Director's Column
By Rosalind Morris

For teachers and students, September is truly the beginning of a new year. Labor Day is our New Year's Eve. And the beginning of a new year always gives us an opportunity to think back on the previous year, to reflect on successes, to lament losses, and to plan the future with excitement.

It is with nothing less than a sense of triumph that we enter this Fall, having successfully concluded two searches in the Spring semester. Next year, the Institute will be joined by two of the country's most

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New Voices at Columbia: Introducing Sharon Marcus

The Institute for Research on Women and Gender is excited to announce the arrival of Professor Sharon Marcus, who comes to the Columbia community from the University of California, Berkeley. A renowned scholar whose publications on Victorian literature and architecture have made significant contributions to urban studies and the scholarship on women and gender, she joins the Department of English and Comparative Literature this Fall.

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In Memoriam: Kathleen Savage

Every once in a while, a person passes through our lives in ways that change us irrevocably. Kathleen Savage, the Assistant to the Director at IRaCG for nearly a decade, was one such person. She joined our community when our still-infant Institute was under the leadership of Martha Howell, and she remained the constant center of our changing universe, as Professors Victoria de Grazia, Jean Howard, Rosalind Morris, and Christia Mercer took the helm. She helped it to mature into the vibrant institution that it is now. When she died on February 24, 2003, after a brief and difficult battle with cancer, all of us lost a part of ourselves and of our collective history.

Kathleen had been a member of the Columbia University community for 32 years before her untimely death at the age of 56. She had, over the decades, worked in a large number of the University’s programs and departments: in Music, where she began and where she met her husband, Stephen Dydo; in History; in General Studies; in the American Language Program; and, lastly, at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. But it would be wrong to imagine her time here merely as the passing of years in a place to work. For amid the labor of everydayness, Kathleen secured time and energy for people to an extraordinary degree. She did not work alongside so much as she sustained the people with whom she worked, making it possible for them to be their best selves by offering them that inimitable gift of care and attention, a forgiving ear and, invariably, laughter.

One of three children born to two adoring parents, Kathleen was born in Ashokan in 1946, before moving to Kingston, New York. Her childhood friend, Charlie Gaffney, remembers her as a sprite of a child: nimble and swift of mind and foot, a passionate girl with such joie de vivre that he thought of her as a force of nature.

From a lively girl, Kathleen grew up into a vivacious young woman. She went to... 

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

The establishment of a permanent core faculty, cross-appointed in various disciplinary departments, promises to make Gender Studies at Columbia University one of the strongest such fields in the U.S.

under the new structure (History and IRWaG), and Lila Abu-Lughod (Anthropology and IRWaG).

This represents a profoundly significant landmark in our development. The establishment of a permanent core faculty, cross-appointed in various disciplinary departments, promises to make Gender Studies at Columbia University one of the strongest such fields in the U.S. We are already widely recognized for the excellence of our associated faculty and for the strong curriculum that grounds our teaching. Now, we hope to enter the ranks of even more established programs with longer histories of permanent faculty. This new team of people, whose time and energies are secured for the purposes of feminist pedagogy and research in gender studies, will guide long-term curricular development, provide continuous advising, and ensure a richly diverse array of courses for students to choose from. They will also help to maintain a high level of visibility for research on gender issues at this university, and will carry forward IRWaG’s project of insisting upon the significance and the necessity of such research at any world-class university.

Curriculum and course development continues to be an urgent task at IRWaG, as we endeavor to make the degree program responsive to changing needs and emergent social phenomena. This is not easy in times of war, and this year, as in the past, we find ourselves teaching and learning in a situation of enormous global instability, when military responses to political failures seem to dominate all aspects of our domestic and international lives. Over the past two years, IRWaG has organized a variety of contexts in which students and faculty may think about these issues, from classrooms to symposia. Film screenings and conferences on women and war, on the plight of women in Afghanistan, on the politics of media violence—among other topics—have been among our activities. This autumn, students may also take classes with IRWaG faculty on the nature of the state, on war in Southeast Asia, on feminism and internationalism, or on law and identity (see our course brochure). And IRWaG will continue to host ongoing public lectures and debates on timely issues, as well as regular events on topics of more traditional relevance: from Renaissance literature, to the history of women in Islam, to the literatures of First and Second Wave feminism.

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accomplished scholars in their respective fields, Elizabeth A.
Povinelli (jointly hired by Anthropology, Law, and IRWaG) and
Marianne Hirsch (English and IRWaG). Professor Povinelli will join
Columbia from the University of Chicago, and Professor Hirsch is
departing Dartmouth for our campus. Their hires conclude the first major
stage of faculty recruitment into permanent half-time positions at the
Institute for Research on Women and Gender. They join Alice Kessler-
Harris, our first faculty member
**Sodomy and the Supreme Court: Lawrence v. Texas**

**By Jean L. Cohen**

The Supreme Court’s decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* (June 27, 2003) has been heralded as the landmark which indeed it is. In its 6–3 vote, the Court overturned a Texas law that criminalized “homosexual” sodomy, thereby striking down not only all same-sex sodomy laws (Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri are the other three states with such laws on the books), but also all “gender neutral” laws criminalizing sodomy between heterosexuals and homosexuals alike (on the books in nine states: Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah and Virginia). Moreover, *Lawrence* overruled the Court’s own 17-year-old precedent, which dismissed the same constitutional argument that the Court now embraced, citing a decision by the European Court of Human Rights to make its new case.

The *Lawrence* decision struck down the Texas law on the grounds that it violates privacy and liberty interests protected by the due process clause of the 14th amendment. In other words, the Court found that fundamental privacy protections apply to homosexual as well as heterosexual intimacy. No longer can consensual adult sexual behavior conducted in private between persons of the same sex be criminalized merely because a legislative majority considers the acts, or the fact that it is persons of the same sex engaging in them, repugnant. No longer can homosexuals or lesbians be stigmatized as sexual deviants by the law.

That this decision matters greatly to those affected comes as no surprise. But why did it receive several days’ worth of full-spread front-page headlines, in-depth articles and analysis, and why did it trigger innumerable radio and TV talk show debates? Why did it lead to such euphoria on the part of gays, lesbians and civil libertarians, and such rage on the part of conservatives? The answers to these questions lie in the doctrinal, cultural, political, and constitutional issues that the Court’s decision implicitly raises.

In its infamous 1986 decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, the Court refused to apply to “homosexual intimacy” the privacy jurisprudence it had developed in a line of rulings initiated in 1965 regarding intimate association. From *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), which first applied “substantive due process privacy analysis” to the right of married couples to use contraception; through *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972), which granted the same right to non-married couples on equal protection grounds; through *Roe v. Wade* (1973), protecting the right to choose an abortion as an intimate decision covered by privacy analysis; and more recently, *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey* (1992, upholding the core of *Roe*), the Court had affirmed and subsequently reaffirmed the substantive dimension of the liberty and privacy at stake in personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, and intimate decisions arising in the context of intimate association. In *Bowers*, however, the Court failed to extend these protections to homosexual intimate association. It withheld privacy rights from homosexuals by arguing that the Constitution does not confer a right to engage in “homosexual sodomy.” And it did so by invoking a selective history of “Western civilization” and Judeo-Christian tradition in an effort to demonstrate that homosexual sodomy has long been deemed immoral, and even a “crime against nature.”

The *Lawrence* decision overturned *Bowers* on both counts. Justice Kennedy’s majority decision finally acknowledged that the issue at stake, then and now, was never the “act of sodomy” per se, but rather the right to participate in a consensual, adult relationship along with the intimacies it entails. According to Kennedy, “To say that the issue in *Bowers* was simply the right to engage in certain sexual conduct demeans the claim that individual put forward just as it would demean a married couple were it to be said that marriage is simply about the right to have sexual intercourse.” Moreover, the result of criminalizing homosexual sodomy is to demean people who engage in same-sex relationships by imposing a deviant identity on them, stigmatizing the respective groups and inviting discrimination against them in both public and private spheres. Quoting Justice Steven’s dissent in *Bowers*, Kennedy reminds us that the mere fact that a governing majority in a state traditionally viewed a practice as immoral is insufficient reason for upheld a law prohibiting the practice: neither history nor tradition could save a law against miscegenation from constitutional attack. In other words, arguments and not “tradition” are needed to justify such prohibitions.

What makes this decision radical, however, is the fact that it is grounded in privacy analysis rather than equal protection arguments.
The efflorescence of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender studies over the past decade has raised many questions about what it means to write a history of sexuality. What assumptions do such histories rest upon? What do they include or exclude? And how should we narrate the very history of the political and academic movements from which such scholarship has emerged? What issues are central or peripheral to the history of LGBT studies themselves?

On February 27, 2003, Carolyn Dinshaw of the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality at New York University responded to such questions in a presentation about the censorship she encountered as one of the founders and editors of GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies. Her lecture was part of the annual series entitled "Queer Futures," which was curated this year by David Kurnick, a doctoral student in the Department of English. While some might dismiss incidents of censorship (which occurred in Malaysia and Canada) as irrelevant to scholarship in the United States, Professor Dinshaw argued that such conflicts engage issues central to LGBT studies today, no matter where they occur. This is especially true of journals such as GLQ, which seek to address an international audience and the concerns that scholars face in other locations. The history of GLQ cannot be extricated from the material conditions of its academic enterprise, nor from the larger issues LGBT studies ought to address: problems not only of community and identity formation, but of "making histories in a transnational frame."

By examining the history of a publication itself concerned with thinking about histories of sexuality, Professor Dinshaw thus sought to expand the scope of LGBT inquiry more generally.

Founded in 1991 by Professor Dinshaw and David M. Halpern, GLQ was conceived in the spirit of the "disruptive, disloyal energy of queerness" pervasive in the activism and academia of that time. Yet the very creation of the journal was also, of course, a gesture towards professional and institutional legitimacy. This tension between disruption and disciplinarity is evident in the founders' subversive choice of title. While "G" stands for "Gay" and "L" for "Lesbian," "Q" functions as a sliding signifier, standing for both "Queer" and "Quarterly." The "Q" gestures toward the vocabulary of "queerness" contemporary with the journal's inception, but it refuses to date itself as simply a product of that moment. Nor does it want to discard the important work performed under the terms, "gay" and "lesbian."

In order to maintain such a commitment to questioning the very terms through which sexuality is defined and understood, Professors Dinshaw and Halpern chose to produce GLQ through a for-profit press (Gordon and Breach Science Publishers). They believed this decision would guarantee them intellectual freedom: "as long as we could sell journals, they wouldn't interfere with our ideas." In other words, "liberation through capitalism" would free GLQ from the restrictions a state university press funded by taxpayers might impose.

Yet as Professors Dinshaw and Halpern soon discovered, the equally repressive economic concerns of a transnational corporation resulted in its own set of problems. In 1996, customs officials held up a routine shipment of the journal sent to Gordon and Breach's production office in Malaysia. An article by Lawrence Cohen ("Holi in Banares and the Mahaland of Modernity," GLQ 2:4) included reproductions of "obscene" illustrations found in political and religious pamphlets that appear every year during the Hindu festival of Holi in Banares. The Malaysian police considered these images an affront to Malaysian Muslims, and warned that if more such material appeared in the publication, the entire office would be shut down.

Gordon and Breach had previously taken a supportive and non-interventionist editorial stance with the journal; however, the Malaysian incident concerned important company operations in a Far East production and distribution hub. Defending GLQ could risk a "cross-cultural blunder," a costly legal battle, and endanger the economic or cultural well-being of the publisher's personnel. The freedom granted by the profit motive, Professor Dinshaw discovered, is not identical to the intellectual freedom and social transformation fought for by Western social and political movements. "Our Western formulations of 'freedom' and 'liberation,' always at the ready, were not only naïve in relation to the profit motive, but inadequate in this transnational situation."

Indeed, when the editors submitted the next issue of GLQ for production, Gordon and Breach similarly refused to print K. Daymond's piece, "Bodies on the Line" (GLQ 4:1), since it contained graphic photographs of lesbian S/M acts considered obscene in Canada, where the journal was printed. Given this editorial impasse, GLQ was ultimately sold to Duke University Press, which guaranteed freedom of expression, but at the cost of the more limited distribution that university presses are able to provide.

It would be easy to explain these acts of censorship as homophobia...
Disenfranchised Workers and Disappearing Women: 
Coco Fusco on Art and Activism

A highlight of last spring's symposium, "Women on the Line: Women, Work, and the U.S./Mexican Border" (see story in this issue of Feminist News) was Columbia School of the Arts Professor Coco Fusco's presentation of her efforts to publicize the plight of women working in foreign-owned factories (maquiladoras) in Mexico. An interdisciplinary artist who has performed, lectured, exhibited, and curated throughout the world, Fusco is the author of English Is Broken Here (1995) and The Bodies That Were Not Ours and Other Writings (2001). She also edited Corpus Delicti: Performance Art of the Americas (1999).

One of the many qualities that distinguishes Fusco's work is her critical rigor in exposing the underside of late capitalism. Whether demonstrating how the "disembodiment" celebrated by internet culture also dehumanizes the workers who produce its technology, or examining how the commodification of "multiculturalism" ensures ethnic visibility at the cost of political influence, Fusco reveals how the promises of globalization often translate into oppressive social realities. New technologies and the associated fantasies of mobility, she demonstrates, often entail but also conceal new forms of disappearance and instability for laboring populations. Sometimes, they provide employers with new ways to evade accountability as well. But they also enable novel forms of protest and resistance, as Fusco's presentation of her own art and activism made clear.

One of the pieces Fusco discussed at IRWaG's symposium was a 12-hour streaming net video performance, which she made in 2001, about surveillance and the disciplining of female bodies in the maquiladora complex. Titled "Dolores from 10 to 10," the piece was inspired by fieldwork Fusco conducted with maquiladora workers in Tijuana. Fusco discovered that maquiladoras would periodically shut down and re-open their facilities in order to avoid responsibility for the seniority, pensions, and other benefits otherwise owed their employees. When one worker dared to question this policy, she was locked in an office for twelve hours and deprived of food, water, and bathroom facilities while the management tried to force her to resign. The woman later filed—and won—a suit against the company, but one of the challenges posed to her case was its lack of evidence. Not only were her colleagues afraid to testify, but there was no physical proof of her ordeal.

How can a factory lack visual surveillance, Fusco asked, when it supervises its workers so carefully and is itself devoted to producing so much of the technology needed for surveillance? How can any such factory both demand visibility and then leave no traces? Fusco answered these questions by producing her own fictive documentary footage. "Dolores from 10 to 10" is a real-time re-enactment of what the surveillance tape might have looked like. Broadcast live in such a way as to permit viewers to participate in the interrogation process, and re-broadcast using museum security monitors, Fusco's internet performance implicitly asked viewers to imagine how many other similar stories might have been (or are being) forced out of the corporate field of vision. Moreover, by allowing its internet viewers (who were unsure whether the performance was real) to participate, she forced them to contemplate the ethics of viewing surveillance and other live material on the internet. In the end, "Dolores from 10 to 10" questions the intimacy and the strange distance that characterizes all internet engagements.

Such insistence upon examining the politics of the spectator and not just of those "in the picture" is one of the things that sets Fusco apart. "It's not enough just to represent the problem," she said. "I wanted to deal with both the story and how we deal with awful things that happen far away. Looking at something telematically turns it into a game. It dissipates the idea of agency in the spectator—of any moral relation to what he or she views."

At the same time, however, this technology can also be turned against itself in order to produce virtual actions with very real effects. At the April symposium, Fusco also discussed a "flood-net" action conducted last year to call attention to the hundreds of women murdered on the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez border. On a single day, thousands of people across the globe simultaneously emailed so

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CALLA BROWN:
The Political Economy of Cervical Cancer

Calla Brown, who hails from Zionsville, Indiana, began her studies at Columbia eager to pursue an interest in healthcare. After focusing on core and premed requirements during her first two years, she took the Institute’s Feminist Texts II course “on a whim.” Impressed by the good teacher-to-student ratio in the classes and the possibility of working closely with faculty, she decided to major in Women’s and Gender Studies and to focus her work upon the discourses and practices surrounding women’s sexual health.

Brown’s thesis, supervised by Professor Judith Gibber (Department of Biology) and Professor Abu-Lughod, examines preventative measures taken against cervical cancer. It argues that the rhetoric of promiscuity used to describe the risk factors for morbidity from this disease obscures the true risk factor: failure to get regular Pap smear exams. After reading documents produced by the Center for Disease Control and shadowing health care providers at a clinic that treats cervical cancer, Brown conducted a survey concerning knowledge of the transmission and consequences of HPV (human papilloma virus, the virus that causes cervical cancer), and concluded that death from the disease is not so much a sexual issue as an economic one. Most women who die from cervical cancer in the United States are poor, uninformed, and do not have health insurance. Education and access to health care—rather than attempts to police sexual behavior—are thus the keys to reducing mortality rates for the disease, in her analysis.

In addition to her extensive research, Brown also brought a wealth of clinical experience to the project. During her years at Columbia, she spent her summer breaks working at an HPV lab, and she has also volunteered with pre- and post-test HIV counseling at the Gay Health Advocacy Project. Still, Brown describes the process of writing her thesis as a challenge: “It was a lot of work … I don’t think I’ve done anything else even close to it, and it was very gratifying to complete.” Now graduated, Brown is currently taking a year off to work and travel, and in the future she plans a career in international health care, women’s health, or gay and lesbian health.

Seven seniors majoring in Women’s and Gender Studies wrote theses at IRWaG this year, under the supervision of Professor Lila Abu-Lughod, the Institute’s Undergraduate Director. With topics ranging from feminist bioethics to legal definitions of motherhood to histories of feminist activity, these projects took on many issues that have become central to studies of women and gender, and thus exemplify the interdisciplinarity and theoretical rigor for which IRWaG is well-known. Feminist News recently spoke with six of the seniors about their senior theses and future plans. (The seventh, Reina Platt, whose project examined representations of the victims of 9/11 in the New York Times, was unavailable for interview.)

KERRY LEAR:
The Legal Limits to Lesbian Parenting

An experienced babysitter and co-coordinator of Students for Choice, Kerry Lear knew that she wanted to write her senior thesis on concepts of motherhood and child-rearing. But it was not until taking a seminar at Barnard last Fall on sexuality and the law with visiting professor Paula Ettelbrick that Lear was inspired to examine the ways in which motherhood and the legal sphere overlap. With help from Professor Ettelbrick, as well as Professor Abu-Lughod and Professor Carol Sanger of the Columbia Law School, Lear decided to look at court cases concerning the rights of non-biological lesbian mothers. Understanding how courts support or challenge these claims for custody, Lear argued, would illuminate contemporary legal definitions of parenthood more generally.

Lear’s research, which focused on cases in New York State, revealed that while courts have supported non-biological parents who previously legally adopted their children, appeals to existing legal theories of “psychological parenting” have met with little success. While second-parent adoption is thus an effective proactive measure for lesbian couples, however, it also weeds out many potential parents, since the process is expensive, time-consuming, and difficult for those with a criminal record. Noting that other states have come up with guidelines to determine whether a non-biological mother has acted in the role of the parent, Lear’s thesis concludes by asserting that more attention is needed to redefine parenthood and how it should be legally recognized, in order to enable those women who did not choose second-parent adoption to claim legal rights to their non-biological children.

Lear spent the summer working at a law firm in her hometown of Kansas City, Missouri, and is now planning to move to the West Coast, where she will take a few years off before starting law school. “I didn’t enter the Women’s Studies major in order to make a career of it,” she reflects. “It was more of an idea that having background knowledge in women’s studies would help me in any career I decided to pursue, and give me a better day-to-day understanding of how things work. Whatever I go into, it will definitely play a role.”
HALEY ACRE: 
**Sports, Drug Testing, and the Secret Surveillance of Sex**

Haley Acre, a native of Seattle, entered Columbia as a premed student, but an introductory course to Women's and Gender Studies taught by Professor Sherry Ortner and Alice Kessler-Harris, Professor of History and IRWaG's Director of Graduate Studies, soon changed all that. "It blew me away," she recalls. "I found myself doing even the most menial work for the class rather than my premed assignments." Not only was Acre attracted by the interdisciplinarity of the program, but her knowledge of departments at other universities convinced her that IRWaG’s program is one of the most progressive and innovative around. "This is the least limiting program you can get into," she says. "A lot of people elsewhere are still just learning basic elements of women's history, whereas here we are investigating issues of gender. It's not just about oppression, breast cancer, and rape, but about how gender functions in society, positively and negatively."

Building upon her own experience as an athlete in track and cross country at Columbia, Acre wrote her thesis about drug and sex testing in the Olympics. "It's a very important topic," she says. "Many feminist scholars have examined science and the scientific study of sexuality, but no one is looking at athletics and drug testing in particular." Under the supervision of Professor Abu-Lughod and Barnard Professor Rebecca Young, who teaches a course on science and sexuality, Acre discovered that while mass sex testing has been abandoned since the 2000 Olympic games, current drug testing now polices gender in the same way that chromosomal testing once did. The tests, which now dominate athletic competition and constitute the key to its forms of sexual surveillance, focus upon hormones and other body chemicals that are thought to compose or...
Announcing the 2003 Annual
Virginia C. Gildersleeve Conference
Jumpin’ At The Sun:
Reassessing The Life And Work Of
Zora Neale Hurston
with a keynote address by Alice Walker
Friday, October 3
Registration begins at 9:00 AM in Barnard Hall Lobby

As one of the principal figures of the Harlem Renaissance, novelist, playwright and essayist Zora Neale Hurston has left her indelible impression on Barnard, the surrounding neighborhood, and, of course, generation after generation of readers. A new wave of scholarship on Hurston's life and letters makes this an excellent time for a reappraisal of these varied contributions. We are especially pleased to offer a keynote address by poet, novelist and essayist Alice Walker, author of such classics as *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, *The Color Purple*, *The Temple of My Familiar*, and *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, as well as the landmark 1975 essay, "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston," which is often considered the impetus for a serious revival in Hurston studies.

Joining Ms. Walker will be a panel of distinguished scholars whose contributions to our understanding of Hurston's life and work are nothing short of extraordinary:

- Valerie Boyd, author of *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*
- Ann duCille, author of *Skin Trade*
- Robert Hemenway, author of *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography*
- Carla Kaplan, co-editor (with Robert Hemenway) of *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*
- Anthea Kraut, Fellow in Theatre and Drama at the Humanities Research Institute, University of California at Irvine
- Irma McClaurin, Deputy Provost, Fisk University
- Cheryl Wall, author of *Women of the Harlem Renaissance*, among others.

To kick-off this extraordinary conference, we invite you to join us on Thursday, October 2 for an evening of Hurston's work in performance. David Krasner, Associate Professor of Theater Studies at Yale University and author of *A Beautiful Pageant: African American Theatre, Performance and Drama in the Harlem Renaissance, 1910–1927*, joins BOSS (Black Organization of Soul Sisters), for a spirited evening of dramatic readings from such Hurston classics as *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Spunk* and *Mule Bone*.

This conference is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required. To reserve your place or for more information, please call the Barnard Center for Research on Women at 212.854.2067 or visit www.barnard.edu/bcrw.

Presented by the Barnard Center for Research on Women, the Barnard Department of English, the Barnard Department of Anthropology, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Columbia University, and the Institute for African-American Studies at Columbia University.
One of IRWaG’s mandates is to focus the attention of the Columbia community upon urgent matters of women, gender, and social justice. While in recent times, IRWaG scholars have devoted particular consideration to the gendered issues associated with the “war on terror,” they have also sought to raise public awareness regarding the female victims of less spectacular, but no less deadly, conflicts.

In a one-day symposium held on April 25 and titled “Women on the Line: Women, Work, and the U.S./Mexican Border,” IRWaG drew attention to one such frequently overlooked battle: the encounter between global capital and local labor waged daily in the borderlands between the United States and Mexico, and upon the bodies of the women who work in the region’s many maquiladoras. Maquiladoras are foreign-owned factories that assemble finished products with imported machinery and materials. Tax and other treaties facilitate their establishment and operation, yet these employers often contribute little to the safety or infrastructure of the urban centers in which they operate; even public services as simple as lighting and safe transport to and from work are often unavailable. Frequently, the factories themselves are the scenes of brutally inhumane practices, and the wages they pay subject the many workers whom they employ to degradation and desperation.

In recent decades, the numbers of maquiladoras have soared, and the combination of rapid growth and failing infrastructure has produced high levels of crime and violence, much of which is gendered and directed against women. The statistics that index crime and violence in the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez area—one of the most intense sites of maquiladora labor—are horrifying and enigmatic at the same time. Not only have more than 300 women employed by maquiladoras on the El Paso/Juarez border disappeared or been murdered over the past decade, but authorities have made little effort either to find the culprits or to solve the problems of violence and unsafe working conditions that make such murders possible.

Despite strong pressure from victims’ families and local and international activists, the rate of such crime has remained constant, and the progress toward solving the crimes seems negligible. Moreover, the brutality of the workplaces is often overshadowed by the even more gruesome brutality of the murders, and thus, neither the disappearances nor the invisible presences of the women (and sometimes men) in the factories is well known beyond circles of labor and human rights activists. Indeed, while many of the technologies and toys—from cell phones to Barbie dolls—enjoyed by North Americans are produced by maquiladoras (or similar production facilities in East Asia), there is little public knowledge concerning the gendered violence and exploitation that produces them. Ironically, such violence has become so extreme and yet so everyday that it has assumed the status of “normal,” and thus has become invisible to outsiders and locals alike.

In an afternoon of presentations, discussions, and film-screening, a number of scholars and artists brought the plight of female maquiladora workers into public visibility. After opening remarks by IRWaG Director Professor Rosalind Morris, and an introduction by Professor Rachel Adams (English, Columbia), interdisciplinary artist Coco Fusco (School of the Arts, Columbia) gave a video presentation of her internet performance piece, “Dolores from 10 to 10,” and discussed how she has used art and activism to publicize the challenges facing women on the border. (See the story on Coco Fusco in this issue of Feminist News.)

Later that afternoon, Professor Kendall Thomas of Columbia Law School moderated a panel discussion on “Women and Labor’s Law(less) Zone.” The first speaker, Professor Melissa Wright (Geography, University of Pennsylvania), examined how the exploitation women experience within factories translates to the violence experienced outside them. How is it, she asked, that publicizing the disappearances and murders in Juarez can be viewed as a political act, rather than reasonable social behavior? Why do...
**Director’s, continued from page 3**

scholarship on African American women, and explorations of Jewish women’s literature.

Among those topics that will surely attract our attention and interpretive labors in the coming months is the recent Supreme Court decision overturning the anti-sodomy laws which have, for so long, provided the grounding for the legalized discrimination against homosexuality and queer sex. This landmark decision, the terms of which were established by a clear majority, now constitutes the point from which both progressive and reactionary forces will organize themselves. One of the most compelling questions concerns the possibility that the United States will, on a state-by-state basis, follow Canada’s Supreme Court lead in permitting gay unions “to the exclusion of all other persons” and granting them the full legal status of marriage. There is much debate about this, in both gay and straight communities, and at IRWaG, we hope to contribute to that debate with informed and informative events.

Jean Cohen’s article in this issue of *Feminist News* begins that process.

Still another issue on our radar is the impending decision regarding *Roe vs. Wade*, and thus on the status of women’s reproductive rights. Many who are celebrating the recent Supreme Court decision, which used privacy to secure other rights, are conscious that even the seemingly most entrenched rights can be revoked, and are thus watching the debates surrounding this imminent decision with great interest and, occasionally, trepidation. Developments over the last 5 years suggest that rights which we took for granted for more than two decades are being rescinded or narrowed. Recent challenges to reproductive rights include decisions by Congress and the Senate to limit aid to those nations which have vigorous family planning programs in which abortion is an option; the withholding of federal monies to states which seek to use these funds to purchase Medicaid coverage that includes abortion services for low-income women; the continued ban on abortion for women in federal prisons, except in cases of rape, incest or potential pregnancy-related injury; the prohibition on abortions in military hospitals; and a law that restricts government workers and their dependents enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan from receiving coverage for abortions unless a pregnancy is life-threatening or results from rape or incest. To keep us informed of these issues, the next issue of *Feminist News* will feature a conversation on the abortion debate, with commentary from a variety of disciplines and perspectives.

As always, *Feminist News* attempts to extend the range of our dialogue, to make our activities known to a wider community, and to invite readers to join us at public events. We look forward to a new year full of change and challenge, and shall join all of Columbia University as it commences its celebration of 250 years. To new students on campus, we offer a hearty welcome. To those who are returning, we say, welcome back! Our colleagues on the faculty are reminded that IRWaG welcomes all who care about questions of gender. We hope to see you at our events, and we wish you all a very fine year.

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**Savage, continued from page 1**

the College of New Rochelle, withdrawing briefly into grief when her father died suddenly, and returning to the world more melancholic, but still—as pictures of her attest—capable of extravagant adventuresomeness and the profound attachment that would draw so many of us to her over the years. Her son, John, was born in 1981, and he remained the object of her most abiding love. Over the years, she traveled at every opportunity, developing a special affection for the Netherlands and Greece.

Even in her illness, she fantasized great journeys and often joked that she had been reduced to morphine trips. Such was her humor: dry and sharp, self-reflective, and smart.

That humor and the kindness that she lavished upon her friends, as well as the capacious knowledge that she possessed of New York—the product of her prodigious reading and passionate listening—was remarked by almost all of the several hundred people who attended Kathleen’s funeral and the memorial service organized by the Institute in April of this year. Her numerous friends around the world will cherish memories of their times together; many testified to that effect in the course of the service.

At IRWaG, we will remain grateful for the humanity she brought to her job. Over the years, Kathleen acted as a surrogate parent for nearly all of the work-study students who found employment in our offices. It was not uncommon, on a Friday evening, to find her cooking for them, or to hear her offering advice on how to study, how to survive life’s traumas, or when to take a break from the burdens of school. She provided the bridge to independent adulthood for many.

To her faculty colleagues, she provided calm and sage advice when it was needed, hilarity and ironic commentary when it was helpful, and bracing perspective when things were in need of reassessment. She buffeted our souls in difficult times and shared our joys when these came. For all of these reasons, we shall miss her. For the same reasons, we shall bear her in mind, as we go forward without her. The Institute for Research on Women and Gender bids Kathleen adieu, and extends its deepest sympathies to Kathleen’s son, John, to her sister and brother-in-law, Meg and Don Siewert, and to her brother and sister-in-law, Andy and Cheryl Savage. To her friends, many of whom provided sustenance and comfort to Kathleen during her illness, we offer condolences and the sense of a shared sorrow. As her god-daughter so eloquently stated, “We are better for having known her.”
Due to competition from East Asia, the region’s economic development qualified—are viewed as the key to only they are presumed to be high-tech industries for which invisibility, in which only men—and sex workers or runaways? The suggestion that they are “merely” absence of working women by public officials try to normalize the images that accompanied Cohen’s article include male-female as well as male-male coupling. Moreover, the Malaysian authorities objected to the journal on religious rather than sexual grounds. Although the Malaysian government is not a theocratic state but a parliamentary system, it represents a largely Muslim population. It has increasingly invoked the tenets of conservatively-interpreted Islamic custom (adat) and law (Sharia), including sexual regulations and prohibitions, as part of a strategy for self-legitimation and control: as a means to oust oppositional elements and to represent them as threats to the nation according to a logic of a “threat to Islam” and “reverse orientalism.” Thus, an interaction between corporation and state may result in a censorship that looks like Western homophobia, but is in fact “more globally complicated and entrenched” and not necessarily driven by direct animosity towards gays and lesbians. Indeed, to insist upon such a narrative of sexual oppression is to write an implicit chronology that pits progressive secular freedom against timeless timelines. We must understand our very selves—identities, communities, histories—in relation to these increasingly transnational contexts, if we are ever going to approach the promise, and resist the parochialism, of the queer 90s.”

Professor’s Dinshaw’s words fell on sympathetic and deeply-engaged ears. Her lecture was extremely well-attended, and the audience of faculty and students at Columbia University demonstrated their enthusiasm with vigorous questions and warm conversation in the reception that followed. Students and faculty interested in the topics and issues covered by IRWaG’s “Queer Futures” lecture series are invited to send their names and addresses for inclusion on our mailing list. In addition, we extend a heartfelt invitation to all members of the Columbia University community to attend future events and activities. Announcements of this year’s lectures will be made in September. So, watch for posters and e-mails. We’ll look forward to seeing you.

**Border, continued from page 9**

Public officials try to normalize the absence of working women by suggesting that they are “merely” sex workers or runaways? The answer, Professor Wright argued, lies in a larger politics of invisibility, in which only men—and the high-tech industries for which only they are presumed to be qualified—are viewed as the key to the region’s economic development. Due to competition from East Asia, the Mexican government is trying to attract more technology-based industry, rather than the assembly work that maquiladora women traditionally perform. The disappearance of women from public view, and their relative disappearance as a proportion of the workforce in maquiladoras, has thus become a symbol of progress rather than crisis.

Patricia Fernandez-Kelley (Sociology, Princeton University), a social anthropologist who has been studying maquiladoras since 1979, offered a different perspective. Given that maquiladoras have become a blueprint for NAFTA, she highlighted the importance of analyzing these factories in the context of larger-scale neoliberal economic trends. In particular, she argued, isolating one group of victims—such as the disappeared female maquiladora workers—

**Border, continued on page 18**
Professor Marcus’s work typifies the interdisciplinary breadth and theoretical ambition that link the diverse scholarly community at IRWaG. Her first book, Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London (University of California Press, 1999) brings together history, literary studies, and women’s studies in order to break apart traditional assumptions about space and gender in nineteenth-century Western Europe. Much of the scholarship on this era, Professor Marcus observes, describes life during the “age of great cities” as one of crowds, streets, and public places. Yet this period is also seen as “the zenith of a domestic ideology that emphasized the private pleasures of home.” How can urban studies, she asks, simply excise residential architecture from the urban landscapes these buildings often dominated? Were private homes, and the women who inhabited them, truly as isolated from urban life as many assume?

Apartment Stories focuses upon the apartment house as emblem of the intersection between city and home, public and private, male and female.

Rather than try to overcome this contradiction by arguing for a gendered division of space—“the city was public and male, the home private and female”—Apartment Stories focuses upon the apartment house as emblem of the intersection between city and home, public and private, male and female. “Apartment buildings,” Professor Marcus argues, “combine shared public space with private space; in form, style, and mass they resemble public monumental buildings as much as they do residential types; and they are a product of intense urbanization. I was interested in how commentators on city life did or did not incorporate the apartment house into their representations of urban life, and in how architects and domestic ideologues reconciled apartment-house life with the ideology of separate spheres.”

In order to do this, Professor Marcus studied materials that included architectural treatises, handbooks, and plans; housekeeping manuals; medical investigations into urban hygiene; and the vast literature of urban observation that attempted to organize and theorize city life. Moreover, since Professor Marcus’s training is in comparative literature, she looked closely at the realist novel in French and English, which literary studies has linked both to the rise of domestic ideology and to the intensification of the domestic sphere.

Apartment Stories focuses on the differences between the forms of residential urban architecture and the fictional narratives associated with them in two iconic cities of nineteenth-century Europe: Paris and London. It draws out the implications of English urbanism, with its emphasis on discrete single-family dwellings, and French urbanism, which was dominated by apartment buildings, and the very different relationships between domestic and public space that they accommodated and indeed encouraged. In the novels of the time, Professor Marcus discerns different fantasies and fictions about the kinds of people who move between public and private domains, and about the nature of visibility within each.

“Like the apartment house,” Professor Marcus says, “the nineteenth-century novel was both public and private: produced for general consumption even as reading was usually depicted as an intensely private activity.” Indeed, as Professor Marcus’s reading of Honoré de Balzac’s Cousin Pons makes clear, the omniscient narrator of the realist novel found its real-life counterpart in the figure of the Parisian portière, the woman who controlled exit and entry into apartment buildings. As the person who could see and know everything without leaving the house, the portière epitomized the urban desire in mid-nineteenth-century France for transparency and visibility, as well as the blurring of private and public spheres this desire produced. Meanwhile, the anxiety about the invasion of privacy represented by the portière also reveals how urban commentators wanted to limit such powers of observation to men.

In London, on the other hand, a city whose planners self-consciously opposed the city to Paris, the emphasis was upon the privacy of the single-family home and garden. “Just as the Parisians extended an urban sensibility to include women,” Professor Marcus says, “Londoners included men in their vision of domesticity.” Professor Marcus’s research revealed, however, that this domestic ideology did not reflect actual living conditions, but rather represented a reaction to the overcrowding of urban London life, in which most middle-class people could only afford to rent one or two rooms within a house built for a single family.

Professor Marcus concludes by detailing the ways in which Parisians, after several turbulent revolutions and under fairly repressive political regimes, similarly began to advocate the interiorization represented by the single-family home. This discourse, she argues, revealed a desire to assert a paternal order in which men would act as “proper heads of households.” In other words, not only privacy was at stake, but “the sovereignty and prestige of a patriarch.” Yet, as in London, this interiorization was impossible to
“You can’t talk about the city and the home without talking about sex and gender,” Professor Marcus remarks, “although certainly many have tried.”

literary representations and other kinds of representation.”

Professor Marcus’s other publications and research interests span an impressive range of subjects, disciplines, and historical periods. In addition to her work on Victorian literature and nineteenth-century urban life, Professor Marcus has also published articles on Rosemary’s Baby, on Anne Frank and Hannah Arendt, and on recent writing about New York City. Her 2002 article, “Comparative Sapphism,” in the book The Literary Channel, won Honorable Mention from the Crompton-Noll Award for best article in lesbian and gay studies, and she has also won many fellowships and grants for her work (most recently the ACLS Frederick Burkhart Fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study and a Stanford Humanities Center Fellowship, which she declined). Professor Marcus is also frequently invited to give lectures and interviews on topics ranging from the Hausmannization of Paris to Victorian fashion plates.

Professor Marcus’s next book project, which she is currently in the middle of writing, continues her involvement in studies of queer theory and sexuality by examining female homoeroticism and family life in Victorian England. At UC Berkeley, she was very involved in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies program (a minor for undergraduates), where she taught the history of sexuality. For the past two or three decades, this area of inquiry has been organized around debates concerning the history of homosexuality: whether the continuous presence of same-sex homoerotic activity in human history enables us to write a similarly seamless history of homosexuality, or if the concept is itself a nineteenth-century invention that emerged from sexology and subcultural self-definition of the era. Professor Marcus firmly supports the latter: the answer to understanding how sexuality signifies, she says, “is to look at categories for making sense of sexuality, rather than actual sexual behavior.”

Doing so, Professor Marcus argues, enables us to recognize an apparent paradox. The nineteenth century was a period in which there was almost no discussion of lesbianism. Yet despite the invisibility of lesbianism as a cultural category, this era was also one that “encouraged, fostered, even demanded” intense physical and emotional desire between women. Looking at the history and literature of that time (including works by Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, and Anthony Trollope), Professor Marcus illuminates the importance of female intimacy in the Victorian era: from the emotions invested into mother-daughter relationships to the female friendships that helped to encourage and maintain marriage as the paradigm of Victorian sexuality. Turning from female desire to actual sexual relationships, Professor Marcus then explores how the ideology of marriage influenced and was influenced by the era’s female couples, who used modern, imperialist narratives of progress to create a model of marriage as a “contract.” While this is not a narrative queer politics would want to embrace today, Professor Marcus notes, it points to “a significant confluence in liberal thought between feminism and queer liberation, well before the 1970s.”

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Sodomy, continued from page 3

But what about the politics of Lawrence v. Texas? Why did the Court make such a sweeping decision and what follows from it?

discriminatory work by stigmatizing acts and, indirectly, the identities associated with these acts. Unless the substantive validity of the laws’ infringement of privacy and liberty interests is addressed (substantive due process privacy analysis), the now homosexual rights? It would surely undermine the legitimacy of the Supreme Court if it overruled itself again on the same issue in the near future.

Or was this a triumph of the libertarian over the Moral Majority brand of conservatism within the Court (Justices Kennedy and O’Connor vs. Justices Scalia and Thomas), with a nod to the libertarian cause within the Republican party? After all, the Court does not exist in a political or social vacuum. The Bush administration has not made much noise against this decision, knowing full well that the Moral Majority, unlike the libertarians, has nowhere else to go at the ballot box. But no one can say for sure what motivations were at work except the Justices themselves.

As for the second question—what follows from this decision?—theorists can do better. Consider, to begin with, Justice Scalia’s acerbic and panicked dissent. Scalia’s opinion in Lawrence warns us that state laws against bigamy, same sex marriage, adult incest, prostitution, masturbation, adultery, fornication, bestiality and obscenity are now all at risk because Bowers has been overturned and a right to privacy covering adult intimacy has been “discovered” in the Constitution. The sweeping reach of Lawrence extends privacy protection well beyond the limits Justice Scalia and others tried to establish in 1986; i.e., well beyond protecting what is, in the United States, the culturally valorized form of intimate association—the nuclear family. To Scalia, “This effectively decrees the end of all morals legislation.”

Is he correct? Let’s look a bit more closely. By reaffirming privacy analysis covering consensual adult intimacy, what the Lawrence decision does is to shift the burden of proof...
onto the regulators. It overturns only one type of “morals legislation”: the old version based on the premise that only procreative sex within marriage between heterosexuals is legitimate. That version invoked “tradition” or religion to justify laws restricting everyone else’s liberty and privacy. Increasingly, this premise no longer appears to be self-evidently true. It is no longer universally accepted, and it cannot withstand criticism in a secular society, which must justify its laws without referring to the tenets of a particular religious worldview. If no other justifications can be found, if no other state interest exists in regulating or criminalizing intimate relationships, then they must be left alone. Morals legislation that can be grounded on good reasons remains perfectly permissible under the new decision.

The long-term implications of the decision extend beyond questions of sexuality, intimacy, even the nature of the family, however. Ultimately, everyone must admit that the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision raises two major constitutional issues. First, it forces us to ask whether privacy analysis based on substantive due process is an example of illegitimate, activist judicial review. Second, it leads us to ponder whether European or any other polity’s law has any relevance for the U.S. Supreme Court’s interpretation of the United States Constitution.

It is indeed hard to defend substantive due process as distinct from procedural due process, for the 14th amendment provides that states may deprive citizens of their liberty so long as due process of the law is provided. Scalia is right to note in his dissent that this clause refers primarily to legal procedure. When the Court starts reading substantive values like privacy or liberty of contract into the due process clause, it substitutes itself for the legislator, making higher law instead of interpreting it. However, Scalia himself also notes that “our opinions” have long interpreted the due process clause as protecting fundamental liberty interests unless there is a compelling state interest at stake. Everything then turns on what is deemed a fundamental liberty and on what is considered to be a compelling state interest. Scalia wants liberty restricted to rights deeply rooted in a tradition and history in which he can recognize himself. But as Justice Stevens correctly argues, tradition is not an adequate criterion, especially when we come to see past “values” as based on prejudice or narrow-mindedness. Thus, while the critique of substantive due process judicial review is cogent, learning and the change that it demands must be possible for it to be.

What about the legitimacy of citing the decisions of Constitutional courts in other polities? Justice Kennedy cited a 1981 gay rights opinion of the European Court of Human Rights, among other historical and contemporary references, to show that the decision in *Bowers* was out of step with developments in other Western countries. Justice Scalia found this to be a dangerous imposition of foreign views on American constitutional law. But the point was of course to show that moral learning about the integrity and dignity of everyone, including homosexuals, must triumph over entrenched prejudice, and that a Western consensus was emerging regarding basic human rights on which we should not turn our backs. The Court’s case does not turn on this reference, but it does serve to link U.S. Constitutional interpretation to key developments in supranational human rights law and policy. Perhaps there is a risk in following the lead of “foreign” legal developments, but the greater risk surely lies in the blind adherence to an 18th century worldview which could never have imagined the world that we inhabit. A Constitution must be a living thing, adaptable to the present.

Universalistic principles should not be deemed “foreign” a priori, or rejected simply because they originate outside of the United States. Contrary to Scalia’s polemics, the *Lawrence* decision did not illegitimately take sides in the “culture wars.” It faced up to the fact that the old premises and justifications for morals legislation in this country are no longer sustainable. It has not come down on the side of one group versus another, but has affirmed the side of justice against injustice.

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LEAH RORVIG: 
**The Myth of “Crack Babies”**

Leah Rorvig, who came to Columbia after growing up in Austin and Houston, Texas, pursued a specialization in political science as part of her major in Women’s and Gender Studies. When it came time to write her senior thesis, she therefore picked a topic that would enable her to explore both public policy and its impact upon women’s lives.

Under the supervision of Professor Abu-Lughod and Barbara Simon of Columbia’s School of Social Work, Rorvig examined the myth of “crack babies” and the ways in which the war on drugs has unfairly stigmatized pregnant drug users. Most medical studies, Rorvig argues, demonstrate that exposure to crack cocaine has a negligible effect on the fetus. Rather, it is poverty—and the malnutrition, lack of prenatal care, and alcohol and tobacco abuse that often accompanies it—that primarily causes neonatal birth defects. By blaming birth defects upon drug-addicted mothers, however, the spurious myth of “crack babies” succeeds in deflecting attention from the poverty and infrastructural deficiencies that produce them.

As president of the nationwide organization Students for Sensible Drug Policy, Rorvig was already familiar with the ways in which recent administrations have chosen to deploy criminal justice rubrics, rather than rehabilitation, to the problems of drug addiction and abuse. Her thesis argues that such an approach only makes it more difficult for pregnant women to seek the help that they need. Sixty to eighty percent of these drug abusers are victims of domestic violence, and seventy percent of them end up cut off from public assistance entirely, since many welfare systems have strict drug rehabilitation requirements that are difficult for the women to fulfill while they attempt to earn money and to care for their children.

Moreover, many women are afraid to seek treatment because they fear losing their children or being sent to jail—or both. Such concerns, Rorvig notes, are not ungrounded: while health care providers, for example, rarely refer a drug abuser to the criminal justice system, they do have the option of contacting child welfare services. Indeed, organizations such as CRACK (Children Require a Caring Community), which pay drug-abusing mothers $200 to get their tubes tied, are exemplary of this “blame the victim” mentality, which buys out reproductive rights in lieu of offering rehabilitation.

The myth of crack babies is thus a dangerous one, Rorvig’s thesis concludes. It is a myth that not only falsely imagines a population of infants damaged by their mothers’ drug addictions, but a myth that maliciously hides the deeper causes of a real social problem: namely, economic inequality and the gendered violence to which it leads.

Rorvig spent the summer as an intern for the Drug Policy Alliance, a non-profit organization which is at the forefront of drug policy reform. In the near future, she hopes to work for a similar non-profit on drug policy or women’s rights, as well as travel to Latin America. She ultimately plans to pursue a Ph.D. in political science, economics, or anthropology, and hopes that she can find a program to match the quality of classes and the sense of community she experienced at IRWaG. “Both the students and faculty were much more invested in the classes and materials than in other departments,” Rorvig says. “It was amazing to be in such a small major and to get so much individual attention from top Columbia faculty.”

KATHERINE THURSBY: 
**Biopolitics and the Ethics of Cesarean Births**

Growing up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Katherine Thursby was always interested in healthcare and the construction of illness. In high school, she did volunteer work with HIV-positive and AIDS patients, as well as educational outreach programs on safer sex. When she began her studies at Columbia, not only did Thursby choose a triple major (Women’s and Gender Studies, Political Science, and Biological Science) that would enable her to focus...
upon healthcare policy and women’s issues, but she also took on extracurricular activities that allowed her to explore these topics from a variety of perspectives. She served as president of Columbia’s AIDS foundation, and gave papers at national undergraduate bioethics conferences. The summer before her senior year, Thursby worked as an extern with the ethics division of the American Medical Association, focusing upon issues of patient autonomy.

Thursby’s breadth of experience studying and working for feminist bioethics inspired her to write a senior thesis on a controversial topic within this field: women who choose to give birth by elective cesarean section. Many health care providers discourage such surgery, citing medical risks and economic considerations. Indeed, insurers often pressure doctors to keep their rates of surgically-assisted deliveries low. Yet a number of studies have proven cesarean deliveries to be no more dangerous—and perhaps even safer—than vaginal birth, and suggest that they can actually reduce the risk of many post-delivery complications. Even more important, Thursby’s thesis argues, regardless of why the medical profession and its associations privilege certain kinds of births, women should be free to choose their own form of delivery: whether because vaginal birth poses particular physical risks, or because the woman wants to control the time and setting of the delivery. "After all," Thursby points out, "we celebrate a woman’s choice to give birth at home with a midwife. We should support this, too."

One of the greatest challenges Thursby faced in writing up this material was the definition of "feminist activity" itself. Neither the term nor the concept existed as a vernacular term during the era she studied, and Yeo soon discovered that the current literature on feminist social movements was not entirely relevant or easily translated to the politics of that period. Early feminism in China and Japan did not arise simply because women agitated for rights and political power, she learned, but also because male reformists used female emancipation as a symbol of larger political demands for national emancipation and reform. Even more difficult, Thursby found, was determining which gender roles and practices to view as feminist. For example, wartime rhetoric that exalted women as wives and mothers may today appear to be antifeminist, but for women who functioned as virtual slaves in their households, it was empowering to be celebrated for fulfilling important social roles.

"Ultimately," Thursby says, "What I came up with isn’t as important as what I found out along the way. No one’s done what I’ve done—but perhaps because it’s an impossible task—but I’ve raised important topics for debate." Now graduated, Thursby has returned to Singapore on a government civil scholarship. ■

ADELINE YEO:

Feminist Histories and the Histories of Feminism in China and Japan

Adeline Yeo, a native of Singapore, began her studies at Columbia as a Political Science major. After taking a course in feminist studies and visiting open houses at IRWaG, she was so impressed by the small classes and sense of community that she decided to double major. "Many of the departments at Columbia are huge and the sense of community is very splintered," she says. "I was excited to work with such a nice group of dynamic people who really cared."

For her senior thesis, Yeo undertook a historical project that would bring together these two fields, as well as take advantage of her knowledge of both Mandarin Chinese and Japanese. She decided to examine feminist activity in China and Japan between 1911 and 1937 (the period between the Chinese revolution and the war between China and Japan), and she undertook the considerable research this project demanded with enthusiasm. "It was fun to have a reason to check all those books out of the library," she recalls, "and my advisors [Professor Eugenia Lean (East Asian Languages and Cultures), Professor Jack Snyder (Political Science), and Professor Abu-Lughod] were pleased that I plowed through so much material."

One of the greatest challenges Yeo faced in writing up this material was the definition of “feminist activity” itself. Neither the term nor the concept existed as a vernacular term during the era she studied, and Yeo soon discovered that the current literature on feminist social movements was not entirely relevant or easily translated to the politics of that period. Early feminism in China and Japan did not arise simply because women agitated for rights and political power, she learned, but also because male reformists used female emancipation as a symbol of larger political demands for national emancipation and reform. Even more difficult, Yeo found, was determining which gender roles and practices to view as feminist. For example, wartime rhetoric that exalted women as wives and mothers may today appear to be antifeminist, but for women who functioned as virtual slaves in their households, it was empowering to be celebrated for fulfilling important social roles.

"Ultimately," Yeo says, "What I came up with isn’t as important as what I found out along the way. No one’s done what I’ve done—perhaps because it’s an impossible task—but I’ve raised important topics for debate." Now graduated, Yeo has returned to Singapore on a government civil scholarship. ■

The Institute for Research on Women and Gender congratulates Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University for her receipt of an Honorary Doctorate from the University of London
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Professor Marcus describes herself as “honored and excited” to be joining the IRWaG community. “I’m especially impressed by the large number of disciplines represented and the range of historical periods and geographical regions that its affiliated scholars study. It’s always interesting to be able to test out structural propositions about gender and sexuality that span many spaces and times, and to be made aware of the historical specificity of phenomena that one takes for granted.” She looks forward to exchanging works in progress and discussing current scholarship with her new colleagues. “I hope to bring a theoretical perspective that emphasizes the interconnections of gender and sexuality,” she says. “Definitions of the one almost always imply assumptions about the other that often need to be questioned.”

Professor Marcus is also eager to acquaint herself with her new body of students. While she has already had the chance to meet with Columbia graduate students, she encourages Barnard and Columbia undergraduates to stop by her office hours to chat. “I hear wonderful things,” she says. “I’m looking forward to teaching students with a reputation for being sharp, independent, and knowledgeable.”

“My teaching philosophy is very focused on pedagogy rather than content,” Professor Marcus explains. “I really want students to think for themselves, to get comfortable disagreeing with me and with each other in constructive ways that help us all to learn. I like structuring classes so that students get to define their own area of interest within the course, pursue that, and also share it with the class. I see my role as organizing an endeavor that needs to be as collective as possible, and I work hard to balance that role with a leadership that no professor can effectively abdicate.”

At Berkeley, for example, where many students were the first of their family to attend college and where large lecture classes were the norm, Professor Marcus focused her seminars around oral presentations that would give her students the confidence to speak in public. Professor Marcus similarly looks forward to learning more about Columbia and Barnard students so that she can play to her new students’ strengths, and provide what might be lacking in the dominant classroom experience.

Upcoming courses include an introduction to the English major and a class on the Victorian novel and the marriage plot. In the spring, Professor Marcus will teach a graduate seminar on Victorian women writers and the relationship between popular fiction, aesthetic theory, and gender, as well as a seminar called “Odd Women and Queer Men in Victorian Literature.” With readings ranging from Christina Rossetti’s poem “Goblin Market” to Oscar Wilde’s play “Salomé” to the transcript of the Oscar Wilde trials, this course combines literary texts, literary criticism, historical documents, and historiography to study how a period known for its intense gender conformity represented those who did not fit the gender mold.

In the future, Professor Marcus hopes to teach seminars on feminist and queer theory, including the Institute’s required feminist theory seminars. She also plans to teach in the core sometime in the next few years. “Since the core courses define the undergraduate intellectual experience at Columbia,” she says, “I’d like to have the chance to teach those texts and to place questions of gender and sexuality at the forefront of understanding them.”

A native of Queens, Professor Marcus is excited to be returning to New York. We at IRWaG, in turn, are delighted to welcome her to the Columbia community, and we look forward to benefiting from her intellectual energy, commitment to students, and ambitious scholarship. ■

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distorts understanding the larger process by which the global reorganization of production debases both men and women. After all, she reminded the audience, such conditions also produce the yearly murder of hundreds of male migrants who attempt to cross the U.S./Mexico border. Those who work for women’s rights, she argued, also need to address larger political and economic concerns which operate independently of gender, and the ways in which eroding labor conditions disrupt families and communities on both sides of the border.

Other members of the symposium, however, highlighted the importance of attending to the specific, gendered ways in which this violence takes place, and they noted that the forms of sexual violence to which women are subjected, like the sexualized forms of surveillance that they endure at work, are unlike those which men—who may also be victims—experience.

The final session of the day took a closer look at the environment in which the murders in Juarez have taken place. Activist Rosario Acosta Alvarado of the organization Nuestra Hijas de Regreso a Casa (May Our Daughters Return Home) spoke about how the murder of her own ten year-old niece transformed her from accountant to political activist. She listed a number of reasons why the fate of disappeared or murdered women has met with public and official indifference: an obsolete and inoperative justice system; laws that require a wait of 72 hours before searching for a missing person; government and media repression of these cases; the politically controversial presence of maquiladoras themselves; the lawlessness and indifference to safety, child labor laws, and workers’ compensation that the Mexican government permits; a blame-the-victim mentality; and the
### Fall 2003 Undergraduate Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
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<td>V1001</td>
<td>Intro—Women &amp; Gender Studies</td>
<td>L. Abu-Lughod &amp; A. Swarr</td>
<td>T</td>
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<td>BC1003</td>
<td>Introduction to Women's Health</td>
<td>R. Young</td>
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<td>4:10–5:25</td>
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<td>Feminist Texts I</td>
<td>A. Cvetkovich</td>
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<td>V3112</td>
<td>Feminist Texts II</td>
<td>M. Weisgrau</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>2:10–4:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC3120</td>
<td>Lesbian Texts</td>
<td>A. Cvetkovich</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>12:10–2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC3121</td>
<td>Black Women in America</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>11:00–12:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC3122</td>
<td>Jewish Woman</td>
<td>I. Klepfisz</td>
<td>TR</td>
<td>1:10–2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC3136</td>
<td>Asian American Women</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>12:10–2:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>V3311</td>
<td>Colloquium in Feminist Theory</td>
<td>J. Jakobsen</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2:10–4:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3520</td>
<td>Senior Seminar</td>
<td>L. Abu-Lughod</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>12:10–2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3521</td>
<td>Senior Seminar I</td>
<td>N. Kampen</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>4:10–6:00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Fall 2003 Graduate Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W4300</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Women's and Gender Studies: Jewish American Women Writers</td>
<td>I. Klepfisz</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>4:10–6:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>W4300</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Women's and Gender Studies: Masculinities</td>
<td>G. Pflugfelder</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>4:10–6:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>W4300</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Women's and Gender Studies: Int'l Human Rights, Gender, Violence &amp; Identity</td>
<td>R. Romkens</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>2:10–4:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G6001</td>
<td>Theoretical Paradigms of Feminist Scholarship: Feminist Theories of the State</td>
<td>E. Bernstein</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>10:00–12:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Border, continued from page 18**

poverty that leaves these maquiladora women ignorant of their legal and human rights. Characterizing this situation as one of utter “moral abandonment,” Alvarado’s organization is eager to publicize the plight of these women abroad in the hopes that international outrage can accomplish what the Mexican government and maquiladora employers refuse to address. After all, Alvarado stressed, *Nuestra Hijas de Regreso a Casa* works for justice not merely on behalf of the victims and survivors, but in order to destroy the climate of violence that threatens all of the women in Juarez.

The evening ended with a screening of Lourdes Portillo’s documentary film, *Señorita Extraviada (Missing Young Woman)*, as well as discussion of the film by Fusco and Alvarado, moderated by Professor Rachel Adams. Using a variety of methods (interviews, re-enactments, and reports from the media), the film depicts the danger and uncertainty that pervades the lives of young maquiladora women, as well as the ineffectual attempts to bring their killers to justice. Following the screening, Professor Morris urged audience members to share the knowledge they had acquired during the day with others, and expressed her conviction that although this event was not well attended, its subject matter deserves the full attention of the feminist community at Columbia, and indeed of all feminist communities throughout the United States and Mexico—and elsewhere.

**IRWaG is grateful to The Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, the Center for the Study of Law and Culture, the American Studies Program, the Department of English, and the Barnard Center for Research on Women for helping to support this important event.**

**Fusco, continued from page 8**

where power relations and gendered inequalities are starkly visible.”

In the discussion that followed her presentation, an audience member asked Fusco how a play that treats disappearance in metaphorical terms could have a direct impact upon the lives of the women she advocates. “But I don’t expect it to have an immediate effect,” Fusco responded. “I don’t make that demand of it.” Artists have to acknowledge how culture works, she argued: hence the very interdisciplinarity of her own endeavors.

“You have to divide your efforts up,” she said. “It’s better to be focused, and to do different kinds of work for different audiences in different media.” Indeed, Fusco is exhibiting a video in the International Center of Photography’s Triennial this September, and we at IRWaG look forward to her continued art and activism on behalf of those denied visibility.
The Institute for Research on Women and Gender is pleased to support

**“THE WORLD AFTER THE IRAQ WAR”**

A series of lectures and conversations sponsored by the Columbia Faculty for Peace Committee.

**Wednesday, September 17**

Jeffrey Sachs  
with comments by Rosalind Morris and Richard Parker

**Tuesday, September 23**

Joseph Stiglitz  
with comments by Gayatri Spivak and Anders Stephanson

**Wednesday, October 1**

Mahmood Mamdani  
with comments by Jean Cohen and Michael Doyle.

Free and open to the public.  
All events at 8:00 pm. Venue tba.

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