Victoria de Grazia Succeeds Martha Howell as Institute’s Director

Victoria de Grazia, the Institute’s new director and Columbia professor of history, is a direct woman who talks in spurts. Thoughtful silences and slowly-enunciated words are followed by a torrent of sentences. She speaks alternately, her lofty academic tones mediated by brief summations in simpler layman’s terms: a habit reflecting, she explains, “the sense of gap between specialized languages, jargons, and plain speech.” The result, however, is that de Grazia is a woman capable of communicating, and making herself heard, on many different levels.

Although a longtime feminist, de Grazia did not contemplate the study of gender issues until she finished her first book. Her moment of consciousness-raising occurred while she was completing the index and realized she could list only a half-dozen places where she explicitly referred to women. How was it, she asked herself, that a study devoted to examining the oppression of the people under fascism addressed only half of that population?

In response to her own question, she recalls her cultural-political formation, moving between the U.S. and Europe during the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike the U.S., she explains, where the feminist movement stood apart from left-wing politics, in Europe it was long subordinated to the political left that focused primarily on class analysis. “Studying the history of women and gender and drawing on feminist perspectives became a way for me to rethink the categories of Marxist historiography,” she explains of her scholarly awakening, “a way to explore a whole range of broad questions about class, the nation, and the family, indispensable to a critical analysis of contemporary society.”

A Radical Beginning

De Grazia, however, has always been one to encourage “rethinking” accepted categories, a tendency which quickly earned her a reputation as a radical. As an undergraduate at Smith College in the politically-charged climate of the late ‘60s, she organized an arts festival which she called “The Engaged Artist.” This involved guerrilla theater troops and underground films, which, she explains, with their precocious sexuality and anti-Americanism, caused such a ruckus among the custodial staff at Smith that she was summoned to the President. “That was Smith,” de Grazia summarizes. “Stimulating education combined with suffocating paternalism.” Though she admits Smith has changed considerably since her undergraduate years, she remains ambivalent about the all-women’s educational experience. “Depending on the times, all-women’s education can be as conservative and as potent a purveyor of masculine ideologies as mixed institutions.”

The greatest cultural-political influence throughout her childhood and post-college years, however, was her growing exposure to European society: first through family trips (as the daughter of a college professor, de Grazia describes her family life as “peripatetic”), then through a sophomore year in Florence, thereafter with a Fulbright grant,
**THE GENDERED NATION:**
**Feminist Perspectives on Nationalism and the Modern Nation-State**

For many first-world women, the recent upsurge of nationalist violence has come as a shock. The Bosnian war presents a nightmare scenario of mass rape. In Africa, post-colonial nation-states collapse in civil war, the most vulnerable populations, women and children, victimized by ethnic slaughter, famine and cholera. In Europe, neo-nationalist movements raise the specter of interwar fascism with its regimented nationalist feminisms and birth campaigns. All over the globe fundamentalist religious movements protest against secular definitions of national citizenship, evoking traditionalist female roles. Recognizing the urgency of the issue to the lives of women everywhere, the IRWG will promote a series of seminars, public lectures, and a spring conference to explore a new generation of scholarship devoted to the gender dimensions of nationalism and the modern nation-state.

Resurgent nationalism, combined with the new challenges of fundamentalism and globalization to western-type nation-states, presents a particular test to western feminists. Many shared the widespread belief that the virulent old nationalism had been laid to rest, indeed that women were protagonists of a new post-national feeling, their commonalities transcending territorial barriers, their activism identified not with the old nation-state, but with the basically nation-less arena of the social and private. Often in ignorance of the ongoing anti-colonial movements and the effects specifically on women of the patriotic alignments produced by the Cold War, feminist scholarship has until recently paid little attention to the gendering of the nation-state, to the notions of female citizenship it yielded to the West, and to the vast ramifications these models have under imperialism in post-colonial societies.

Whether the nation is referred to as the motherland or fatherland, the nation-state is deeply gendered. Nationalist movements have always defined different roles for male and female in the imagined community of the nation and in nation-building. Citizenship prescribes rights and responsibilities differently for women and men. The old histories of nationalism highlight the sacrifices of “heroic mothers”; “maternity is the patriotism of women,” early 20th-century nationalists averred.

Starting in October, the Institute intends to explore various dimensions of what we have called the “gendered nation.” The several events, starting with the Thursday afternoon meetings, will offer diverse disciplinary as well as regional perspectives, drawing on the Columbia faculty’s outstandingly rich and varied work on the subject, as well as on the research of distinguished visitors. Some key issues under discussion include the nature of the model of female citizenship associated with the western nation-state, the definition of “the women question” in anti-colonial movements, authoritarian rule and “national” feminisms, and the gendering of national identities under the pressure of globalization and transnational cultural flows.

For information on the program, please contact the IRWG.

Victoria de Grazia
Director
which took her to Bologna and Florence. "Throughout my career," she emphasizes, "this contact with Europe, though difficult to sustain, has been indispensable to me both intellectually and personally."

Maintaining that contact was central to her decision to pursue her graduate studies at Columbia, and she was sustained there by professors whose own family and intellectual ties were European. She fields the oft-asked question, "How was it then?" with the blunt response, "Another world." This was not merely due to the fact that there were no women professors, she continues. Columbia had high standards of scholarship, but especially for anybody who qualified as different. She and a number of those in her cohort were deemed different not only because they were women, but because they were radicals as well. Instead of rejecting Columbia's idea of standards outright, however, their response was to internalize them. "If you wanted to be free of the system, you had to work twice as hard; three times as hard if you were a radical and wanted to study social history; four times as hard if you were a woman."

Columbia, however, unlike Smith, had no female professors to provide positive role models for women students—a reality that had a deep and prolonged effect on de Grazia. "After Smith College I never attended a lecture series by a woman. With the exception of Simone de Beauvoir, Hannah Arendt, or Simone Weil, our models were strangely, invariably, male. When I thought of the perfect lecture style, I thought of the delicate gesture one of my male professors made when he delivered a profound point—glancing at his fob-watch and gently putting it away in his vest pocket."

Despite these challenges, her Columbia experience enabled her to combine her European interests and influences with her academic and intellectual pursuits. De Grazia describes her dissertation and first book, The Culture of Consent: The...
state plays gender politics, I needed them in order to understand, with an inclusive gender perspective, the fascist patriarchy in Italy."

De Grazia describes her approach as one relating to the exercise of power through consumer and mass culture in complex capitalist systems. "A big interest in my work is to combine a revision of writing about contemporary society with a gendered perspective—meaning one which incorporates the impact on the family and the changing boundaries between private and public." This approach is inextricable from the theme de Grazia has been exploring since the early 1980s—also the subject of her present writing. She articulates this as the ways in which the U.S. has conditioned the development of mass society in Europe. "As relationships between the U.S. and Europe have shifted over the years," she explains, "so have my interests, moving from Italy to western Europe, and from the most catastrophic moments of early modern history to the post-1945 years with the onset of mass consumption." This current area of concentration expands on trends she observed in Italy, but tries to understand how models of consumption and social life have been played out in Europe, referring to American precedents and alternatives.

De Grazia began her teaching career at CUNY before going to Rutgers University, where she remained for fifteen years. In her last three years at Rutgers she served as the Project Director of the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis. The RCHA, she explains, is "a research and teaching institute that brings historical perspective to bear on issues of contemporary relevance." As director, she engaged in a study of consumer cultures that focused on the ways in which different societies use commodities. "The project was designed to highlight conflicts over consumer goods as definitions of individual and collective consumption, especially in moments of transition: the U.S. in the early 20th century, Europe in the 1950s-1960s, and Eastern Europe today. It also analyzed the impact of Western consumer models in other regions, and especially the ways in which goods are used to express gender and ethnic identities." Two volumes of writing are being published as a result of this study—The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective, appearing next year with University of California Press, and Paths to Mass Consumption, which treats Eastern and Western Europe since the 1930s.

**Morningside Heights Revisited**

De Grazia returned to Columbia, this time as a professor, in the fall of 1993. She taught classes entitled respectively, "Consumer Society" and "Introduction to Contemporary Europe," both of which included a strong gender dimension. She believes that the basic European history classes need to be rethought to give them perspective. "When people thought of the nation it was as the motherland or the fatherland. When political leaders thought of the state, they also thought of the family as the pillar of national power:"

In the years since her graduation, Columbia, like everything, has evolved considerably—de Grazia cites as evidence of change more women in more visible roles, and faculty and resources dedicated to studying the non-western world. But for all these positive changes she notes in her alma mater, de Grazia continues to question and to engage in the process of rethinking. She still feels a certain traditionalism exists in the curricular and academic structure that inhibits contact between departments and disciplines. "That is why centers like the Institute play such a crucial role," she insists. "Not only do they serve their immediate constituencies, but they also reach out, to 'imagine' other groups with which to commune..."
Kathryn Gravdal comments on the creation of her new position, Graduate Director of the Women’s Studies Program

It is with great pleasure that I return to the Institute as its first Graduate Director. This position was created this year because of the Institute’s commitment to graduate students in the Columbia community at large. Graduate students often express a feeling of intellectual isolation in their disciplines because of the rigorous curricular demands of departmental degree programs. We hope to create a space—both intellectual and physical—in which a community of graduate students can form across disciplinary lines. I hope students will feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas, or wishes.

Learn the Art of Teaching Women’s Studies

All graduate students interested in teaching women’s studies are invited to participate in a graduate seminar dedicated to exploring both pedagogical issues and curriculum development. Currently in its formative stage, the seminar will take place over the course of the spring term and will both help graduate students to be effective teaching assistants in women’s studies at Columbia and prepare students to teach interdisciplinary women’s studies courses at other universities. “Because women’s studies is interdisciplinary, it requires different teaching methods,” Gravdal explains. “We hope to have students from all different backgrounds coming together to develop a common pedagogical approach.” Anyone interested in participating should contact Kathryn Gravdal immediately. An organizational lunch will be scheduled for December, and all interested graduate students are urged to attend.

Media Professionals Discuss Women’s Issues in the Workplace

Due to the success of the “Women in Publishing” symposium (sponsored by the Institute in February 1993), Kathryn Gravdal is continuing her series on women in the professions this fall with a symposium on “Women in the Media.” Aimed at both graduate and undergraduate students, these symposia were created as a way to convey information about career possibilities, as well as to explore general issues related to women in a variety of professional spheres. Gravdal instituted the series with the hope of making students aware of the options available to them beyond the boundaries of academia. Still more important, this particular symposium will provide an opportunity to reflect on the political issues facing women in the media: the relationship of power to gender, race, education, sexuality, and class. Gravdal sees the series as another part of the Institute’s commitment to the Columbia community at large.

“Women and the Media” is scheduled for October 25 from 5-7pm in the Institute’s seminar room, 754 Schermerhorn Extension. Panelists have been chosen from a wide range of media professions, from producers to broadcast journalists to magazine and newspaper reporters. Currently scheduled to speak are: Maggie Bruen, independent filmmaker; Audrey Edwards, editor-at-large for Essence magazine; Annette Fuentes, award-winning reporter from The Daily News; Jill Tillman Irving, radio journalist and professor at the Columbia University School of Journalism; and Judy Tygard, Emmy Award-winning senior producer of “48 Hours.”

Earn A Certificate in Feminist Scholarship

Are you a graduate student whose research also involves issues relating to gender and women’s studies? Are you a graduate student otherwise interested in these fields? If so, you should be aware that the Institute offers a minor field exam and certificate that acknowledges the holder’s competency in the area of feminist scholarship. Kathryn Gravdal explains that the certificate was created “as a means of recognizing in a material way those graduate students who undertake an additional body of study. The certificate serves not only as an acknowledgment of their expertise from the Institute, it is a nationally-recognized commendation that can assist them in establishing their teaching careers.”

To receive a certificate, students must compile a reading list under the direction of two professors affiliated with the Institute. The actual exam can be administered either in conjunction with the student’s departmental oral exams, or within six months of completing the departmental exams. If interested, please contact Kathryn Gravdal at the Institute for further information.
### A Letter from the Undergraduate Program Director, Maggie Sale

One of my principal aims during my first year as Undergraduate Director was to survey and assess Columbia’s women’s studies curriculum through discussions with women’s studies majors, past and present, and women’s studies faculty at Barnard and Columbia. This year I am launching two projects, developed in the context of these conversations, that will address some of the majors’ stated concerns by further developing the undergraduate curriculum.

First, I will soon be approaching several departments about developing combined interdisciplinarydisciplinary majors with women’s studies, such as women’s studies/history or women’s studies/English. In the past, many students have tried to create similar combinations on their own through double majoring or doing a major and a concentration—a tremendously burdensome course of study. The proposed combined majors will most likely include the core requirements for both majors minus the related courses. These programs will provide students with both interdisciplinary breadth and a disciplinary focus but with a more manageable course load.

Second, this fall I will be directing a faculty seminar dedicated to developing a new core course, tentatively titled “Feminist Approaches to Scholarship” (see accompanying article). This course will consider principal debates among feminist scholars regarding interdisciplinary methodology and epistemology, and will survey specific techniques for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data, texts, etc. It will both help prepare majors for writing their senior theses and ease some of the overcrowding of the junior colloquium in feminist theory caused by the growth in our major.

I encourage students (and faculty) to check with me about the status of these projects and to discuss with me their intentions and goals. Let me sign off by saying how excited I am to be working with the majors on their senior theses in the seminar this fall.

### Progressive Politics and the Professions

In an era when just finding a job can be difficult, discovering a meaningful career—one that feeds not only the stomach but the mind and sense of political purpose as well—seems a daunting and impossible task to most college graduates. This quest is hindered further by the fact that career services typically present most students with a frustratingly narrow range of career options. In response to this lack of information, Professor Maggie Sale conceived of a panel called Progressive Politics and the Professions. “This panel,” she explains, “was generated out of concerns expressed by women’s studies majors who are politically committed and aware, yet are concerned as to how that sensibility can be transferred to the workplace.” Sale structured the panel to address two main objectives: 1) to let students know that more options are available; and 2) to provide a forum for women to talk about the relationship between their political and professional lives.

The first Progressive Politics Panel was held last spring, and focused on the nonprofit sector, an area largely neglected by career services. The panelists were: Linda Earle, of the New York State Council on the Arts; Yolanda Sanchez, Director of the Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs; Emily Schnee, ESL Teacher at the Consortium on Worker Education; and Carey Shea, Director of the Community Building Initiative, a project of the Local Initiative Support Corporation.

“It was interesting how many similarities surfaced between these women’s different career experiences,” Sale reports. “All agreed that being creative, innovative, persistent, optimistic, and retaining faith in oneself and others is crucial when working for social and economic change.” Sale summarized the panelists’ conclusions, stating, “Work of this nature needs to be done locally. As long as we keep focused on the community or population we’re serving, we can see a significant impact. There’s value in work, even if it is only affecting 20 people’s lives.”

The second Progressive Politics and the Professions Panel is tentatively scheduled for February 7, 1995. Don’t miss this opportunity to explore the ways in which it is possible to transform youthful idealism into a lifetime commitment.

### Faculty Seminar: Building Community and Commitment at Columbia

In the wake of the current examination of the structure and content of the Columbia Women’s Studies major, Undergraduate Director Maggie Sale is organizing a faculty seminar that will meet six times during the fall semester. Its purpose, Sale explains, is to bring together faculty from the humanities and social sciences in order to develop a course description and archive of readings for a new junior level undergraduate theory course— provisionally entitled “Feminist Approaches to Scholarship”—to be taught this spring by Professor Kathryn Gravdal. “The goal of the faculty seminar,” Sale continues, “is to develop a collection of writings that will be kept in the Institute for future professors of the course to use in developing their syllabi. We want the course description to be organized in such a way that people with varying backgrounds can approach it in different ways.”

In addition to serving a community-building function for the many newer faculty members who, as Sale puts it, “will really benefit from the opportunity to discuss pedagogical questions with their colleagues in other departments,” the seminar is also an attempt to solidify faculty support and commitment to the Women’s Studies Department. Columbia departments do not regularly allocate courses to the Women’s Studies Program as they do at Barnard and numerous other colleges and universities across the nation. “It is important for the Columbia faculty to devote themselves to the Women’s Studies Program rather than relying on Barnard, and for Columbia University at large to support their faculty in this endeavor,” Sale insists. Furthermore, Sale points out, such structural commitments to interdisciplinary work will benefit not only the Women’s Studies Program, but the entire university as well, by providing interested faculty with the opportunity to become better at what they do.
Institute Sponsors International Conference

On the weekend of September 23, the Institute will co-sponsor an international, interdisciplinary conference entitled “Gender and Modernity in the Age of Rationalization” at the Union Theological Seminary (120th and Broadway). The conference, organized by Atina Grossmann, an associate professor in the History Department, and Molly Nolan, a professor of history at NYU, will explore how definitions of modernity have shaped gender constructions, and attempt to determine whether or not these constructions can be understood through what Grossmann terms the “admittedly slippery, ambiguous and capacious concept of rationalization.”

For Grossmann, the idea of rationalization has long been a preoccupation. This conference, in fact, grows out of a series of workshops that she’s been involved in over the past five years—first in Berlin, in 1989, and later at Trinity University in Hartford, Connecticut. These workshops were organized by a group of German and American scholars attempting to define the concepts of “modernity” and “rationality,” specifically within a German context. “With this conference, however,” Grossmann explains, “we are trying to see how these broad concepts can also be applied to other modern industrial societies.” In short, rationalization could provide a link between industrialized countries that have, despite being subject to varying and different cultural and political influences, experienced similar social restructurings.

Rationalization, Grossmann explains, is more a European than an American concept. “There is no one term in English that captures—with all the ideological force—all that the term ‘rationalization’ implies in Germany,” she states. At the most basic level, rationalization refers to the planned organization of production and labor processes that came as a result of industrial, technological, and scientific advances during the interwar years. As a trademark of modernity, rationalization also encompasses the subsequent evolution of social structures; the development, for example, of personnel management and company social policies “aimed at conditioning workers for the modern production processes and ‘rationally’ restructuring their social relations,” and the promotion of new forms of consumption, leisure, family life, and sexuality. Twentieth-century industrial societies have been challenged with the need to balance many competing forces. “Sexuality and fertility, family and gender, all have been as important as economics, politics and culture,” says Grossmann. Questions of gender are thus central to the quest for any overarching theory of rationalization and, indeed, any theory of modernity.

The conference will consist of six panels addressing the diverse areas of intersection between gender, modernity and rationalization: “The Labor Process and Housework”; “Consumption”; “Social Welfare”; “Racism and Gender and Political Cultures”; “Body Politics and Experiences of Intimacy and Solidarity”; and “Learning to be ‘Rational.’” The panels will focus on so-called “exemplary” countries, such as the US, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, the Soviet Union, and Sweden, where, as Grossmann puts it, the processes of rationalization are most obvious and problematic.

First Scholar-in-Residence Solidifies Institute’s National Reputation

Jean Howard completed her term as the Institute’s inaugural Scholar-in-Residence with a highly successful public conference on “The Material of Culture in Early Modern Europe.” The Scholar-in-Residence position was established last fall as a way to enhance the Institute’s intellectual identity and solidify its reputation as a national center for interdisciplinary feminist scholarship. The conference marked the culmination of a four-week seminar series Howard led during the spring semester. Comprised of fifteen scholars—representing a diversity of disciplines, including history, English, French, Italian and art history—from several universities in the New York area, the seminar series offered participants an opportunity to present works in progress, and to exchange ideas on how feminist scholarship has changed the way in which various disciplines determine what constitutes the objects and methods of cultural analysis. The concluding day-long public conference was organized and moderated by the seminar series participants and featured nationally-renowned speakers who, Howard explains, were chosen because “they were people whose work directly addressed the very issues we had begun to explore.” Howard expressed enthusiasm regarding the high quality of the papers, and the fact that the work was so cross-disciplinary in nature.

This fall, Howard is on leave from her position as Columbia professor of English and Comparative Literature to co-write a book with University of Pennsylvania professor Phyllis Rackin entitled Engendering the Nation. She describes this work as a look at the history plays in the early modern period, and argues that these plays create a “nation-forming genre that also intervenes in conventional notions of the gender system, creating new models of gender in the emerging nation-state.” The Institute extends its appreciation to Jean Howard for successfully pioneering the Scholar-in-Residence position, and for her immense contributions toward establishing the Institute as a nationally-visible center for interdisciplinary feminist work.
INTRODUCTION:
What’s Good for the IRWG is Good for Columbia

Any feminist graduate student will tell you that it’s not just more intellectually stimulating, but also more pleasant to work in a gender-sensitive department. A chief goal of the IRWG over the years has been to persuade departments to move in a gendered direction through hirings and promotions as well as curricular innovations. With this issue, we want to begin recognizing such accomplishments—beginning with the Anthropology Department, which, since February 1993, has appointed four new faculty members whose work contributes to gender scholarship. Anthropology, to quote Chair of the Department and good IRWG friend Elaine Combs-Schilling, “addresses how human beings in community construct themselves and their collectivities, as well as how these constructions enable and constrain. Gender proves particularly illuminating for understanding these constructions.” The recent hiring of these four enormously creative scholars—Linda Green, Roger Lancaster, Rosalind Morris, and Mick Taussig—each of whom approaches gender differently, is, as Combs-Schilling puts it, “simply a way of incorporating the best work in current anthropology into our department.” Here, we introduce you to them.

Linda Green

The artwork propped on top of Linda Green’s busy bookshelf hints at both her present and former lives. A swooping pastel poster advertising the Alaskan Iditarod dogsled race sits alongside brightly-colored weavings from Guatemala. “I lived and worked in Alaska for eight years,” Green explains. “I was a nurse practitioner who traveled regularly to rural villages, and worked on tuberculosis control in Anchorage.” Though she left Alaska to attend the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health for a masters in epidemiology, Green realized that what she had loved most about her Alaska experience was the people. She shifted her focus to anthropology because “it was a way to talk about the social and economic conditions of people’s illnesses.”

Green joined the Columbia faculty in August 1993 as an assistant professor with a joint appointment in the Anthropology Department and the Economic and Political Development Department in the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). She received her Ph.D. in anthropology in 1993 from the University of California at Berkeley, where she wrote her dissertation on Guatemalan Mayan widows of political violence, a work that was based on three years of field research in the western highlands of Guatemala. Her dissertation, The Realities of Survival: Mayan Widows in Guatemala, will be published by Columbia University Press in 1995. “My dissertation topic emerged from my own political interests,” Green elaborates. “It involved political work as well as the effect such politics have on women’s lives. These women are simultaneously victims and survivors, and I wanted to look at how they experienced that duality.” Though her current areas of interest combine issues of gender, political violence and development in Central and Latin America, Green plans to expand her scholarly focus to the study of transnational communities and the relocation of people and cultural migration.
This fall, Green is teaching courses offered in both the Anthropology Department and at SIPA: an undergraduate seminar entitled “Power and Violence in Central America” (Anthropology) and a course called “Issues in Development” (SIPA). During the spring term, she is teaching a graduate seminar, “Crossing Borders: Transnational Capital, Community and Culture,” (Anthropology), as well as co-teaching a “Project Management” workshop (SIPA). Though issues of gender do factor into her current courses, Green says she hopes to make gender a more explicit focus in the future.

**Roger Lancaster**

Roger Lancaster is a man caught at the crossroads—by choice, not decision. “I became interested in anthropology because it represents an intersection between the hard sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities,” Lancaster explains. “No matter where they originate, all ideas eventually pass through anthropology. And anthropology generates its own best ideas in this liminal area between the more fixed disciplines. It is an aggressively interdisciplinary space that molds itself to the subject matter it’s working with.” Lancaster’s fascination with those places where different patterns of thought converge also explains his newest geographic area of concentration—the Caribbean. “The Caribbean—especially Puerto Rico—is a model of multicultural, transnational, intercultural phenomenon par excellence. It is the crossroads of Africa, Europe, and North and South America.”

Though Lancaster has always been involved with issues of gender and sexuality, prior to coming to Columbia University in September 1993 his geographical interests were firmly rooted in Central America—particularly Nicaragua. As a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley, Lancaster wrote a doctoral dissertation *Thanks to God in the Revolution: Popular Religion and Class Consciousness in the New Nicaragua* (Columbia University Press, 1988), which involved years of fieldwork in Managua, Nicaragua. His second book, *Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua* (University of California Press, 1993), examined family life in Nicaragua during the years of war and crisis. Lancaster describes this work as “an attempt at understanding the diverse areas of gender, sexuality, and the body in a political/economic context.” *Life is Hard* was enthusiastically received by critical audiences, winning both the C. Wright Mills Award and the Ruth Benedict Award.

Currently, Lancaster is working on two new projects. First, he is editing a “reader” called *Gender, Sexuality and Culture*. “Most of the material published on these topics is in the humanities. This book, however, is tailored to the social sciences. It is not,” he states, “primarily a textual or literary approach. With an emphasis on ethnographic methods, the essays I’ve collected treat institutions, body practices, and everyday experiences in various cultures.” In addition, Lancaster is at work on his third book, *The Queer Body*, which, he explains, is “an attempt at thinking through gay and lesbian theory by means other than semiotic, textual, or discursive models. I’m returning analysis to the sensory body—nerve endings, tactility, and embodied experience, rather than a purely representational body.” He is attempting to do this, he adds, without falling into the trap of biological reductionism or being pulled by the current gravitational shift toward literary theory. “We do inhabit physical bodies,” Lancaster insists. “These bodies are not fixed and immutable, but then, they are certainly not ephemeral fictions, either. The body has to be thought of as the medium of our existence. Then you have a very different starting point, instead of thinking of the body as an artifact of language.” Both of the classes Lancaster is teaching this fall—a graduate course on the materiality of the body and an undergraduate course in 20th-century cultural theory emphasizing models of the body—examine the relationship between the body and consciousness, perception and culture.

**Rosalind Morris**

Rosalind Morris, one of the most recent additions to Columbia’s Anthropology Department, says she decided to concentrate on anthropology because, “it allows one to address issues raised by literary, film, or psychoanalytic theory, or whatever is of the moment.” And, as Morris points out, in an age when identity is an increasingly difficult thing to fix and an issue of deepening political significance, this sort of innately “interdisciplinary discipline” can come as close as possible to understanding the fluid categories of being—especially categories of gender. “Gender became a dominant issue in anthropology in the ’70s,” elaborates Morris. “Since then
we’ve moved from a concern with the universality of oppression to an interest in the lack of universality of what it means to be a man or a woman. The earlier questions have not been abandoned, but analytic concerns have shifted as the categories of male and female have become increasingly unstable. Now, the questions must be recast.”

Morris is teaching two classes this fall which accomplish that very goal—“Culture and Performance” for undergraduates, and “Film and Performativity” for graduate students. In the spring she is teaching “Performing the Sexual Subject” as the Advanced Topics in Feminist Theory course for the graduate Women’s Studies Program, and “Gender and Ethnographic Representation” for undergraduates. “These latter courses examine the history of gender studies and the emergence of categories of performance in the analysis of sexuality. They examine the shift from gender and representation to sexuality and performance. They also look at anthropology’s relationship to literature and film studies.”

Morris arrived at Columbia as a recent graduate from the University of Chicago. Morris’ dissertation, Consuming the Margins: Northern Thai Spirit Mediumship and the Theatrics of Consumption in the Age of Late Capitalism, involved six months of field work in Chiang Mai, Thailand. “Though questions of gender were a big part of that work, it was more an historical study of modernity than one of gender categories,” she states. Her master’s thesis, New Worlds from Fragments, was published this year by Westview Press. Morris describes this work as the history of ethnographic film and the representation of native Northwest coast cultures.

Currently, Morris is focusing on the question of how to theorize modernity in order to develop, as she puts it, “a social theory that is not so ocularcentric. This actually emerges nicely out of my work in Thailand. Thai society cannot be understood in terms of purely panoptic power. Because most theories of modern sexuality are so deeply entwined with the idea of surveillance, a different understanding of visibility and power (which Thailand demands) will necessarily lead us to rethink the history of sexualities.” In addition, Morris hopes to continue with her own filmmaking, which to date includes a number of experimental, abstract shorts.

**Mick Taussig**

A bookjacket blurb describes Mick Taussig’s work as “vigorous and unorthodox”—terms that appear to apply to Taussig’s life in general, and to Taussig himself. The provocative titles of his books alone—Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man, A Study in Terror and Healing, and The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America, to name a few—suggest the highly creative mind with which Taussig approaches his subject matter. Few professors could promise in a course description to begin with “my fieldwork into spirit possession on the enchanted mountain of a spirit queen in a South American republic.” Yet this is but one of the many unusual topics to which Taussig has applied his unusual intellect.

A native Australian, Taussig began his professional career in a rather traditional manner as a medical student at the University of Sydney. He rapidly abandoned this pursuit out of his avid distaste for what he describes as “a horrible profession, whose view of healing and people is both authoritarian and mechanistic.” From Sydney, he relocated to the London School of Economics in 1967 to pursue a degree in sociology and anthropology. His attraction to anthropology, he explains, was greatly influenced by the Vietnam War and the social unrest that occurred at the end of the ’60s. He was motivated, he explains, to get involved in third-world revolutionary movements, an impulse he quickly realized was fraught with “pie-in-the-sky idealism.” Nonetheless, this impulse brought him to South America, particularly to Colombia, where he has returned since 1969 to do research on topics as diverse as African slavery, peasant economics, health issues, and the impact of colonialism on shamanism. In addition to the aforementioned titles, Taussig has published a collection of his own essays titled The Nervous System, and, most recently, a book called Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses which explores the power of the copy over the original through South American history and ethnography.

Taussig began his teaching career at the University of Michigan. Prior to joining the Anthropology Department at Columbia in the fall of 1993, Taussig spent seven years teaching performance studies at NYU, where he concentrated primarily on the construction of reality, and on what it requires to live in a “constructed world” as both real and really made up. “People say that gender, for instance, is culturally constructed; that the category of ‘woman’ is culturally constructed. It sounds wonderful but what, really, does that mean? I’m interested in exploring that notion further.”

Taussig continues to explore topics involving gender studies at Columbia, primarily through his course on “Taboo and Transgression,” offered this fall. (Last year Taussig also taught another gender-related course, “Gift and Fetish.”) “One of my primary interests is the study of the philosophy of transgression,” he elaborates. “‘Taboo’ is a word that, in the 18th century, settled uncomfortably but readily between law, desire, magic, and the curious logic of the negative. Its meaning in contemporary western societies implies a mystical relation of attraction and repulsion. This course takes up the question as to how erotic dimensions of violence might ‘function’ by means of this same attraction and repulsion.”

Taussig’s other fall course, a graduate seminar called “Magic of the State,” is dedicated to understanding the fantasy constructions underlying the sacred or quasi-sacred authority of the modern state, its law, its monopoly of the legitimate use of violence, and its pivotal role in the theatrical construction of the real and the “made up.”

Together with the Barnard Theater Department and a group of students and colleagues such as Rosalind Morris (see her profile beginning on page 9), Taussig is organizing a two-year series of performances entitled “Policing New York and Other Places.” These performances will be held on both the Barnard and Columbia campuses.
Mapping the Intricacies of the Information Superhighway

Many people might consider the popularized term “information superhighway” something of a misnomer. With its astounding web of networks, news groups, and discussion lists, the superhighway adopts the complex configuration of a daunting labyrinth, filled with unexplored forks and side streets. In late 1993, the Institute volunteered to join the Math Department in a pilot project, launched by the Columbia University Libraries with the goal of demystifying this labyrinthine world of online resources. The project was conceived as a way to insert computer-savvy electronic research assistants into academic departments to advise faculty and students. Martha Howell, then Director of the Institute for Research in African Women and Gender, and Manning Marable, Director of the Institute for Research in African American Studies, jumped at the chance to participate jointly in the pilot project.

"The two Institutes seemed perfect locations for the service," Howell remarks. "We work principally with students and faculty from the humanities and social sciences—the very users for whom the service is designed—and because our faculty represent numerous disciplines, we can provide connections to many different departments. The Institutes are also ideal as working spaces," Howell continues. "Rather than just administrative centers which organize the business of our programs, our offices include seminar rooms and study carrels where faculty and students actually do some of their scholarly work. In such and environment, potential users would, I thought, find it easy to take advantage of an assistant’s expertise."

Alana Erickson, Electronic Research Assistant for both the IRWG and IRAAS, has been well-utilized since her arrival in November 1993. Not only has she assisted faculty in various research capacities, she’s also advised the Institute on upgrading its computers and establishing Ethernet connections directly to the Internet. Erickson, currently a Ph.D. candidate in American history, is a tremendous resource—an ideal guide who understands not only the world of technology, but the specific needs of academics as well. "I not only know about computers," she states, "but as a graduate student I know about research." Due to the positive response from all participating departments, the Columbia University Libraries has decided to expand their Electronic Research Assistant Program to eight more departments in the coming academic year.

Erickson is available as a "guide" with respect to any and all on-line needs—from e-mail, to discussion lists, to news groups, to roaming the Internet for citations and data, to locating and using information from CD-ROM or computer tapes. She can be reached by phone at (212) 854-7034 or in person at 760A Schermerhorn Extension. From cmunix you can find out her office hours by typing finger aj4 at the $ prompt, or, for those still relying on more archaic means of communication, her hours are posted on her door and listed on her phone message.

Current and Forthcoming Faculty Publications on Women and Gender

**Caroline Bynum**, Professor of History
*The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*  
Columbia University Press, forthcoming November 1994
A contribution to the new field of "body history," Bynum’s book connects the western obsession with bodily return to a deep-seated fear of biological process and a tendency to locate identity and individuality in the body.

**Maria M. Carrión**, Assistant Professor of Spanish
*Arquitectura y Cuerpo en la Figura Autorial de Teresa de Jesús*  
Anthropos, forthcoming October 1994
Carrión’s book proposes a new reading of Teresa’s narrative prose, not as an emblematic icon of the oppressive ideological frame of the Catholic church and Spanish nationalisms, but as a critique of spaces prescribed for women by architectural theory and practice.

**Martha Albertson Fineman**, Professor of Law and Director of the Feminism and Legal Theory Workshop
*The Neutered Mother, The Sexual Family, and Other Twentieth Century Tragedies*  
Routledge, forthcoming winter 1994
*The Public Nature of Private Violence: The Discovery of Domestic Abuse* (editor)  
Routledge, forthcoming September 1994
*Recapturing the Colonial Category: Mothers in Law* (editor and contributor)  
Routledge, forthcoming spring 1995
The Neutered Mother argues for the reinstatement of public and legal subsidy from sexual affiliations (marriage) to nurturing and caretaking. It also details the way in which motherhood and mothering have been systematically devalued. Fineman’s latter two books are collections of papers, the first on law and “domestic” violence, the second on motherhood with an emphasis on the legal regulation of that status.

**Alina Grossmann**, Associate Professor of History
*Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform 1920-1950*  
Oxford University Press, forthcoming 1995
Focused on the turbulent and innovative Weimar years, Grossmann’s book analyzes a mass movement of doctors and laypeople that demanded women’s right to abortion and public access to birth control and sex education.

**John Stratton Hawley**, Director of the Southern Asian Institute at Columbia University and Professor and Chair in the Religion Department at Barnard College
*Fundamentalism and Gender* (editor)  
Oxford University Press, 1993
*San: The Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India* (co-editor with Donna M. Walff)  
Oxford University Press, 1994
*Devi: The Goddess in India* (editor)  
University of California Press, forthcoming 1995
These books, edited by Hawley, contain essays and articles dealing with Hindu religion and issues of gender, and in some cases explore these themes and issues in the broader field of comparative religion.

**Nathalie Kampen**, Professor of Women’s Studies (Chair) and Art History, Barnard College
*Women in the Classical World: Image and Text* (co-authored with Elaine Fantham, Helene P. Foley, Sarah Pomroy, and H.A. Shapiro)  
Oxford University Press, July 1994
A narrative history of women in the Greek, Etruscan, and Roman worlds, Kampen’s book includes discussions of the major texts by men that depict women, and considers archaeological materials and household objects that help, along with writings by women, to make the specificity of women’s lives clearer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roger N. Lancaster</td>
<td>Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua</td>
<td>University of California Press</td>
<td>January 1993</td>
<td>Focusing on family, gender, and sexuality, Lancaster’s book is a non-traditional ethnography of everyday life in Nicaragua during the period when the revolution was slowly being suffocated by the U.S.-sponsored contra war.</td>
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<td>Deborah Levenson-Estrada</td>
<td>Trade Unionists Against Terror, Guatemala City 1954-1985</td>
<td>University of North Carolina</td>
<td>May 1994</td>
<td>Levenson-Estrada’s book illuminates complex relations between gender and workplace activism, showing how individual men and women were able to act collectively despite a violent state, death squads, and a culture of fear.</td>
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<td>Dorothea von Mücke</td>
<td>Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century (co-edited with Veronica Kelly)</td>
<td>Stanford University Press</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>This volume is a collection of essays by twelve scholars who draw from a variety of cultural sources—from literature to garden architecture to pornography—in order to analyze the complex appearances of the human body in the cultural production of meaning.</td>
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<td>Rosalind Rosenberg</td>
<td>Divided Lives: American Women in the 20th Century</td>
<td>Hill and Wang</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Divided Lives puts women at the center of the social and political history of twentieth century U.S. history, and in so doing challenges the conventional view that the experiences of men can alone account for historical change.</td>
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<td>Gayatri Spivak</td>
<td>Outside in the Teaching Machine</td>
<td>Routledge</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Both works, Outside (a Marxist/feminist/deconstructivist/globalist consideration of the conflict between migrancy and postcoloniality on the issue of multiculturalism) and Imaginary Maps (a translation of Mahasweta Devi’s fiction), relate to gender studies in their basic suppositions, and in their discussions of the relationship between women and class in postcoloniality and migrancy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deborah Valenze</td>
<td>The First Industrial Woman</td>
<td>Oxford University Press</td>
<td>Forthcoming November 1994</td>
<td>Through selective treatments of agriculture, spinning, and cottage industries, Valenze shows how the rise of values of productivity and rationality subordinated women of the working class and strengthened an emerging ethos of individualism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Woloch</td>
<td>Women and the American Experience</td>
<td>McGraw Hill</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>This book, a survey of American Women’s History from the 17th century to the present, is also a synthesis of a generation of feminist scholarship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Zito</td>
<td>Body, Subject, and Power in China (co-edited with Tani E. Barlow)</td>
<td>University of Chicago Press</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>This collection of essays brings theoretical concerns and methods of contemporary critical cultural studies to the study of China by exploring problems of bodiliness, engendered subjectivities, and discourses of power through a variety of sources.</td>
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**Feminist News**

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