Brown of Hartford, Connecticut, 1854-1868 published in 1999. During the mid-1980s, Griffin said, there was a “sense that we’d never know certain things about African-American women’s public lives…this was especially the case for non-elite black women.” It has since become clear that archival sources, such as letters and biographies, can be uncovered and could yield an invaluable archive for scholars. “Black women’s history has burgeoned” since the 1970s, said Griffin. Smith-Rosenberg’s early essay forwarded a notion reinforced by scholarship in this area and, more specifically, Griffin’s own work: historical characters’ personal lives are integral to gaining an understanding of their public personas, and of the social restrictions of race, class and gender to which they were subject.

Ivy Schweitzer called Smith-Rosenberg’s essay “fertile.” It was the “first historical scholarship to take women’s friendship seriously…and analyze it in a systematic and structural way.” Instead of taking “the psychoanalytic approach,” Smith-Rosenberg saw women’s friendship in a social context.

Schweitzer followed a similar approach in her 2006 book Perfecting Friendship: Politics and Affiliation in Early American Literature, which shows how early American women and minorities appropriated and redefined the philosophical and political discourses of “perfect friendship” emerging from Plato, Aristotle and Montaigne, adapting them to the challenges of interracial relationships that shape American history.

“Like all classics,” Smith-Rosenberg’s essay “seems to be part of the mental landscape,” said Sharon Marcus. When Marcus’ students discuss the piece, she said, they have “an electrified, alive look,” and feel as though “they’ve been given a vocabulary for their lives.” Students often extract different points from the essay, Marcus added, noting that some see it as a testament to “the golden age of lesbian love,” while others believe it to be a commentary on the acceptability of physical intimacy shared by friends in the nineteenth century. In her 2007 book Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England, Marcus explores a range of different types of relationships in women’s lives, from friendship, to sensual love, to sexual love and marriage. These multiple manifestations of friendship among women in Victorian England expose its centrality to female identity and the ideal of companionate love it helped realize for women and for men.

“Yes, that is the question,” Smith-Rosenberg responded to the questions posed to her during the presentations. “Did they or didn’t they?” Explaining that she wanted to undo the dichotomies of homo/hetero, deviant/normal, genital/platonic that had shaped understandings of female relationships, Smith-Rosenberg turned to another topic she left out of her original essay: race. Her current work examines the 1820 novel, Zelica: The Creole, which features two main female characters who “exemplify same sex love and a noble passion for liberty.” In the book, “women represent one virtuous republic,” Smith-Rosenberg said, adding that she is attempting to assess why, as early as 1820, “females were used in this way.” As she pursues this project, Smith-Rosenberg said she remains influenced by the same principle that guided her 1975 essay: “It’s not enough to note that women have loved women in the past…we must understand female love in connection with its time and culture.”
‘Juanita/Svetlana/Geeta’ is Crying: Melodrama, Human Rights, and Anti-Trafficking Interventions
Feminist Interventions: Carole Vance

By Jessica Adler

The 1996 Emmy Award-winning documentary, The Selling of Innocents has a flawless narrative arc. The opening shot reveals hands typing ominously on a computer keyboard as the narrator reports that “thousands of men” are, “at this moment” searching for prostitutes online. From there, viewers are ushered into the streets and brothels of Mumbai; they watch interviews of teenage girls speaking of being sold into prostitution by family members or strangers; they see a group of men break into a run-down brothel to help three young women escape. In the end, viewers can find hope as they witness a rally of women in the hills of Nepal. In order to stop the burgeoning sex trade, a speaker says, “We need a revolution in every household.”

Carole Vance, Associate Clinical Professor of Sociomedical Sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health, challenges the representations and narrative form structuring The Selling of Innocents. Vance’s September 27th talk, “‘Juanita/Svetlana/Geeta’ is Crying: Melodrama, Human Rights, and Anti-Trafficking Interventions,” called into question the value of what she calls “melo-mentary” — a mixture of melodrama and documentary — as a suitable medium for explaining the complex factors underlying human trafficking. Such films narrow the definition of human trafficking strictly to sex trafficking, give the impression that prostitution is forced upon female victims of trafficking, and ignore the wider global economic system that spurs rights abuses, Vance said. Her work, elements of which challenge the viewpoints of some feminist and evangelical groups who unconditionally see prostitution as a violation against women, discounts the validity of policy initiatives shaped around an ideal of feminine innocence. Instead, Vance proposes a so-called rights-based approach to combat the complicated forces underlying human trafficking.

“It’s a breath of fresh air to have somebody come at the issue in a different way and dissect what is politically troubling about these representations,” said Elizabeth Bernstein, Assistant Professor of Women’s Studies and Sociology at Barnard College, of Vance’s research. “Hollywood is able to meld stock narrative tropes with the complex social realities that constitute trafficking. But, to tell the story in a different way is harder and more politically challenging; it implicates nice-sounding political institutions, like the U.S. state, capitalism, and all kinds of things that many in power prefer not to question.”

Documentaries like The Selling of Innocents aim to provide eyewitness accounts of sex trafficking, Vance said, and use Victorian-era melodramatic strategies to convey images of women as innocent, in order to gain viewers’ empathy. In The Selling of Innocents, she noted, the men depicted as rescuers are members of a Hindu fundamentalist nationalist party, and advocate one solution: to remove women from brothels in order to return them to their family homes. Such an approach disregards the fact that many women prostitutes choose to leave home due to a host of factors, Vance said, including abuse or a lack of employment opportunities.

“Melodrama as a form has…no place for empowering victims,” she argued.

U.S. policies, echoing melodramatic strategies, define sex trafficking according to the notion that all female prostitutes are exploited victims, Vance said. Furthermore, she added, New York State laws penalize sex trafficking more extensively than other types of trafficking, de-legitimizing the human rights of other groups at risk of trafficking, such as factory, domestic and agricultural workers.

By making women unconditional victims, and a select group of traffickers criminals, films like the The Selling of Innocents avoid taking on the task of examining root causes of sex trafficking by, for example, providing statistics and information on World Bank policies, Vance said. Such films are shown in training programs of NGOs and government agencies, in spite of the fact that they take an over-simplified view of globalization. Viewers are shown harrowing images of poverty in a brothel — peeling paint, an exposed light bulb hanging from a rotting ceiling — without being presented with the similar conditions prevalent in homes of women who are not prostitutes, she noted: “There is no critique of the larger economic world.”

In the end, The Selling of Innocents “exempts western viewers while condemning individual traffickers,” Vance said. In spite of the fact that the film may increase overall awareness of trafficking, its “analytic frame distorts our understanding of the issue.”

Vance advocates interventions that use a four-pronged rights-based framework, which includes research and documentation of a diversity of experiences; invites the participation and reports of people affected by the problem; implements change that prevents the problem from recurring; and is generally rights-respecting.

The first event of IRWaG’s Feminist Interventions: Works in Progress series, which features public lectures by Columbia University faculty, Vance’s talk drew a range of students and professors, including Christen Dobson, a first-year Masters candidate at the School of International and Public Affairs.

“I agree completely with Vance’s emphasis on the need to address the root causes of human trafficking and the importance of utilizing a rights-enhancing approach and framework,” Dobson said. She related Vance’s discussion to her own work as a Special Project Coordinator with the Project to End Human Trafficking in Pittsburgh, and as an intern with the Safe Horizon Anti-Trafficking Program in New York City. “Human trafficking cannot simply be viewed as a ‘rescue’ mission; doing so often serves to exploit those whose rights have been violated.”

Carole Vance
Lillian Hellman’s Crusade: Civil Liberties in an Age of Lies

By Jessica Adler

When Alice Kessler-Harris talks about Lillian Hellman, her heart sinks to her toes. “Everyone has an opinion about Lillian Hellman” says Kessler-Harris, who is the R. Gordon Hoxie Professor of History and an appointed faculty member of the IRWaG. Hellman provokes strong feelings of either admiration or dislike; although the writer’s friends were loyal and loving, her enemies viewed her as representative of “everything a woman should not be,” Kessler-Harris said. While researching and writing a book about Hellman, Kessler-Harris’ challenge has been to resist “falling to one side of the divide…to think of her as an individual whose life…speaks to some of the things we understand about 20th century society.”

At the October 25th Barbara Aronstein Black Lecture on Women and Law at Columbia Law School, Kessler-Harris presented an excerpt of her work on Hellman. She noted that since the 1970s, Hellman has been widely thought of as a “liar.” The accusations of hypocrisy originated in the 1970s, Kessler-Harris said, posing her question of focus: “What did it mean to accuse Hellman of lying in an age when lies were among the most potent political weapons?” Hellman, in fact, “neither lied nor acted hypocritically,” Kessler-Harris argued. But, as a celebrity who was “not a normal woman,” Hellman provided a “target” for critics. An attack on Hellman, Kessler-Harris said, served a larger purpose for a rising neo-conservative movement: “Depriving liberalism of its credibility.”

Hellman, born in 1905 in New Orleans, was raised on the fringes of Southern society before moving permanently to New York City and reaching adulthood with the flapper generation. After working in a publishing house in the 1920s, she began writing plays and movies, gaining enough celebrity status to be called in 1952 to testify, like other Hollywood figures, in front of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC) about her political leanings. She continued to write in the 1950s and 1960s, becoming what Kessler-Harris referred to as “a genuine celebrity.” She earned honorary degrees from various universities, and became friends with powerful people, including Norman Mailer and Norman Podhoretz.

“All of this came to a screeching halt,” said Kessler-Harris, when, in 1976, Hellman published “Scoundrel Time,” the third of three memoirs. Originally greeted with positive reviews, the book described Hellman’s experience with HUAC. It detailed her frustration with those who had not shown the same resolve as she had in refusing to answer questions about anyone but herself, and declaring to the HUAC chairman: “I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year’s fashions.”

Soon enough, “Scoundrel Time” went from the best-seller list to being lambasted by conservative critics, such as William F. Buckley, Kessler-Harris said. Hellman was a self-aggrandizing celebrity, who had been insufficiently apologetic about her 1930s Stalinist loyalties, the critics said. (She had, in fact, formally expressed regret for her pro-Stalinist leanings, Kessler-Harris pointed out, but conservative commentators were unsatisfied with her apology, which, they pointed out, consisted of only 27 words.) In the end, the critics’ unrelenting accusations, which painted Hellman as a self-important hypocrite, “stuck.”

The fact that “Lillian Hellman doesn’t deserve this reputation,” Kessler-Harris argued, is illustrated by her involvement with the Committee for Public Justice (CPJ). Hellman was instrumental in gaining the support of actors, lawyers, union representatives, editors, and others that made possible the 1970 launching of the watchdog non-profit organization. CPJ would not only eventually help to make the Nixon tapes public, but would also sponsor conferences and publications on topics ranging from conditions at a women’s detention house to FBI and CIA corruption and secrecy.

In fact, an extensive FBI file existed on the CPJ, Kessler-Harris noted, the records of which demonstrate FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover’s determination to discredit the organization; Hoover personally requested that newspaper editors represent the CPJ negatively, and asked congressmen to speak ill of it on the floor of Congress.

“Soon, CPJ was everywhere,” said Kessler-Harris, and it could not have survived without Hellman, who attached her name to CPJ benefits and attracted her powerful friends to its ranks. CPJ “moved civil liberties to the head of the agenda,” Kessler-Harris said. “Whatever Lillian Hellman was, she clearly wasn’t a hypocrite.”

Although Hellman might have lied at points about her personal life—as virtually everyone does—she did not lie about her “larger values,” Kessler-Harris argued. Still, Hellman became a target for a burgeoning neo-conservative movement, the subject of a “character assassination for political purposes.” Accepting the terms of that attack, and dismissing Hellman, Kessler-Harris maintained, “dismisses a generation.”
New Voices at Columbia: Introducing Ellie Hisama

By Sonali Pahwa

The Department of Music and IRWaG welcomed Professor of Music Ellie Hisama to Columbia in the spring of 2006. Professor Hisama comes uptown from her previous appointment at the Graduate Center, City University of New York and Brooklyn College. She is a music theorist and a historical musicologist, and has the distinction of being the second woman tenured in Columbia’s Music Department.

Professor Hisama received her PhD in music theory from the CUNY Graduate Center after receiving two bachelor’s degrees, one in English from the University of Chicago and the other in violin performance from Queens College. Her doctoral research focused on music by twentieth-century American women composers, and helped to develop feminist music theory. In contrast to feminist musicology, which focuses on the history of women in music and issues of gender and sexuality, music theory tends to focus more on close readings of the music itself. In her own dual focus on music theory and musicology, Hisama affirmed she was “interested in bringing together discussions of music and the contexts in which it operates.”

The elisions in classical canons of Western music are of particular interest for Hisama. She remembers hearing Ruth Crawford’s String Quartet 1931 in a music theory class, and realizing it was the first work by a woman composer she had ever heard. “The presence of a woman showed me all the absences,” she recalls. Her subsequent research developed in two directions, focusing on music written by women in Western classical traditions, and on female popular musicians as well as the representation of women in such music. The representation of Asian women in pop songs such as David Bowie’s China Girl was the subject of an early article. Hisama expanded on this issue in a book chapter titled “John Zorn and the Postmodern Condition,” in which she analyzed the representation of Asians in that composer’s music and the sado-masochistic images which he used in the liner notes of CDs such as Torture Garden as well as in his performances.

“He is an Asiaphile—the most extreme example I can think of,” said Hisama. She and other Asian-Americans were disturbed by the violently sexualized images of Asians which Zorn used. Electric violinist Jason Kao Hwang declined to perform after Zorn at the Knitting Factory because these images were displayed on stage. The Asian-American artists’ group Godzilla West based in the Bay Area began a media campaign asking Zorn to comment on these aspects of his work and he refused; he eventually lost gigs in San Francisco and New York because of the protest. This controversy brought forth issues of gender and racial politics that tend to be overlooked in discussions of classical music.

Hisama noted that even though many women are now composing contemporary classical music, “they still do not appear frequently on concert programs.” Most academic music departments have few women faculty; women make up less than a quarter of music theorists, and she speculated that this imbalance is because of the traditionally formalist and male-dominated nature of the field. There are also few women composers teaching in music departments; women are better represented in musicology, ethnomusicology, music education, and performance. To their credit, some institutions are trying to change the traditional distribution of faculty, and Hisama finds Columbia’s diversity initiative led by Vice Provost Jean Howard and Geraldine Downey a particularly laudable effort at “focusing on racial and gender balance throughout the university.”

Hisama’s teaching at Columbia has included a graduate seminar on the pioneering composer Ruth Crawford, whose music and life she analyzed in her book Gendering Musical Modernism. “She was a tremendously gifted composer, and is the twentieth-century female composer who is most often acknowledged as important and influential,” Hisama said. “Her ultra-modernist musical style was well before its time. But she is often also regarded as someone who followed a somewhat traditional path in her family life. She married her composition teacher, the musicologist Charles Seeger, and stopped composing for twenty years while raising four children. In this time she did important work in transcribing and arranging . . .”

Ellie Hisama

“The presence of a woman (composer) showed me all the absences…”

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traditional American music.” Her compositions attracted the interest of contemporary composers including Elliott Carter, Pauline Oliveros, and Christian Wolff, and her song arrangements for children are widely influential, performed by her stepson Pete Seeger and children Peggy and Mike Seeger, and by Bruce Springsteen. “She has had an enormous impact on musical life in ways that people often don’t realize,” Hisama affirmed.

While Hisama’s innovative research has explored absences in traditional music history, she now teaches the classics-centered course Music Humanities. She interprets the core course as a way of getting students to “explore and expand their musical repertoires”: “My own work has not focused on ‘masterpieces,’” Hisama notes, and she resists using the standard textbooks for teaching European musical history, citing the unreconstructed quality of textbooks that tell the reader to “ignore, if you can, the seductive tones of the voice” in an aria by the composer Barbara Strozzi. She organizes the course through readings and listening assignments, presenting a number of lesser-known works and considering the role of women composers and musicians including Hildegard, Strozzi, Clara Wieck Schumann, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, and Oliveros. Hisama also brings in popular music in order to demonstrate fundamentals of music and issues of gender and sexuality.

“Teaching Music Humanities has really been a learning experience for me,” Hisama says, “particularly the challenge of discussing music with students who are not trained in music. It’s exciting for me to have them listening attentively and sharing their observations.” Being in New York City allows for further opportunities to expand students’ musical horizons. Hisama took a group of Hum students to dinner at the Faculty House followed by visit to Roulette, a downtown performance space, for an evening of avant-jazz performed by pianist Marilyn Crispell and saxophonist Lotte Anker.

In fall 2007, Hisama brought into the repertoire of Columbia’s Music Department a popular undergraduate course on hip-hop. It examined MCing, DJing, graffiti, and breakdancing from a musical perspective, in addition to examining “crossings of hip-hop culturally and across boundaries” in its diaspora from the United States across the globe. The musical worlds of New York City formed an integral backdrop to the course.
Contemporary Perspectives on Reconstructing Womanhood

Lisa Lowe
University of California—San Diego
Yale University (in-residence)

Lisa Lowe discussed Hazel Carby’s autobiography *Child of Empire* in conjunction with Olaudah Equiano’s 1789 autobiography and slave narrative. Both texts, Lowe argues, speak to (and resist) the liberal mythology of freedom, which seeks to ‘socialize’ the slave within the liberal ideology of the wage labor system. “The modern concept of freedom,” she notes, “is structured by an economy of repression and forgetting, spatializing the unfree as exteriority, viewing slavery as a mere internal contradiction or exception.” Carby’s *Child of Empire* does not seek to correct this failure, she argues, but points to the diversity within the liberal humanist position—the degree to which slavery, imperialism, and inequality are all irrevocably part of contemporary liberal thought. It is in this diversity, Lowe argues—in the multiplicities, rather than the exclusions, of liberal capitalism—that *Child of Empire* most effectively articulates the history of imperialism in the present moment.

**Reconstructing Womanhood: 20 Years Later**

By Katie Gradowski

When discussing the impact of Hazel Carby’s *Reconstructing Womanhood*, Professor Saidiya Hartman speaks with uncharacteristic effusion. Hartman recalls reading an excerpt from Carby’s text for the first time during her senior year of college: “Hearing those words made me shudder,” she says. “I knew I would never read as naively or lazily again.”

The impact of Carby’s work was celebrated this past semester in a symposium entitled *Reconstructing Womanhood: A Future Beyond Empire*, where nearly 300 scholars, students and followers gathered to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Carby’s *Reconstructing Womanhood*. Published in 1987, *Reconstructing Womanhood* helped to consolidate the field of black feminist criticism at a time when the place of black women writers in the academy was still a point of contention.

“[Reconstructing Womanhood] was a watershed text for many people working in feminist theory and cultural studies,” recalls Hartman. “If we think about a dominant U.S. feminist discourse, there’s a notion that there is a thing called woman and that woman is normatively white. What Hazel did was not only critique that normative construction as white—woman as a racialized category—but also examine the production of black womanhood as a social category.”

The text’s aim was simple: to open the field to four previously unacknowledged black women writers of the 19th century, while at the same time revising the contemporary feminist discourse that adopted (white) solidarity as the prerequisite for feminist sisterhood. In bringing these authors to the table, Carby shifted the feminist discourse in the mid-1980’s toward a more stringent historical stance. At the same time, *Reconstructing Womanhood* also offered a valuable self-critique—criticizing both the implicit racism of 19th century feminism and the male-centered discourse of African American

“Hazel’s work and presence in the university created a place for me. Were it not for her work, I would not be standing here.”

*Saidiya Hartman*
An Interview with Rinaldo Walcott, University of Toronto

By Katie Gradowski

**FN:** When did you first come into contact with Hazel Carby’s work? What was your initial reaction to it?

**RW:** My first contact with Hazel’s work goes back to a book called The Empire Strikes Back, an essay called “White Women Listen” on the limits of sisterhood and feminism. That essay was a really important essay, because I was reading it in Canada, and it was very interesting for me to see that people writing on black Britain [shared] the kind of concerns that black people in Canada were grappling with.

**FN:** How has it influenced your own research?

**RW:** In terms of engaging a text like Reconstructing Womanhood, it’s obviously really important to account for the nuanced ways in which Hazel and the women’s texts that she reads in that book articulate both a sense of community, and a challenge to inter-black community. Both the fictions that she reads and her own writing and engagement demonstrate that we should not fall for any too simple or easy romanticized stories about black community—that black community is something that has to be struggled over, is something that has to be made in political struggle.

For me, a black man, the companion text for Reconstructing Womanhood, is Hazel’s text Race Men. She was one of the few black feminists to not simply make the rhetorical case that black men have a role in feminism, but to bring feminist analyses to reconstructing and explicating black masculinities. What you see, reading across the two texts, is a political project that is worthy as cultural criticism.

**FN:** What do you see as the longevity of this text? How will it be important going into the future?

**RW:** There are a number of literary paradigms [in African American studies] that in the 1980’s and 1990’s became paramount in a certain kind of way. On one hand, [you’ve got] a literary paradigm…that’s all about signifying and inversion or reversal. With that line, at a certain point, you run against a politics where after you’ve inverted, after you’ve reversed, after you’ve signified, what now?…On the other hand, you’ve got another kind of paradigm that reads a kind of monolithic homogenous voice in black women’s texts, [creating] a caricature of black women. All of a sudden black women become “hard” black women, they become vessels of keeping and reproducing culture. What gets missed from that is the nuances. They get rendered emotionless.

In Reconstructing Womanhood, what we get are readings that in their nuance, and in their ability to demonstrate black women’s active political agency to intervene in the world, [are able] to intervene in discourses that bring white American-ness [to the forefront] and frame blackness—especially blackness that has been framed through a particularly heterosexual community. What you then get is a text that will continue to teach us to look for the things that are concealed. To look at concealment as a particular political discourse that will open up different ways of reading our present, reading our past, and potentially reading our future. If we place [Reconstructing Womanhood] into a broad conceptual archive of the recovery of particular kinds of texts in the middle of the 20th century, Hazel’s book continues to be an extremely important book in demarcating a very different reading from the two dominant readings.

**FN:** Reconstructing Womanhood emerged at a critical political moment, both in terms of black feminist criticism and the inclusion of black women’s writing in the academy more broadly. What contribution can it make today?

**RW:** I think Reconstructing Womanhood is a text that we still need to read and engage with, especially in the context of both the precariouslyness of both African American studies programs in the contemporary university, and the way that those programs have kind of produced caricatures of what it means to be African American in this historical moment. The political need to work through those ambivalences, to work through a more hopeful future, is still very much with us.
“It’s critical for all departments—in the humanities as well as the sciences—to have a variety of people from different backgrounds who bring different questions,” said Downey. “It’s also critical for students to see strong role models in the classrooms, to send the message that people of all backgrounds are top scholars. This is especially true as Columbia tries to be a leader in global education.”

To meet the challenges of attracting and retaining faculty, Downey works with the Office of Work/Life and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, both of which implement programming aimed at helping new professors and their families adjust to life at Columbia. The Office of Work/Life, for example, now provides for faculty up to 100 hours of heavily subsidized child care per year. In 2006, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action took a lead role in establishing the Metro New York and Southern Connecticut Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (MNYSC HERC), an internet database of job opportunities at 42 metropolitan-area educational institutions. Downey has recently been working with the Office of Equal Opportunity to expand job search opportunities—both throughout the metropolitan area, and through the HERC database—for faculty spouses and partners.

Such quality-of-life enhancements are aimed at ensuring that new faculty “move along the pipeline,” said Downey. “It’s important to get excellent faculty to come to Columbia, especially from under-represented groups, but we have to make sure that as many of them as possible get through tenure and develop into leaders, whether within the university, or as scholars within their disciplines.”

Downey’s training in developmental psychology, she says, underlies her focus on “removing obstacles that interfere with an optimized career path.”

Her current research focuses on how characteristics, such as gender and race, lead people to develop expectations and concerns about being rejected or marginalized. It is an extension of work Downey did as a PhD student at Cornell University and as a Post-Doctoral fellow at the University of Michigan in the 1980s, when she conducted studies with rural, poor children, as well as women in prison and their kin, attempting to determine factors that increased the risk of behavioral difficulties, or criminal behavior.

Downey traces her interest in psychopathology to a job she held as a research assistant in the early 1980s, following completion of her undergraduate work at the University College Dublin. Her personal experience with hands-on research after college helped inspire her to spawn a new program at Columbia, the “Bridge to the PhD,” which is scheduled to launch in September 2008. Through the program, the university will cost-share with Columbia’s scientific laboratories in order to fund six to eight students as research assistants. Aimed especially at women and groups under-represented in the sciences, the “Bridge to the PhD” is intended to be more flexible than a Masters program, and offer practical experience. Some of the students who participate, Downey hopes, might eventually enroll as doctoral candidates at Columbia. But, she said, “getting more people into the pool is the important thing.” Even if “Bridge to the PhD” students do not ultimately attend Columbia as graduate students, she noted, eventually “we might be able to hire them as faculty.”
IRWaG Graduate Fellows 2007-2008

This academic year marks the inauguration of a new fellowship to increase graduate student participation and collaboration in the Institute. IRWaG Graduate Fellows are involved in numerous projects. Along with serving as liaisons to the Institute’s administrative committees, the Fellows are also co-organizing the Graduate Colloquium that has met twice this fall to discuss new scholarship and present information about the Graduate Certificate in Feminist Scholarship. They are also helping to plan the Institute’s celebratory anniversary conference that will take place in September 2008, entitled “What is Feminist Politics Now? Local and Global.” Finally, they are working to revamp the web-based reading lists for the graduate certificate exams, which should be available this spring. The Fellows draw on a range of research experience and interests.

Jess Fenn is a graduate student in the Department of English and Comparative Literature. She specializes in fourteenth-century theories of sex, gender, and reproduction as they appear in medical, encyclopedic, and literary texts. She is especially interested in alternative modes of reproduction, such as social affiliation through speech and writing. Her secondary interests include twenty-first-century female mystery novelists who lived and wrote in New York. Before coming to Columbia, she worked as a public radio reporter in Alaska. She received a Master’s in Education from Hollins University and a B.A. in English with High Honors from Swarthmore College.

Melissa Marie González graduated magna cum laude from Columbia College in 2002 with departmental honors in English. In 2003, she returned to Columbia for graduate school and, in 2007, earned her M.Phil. in Spanish and Portuguese and completed the requirements for the Graduate Certificate in Feminist Scholarship offered by IRWaG. Her academic interests include feminist and queer theory, film studies, twentieth-century Latin American and U.S. Latino literature and culture. She has recently published “Resisting the ‘Fatal Allurement’ of Local Color: María Cristina Mena’s Mexico in American Magazine and The Century Magazine” (Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage, Volume VI. Ed. Antonio I. Castañeda and A. Gabriel Meléndez). At present, she is working on her dissertation, tentatively entitled “Consuming Identities, Mourning Resistance: Contemporary Hispanic Cultures and Queer Theories.” In it, she examines the consumption of counter-hegemonic identities within global markets that value resistance as a discursive commodity, and argues that this consumption moves some queer critics and cultural producers to both mount itinerant, non-identitarian resistances and mourn the impossibility of a fixed resistance.

Jenny James is a doctoral student in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia. After earning a B.A. from Smith College in 2001, she went on to complete an M.A. in Comparative Literature at Dartmouth College. From the beginning of her studies as an undergraduate at Smith, Jenny has been interested in the complex ways gender is encoded in our lived experiences. Along with serving as a Graduate Fellow in IRWaG, Jenny also was a Teaching Assistant for this Fall’s Graduate News, Continued on Page 14
To Andrea Fiano, Salata Baladi seemed to be about identity, more than about Middle Eastern politics. “Whatever we think of the conflict,” he said, “it’s very important to show human beings.”

Fiano was part of a standing-room only audience at a November 13 screening of Salata Baladi, a documentary about the multi-religious, multi-ethnic roots of the family of Nadia Kamel, the film’s director. The film focuses on Kamel’s mother, Mary, who is spurred by the inquisitiveness of her 10-year-old grandson, Nabeel, to explore her own diverse background. Born in Cairo to a Jewish father and a Catholic mother, Mary converted to Islam when she married an Egyptian man. In the film, Mary traces her past work as a political activist, a feminist, and a journalist. As she gets more determined to search out the details of her own history, Mary makes the difficult decision to travel from her home in Egypt to Israel to visit her Egyptian Jewish relatives. In the end, the viewer comes to understand the extent to which a complex life story can be shaped by, and reflective of, sweeping global political forces.

“Like many Egyptians, after a hundred years sprinkled with multiple immigrations, a few conversions and a few mixed marriages, Nabeel, (Mary’s grandson), is a mix of Egyptian, Italian, Palestinian and Lebanese with some Russian, Caucasian, Turk and Spanish blood as well,” according to the Salata Baladi web site. “From his Muslim, Christian and Jewish descendants, he inherits a track record embracing socialism, fascism, communism, nationalism, feminism and pacifism.”

The film has been shown in Egypt, and at various locations in Europe and the United States. It was recently awarded the “Outstanding Documentary” Noor Award at the 2007 Arab Film Festival.

“I made the film because I wasn’t able to count the (family) stories anymore,” Kamel said at the question and answer session following the recent film screening, which was co-sponsored by IRWaG, the Center for Study of Democracy, Toleration and Religion, and Cinemaeast. “Because of the subject of the film, nobody wanted to help the film—in Egypt, Europe or the United States,” Kamel said. In fact, Kamel added, she benefited from such obstacles. Although it took her five and a half years to film and edit the documentary, she retained creative and artistic license along the way. “Now that it’s made, Kamel said, “I’m happy I had difficulties.”
I doubt I would have seen prison reform as such an exciting issue if it hadn’t been for all the Foucault, Nietzsche, and Scarry my professors had me reading.

Kaufman, Continued from Page 1

internship in the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Domestic Violence Division and then to the Correctional Association, the prison reform organization where I now work.

2. What research are you working on currently? How do you incorporate an examination of gender issues into a larger discussion of criminology and prison reform?

This question has several answers. On the academic end of things, I am currently working on a thesis which will evaluate Emmanuel Levinas’ ethical critique of Maurice Merleau-Ponty from a feminist perspective. The central question—both of the paper, and motivating this project—is whether there’s an ethic to be found in Merleau-Ponty’s picture of embodied subjectivity. This thesis is one of the ways I’m exploring feminist philosophy of justice, as the academic thinking about how to frame criminological questions, research, and debates. The latter half of that challenge is what inspired me to apply for the Marshall.

3. During your time at Columbia, you’ve worked as an intern at a number of institutions, including Planned Parenthood, the Legal Aid Society, the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office, and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. How and why did you choose to become involved with these organizations, and how have these various internships influenced your academic perspective?

As most resumes do, my experiences built one upon the other by luck and word of mouth. I started working in the public policy department at Planned Parenthood in my hometown, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, because I wanted to do more my academics that have shaped my internships than the other way around. I doubt I would have seen prison reform as such an exciting issue if it hadn’t been for all the Foucault, Nietzsche, and Scarry my professors had me reading. I think the reason my internships and my academics have worked together so well is that there has never really been an intellectual division between the two.

4. The Marshall allows students to study at any United Kingdom university. What made you choose to pursue criminology at Oxford? What are your expectations or objectives as you prepare for your next academic endeavor?

I found the Criminology program at Oxford by starting with the faculty. I knew that I wanted to study abroad and that the Marshall would be an amazing and exciting way to do it, so at the end of my junior year I began to look for sites of interesting feminist work in the UK. I quickly discovered several people at Oxford: Mary Bosworth, who writes on agency and power in women’s prisons; Carolyn Hoyle, who works on the ethical questions surrounding domestic violence and transitional justice; and Liara Lazarus, who studies prisoners’ rights. From there I was drawn to the theoretical bent of the courses offered for the M.Phil, as well as to the fact that current graduate students in the Oxford program are studying feminist contributions to criminology. By the end of my research and the lengthy fellowships applications process I was convinced that Oxford was the place to be.

My main objective for the next few years is to be open to the new academic and cultural experiences while maintaining my commitment to feminist philosophical questions. While I hadn’t articulated it as such, this was certainly my goal coming into Columbia and it served me well. I hope to take what I’ve learned here at Columbia and bring it to Oxford, back home to study law, and into my future work in prison reform.
“[Working with Hazel Carby], there wasn’t a push to replicate her own work, but to create my own discourse...to come up with my own theory of citizenship and nationalism”

Kaysha Corinealdi, Yale graduate student

Walcott. “Black community is something that has to be struggled over, is something that has to be made in political struggle.”

Carby herself is modest about the work’s aims. “I wanted to question the way the field of African American studies was organized and who it thought its subjects were...I wanted to address the field of women and gender studies, and who they thought their subjects were,” she says. “You don’t imagine seminal, but you do imagine change, and you do imagine transformation.”

This change is reflected in the sheer diversity of scholarship that has emerged as a result of Carby’s work. The symposium featured talks by Anne McClintock, Rinaldo Walcott, Lisa Lowe, and Robert Reid-Pharr, on the topics ranging from black queer masculinity to the historical space of slave autobiographies, to the current treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. The topics, like Carby’s own work, related to a variety of disciplines, touching on gender and race studies, but also on explorations of empire, queer theory, and diaspora studies.

“What was so important about Reconstructing Womanhood was not only its critical intervention, but also [its role in] creating a bridge between Marxist theory, feminist theory, black feminist theory, and a more encompassing project of empire,” explains Saidiya Hartman. “We wanted to have a conference [that] wasn’t just a celebration of Reconstructing Womanhood, but an examination of its meanings and implications for the present.”

“It is indicative of Hazel’s legacy,” adds Janet Jacobson, “[that] all of our speakers have written books that are themselves groundbreaking.”

In this respect, the explosion of discourse around Reconstructing Womanhood is a testament to how far the field of black feminist studies has come. Carby recalls writing in solitude as a graduate student at a time when the field of black feminist studies was in its earliest stages: “All of the people who were beginning to imagine the field of black feminist work were working pretty much in isolation from each other. We didn’t know each other very well, and none of us were being encouraged to do what we did, or even encouraged to imagine what we could be doing with black women writers, because nobody believed there were any to be found.”

Today, Carby’s work has touched hundreds of scholars, branching into disciplines well beyond the scope of black feminist criticism. “My students are everywhere, they’re literally all over,” Carby reflects. “In all the vast changes in my work, I’ve been incredibly informed, and learned a lot, from my students...I’ve seen the passage we’ve all taken as being much more collective, being able to learn from each other.”

Carby herself has moved well beyond the arguments in Reconstructing Womanhood, coming full circle from the historical specificity...
Continued from previous page

of four nineteenth century women writers to the impact of race and empire on her own life. Her forthcoming book, *Child of Empire*, deals with her own history as the child of a British woman and a Jamaican RAF pilot in post-war Britain. Carby ruefully notes the tendency of her readers—especially American readers—to view her parents’ marriage as a triumph of race—as she puts it, “a romance between Sidney Poitier and a starry-eyed Veronica Lake—a war-time romance, triumphant in the face of empire and segregation.” To counter this fantasy, Carby read a portion of the autobiography at the symposium, forcefully describing the trauma of growing up in a household divided by race.

Carby treats *Child of Empire* as a critical autobiography, blending literary and cultural criticism with striking recollections from her childhood in Britain. As always, she emphasizes the importance of growth. “[I am] writing about Britain in a much more transnational comparative way,” she notes, reflecting on how her own views on the subject have evolved over time. “[I am] thinking not just interdisciplinary, but [about multiple forms]...about literature, engaged with a lot of visual culture. It has changed completely.”

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**RITES OF RETURN: POETICS AND POLITICS**

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**Thursday April 10 and Friday, April 11**

at Columbia and CUNY Graduate Center

What is driving the contemporary obsession with the recovery of roots? In two days of intense discussion and conversation world-renowned scholars, writers, artists, and curators will explore questions of origin and identity, national and cultural memory, "trauma tourism" and museums of conscience, as well as literary and visual returns to lost sites. They will consider experiences of displacement and the risks and rights of return. Participants will include writers Daniel Mendelsohn, Saidiya Hartman, and Eva Hoffman; photographers Keith Calhoun, Chandra McCormick, and Susan Meiselas; journalist Amira Hass; and scholars and curators Nadia Abu El-Haj, Svetlana Boym, Jarrod Hayes, David Levi-Strauss, Marianne Hirsch, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Nancy K. Miller, Alondra Nelson, Jay Prosser, Liz Sevcenko, Leo Spitzer, Diana Taylor, David Troutt, and Patricia Williams.

**Columbia University Law School, April 10, 3:30pm–8:30pm**

**CUNY Graduate Center, Proshansky Auditorium, April 11, 9:30am–6:30pm**

For more information please contact irwag@columbia.edu.

Co-sponsored by the Columbia University Seminar on Cultural Memory; IRWaG; Center for Institutional and Social Change, Columbia University Law School; CUNY Graduate Center, Women’s Studies Program and the Center for Women and Society, and the Concentration in Twentieth-Century Studies.

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**The Thirteenth Annual IRWaG QUEER STUDIES PRIZE**

All Columbia, General Studies, and Barnard College undergraduates are invited to submit their best papers for consideration. Papers from every discipline, on any topic within “queer studies”—broadly defined—will be judged anonymously by an interdisciplinary committee of Columbia and Barnard faculty and graduate students.

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763 Schermerhorn Extension

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call the Institute at 212.854.3277, or email questions to irwag@columbia.edu

**Deadline:**
Noon, Monday, April 21st, 2008
**Spring 2008 Events**

**January 22**

“The Need of their Genius: Women’s Reading and Writing Practices in Early America”
A lecture by Mary Kelley, Ruth Bordin Collegiate Professor of History, American Culture, and Women’s Studies, and Chair, Department of History at the University of Michigan, part of Rare Book & Manuscript Library, 14th Annual Bibliography Week Lecture, 6pm, Faculty Room, Low Memorial Library

**February 11**

IRWaG Graduate Colloquium
Dissertation Prospectus Workshop, 11:30am-1pm, 754 Schermerhorn Extension

**Feminist Interventions: “Gender and Public Health: Cutting Edge Research”**
with Lisa M. Bates, Wendy Chavkin, Theresa Exner, Debra Kalmuss, and Jennifer Hirsch, from the Department of Sociomedical Sciences, Columbia University, 4pm, Deutsches Haus, 420 W. 116th St. between Amsterdam Ave. and Morningside Dr.

**March 7**

IRWaG Graduate Colloquium
A faculty panel on the body, featuring professors Jenny Davidson, Geraldine Downey, Eugenia Lean, Beth Povinelli, and Coco Fusco, of Columbia University, 1-3pm, Location TBA

**Feminist Classics: Fear of Flying Conference**
A discussion of what makes a feminist classic an American classic with Erica Jong, Min Jin Lee, Nancy K. Miller, Susan Rubin Suleiman, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, James Frey, Rebecca Traister, and Aoibheann Sweeney. The Fear of Flying Conference will be held from 2-8pm at the Social Hall at Union Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway at 121st St.

**April 7**

**Feminist Interventions: “The Rising Gender Gap in Education: Explanations and Potential Implications”**
with Thomas DiPrete, Professor of Sociology, Columbia University, 4pm, 754 Schermerhorn Extension

**Rites of Return: Poetics and Politics**
A two-day symposium about the new genealogy, cultural memory and the contemporary obsession with the recovery of roots. The symposium will be held on 4/10 from 3:30-8:30pm, at the Columbia University Law School and on 4/11 from 9am—6:30pm, at the CUNY Graduate Center, Proshansky Auditorium

**April 10 18 21 25**

**IRWaG Graduate Colloquium**
A dissertation chapter workshop, 11:30am-1pm, 754 Schermerhorn Extension

**Feminist Classics: Top Girls**
A panel discussion on the plays of Caryl Churchill with actors, directors, and scholars Joseph Roach, Yale University, Elin Diamond, Rutgers University, and Jean Howard, Columbia University, 5:30pm, Deutsches Haus

**Feminist Legacies of Columbia ‘68**
A roundtable discussion with radical feminist leaders, 12:30pm, 501 Schermerhorn Hall

Please check our website for updated events information: [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irwag/events/main/one/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irwag/events/main/one/)
Support the Institute:

Become a Friend of IRWaG

The Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Columbia celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year. All of us here at IRWaG are especially eager to share this milestone with our friends, colleagues and IRWaG alumnae/i, each of whom has helped to make IRWaG such a dynamic and intellectually exciting center of interdisciplinary feminist scholarship.

Our celebration begins on March 28th, when IRWaG will host the first of our twentieth anniversary roundtables: “Feminist Classics: Fear of Flying.” This electrifying afternoon of panel discussions about what makes a feminist classic an American classic will revisit Erica Jong’s novel Fear of Flying, in celebration of Columbia University Library’s recent acquisition of Erica Jong’s papers. Jong will be joined in roundtable discussion by an array of writers and critics: MinJin Lee, Nancy K. Miller, Susan Robin Suleiman, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, James Frey, Rebecca Traister and Aoibheann Sweeney.

Soon to follow are other roundtables in our Feminist Classics series, including: “Top Girls: The Plays of Caryl Churchill” on April 21 and “Feminist Legacies of Columbia ‘68” on April 25. In September, feminist writers, scholars and activists from across the globe will come together here at Columbia for a landmark three-day conference exploring the question “What Is Feminist Politics Now? Local and Global.”

Please support the Institute by becoming a “Friend of IRWaG.” We need your help to continue developing innovative public programs, lectures and conferences, and to support the kind of cutting-edge feminist scholarship that has been a hallmark of the Institute throughout our twenty-year history. As a Friend of IRWaG, you will receive our newsletter in both print and electronic form, you will be invited to special events at the Institute and at Columbia, and you will be involved with New York City’s leading center for the scholarly exploration of women and gender.

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## Spring 2008 Undergraduate Courses

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<td>4</td>
<td>L. Collins</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>11:00am-12:50pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC3130</td>
<td>Intro to Gay &amp; Lesbian Studies</td>
<td>03365</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>E. Glasberg</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>V3312</td>
<td>Theorizing Women’s Activism</td>
<td>07248</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C. Cynn</td>
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<td>2:10-4:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC3515</td>
<td>Women in Israel: An Introduction</td>
<td>08742</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I. Klepfisz</td>
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<tr>
<td>V3522</td>
<td>Senior Seminar II</td>
<td>85798</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M. Hirsch</td>
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<td>V3522</td>
<td>Senior Seminar II</td>
<td>01088</td>
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<td>T. Szell</td>
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<tr>
<td>V3813</td>
<td>Colloquium on Feminist Inquiry</td>
<td>09530</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N. Tadiar</td>
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<td>11:00pm-12:50pm</td>
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## Spring 2008 Crosslisted Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Call#</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83920</td>
<td>Gender &amp; Sexuality in Medieval Poetry</td>
<td>62848</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>S. Crane</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3930</td>
<td>Race, Gender and Sexuality</td>
<td>86446</td>
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<td>J. Humphries</td>
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<td>83950</td>
<td>British Drama: The Plays of Caryl Churchill</td>
<td>81772</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>J. Howard</td>
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<tr>
<td>84422</td>
<td>Women &amp; American Citizenship</td>
<td>81096</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A. Kessler-Harris</td>
<td>T</td>
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<tr>
<td>86090</td>
<td>Women and Literary Communities in Early Modern England and France</td>
<td>62035</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>J. Crawford</td>
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<tr>
<td>86230</td>
<td>Eros, Gender &amp; History in Spanish Cinema</td>
<td>71301</td>
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<td>E. Amann</td>
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<tr>
<td>86820</td>
<td>Heroines of Disaster: Novels and Feminist Literary Theory</td>
<td>68247</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>M. Hirsch &amp; N. Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>88738</td>
<td>Seminar on Gay/Lesbian Issues in Public Health</td>
<td>80800</td>
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<td>I. Meyer</td>
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<td>P8760</td>
<td>Sex Work, Trafficking, Health, and Human Rights</td>
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<td>89402</td>
<td>History of American Women &amp; Gender</td>
<td>73596</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A. Kessler-Harris</td>
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<tr>
<td>89719</td>
<td>Critical Approaches to Research on Gender &amp; Sexuality</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>J. Hirsch</td>
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## Spring 2008 Graduate Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Call#</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W4300</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Women’s and Gender Studies Cavafy: Typography of Desire</td>
<td>21447</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>K. Van Dyck</td>
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<tr>
<td>G8010</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Feminist Theory: Body &amp; Power: Politics of Life</td>
<td>23299</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>E. Povinelli</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>4:10-6:00pm</td>
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* For more gender-related courses that do not have WMST call numbers, please consult the IRWaG courseguide on our website.