Morris to Head Institute

For academic year 1999-2000 Professor Rosalind Morris, Associate Professor of Anthropology, will serve as Director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. A specialist on Thailand, Professor Morris has been an active participant in the intellectual life of the Institute since her arrival at Columbia in 1994. “The best pedagogical experiences I have had at Columbia,” she says, “have involved working with students in the special intellectual environment created at the Institute. Students who are attracted to the Women’s Studies program tend to be creative, iconoclastic, and theoretically adept.” Morris has directed a number of exciting senior theses there and this fall will be teaching a graduate course entitled “Crimes of Intimacy” which treats the emergence of the public sphere in terms of the “criminalities” that it generates. She is concerned with the moments in modernity when gestures of public intimacy become legible as signs of sexuality and when, in consequence, those gestures become of interest to the state because they call in question the threshold of the public domain per se.

A scholar whose own work is deeply interdisciplinary, Morris especially appreciates the opportunity the Institute affords for intellectual exchanges with peers.

Rosalind Morris

Cuban Feminist to Speak

Luisa Campuzano, a prominent Cuban feminist intellectual, will give a talk at the Institute on Thursday, September 16, 4PM, 763 Schermerhorn Extension. Campuzano is the head of the Women’s Studies Program at the University of Havana and is the author of Mujeres latinoamericanas: historia y cultura and Carpetier entonces y ahora. Her talk is entitled ‘Cuban Women in the 1990s.’

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**Director’s Column**

In many ways, the millennial year promises to be an exceptional one at the Institute. New faces will occupy all of the directorial offices this Autumn, and a new member will join us in the Spring. Students will be able to choose from a wide array of classes in fields that represent both the humanities and the social sciences, and faculty members will have an expanded community of interlocutors with whom to share ideas and envision the twenty-first century for the Institute. We are extremely excited to be reaping the rewards and seeing the fruits of the initiative to hire senior faculty in joint appointments with the departments. Professor of History, Alice Kessler-Harris, the first woman to be hired in this fashion, will begin her three-year tenure as Director of Graduate Studies this Fall, and will help steer the Institute into its future from there. She will be joined, temporarily, by Professor Elizabeth Blackmar, also of the History Department, who will act as Director of Undergraduate Studies. In the Spring of 2000, however, Professor Blackmar will go on leave, and the newest addition to the Institute, Professor Lila Abu-Lughod, will take over as Undergraduate Advisor. Professor Abu-Lughod is the second of our senior hires and will enjoy a cross-appointment between the Institute and the Department of Anthropology (see the column on Professor Abu-Lughod in the next issue of Feminist News).

We are delighted to have three women of such remarkable talent and experience working at the Institute. All have long histories in the organization and administration of gender studies and all have been at the center of feminist debates and theoretical developments within their respective fields. Accordingly, our curriculum this year is marvelously diverse and representative of the best new work in feminist scholarship.

Feminist Interventions, the flag-ship seminar series that commenced last year, will continue in 1999—2000, but with a slightly different format. This year, our events will include scholarly papers as well as performances, screenings and readings by feminists from the surrounding community. In undertaking a series of this sort, we hope to expand the range of our conversations and to engage the excellent work that is informed by feminist commitments and theoretical insights but which is exploring the limits of other, extra-academic fields and interdisciplinary forms.

We are therefore pleased to announce a program that begins with a lecture by Professor Alice Kessler-Harris, and concludes with a reading by two poets, Yvette Christiansë and Stephanie Strickland. Feminist Interventions will also include a lecture by Professor Ann Douglas, and a screening of Kutlug Ataman’s controversial feature film “Lola and Bilidikid.” “Lola” will be shown at Miller Theater and will be followed by a panel discussion with the film’s director, Kutllug Ataman, its co-producer, James Schamus, and Orly Ravid, from the Gay and Lesbian distribution company, “Picture This.” There will be other events, of course, including occasional lectures and jointly hosted events with other departments, and news of those activities will be posted regularly.

Although last year was one of enormous accomplishment, with several major awards being received by faculty and a number
Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities at Columbia, opened the 1999 “Feminist Interventions” spring lecture series with a talk entitled “Feminism without Frontiers.” The talk was so crowded that many people stood in the aisles of the Uris Hall auditorium, a clear sign of the enthusiasm and interest Professor Spivak’s work inspires. An internationally renowned feminist thinker and postcolonial theorist, she is known for works such as *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1988), *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (1993), and, most recently, *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999). She is also celebrated for her landmark translation of Jacques Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* and her translations of the literary works of Mahasweta Devi. In a recent discussion with Feminist News, Professor Spivak elucidated her thoughts about academic and ethical practices, issues she has repeatedly addressed in her writings.

One of Professor Spivak’s pressing concerns is the ethical relation to the other, given that such a relation can only be attempted, never achieved. Spivak asserts that “to be born human” is to be born “angled toward the other,” whom we cannot reach. To exemplify this impossible yet imperative relation, Professor Spivak makes reference to Virginia Woolf’s call to evoke the ghost of Shakespeare’s sister in *A Room of One’s Own*. In this essay, Woolf tells the tale of this imaginary sister to demonstrate that a woman with Shakespeare’s genius in Shakespeare’s time could not have written Shakespeare’s works or even have survived; Woolf’s character kills herself, pregnant and unwed, penniless and unpublished. In her conclusion, Woolf counsels her audience of upper class undergraduate women that if they work for the ghost of Shakespeare’s sister, “even in poverty and obscurity,” she will come.

Professor Spivak notes that this was “a very peculiar thing to say to aspiring university women,” adding that Woolf’s emphasis on “poverty and obscurity” was a reminder that just to have material wealth “will not create feminism.” A feminist agenda cannot be separated from an attempt to forge an ethical relation to all of those “at the bottom.” Professor Spivak remarks, “You must try to inhabit the interiority of the below.” Woolf’s text encourages such attention to “the below” through negative example; the narrator in Woolf’s work gleans her independence—a room of her own and a small income—from an inheritance that comes from imperial plunder. Professor Spivak explains, “The five hundred pounds and a room are the political struggle. You must try to get them for yourself and others by collective action. But unless the political is buttressed by the ethical, it will not survive. In your own group you will reproduce the oppressiveness of the oppressors.”

Because of this threat, political efforts unsupported by imaginative efforts fail. “They will ultimately...”

*Spivak, continued on page 4*
Spivak, continued from page 3

lead to nothing," Spivak insists, "except just wealth." She adds, "One of my better known essays is about a female subaltern suicide—like Shakespeare’s sister. In A Room of One’s Own, Virginia Woolf is saying let us try to make the subaltern speak, but you can only do this by an imaginative effort that I call the ghost dance.”

Professor Spivak describes a "ghost dance” as an imaginative endeavor to establish a relationship to the past at a time of crisis. The ghost dance, she explains “originated with the Sioux, who invited other native American nations to join them.” It involves an invocation of ancestors, even those not literally one’s own, as a source of “practical wisdom.” Professor Spivak, who does literacy work with a small group of Indian aboriginals, explains that her own “ghost dance effort” is located in Indian aboriginal culture. She says, “I want to claim ancestry with the first people inhabiting India, a small subaltern group.” Thus, the “ghost dance” has played a role not only in her theory but in her practice. It helps her strive to forge an ethical relation to the aboriginals, a relation not predicated on a power differential.

While Professor Spivak’s imagined ancestry has offered her a training in the ethical, her actual ancestors in her native Calcutta have as well. Professor Spivak comments that her most influential mentors have been her parents, staunch community activists who provided her with wisdom and inspiration. Of her father, who died when she was thirteen, she says, “He was a kind, good and gentle man, whom many still consider to be a saintly person. He was utterly brilliant, a village boy who became the youngest civil surgeon under the British in East India.” She adds that before Indian independence, her father “destroyed his career because he refused to present false medical evidence in a rape trial. The government asked him to give false testimony to protect an upper class man who had systematically raped women in a girls’ college hostel. When he refused, he was immediately made supernumerary. That is what it is like to be colonized.” When Professor Spivak was a child, her father had a large charitable medical practice and commanded great respect in his community. She recounts how she learned from him a pivotal lesson about power and privilege. “When I was eleven, my father took me to the local post office. There were all kinds of people queuing up—such as servants—and my father said to me, ‘Because you’re my daughter and because you’re a woman, they’re going to let you go to the head of the line, but you must always remember to stand at the end of the line.’ This is the kind of training we received.”

Professor Spivak continues, “My father’s lesson was about not exercising social power. My mother’s lesson was to look everyone in the eye, to be brave.” Her mother offered her training by example. A feminist involved in community social work, her mother ran the only working women’s hostel in Calcutta. Professor Spivak comments, “She ran it so effectively that the government asked her how on earth she managed.” Her mother was an achiever who expected her children to achieve as well. “My mother always acknowledged intellectual achievement as the highest accomplishment. She didn’t think that a woman’s life could only be fulfilled with marriage and children,” Spivak’s sisters, like her, all received Ph.D.s.

From her mother, Professor Spivak has inherited faith in the power of intellectual pursuits. She maintains that the study of literature provides “a training in the imagination that can lead to the development of an ethical sense.” She remarks that the student’s attempt “actively to imagine the otherness of texts” facilitates this development. She criticizes teaching that presents literature as “directly political,” the kind of teaching that attempts to inspire activism; “It reduces readings to plot summary and stereotypes, and it undermines what literature can do, which is the training of the ethical. The only way that you change minds is like drops of water on stone, with infinite patience.”

Her own sole goal as a teacher, she says, is “teaching well.” She remarks, “When I hear people talk about teaching there is never any admission that they might not all be the best of teachers. I am not a very good teacher. When I go into the classroom, I first share with the students my problems in teaching. I’m so passionately involved with the material I teach that at the moments when I’m most moved, I forget that I’m teaching. I talk too much and I’m not clear. So I tell the
Students that they should stop me when I get into those modes.” At Columbia, Professor Spivak is an influential and inspirational teacher: as she expresses it, “My classes are not very populous, but I retain with the people who come a certain kind of affective popularity.”

Professor Spivak asserts, “everything I do comes out of my teaching. Even in my subaltern activist work, what I’m doing is teaching.” Her zeal in teaching can sometimes create problems. She says, “I think that one of the worst characteristics of my personality is that even outside of the classroom I fall into the teaching mode.” She tells a story which exemplifies this tendency. “One day in my kitchen I was giving my mother a mini-lecture on some profound topic, and my mom, poor thing, said to me ‘Gayatri, stop, stop, I can’t be lectured anymore.’ I was incredibly embarrassed, and I said ‘look, Ma, do forgive me, it’s just my addiction’ (the word ‘addiction’ in my mother tongue is ‘neshah’). My brother, who was sitting on one of the counters in the kitchen, suddenly jumped down and said to my mother. ‘No, it’s not her addiction (‘neshah’) at all, it’s her profession (‘peshah’). People pay her for this, and she is giving it to you for free, so you should listen to her.’ We all roared with laughter.”

Not only does Professor Spivak see herself as ever the teacher, but she also sees herself as ever the student. Before she began her work as what she calls “an amateur activist,” she was associated with a phrase she had used on occasion, “unlearning one’s privilege as one’s loss.” This formula, she says, became less pertinent to her when, ten years ago, she began her work outside the academy teaching literacy in rural India. Since then, she remarks, she has been engaged in the continuous effort of “learning to learn from below.” Her emphasis has shifted from what one must do for oneself to what one can learn from the other. She is adamantly critical of agencies that deliver services without struggling to learn from below. She says, “They just go there with the assumption that there is nothing to learn, because the people they serve have nothing, poor things.” What these agencies lack, she says, is “a patient, internal connection with the values of the other. Their failure is a failure of the imagination and a failure of patience.”

Professor Spivak views patience and care as her strengths both in her activism and in her intellectual work. “In my own intellectual work, my only criteria are honesty (this is a strange word to be using, especially since I am associated with Deconstruction, but I know what I mean by this), usefulness and care.” She especially stresses the importance of reading “with care.” A meticulous reader herself, she strives to encourage her students to do the same.

Professor Spivak views patience as her strengths both in her activism and in her intellectual work. “In my own intellectual work, my only criteria are honesty (this is a strange word to be using, especially since I am associated with Deconstruction, but I know what I mean by this), usefulness and care.” She especially stresses the importance of reading “with care.” A meticulous reader herself, she strives to encourage her students to do the same.

Professor Spivak believes that literary training—a training in the careful reading of literature—can supplement the social sciences. In “Feminism Without Frontiers” she elucidated this idea by explicating two terms used by Aristotle to describe operations of the mind, presenting them as models for scholarly practice: “historia” and “poesis.” Whereas “historia” describes a thing that has been, “poesis” describes a thing that might be. It is in the realm of the imagination, the realm of “poesis,” that the ethical relation to others can be attempted. Although like Aristotle, Professor Spivak has a strong affinity for “poesis,” she views “poesis” and “historia” as necessarily interdependent.

Spivak sees Aristotle’s “historia”—or some version of a linear Eurocentric history of feminism—as animating the “efforts” of feminists and international organizations that serve women “to bring the women of the world under one rule of law.” She explains that “the generalized name of woman is taken for granted” by organizations that offer services to women all over the globe, such as the United Nations. Likewise, Spivak asserts, feminism has always tended toward generalizing about “woman.” and in her opinion this is a tendency that should not be rejected entirely. She admonishes, “We must not leave history and the political behind.” The work of “poesis,” she claims, is to function as a supplement to “historia.” The ghost dance, she says, can only be “supplementary and interrupting. The ethical and imaginative can supplement the gap on which the historical and the political are founded.”

According to Professor Spivak, a feminism without frontiers “can only emerge from this constant yet necessarily irregular patching up of the ethical by the political and vice versa.” She continues, “For me, the constant counterpoint to today’s global feminism, which is de facto frontierless, is a patient, ethical reaching out and learning to learn from below rather than an impatient giving through consciousness of one’s own supremacy.” This aim, she asserts, cannot be achieved easily. “A true feminism without frontiers is an always moving and withdrawing goal, which is reached without our knowing it has been reached. Something will have happened if we keep the ghost dance going.” She says, “We should pray to be haunted by the ghost of all the unfulfillments of the women who have nothing and cannot have access. If we work for this ghost, she will come.”
Professor Julie Crawford, a feminist scholar of the early modern period, joined the Columbia faculty last year as an Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature. She came to Columbia from the University of Pennsylvania, where she received a doctorate in English. Currently, she is working on a book based on her dissertation, “Lessons and Scholynges For Us All: Monsters as Signs in Early Modern Popular Literature.” This project, which focuses on representations of monsters and monstrous births in popular literature of the Renaissance, reflects two of Professor Crawford’s primary research and teaching interests: popular culture and the social history of women. She explains, “In the book, I argue that monsters appeared in popular writings at moments of crisis in the reproduction of various social norms. Because these tales of monstrous births are always also narratives about women’s productive and reproductive capacities, they tell us a lot about women’s social and cultural history.”

“Lessons and Scholynges” is based on extensive primary research drawing upon a broad range of materials. “My subject,” she reports, “reflects my interests in cultural studies, material history, the history of the text and women’s social and cultural history. I’m concerned not only with stories of monsters but with the texts in which they circulate.” These texts are not canonical literary works, but popular texts—such as pamphlets and broadsheets—which scholars generally categorize as “ephemera.” Instead of using such ephemera solely as evidence, as do many scholars, Professor Crawford views these forms as literary texts in and of themselves. In this literature, Professor Crawford argues, “social and cultural crimes are made legible in the body or form of the monster.” In one pamphlet, for instance, a woman refuses to marry the man to whom she is betrothed and commits incest. The child she bears as the result of this union is marked by a peculiar defect: it lacks a ring finger. Professor Crawford says, “I discuss this pamphlet in terms of incest laws, the rights of women to make their own marriages, the role of the ring in the post-Reformation marriage ceremony, and the importance of church marriage to the economic and ideological function of the state church.” Here as elsewhere in her work, a fantastical text is decoded to reveal a complex web of cultural anxieties.

Professor Crawford traces the origins of her scholarly interests to her experiences as an undergraduate English major at McGill University in Montreal. She explains, “The last course that I took to fulfill my requirements was a seventeenth century poetry class. At the beginning of the semester, I noticed that there weren’t any women writers on the syllabus. When I questioned the professor about this, he claimed that there were no women poets in the seventeenth century.” For Crawford, this was not a satisfactory answer. She headed for the library, where

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New Voices at Columbia: Introducing Rachel Adams

Professor Rachel Adams, a scholar of American literature and culture, has just completed her second year as an Assistant Professor in Columbia’s Department of English and Comparative Literature. She came to Columbia from the University of California at Santa Barbara where she pursued graduate studies in English, earned a certificate of emphasis in Women’s Studies and served as the managing editor of the journal Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture and Media Studies. At Columbia, Professor Adams teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in twentieth century American studies, including “U.S. Culture of the Vietnam Era,” “Race, Gender, and Nation in U.S. Cinema,” and “American Masculinities.” The latter, which examines representations of masculinity in fiction and in Hollywood film, exemplifies Professor Adams’ interdisciplinary approach, incorporating literary texts, theory, film and criticism. Like her teaching, her scholarly work embraces cultural forms not traditionally associated with literary study. Her dissertation, “Strange Company: Women, Freaks, and Others in Twentieth-Century America,” which she is currently developing into a book, investigates the role of “freaks” in twentieth century literary, visual, and performance art. Focusing on the works of five women, this project spotlights the ways in which freaks are represented in high and popular culture. Professor Adams defines “freaks” as “hybrid beings whose bodies confound meaning and defy categorization.” Her research reveals how freaks entered popular discourse in the nineteenth century as they came to play a pivotal role in carnival sideshows. Throughout “Strange Company,” Professor Adams concentrates on the ways in which sideshows transform human variety into freakishness. She describes the sideshow as a site where “difference is commodified and made into something visible on the body’s surfaces.”

Although Professor Adams spent most of her life in California before moving to the east coast, she feels right at home in New York City. She says, “I feel very comforted by the noise. I love hearing cars and people walking by, but I love not having a car myself.” One unexpected benefit that New York has offered Professor Adams is the opportunity to continue her research by observing firsthand the revival of freak shows. She reports that before she came east she was under the impression that the freak show, a popular institution in the nineteenth century, had all but died out. “But then I came to New York and found that the freak show was undergoing a resurgence.” Since her arrival at Columbia, she has attended several local freak shows: The Bindlestiff Family Circus; the Coney Island Freak Show; and the performances of Jennifer Miller’s troop, Circus Amuck. As a result of these experiences, Professor Adams has decided to conclude her book with a discussion of the revival of the freak show as performance art. In a final chapter, she explores its current function as a forum for queer activism, pointing to the emphasis on cross-dressing and camp spectacle in recent freak shows.
Chien-Shiung Wu (1912-1997), a celebrated experimental physicist and a Columbia Professor for several decades, revolutionized modern physics by altering scientists’ understanding of nature’s laws. In a legendary experiment in 1956, she overturned what had previously been considered a universal principle, the law of the conservation of parity. The law held that phenomena in nature are symmetrical; namely, they look the same whether observed directly or in a mirror. Observing the activity of beta particles given off by cobalt-60, Wu proved parity was not conserved for all nuclear interactions. Wu first came to Columbia in 1944 to join the Manhattan Project, the U.S. Army’s clandestine operation to develop the atomic bomb in World War II. After the war, she worked as a researcher in Columbia’s Physics Department and was eventually given a position as a professor at the University in 1952. In 1973, in recognition of her distinguished career, Columbia appointed Wu the first Pupin Professor of Physics. One of the outstanding physicists of her generation, Wu was an important role model for women who came after her.

Chien-Shiung Wu was born in 1912 in a town called Liuhe, near Shanghai. Her parents, whose views about girls were radical for the time, encouraged her to study hard and become financially self-sufficient. The name they gave to her, which means “courageous warrior,” reflects their beliefs. Her father, she said, “believed strongly in democratic systems and women’s emancipation.” When she was a small child, he established a school for girls near their home, the first in the region, which she attended through elementary school. He served as principal of the school, and her mother visited families in the area, encouraging parents of girls not to bind their daughters’ feet and to give them an education. At the age of nine, Wu left home to attend a prestigious boarding school in Suzhou, where she enrolled in a free teachers’ training program. At night, she borrowed friends’ textbooks and taught herself subjects that were not part of her curriculum—chemistry, mathematics and physics. After graduating at the top of her class in 1930, she was selected to attend the prestigious National Central University in Nanjing, where, in spite of her lack of formal education in the sciences, she studied physics. Both in Suzhou and in Nanjing Wu was a leader in the nationalist student underground which put pressure on the government of Chiang Kai-Shek to resist the Japanese. Upon graduating from the University in Nanjing, Wu determined to continue her studies in the United States, as there were no Chinese graduate programs in physics. Her plan was to return to China upon completion of a doctorate, but World War II and later the Communists’ triumph in China would make a trip home impossible for many decades.

In 1936, shortly after Wu arrived in San Francisco, she met another young physics student, Luke Yuan, who encouraged her to attend Berkeley where he was enrolled. At that time, Berkeley was arguably the top school for physics in the country. Ernest Lawrence, who was to become Wu’s thesis director, had just received a Nobel Prize for the invention of the particle accelerator, known as the atom smasher. Robert Oppenheimer, who would later head the Manhattan Project, led a team of notable theoretical physicists at Berkeley. Wu quickly decided to join the department. She received her doctorate from Berkeley in 1940 and soon became known as an expert on nuclear fission. However, neither Berkeley nor any other major research institution would hire her because of her gender and her ethnicity. At the time, none of the important physics programs had any women on the faculty. Furthermore, during the second world war, heightened bigotry against all Asians, even those from countries that were U.S. allies, pervaded American institutions.

In 1942, Wu married Luke Yuan and took a job teaching at Smith College, where she had no opportunity to do research. Only after America entered the war, and many male physicists left their positions for defense leave, did Wu manage to find a research position. She worked briefly at Princeton, where she was the first woman on the department’s faculty, and then joined the Manhattan Project at Columbia. At Columbia, she played a key role in the development of a process used to produce uranium 235, a fuel for the bomb.

As a researcher at Columbia after the war, Wu conducted extremely successful experiments on beta decay and was hailed as a brilliant and rigorous scientist. Nevertheless, the University did not hire her as a member of the physics faculty for seven years. In the late forties, shortly before the communist victory in China in 1949, Wu and Yuan received an offer from the Chinese government of positions at the University in Nanjing. They refused the invitation, as it was evident that the communists would soon gain control of the country, and they did not want to raise their son, born in 1947, under communism. When Wu was finally permitted to return to China in 1973, her parents and her two brothers were dead. One brother had been killed in the Cultural Revolution and the other had committed suicide, as had many friends.
When in early 1956 the theoretical physicists Tsung-Dao Lee at Columbia and Chen Ning Yang at Princeton came up with a hypothesis that challenged the law of parity, Wu immediately suggested a way to test the theory. Lee and Yang theorized that the law of parity would not hold for interactions between subatomic particles involving what is called the "weak force," a force which, along with gravity, is considered one of the four fundamental forces of nature. Wu commented, "Most physicists thought we would find nothing exciting. The odds were one million to one in their favor that the law of parity in beta decay was conserved. In fact, many famous physicists bet on it. It was a horrible position to be in."

Even Lee and Yang doubted that Wu would succeed. Nevertheless, the results of Wu’s experiment confirmed the theory and sent shock waves through the scientific community. The same year, Yang, with Lee, who later called Wu “one of the giants of physics,” won the Nobel Prize for their work. To the disappointment of many physicists at the time, Wu and her experimental team did not. Soon after the prize was announced, the playwright Clare Boothe Luce declared, “When Dr. Wu knocked out the principle of parity, she established the principle of parity between men and women.”

Wu’s disappointment about the Nobel Prize was countered by a string of professional successes. Shortly after the stunning results of the experiment on parity were announced in 1957, Wu received numerous honors. In 1958, she became the seventh woman elected to the National Academy of Sciences, and that same year she became the first woman to be awarded an honorary doctorate in science from Princeton, and the first woman to receive the important Research Corporation Award. Moreover, she was also named full professor at Columbia in 1958. The honors continued until the end of her life. In 1975, she was elected president of the American Physical Society, becoming the first woman to hold this position. Later, she became the first woman to receive the Cyrus B. Comstock Award of the National Academy of Sciences. Among many other honors, she received the National Medal of Science, America’s highest award for scientific achievement, and she was awarded honorary degrees from more than a dozen institutions in addition to Princeton, including Yale and Harvard. Much to her amusement, she was the first living scientist to have an asteroid named after her.

Historically, women in physics have been subjected to severe discrimination, and even now physics remains a terrain dominated by men. When Wu retired from her position at Columbia in 1981, she reduced the number of women faculty members in her department to zero. Even now, almost two decades later, there are only two women on the physics faculty at Columbia. In 1997, the year of Dr. Wu’s death, women constituted only 3% of full professors in the field and only 9% of those working in the field overall. Working with The Committee of Women Physicists of the American Physical Society, Wu encouraged women to enter the field. Contemplating the problems encountered by women in science, she once said, “The main stumbling block in the way of any progress is and always has been unimpeachable tradition.” Wu’s career illustrates the possibility of disrupting tradition, and her example continues to inspire women in the sciences.

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2. Ibid. p. 69.
of prestigious prizes going to our students, we have also been saddened by the departures of faculty members whose dedication and passion helped to make the Institute the vibrant place that it has been over the last few years. I’m sure that everyone on campus joins me in wishing Professors Kathryn Gravdal and Zita Nuñes much success and happiness in their post-Columbia lives. We thank them for all that they have done for us.

And, as Professor Jean Howard moves on to enjoy a much deserved research leave, I would like to take this opportunity to express the debt of gratitude that the Institute owes her for the extraordinary efforts and exemplary achievements she made on its behalf. As Director between 1996 and 1999, Professor Howard labored heroically to recruit new faculty and to equip the Institute for a life beyond her own stewardship. We are all grateful to her for her energy, vision and tenacity.

As in the past, we look forward to celebrating the achievements of our own faculty and students. Book parties and celebratory occasions, which have become such an integral part of the community life centered at 763 Schermerhorn Extension, will continue. And it is appropriate to recognize here the hard work of the staff headed by Kathleen Savage, without whose labors these events could not occur.

In the meantime, please see the column on our recent Guggenheim prize winning colleagues, Professors Howard and Victoria de Grazia (both former Directors!). And watch your mail-boxes for invitations and announcements. The Institute encourages everyone to drop by and see what else is happening. Welcome back and have a wonderful semester!

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**Crawford, continued from page 6**

she ferreted out a good number of seventeenth century women poets. She continues, “I came back to the professor with a four page bibliography. That was the beginning of my career as a Renaissance scholar.” At Columbia, Professor Crawford teaches, among other things, undergraduate and graduate classes on early women writers.

Professor Crawford, who is teaching her first graduate seminar this fall, has enjoyed teaching at Columbia enormously. “I can’t say enough good things about Columbia undergraduates.” Clearly, the feeling is mutual. She has already been asked by three English majors to supervise independent studies, all of which are feminist projects. One of these students is conducting primary research on Puritan ideas about women’s private devotion, and another plans to investigate constructions of gender in Renaissance cross-dressing plays and popular pamphlets. Professor Crawford’s students have pressed her to teach early modern classes on the literature of colonization, metaphysical poetry, and on gender and sexuality. She hopes to have the chance to teach all of these classes.

Of her position at Columbia, Professor Crawford remarks, “Being a full-time teacher is having a powerful impact on my work. In every single class I’ve taught, I’ve learned from my students. For instance, I got an idea for an article I’m writing now from a class discussion on Herbert.”

In her teaching, as in her scholarship, Professor Crawford focuses on cultural history. Her seventeenth century lecture class last semester offered an “alternative version” of the traditional survey course. Her students read medical texts, popular broadsheets and pamphlets in addition to canonical works. She provided individual supervision for all forty-five students in her class on research projects covering an array of topics. She reports, “They produced historical projects on objects, places and phenomena such as alchemy, controversies over the use of the altar, the hybridization of fruit, early modern translations of Ovid’s Metamorphoses and the beheading of Charles I.”

In her classes, Professor Crawford incorporates a wide range of non-literary materials. “Last semester, I gave my students countless handouts: portraits of Elizabeth and James, emblem books, country house estate photographs, maps, copies of broadsheets, and title pages of books.” She is also working to improve her classes by employing modern technology. She says, “Both to save the trees and to make the presentation of visual materials more interactive, I’m setting up a web page for my class this fall that incorporates all of these images.” The web page will also include links to on-line databases, such as early modern dictionaries. Professor Crawford is one of the first Columbia professors to make use of the University’s new media support center for faculty. The technicians at the media center have helped her to put together web pages for her classes and to post her syllabi and assignments on the web.

Professor Crawford sees herself as part of an ongoing feminist movement in her field. “I got my Ph.D. at a time when much important feminist scholarship had already been produced. I could find out about seventeenth century women poets when I was an undergraduate only because other scholars had already dug them up and written about them. The Brown Women Writers Project, for instance, has totally revolutionized my field. Anyone can download formerly unavailable women’s texts.” She remarks that gender studies,
Many critics have discussed Sidney interpellating women readers. Communication but also as a way of not only of woman-to-woman think about Sapphics as a register addressing a woman. That led me to employed Sapphics when his cross-dressed male characters versification. “I noticed that one of this work, she says, “It started with the Sidneys and Margaret Cavendish. Explaining the origin of property rights.” Professor Crawford asserts, “was not a Catholic herself, but viewed the convent as a place where women could experience pleasure. The convent for her was not about a rejection of earthly pleasures; rather it was about the reclamation of property rights.” Professor Crawford has found support for her work not only in her department, which, she notes, “has an astonishing number of top senior Renaissance scholars,” but at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, which, she says, “is one of the best resources here at Columbia.” Currently, she belongs to a feminist writing group that meets regularly at the Institute. She explains, “It’s a group of junior feminist faculty working together to turn our dissertations into books.” The Institute offers not only a room in which these scholars can meet, but “it gives us an institutional rubric under which to work and provides support for our work. We know there are many great senior feminists there looking out for us.” A fan of the Institute’s “Feminist Interventions” lecture series, Professor Crawford remarks, “It’s great to go to the Institute once a month to listen to someone really smart talk about a subject that matters to you intellectually and culturally, even if it doesn’t pertain to your own work.” Professor Crawford has cross-listed her classes with the Institute and hopes to be able to teach courses there in the future.

Asked if she misses her native Canada, she replies, “Canada has socialized health care, better public schools, public libraries, better roads, and better civil rights. But in America you’ve got a lot to fight against, so you’ve got a lot of fighters, and fighters are the most interesting people.”

Scholars to look beyond heterosexual and marital models of relationships, queer studies has enabled new kinds of thinking about female as well as male homosociality.

As she reconfigures her monsters project as a book, Professor Crawford has also been working on a second book project. “My next project is about women’s communities and alliances in the early modern period, everything from literary coteries to sectarian coteries to female academies for the education of women. It is both about forms of female homosociality and about female intellectual and literary communities.” This research, unlike her dissertation, focuses on canonical figures such as the Sidneys and Margaret Cavendish. Explaining the origin of this work, she says, “It started with an essay that I wrote about female homosociality in a Sidney romance and a Shakespeare play.” She began to scrutinize Sidney’s use of Sapphic versification. “I noticed that one of this cross-dressed male characters employed Sapphics when addressing a woman. That led me to think about Sapphics as a register not only of woman-to-woman communication but also as a way of interpellating women readers.” Many critics have discussed Sidney as part of a homosocial literary community, and dismissed the fact that he addressed his writing to his sister, Mary Sidney. Responding to this oversight, Professor Crawford strives to “resist that move to dismiss the titular woman of Sidney’s texts.” She also focuses on desire between women, which recent criticism has commonly rendered invisible or portrayed as insignificant. Her work on Sidney led to an interest in different sorts of female coteries: sectarian coteries, coteries of vagabond women, coteries of recusant women (that is, Catholics who resisted Anglican dominance). Currently, she is writing about convents in the 1650’s, focusing on Margaret Cavendish’s play “The Convent of Pleasure.” Cavendish, Professor Crawford asserts, “was not a Catholic herself, but viewed the convent as a place where women could experience pleasure. The convent for her was not about a rejection of earthly pleasures; rather it was about the reclamation of property rights.”

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Adams, continued from page 7 shows. Professor Adams comments, “They are very playful about the kind of sexual differences that have always been part of the freak show. Hermaphrodites, cross-dressers and bearded ladies are all the principal material of the new side show.” Professor Adams points out that although there are certain continuities in the history of the sideshow, “ideas about what constitutes a deviant and physically interesting form of difference change as time goes on.” Her investigations of the history of the freak support this assertion. While conducting research in Texas last year, she unearthed a box of old photographs of freaks dubbed “Long hairs,” women whose hair reached the ground. “Today,” Professor Adams observes, “extremely long hair...\[continued on page 13\]
Morrison, continued from page 1

from a number of departments. As she says: “I have found at the Institute an intellectual environment—at once rigorous, capacious, and supportive—that is hard to duplicate inside one’s own department where daily business often overshadows intellectual exchanges.”

Asked to describe her own interests, Morris says that she is an anthropologist with a special interest in issues of visibility and in the relationship of modernity and mass media. Drawing on established media studies initiatives in anthropology, she also makes use of new developments in more philosophically oriented media studies and of work on poststructuralist theories of representation. Much of her ethnographic work has been done in Thailand, and her forthcoming book, *In the Place of Origins: Modernity and its Mediums in Northern Thailand*, shows to good advantage her interdisciplinary interests. In it she tells the story of “mediations” in Northern Thailand and of the transformations that have occurred as older forms of transmission—between the seen and the unseen worlds—have been encompassed by the mass media. The book traces the effects of those changes in the dominant discourse about “culture”, and it attempts to understand how practices that were once deemed heterodox or utterly abject could be revalued and rendered as things of worth in the moment of their disappearance. In the course of telling that story, *In the Place of Origins* attempts to comprehend the changing nature of locality and social relations in the late capitalist world which also involves new economies of sex and gender. The book ultimately understands each of these phenomena in terms of the emergent logics of indebtedness that now possess everyone in that part of the world. In the end, Morris says, the book becomes a meditation on the practice of ethnography and on the necessity of radical interdisciplinarity.

Morrison has also published *New World from Fragments: Film, Ethnography, and the Representation of Northwest Coast Cultures*, and she is at work on two new projects. One, which will take her back to Thailand and which she describes as deeply feminist even though gender is not its exclusive focus, will explore the role risk plays in the minds of Thai people in the aftermath of the “Asian Economic Crisis” where speculative investment and inadequate disclosure processes were widely held to have been responsible for the collapse of the currency. Morris has become fascinated by the degree to which new forms of speculation are occupying people and to what extent older forms of gambling are resurfacing. From casinos in borderland areas, to lottery frenzies, to astrologically divined investment schemes, to Amway, Thai people seem to be possessed by the prospect of miraculous wealth. Morris has become convinced that the entire history of Thailand’s capitalization needs to be rethought so as to explicate the particular ways in which the miraculousness of capital has been conceived there. This has taken her back into a rereading of older, indeed, classical arguments in Thai political economy and in Thai studies to the point that she now envisions a project in which an ethnography of economic crisis would be combined with an analysis of capitalism’s antecedents. In working on this project, Morris says that “I expect to learn, at least partially, why it is that Thailand has operated as a figure of both economic and sexual excess in the imagination of non-Thai people. Indeed, I believe that the so-called global sex economy is to be understood only by asking after the history of what has been read as economic excess and/or cultural promiscuity—qualities that would-be colonizers have often attributed to Thailand in their frustrated accounts of that country’s exceptional evasion of direct colonization.”

Her second project takes her to a different ethnographic site, the gold mining region outside Johannesburg in South Africa where she is investigating narratives of disaster and disappearance connected to the giant sink holes that in mid-century repeatedly opened up in these mining regions and swallowed buildings, people, and tennis courts. The holes are caused by the collapse of air pockets in porous limestone, a process that is hastened or precipitated when water, which previously stabilized the rock, is pumped out. The mines themselves required that hundreds of thousands of pounds of water be pumped out per minute, and though there has never been agreement on the degree to which the mines caused the holes, many people believe that without the mines the holes would have been far less frequent occurrences. These sinkholes became the source of numerous first-hand narratives of traumatic disappearance that resonated eerily with political developments in South Africa in the 1950s and 60s and 70s. Morris herself comes from a mining town in Western Canada where her father had emigrated from South Africa and where her grandfather was a mine worker. This particular project thus returns Morris to the landscapes and the narratives of traumatic disaster that were part of her own childhood and which have now become one aspect of her anthropological investigations.
Adams, continued from page 11

wouldn’t be considered freakish at all.” In her work, she stresses that the purported differences from normative humanity featured in freak shows are never inherent to the body. She explains, “There is always a network of strategies that the freak promoters and the performers use to identify a quality as freakish.” She adds that until World War Two, “it was quite acceptable to take any person of color, cause them to behave strangely, and call them an African savage. That, of course, mobilized a whole network of stereotypes about blackness.” She adds, “New versions of the freak show do not deal at all with race.”

Professor Adams positions her work in the broad tradition of American Studies. She says, “Although its boundaries and objects of study are currently the subject of some debate, American Studies seems to me more capacious and enduring in its approach than Cultural Studies. It can encompass historical work, archival research, and even ethnographies.” She contends that her methodological approach is not driven by a particular theoretical paradigm: “It is driven, above all, by the evidence itself.”

“Strange Company” also falls under the rubric of the new field of disability studies, which, Professor Adams says, “moves beyond a medicalized definition of disability, to recognize its constructed nature.” From this perspective, disability is understood not as an inherent quality but as an aspect of identity produced by the social world. Professor Adams asserts, “If I’m in a wheelchair, I’m only ‘disabled’ if a stairway prevents me from getting somewhere.” This conception of disability, she says, “has encouraged me both to think about the normal as a category that needs to be interrogated and to look at how the deviant and the normal play off against one another.”

Professor Adams’ work on freaks originated in an interest in theories of bodily deviance, particularly in contemporary theories of the female grotesque body. The emphasis of her work gradually shifted from theory to actual bodies in history, namely those of freaks. She explains, “I found freaks to be a sort of socio-historical embodiment of theories of the grotesque.” This readjustment of her project led to a further change in focus. Although she initially chose to center her work around representations of women’s bodies, she comments, “I found that there were just as many grotesque male bodies in side shows as female bodies. The freak show is interested in weird variations of gender and sex, and circulation of images of masculinity. Although most of the students welcomed the opportunity to engage with cultural forms in this way, some members of the class were resistant. Professor Adams remarks, “One challenge in teaching a masculinity course is that men are not accustomed to interrogating the conventions of the gender they claim as their own. White masculinity has such transparency and endurance that it can be especially difficult, at first, to challenge its assumptions.”

While Professor Adams has enjoyed teaching in her department and in the core, she is extremely eager to teach classes at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. Of the Institute, she says, “It gives students a model for what a contemporary feminism could look like.” She plans to teach the course “Feminist Texts” in the near future, and also hopes to organize a class around her most recent scholarly work, which deals with the history of the women’s movement in the 1960s. She explains, “In America during the 1960s there was a moment of transnational awareness, a cultural openness that inspired the woman’s movement and other social and political movements. I’m very interested in looking back to some of the texts from the woman’s movement during this period and trying to understand but not necessarily to recuperate them.”

Professor Adams’ recent interest in the 1960s has developed from her research on freaks. She remarks, “In the 1960s, the freak moves from an undesirable identity that’s imposed on you to a desired identity you adopt to show that you are voluntarily dropping out of the mainstream.”

“In the 1960s, the freak moves from an undesirable identity that's imposed on you to a desired identity you adopt to show that you are voluntarily dropping out of the mainstream.”

The insights Professor Adams has gained about gender from her research on freaks have influenced her teaching. “One of the reasons I teach courses on masculinity is to force the recognition that gender is about men as well as about women.” “American Masculinities,” which she is teaching again this fall, provides students with a strong introduction to gender studies as a mode of cultural analysis, centering around Hollywood’s role in the production in playing with dress and with the biological body.” Thus, she shifted her attention from women to gender.

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Former IRWAG Directors Win Guggenheims

For the academic year 1999-2000, Victoria de Grazia of the Department of History and Jean E. Howard of the English Department, both former directors of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, have been awarded Guggenheim Fellowships. These awards are granted on the basis of distinguished scholarly and creative achievement in the past and exceptional promise for future accomplishment. This year 179 such grants were awarded from a pool of nearly 2800 applicants.

Professor de Grazia, who directed the Institute from 1994 to 1996, is a Professor of History, who at Columbia also serves on the Executive Committee of the Center for Comparative Literature and Society and is the Chairperson for the Council for European Studies. She is the author of The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy (1981) and How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945 (1992), which won several prizes, including the Joan Kelly Prize of the American History Association. She is also co-editor of The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective (1996) and has written numerous scholarly articles dealing with the operations of power in daily life. Her work, which has been translated widely, deals with the ways in which power works across cultures, genders and classes. Besides the Guggenheim, Professor de Grazia has received numerous grants throughout her career, including an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, a German Marshall Fund Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Grant.

During her Guggenheim Fellowship year, Professor de Grazia will be working on a book exploring American market culture in twentieth-century Europe. This project, currently called Bright White Atlantic: the Making of European Market Culture in the American Century, examines what she calls “the coming of consumer modernity, the ways that European models were influenced by commercial ideas and institutions ‘made in the U.S.A.’” The project enables Professor de Grazia to develop several of her longstanding interests: the ways that cultures of consumption operate in different societies; the ways that political regimes involve people in dominant values; and the mechanisms by which American society has influenced other cultures. The book will be based on her archival research in the United States and in several European countries.

Professor Howard, who succeeded Professor de Grazia as Director of the Institute from 1996 to 1999, is a scholar of Early Modern English literature. Her books include Shakespeare’s Art of Orchestration: Stage Technique and Audience Response (1984); The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England (1994); and, with Phyllis Rackin, Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Reading of Shakespeare’s English Histories (1997). She is also co-editor of Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology (1987) and one of the four co-editors of The Norton Shakespeare (1997). In 1999-2000 she will serve as the President of the Shakespeare Association of America.
Graduate Courses

Fall 1999

W4300x. Advanced Topics: The Other Woman  
M. Condé-Philcox, W: 10-12

W6001x. Theoretical Paradigms in Feminist Scholarship  
A. Grossmann and M. Howell, W: 4-6

G8010x. Advanced Topics: Crimes of Intimacy  
R. Morris, M: 4-6

Spring 2000

G4000y. Genealogies of Feminism  
J. Cohen and D. von Mücke, tba

W4300y. Advanced Topics: Engendering the Gaze  
J. Weber, MW: 4-7

Undergraduate Courses

Fall 1999

V1001x. Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies (3pts.)  
A. Kessler-Harris and A. Najmabadi, MW: 1:10-2:25

V3111x. Feminist Texts I.  
C. Mercer, Th: 2-4

V3520x. Senior Seminar  
E. Blackmar, W: 2-4

W4300x. Advanced Topics in Women’s and Gender Studies: The Other Woman  
M. Condé-Philcox, W: 10-12.

Spring 2000

V3112y. Feminist Texts II.  
Tba

V3313y. Colloquium on Feminist Inquiry  
B. Simon, W: 2-4

W3920y. Women and Power in American History  
E. Baker, W: 11-1

W4300y. Advanced Topics in Women’s and Gender Studies: Engendering the Gaze  
J. Weber, MW: 4-7
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<th>Date</th>
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| **October 18:** | Alice Kessler-Harris, Professor of History  
What Discrimination?:  
Words and Meanings in 1960s America  
Ira Katznelson responding  
8 PM, 501 Schermerhorn Hall |
| **November 22:** | Film Screening, *Lola and Bilidikid*, a new film by the Turkish director Kutlug Altman.  
Panel: James Schamus, Professor, School of the Arts, co-producer  
Orli Ravid, Distributor and Head of Picture This Kutlug Ataman  
8 PM, The Miller Theater, Dodge Hall |
| **February 14:** | Ann Douglas, Professor of English and Comparative Literature  
Factories of Self-Celebration: The State, Gender, and Race in the Post-War Hollywood Musical  
Patrick Horrigan responding  
8 PM, 501 Schermerhorn Hall |
| **April 10:** | Poetry Reading  
Yvette Christiansë, Professor of Literature, Fordham University  
Stephanie Strickland, Poet and hypertext poet whose work appears in print, digital, and Web publications  
8 PM, The Miller Theater, Dodge Hall |

For further information please call the Institute at 212-854-3277.