Katie Roiphe's *The Morning After*: Wishing Away Sexual Violence

Katie Roiphe is a publicist's dream: it's been nearly four months since her book, *The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism on Campus*, appeared, yet hardly a day goes by without some reference to the 25-year-old Princeton graduate student and her ideas. Newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and television shows have rushed to interview her. As of mid-January, the Nexis information service listed no fewer than 195 entries for Roiphe dating from September 16th. That averages out to nearly two references a day. Many of those references are reviews which have not been flattering. From Boston to San Francisco, reviewers have found Roiphe's thesis—that acquaintance rape and sexual harassment are "crises" created by feminists which frighten women and encourage them to wallow in victimhood—"self-congratulatory," "onesided," "lacking in depth and complexity that discussion of such issues requires," "nerve rather than judicious," "a careless and irresponsible performance, poorly argued and full of misrepresentations, slapdash research, and gossip." Not surprisingly, the reviews which openly praise *The Morning After* appear in conservative journals: William F. Buckley's *National Review* and Norman Podhoretz' *Commentary*.

Despite the negative notices about her book, Katie Roiphe continues to make the rounds on television talk shows. She's hot, she probably had no difficulty getting *The New York Times* to run her op-ed piece on the Bobbit case last month. It's bizarre: the more other writers refute her claims, the more authority Roiphe seems to gain. This prompts two questions: why does the media give her so much space, and what, if anything, is of value in *The Morning After*?

It would be easy to understand the media's fascination if Roiphe had been the first person to make the argument that the so-called "rape crisis" was a product of feminist hype. But she's not. In the October 1991 issue of *Commentary*, Norman Podhoretz ran a piece called "Rape in Feminist Eyes." In it, Podhoretz claimed that date rape was an invention of radical feminists who were attempting to broaden rape's definition to include verbal or psychological coercion. Podhoretz railed against the notion of equating seduction with rape, and took feminists like Andrea Dworkin to task for identifying all men as rapists. He even suggested that "radical lesbians and man-haters within the movement" had manipulated moderates into discrediting and discouraging heterosexual sex, because, Podhoretz implied, women were disappointed in the sexual revolution and wanted a way to say "no" that wouldn't be seen as reactionary. He closed his piece with a warning much like Roiphe's, that the emphasis on rape was making young women "frightened," "weak," and unfit to live in the world.

But Podhoretz wasn't the first to make these arguments either. He was twisting Camille Paglia (though continued on page 2

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*bell hooks, New York Newsday*
*Janice Harary, Cleveland Plain Dealer*
*K. Kaufman, San Francisco Chronicle*
*Wendy Kaminer, The New York Times*

*Katha Pollitt, The New Yorker*

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Roiphe, continued from page 1
he never credited her in his text), who, in January, 1991, wrote an editorial for New York Newsday that was subsequently reprinted in Sex, Art, and American Culture. In it she bluntly proclaimed that "[t]oday's young women don't know what they want. They see that feminism has not brought sexual happiness. The theatrics of public rage over date rape are their way of restoring the old sexual rules that were shattered by

continued on page 3

CHANGING ATTITUDES:
Education As Prevention

FOR DEBORAH LEVINE, an educator at Healthwise (part of Columbia's Health Service), Katie Roiphe's book may do some good if it promotes dialogue about the rape crisis movement—where it's been, where it is now, and where it's going. Says Levine, "Every movement needs to take time and assess whether it's on the right track." Initially, anger fueled the rape crisis movement; advocates fought for funding, staffing, and legitimacy. "Now we've reached a plateau," Levine says. "We have good training manuals, good counselors; there's funding for crisis centers and advocacy. People are now moving on to education and how to reduce the risk of rape. We need to look at what we're doing because anger doesn't work in education."

Studies that try to evaluate how well rape prevention programs work are beginning to appear. Some suggest gender differences, that women's attitudes change more than men's from educational programs. Levine hesitates to generalize from these studies—they're very small and the work is just beginning, but her experience at Columbia this past year has suggested that programs must reflect the complexity of the issue. "When you go in and say 'No means no,' it's too black and white. Communication is much more convoluted in some respects." Levine works hard to tailor her educational agenda to the group she's addressing. She does programs for all-male, all-female, and co-ed groups. "I ask a lot of questions. The first thing I do is assess where the group is—what level of sophistication, what are their issues? I do mostly casual programs where people talk with students and with each other, instead of lecturing." When it comes to programs about acquaintance rape, Levine points out that most students have been indoctrinated about it by the time they get to college. Traditional lectures don't necessarily reach them, because students think they already know all the right answers. "I have much more impact saying to people, 'Let's make a list of how we let someone know we want to have sex with them.' We make a list, then we look at that list and say, 'OK, from how many items on this list is it 100% clear that you want to have sexual intercourse? Usually it's one or two out of a list of twenty or twenty-five. That has power. That shows people there's a lot of room for miscommunication."

Levine, who handles the sexual assault prevention and educational programs for Healthwise, particularly likes the seminars designed to foster positive views of a woman's sexuality. One program offered this past fall (which will be repeated in the spring) is called "Orgasm, Pleasure, and Pizza." Another is "A Kiss Is Still a Kiss." Levine notes, "We're trying to work from a positive aspect, and yet not from a naive place. As human beings, we need nurturing, caring, and sensuality, and that's OK. There are bad things that can happen in sexual relations. So it's important that everyone have information to help make informed choices about sexuality. You can experiment, but just make sure of two things: that the other person wants to be with you, and if you're going to have intercourse, use a condom. Have safer sex. Those are our two main messages."

Healthwise offers a variety of seminars in sexual education, stress management, nutrition, weight control, and social and problem drinking. For further information about programs, call (212) 854-8453.
Roipke, continued from page 2

my generation." Paglia called for women to take personal responsibility for their sexuality: "[a] girl who lets herself get dead drunk at a fraternity party is a fool. A girl who goes upstairs alone with a brother at a fraternity party is an idiot. Feminists call this 'blaming the victim.' I call it common sense."

Roipke, like Podhoretz, doesn’t acknowledge her debt to Paglia, but clearly she is Paglia’s heir apparent. Not surprisingly, Paglia supports her wholeheartedly. In a recent interview with The Guardian, Paglia said, “It’s wonderful. It’s exactly what I’ve been waiting for for several years…[h]ere is a voice from inside saying all the things I had said. Suddenly, I’m off the hook.”

A voice from the inside: Paglia’s assessment speaks volumes about the press’ enchantment with Katie Roipke. She is the “90’s Joyce Maynard—the ‘courageous’ voice broadcasting from alien, enemy territory—the voice that ‘tells it like it is.’” And since the press has never been supportive of feminism (see Helen Benedict’s remarks in “Grabbing Hold of a Simple-Minded Message,” right), what could be better than finding a zealous young woman, who calls herself a feminist, eager to crucify feminism? Plus, she’s the daughter of a famous writer. Katie Roipke comes with built-in cachet. And in writing a book about date rape, she combines this country’s two greatest obsessions: sex and violence. No wonder she’s so popular on the talk show circuit: nothing keeps an audience from channel surfing like controversy.

If the media is going to continue to invite Roipke to voice her point of view, then it’s important to keep putting her ideas in context. The furor that’s erupted over the book suggests that The Morning After should not be summarily dismissed.

What do we keep, and what do we throw away?

Roipke wants women to stand up for their own "agency and independence" as strong, sensual, and autonomous beings. That point is hardly arguable. But Roipke’s chosen form is a problem: memoir cannot carry her arguments. Her research is shoddy; consequently her authority slips as the book proceeds. She sees what she wants to see, and writes with a closed, not an inquiring mind. Never once do we hear her ask other college women whether they actually feel more or less frightened by the measures taken to protect them, be they blue lights strung across campuses, or rape awareness workshops. Susan Brownmiller made an often quoted statement in her 1975 book, Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape. She said that rape "is…a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear." The italics are Brownmiller’s. This incendiary sentence was then backed up by 400-plus pages of research and data. Roipke, because of her insubstantial research, comes across as judgmental, self-righteous, and completely without compassion. Her book is a romp, a fast and easy read. Is that the way rape should be considered? By contrast, Brownmiller’s book is no romp, and not just because it’s three times as long. Brownmiller lets rape victims speak, so the reader feels their anguish all the way through the text. In The Morning After, real rape victims are conspicuously absent, and Roipke begins to sound shrill, frustrated, and incapable of balanced thought.

Roipke argues that feminists are stretching the definition of rape to include "bad sex," or regretted experience. It’s a provocative idea, but one that she seems to pull from thin air. Interviews with rape crisis counselors at various colleges suggest that 98% of acquaintance rapes do involve physical force; few students decide, after the fact, to call a disappointing encounter "rape." (Most are still too ashamed even to admit to rape; see Dr. Rachel Efron’s comments on page 3.) Roipke’s suggestion, that women are too quick to cry

continued on page 4

Grabbing Hold of a Simple-Minded Message

HELEN BENEDICT, author of Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes (Oxford University Press, 1992) and an Associate Professor at Columbia’s School of Journalism, thinks it’s not difficult to see why Roipke is so popular. "Katie Roipke is furious that AIDS has made sex dangerous for her generation and she blames campus feminists, which is insane and illogical. That’s the passion that drives this book: ‘we don’t want to hear any more bad news about sex, and that includes AIDS’ and rape and anything else. We just want to go out and have care-free fun again.’ It’s a very upbeat, simple-minded message, which is very appealing because, of course, rape is a disturbing subject to think about."

Roipke has gotten so much attention in the media, Benedict says, because "there’s an enormous popular appeal for the backlash. The press has a solid, documentable tradition of reacting to each new wave of feminism by trivializing it, and Katie Roipke has done that for them. There’s another issue: who are the top editors, especially at The New York Times, which is one of the most patriarchal bastions still in terms of attitude." To Benedict, this is a backlash against women trying to redefine sex. "Women are saying sex isn’t sex unless we want it; it’s not enough for the sex scene to be defined from a man’s eyes anymore. This is revolutionary and very scary, and so the backlash reacts."
Taking Back the Night

Katie Roiphe devotes a chapter of The Morning After to the annual Take Back the Night march at Princeton. Take Back the Night began in New York City in the '70s with a march through Central Park to protest violence against women. It is now an organization with many chapters nationwide. A number of universities, including Columbia and Barnard College, hold their own march each year, followed by a "speak-out," where women who have suffered sexual assault describe their experiences. Roiphe claims the marches have quasi-religious overtones and calls the speak-outs "a spectacle of mass confession" where women assume the mantle of victimhood. Kim Worobec, one of the student organizers of Columbia's march, describes Take Back the Night differently.

"The purpose of the march is to reach out to survivors of rape and help them realize they're not alone. The march has educative value, it tells everyone that violence against women has got to stop. The speak-outs are meant to break down stereotypes of what women are supposed to be like—they're not supposed to get angry. The act of standing up and talking about your experience and being angry about it shows strength and doesn't fit in with our image of what a victim's supposed to be. That Katie Roiphe interprets what happens at the speak-outs as an embrace of victimhood says a lot about her own fears of weakness, her own fears of being a victim. She's in total denial that this could ever happen to her."

rape, for fear that no one will believe her (as has traditionally been true) or for fear that she was willfully misinterpreting a sexual encounter. It would be a shame if The Morning After undid 20 years of advocacy which has struggled to convince the public of the legitimacy and seriousness of acquaintance rape.

Because her attack on "rape crisis feminists" isn't long enough to fill an entire book, Roiphe includes a chapter on Catherine MacKinnon, whom she calls the "anti-porn star." Roiphe's assessment of MacKinnon's zealous activism against pornography is worth considering. MacKinnon's thinking allows no room for the foibles of human thought and behavior, and Roiphe is right to point that out. She is wrong not to acknowledge that there are many other feminists who feel as uncomfortable as she does in the face of MacKinnon's extremism. Though there have been efforts to counter extremist tracts, perhaps moderate feminists have not worked hard enough to fight public assumption that the anti-pornography move-

ment's conservatism represents feminism's prevailing view of sex. If, unlike Andrea Dworkin, some of us believe in the possibility of "consensual" heterosexual relations that are not rape, then we've got to find a way to make that viewpoint clear. A thoughtful, balanced look at the rise of extremism within feminism and its effect on the movement and women's issues would have been most welcome. Roiphe doesn't attempt such an analysis.

Nonetheless, what should also be noted carefully about Roiphe's book (besides its failure to include the voices of those who've suffered rape) is the absence of any voice, including her own, in contemporary feminism that speaks compellingly about female sexual pleasure (forget Camille Paglia's whoops about female sexuality as "nature's red flame," whatever that may be). The threat of AIDS has shadowed sexual relations with an anxiety far greater than the fear that pregnancy or chlamydia could inspire; that's all the more rea-

THE ANTIOCH SEXUAL OFFENSE POLICY: Can It Engender Dialogue?

ARE THERE ANY MODELS for escaping established narratives of sexual relations? Alina Grossmann, Associate Professor of History, can only point to Judith Walkowitz' City of Dreadful Delight as a book that tells us that women's need and desire to find a space to talk about sexuality in their own terms is an old story. If college-age women are "coding" a range of confusing sexual experiences as rape, that concerns Grossmann, because it cuts off discussion and denies women's agency. Whether the Antioch rules will promote a new narrative remains to be seen. Grossmann says, "I would never legislate the Antioch code, but there are things about it that are intriguing. In the right hands, so to speak, the rules could be wonderful. There would be dialogue—you could give yourself permission to explore in an erotic space that's safe. In principle, I don't think it's bad; I just don't trust that it will be used properly."

What troubles Grossmann about the Antioch code is its insistence that emotionally charged situations can be fully contained by rules and regulations: "When I read the Antioch rules, they struck me as being similar to rules for euthanasia. At every point along the way, patients are asked, 'Do you want to continue; do you give your consent to taking this tube out?' There's an assumption that people know exactly what they want at any given moment."

The biggest battle, for Grossmann, remains the battle to protect women from violence. But she hopes we can learn to talk about sex in a more imaginative way, one that allows for a range of experience, including confusion and ambivalence.
Is It “Bad Sex” Or Is It Rape?

Roiphe’s idea that women are labelling “bad sex” as rape troubles Rachel Efron, a clinical psychologist and Sexual Abuse Specialist at Columbia’s Counseling and Psychological Services. “My experiences working with women who have been raped don’t match Roiphe’s hypothesis. These women do not find it easy to speak about their experience. They often resist labelling as rape encounters that would be called rape by anyone’s definition: Katie Roiphe’s or, for that matter, Rush Limbaugh’s. It’s hard for most of them to admit, even to themselves, that they have been raped. It’s harder still for them to speak about it with friends and family, not to mention campus administrators and police. When they do speak about their experience, they speak with hesitation, fear, and sadness. The pain these women feel is often overwhelming. None of my clients has ever talked about being raped with the glibness that Roiphe suggests.”

There are good reasons why women are reluctant to admit that they have been raped, says Efron. “Being raped makes people feel ashamed and dirty. A woman who admits that she was raped is often judged by guilt. Thinking it was her fault, she wonders how she encouraged it and how she could have prevented it. When the rapist is a man that the woman knew and trusted, admitting rape is admitting betrayal, and worse, that her judgment about the rapist, and maybe about other people was and is terribly flawed. Admitting rape is admitting to the loss, for a time, of all control, agency, and self-determination. Admitting rape is admitting that the sense of safety most people feel is a fiction, or at least that it can be randomly destroyed—without warning and without cause.”

For social and psychological reasons, Efron says it’s usually easier to ignore rape and define it away, rather than admit to it and face its consequences. As a result, women are more likely to label rape as “bad sex” than they are to label “bad sex” as rape. So much for Roiphe’s thesis.

Counseling and Psychological Services offers a number of programs for survivors of sexual assault and abuse. For more information, contact Dr. Efron at (212) 854-2878. The Rape Crisis Center is open from 7-11 p.m. six nights a week and provides peer counseling, information, and referrals to survivors of sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual coercion, childhood sexual abuse, and partner violence. The Crisis Line is (212) 854-HELP; the center’s business number is (212) 854-4366.

institute for research on WOMEN AND GENDER

NEWS FLASH. . . NEWS FLASH.

Thanks to the generosity of the alumnae of the School of General Studies and Columbia University, the Institute will host a one-day public conference to present the scholarship of our first faculty seminar, “The Material of Culture in Early Modern Europe.” (See interview with Jean Howard, next page.) The conference will take place in May. Watch for further information in our monthly calendar updates.
The Making of a Faculty Seminar: 
A Conversation with Jean Howard

This spring, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender will take a giant step toward developing its intellectual identity and establishing itself as a national center for interdisciplinary feminist scholarship in cultural history. Under the guidance of Scholar-in-Residence Jean Howard, the Institute will hold a four week seminar entitled "The Material of Culture in Early Modern Europe." Fifteen distinguished faculty in the disciplines of History, English, French, Italian, Art History, and Fine Arts from Columbia, Barnard, Queens College, New York University, and the College of Staten Island will participate. Together, they will examine how interdisciplinary scholarship, especially feminist work, has changed the way in which early modern scholars think about what constitutes the objects and methods of cultural analysis. Feminist News spoke with Jean Howard about the seminar. Here are excerpts from that conversation:

FN: What does it mean to you to be the Institute’s first Scholar-in-Residence?
JH: It’s fun! The title represents a commitment on the part of the Institute to make sure that feminist scholars on our and other campuses know that we are not just an undergraduate center, but a place that produces scholarship—a place where faculty can share their research and work on collective projects. My appointment marks a new phase in the Institute’s development: we’ve served our students by building a curriculum and creating activities. Now it’s time to cultivate faculty needs.

FN: How will the seminar work?
JH: We’ll meet four times over a two-month period. For each session, one person will circulate a paper and relevant theoretical materials in advance, so that other participants can read and think about them before we meet. At the meeting, the presenter will begin with a short talk about the paper and then there’ll be a two hour discussion. For example, Martha Howell is giving the first paper. It’ll be from her new book, Circulating Goods, about wills and marriage practices in Northern European cities during the 14th and 15th centuries. We’ll look at how women pass property through their wills in late medieval Douai. Martha will surround her paper with anthropological information on gift exchanges and historical material on the development of commodity culture. The next session will be a presentation by Nanette Salomon from the Department of Fine Arts at the College of Staten Island, on paintings of bordellos produced in the Low Countries in the 16th century: what kinds of objects were they, how did they circulate, how did sexuality enter exchange patterns? Ancillary reading will deal with the history of sexuality and the theory of visual narrative: how do visual objects tell cultural stories? The third session will focus on the Medici wedding of 1589 and the material of culture at that wedding—who put the scenery together, who did the costumes...

FN: Who made the food?
JH: Exactly. James Saslow of the Art History Department of Queens College will give that presentation. He’s interested in the costumes: who made them, what cultural roles they signify, how they scripted gender and sexuality. Barbara Bowen, from the English Department at Queens College, will lead the last session. She’ll examine the process of “housewifization” in early 17th century England—how women were turned into domestic figures who lived in houses and took care of objects. She’ll investigate the rise of women’s literature about keeping house and how it connects to the vast influx of goods that were coming into London from the Americas, Africa, and the Far East—goods which women were supposed to consume and manage.

FN: How did you achieve such an interesting juxtaposition of subjects?
JH: We drew on people who had some interconnection in their interests. We didn’t ask for particular topics, but we expected that participants would come up with subjects that would work well together.

FN: What will be the next step after this seminar?
JH: If this first-time pilot project succeeds, we’ll use it as a model and try to bring in two scholars-in-residence from other institutions every year who would organize a seminar each spring. We still hope to do a one-day public conference at the end of this year’s seminar. We’re trying to raise the money for that now. We’d put together the papers and ask a journal to do a single issue devoted to the seminar.

FN: How does this seminar fit into your present and future interests?
JH: Because I’ve always done work on the theatre as a cultural institution—in which the nature of the playing space and the acting troupe is as significant as the plays themselves—there’s always been a materialist bent to my own work. The next book I’d like to do is on London culture in the first decades of the 17th century. I want to look at city comedies and that genre’s obsession with material goods and the commodification of sexuality, the commercialization of social relations. So this seminar is very connected to what I’ve done and where I’m going.

continued on page 7
# Calendar of Events
## Spring 1994

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>&quot;Reading Queer Studies: Essays by Michael Warner and Lisa Duggan.&quot;</td>
<td>Presented by the Lesbian and Gay Studies Group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 P.M.</td>
<td>754 Schermerhorn Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>BROWN-BAG LECTURE SERIES: &quot;The Debate That Will Not End:</td>
<td>Abortion in Post-War Germany.&quot;</td>
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<td>12-2 P.M.</td>
<td>By Professor Atina Grossmann, Columbia University</td>
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<td>The Institute on Western Europe, IAB</td>
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<td>For further information call 854-4618</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 17</td>
<td>LECTURE: &quot;Feminine Death, Theoretical Diets and the Weightiness of</td>
<td>Change: Reflections of German Feminist Criticism.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8 P.M.</td>
<td>By Biddy Martin, Professor of German &amp; Women's Studies, Cornell Univ.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Deutsches Haus, 420 West 116th Street</td>
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<td>Co-sponsored by Deutsches Haus and the Institute.</td>
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<td>For further information call Deutsches Haus at 280-3964.</td>
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<td>February 18</td>
<td>FORUM: &quot;Toward a Manifest New Destiny: Identity, Inequality and the</td>
<td>Struggle for Liberation.&quot;</td>
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<td>12 P.M.</td>
<td>June Jordan, and Professor Manning Marable, Columbia University</td>
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<td>Shapiro Center Auditorium</td>
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<td>Sponsors include the Institute and Columbia/Barnard Rape Crisis Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>COLLOQUIUM: &quot;Queer Schubert.&quot;</td>
<td>Presented by the Lesbian and Gay Studies Group</td>
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<td>February 28</td>
<td>BROWN-BAG LECTURE SERIES: &quot;The Solidarity That Wasn't: The Conflict</td>
<td>Between East and West German Women.&quot;</td>
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<td>12-2 P.M.</td>
<td>By Dr. Nanette Funk, Brooklyn College</td>
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<td>The Institute on Western Europe, IAB</td>
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<td>March 4</td>
<td>&quot;Kissing the Body Politic: Heterosexuality and Anal Eroticism in The</td>
<td>Kiss of the Spider Woman.&quot;</td>
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<td>4 P.M.</td>
<td>By Ben Sifuentes-Jauregui of Yale University</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>BROWN-BAG LECTURE SERIES: &quot;Production, Reproduction and Gender:</td>
<td>A Comparative Look at the Welfare State in Britain, France and the U.S.</td>
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<td>12-2 P.M.</td>
<td>By Dr. Michael Hanagan, The New School for Social Research, and</td>
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<td>Dr. Miriam Cohen, Vassar College</td>
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<td>MARCH 23</td>
<td>11:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M.</td>
<td>LECTURE: &quot;Women Not to Preach: Medieval Orthodoxy, Heresy, and the Lives of Women Saints.&quot; By Professor Alcuin Blamires, University of Wales Co-sponsored by the Department of English 754 Schermerhorn Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCH 25</td>
<td>4 P.M.</td>
<td>Works in Progress Presented by the Lesbian and Gay Studies Group 754 Schermerhorn Extension</td>
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<td>APRIL 1</td>
<td>4 P.M.</td>
<td>FILM SCREENING: &quot;Last Call at Maud's.&quot; Presented by the Lesbian and Gay Studies Group 754 Schermerhorn Extension</td>
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<td>APRIL 15</td>
<td>4 P.M.</td>
<td>Representations of Sexuality in Contemporary Chinese Film. Presented by the Lesbian and Gay Studies Group 754 Schermerhorn Extension</td>
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<td>APRIL 28</td>
<td>4 P.M.</td>
<td>LECTURE: &quot;Gender and the Anglo-Indian Struggle for Power.&quot; By Professor Kathleen Brown Presented by The Institute for Research on Women &amp; Gender, and History and American Studies. 754 Schermerhorn Extension</td>
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<td>APRIL 29</td>
<td>4 P.M.</td>
<td>PANEL DISCUSSION: &quot;Celebrating Stonewall 25--Looking into the Future.&quot; Presented by the Lesbian and Gay Studies Group 754 Schermerhorn Extension</td>
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON EVENTS CONTACT THE INSTITUTE AT 854-3277
If available, readings for the Lesbian & Gay Studies Group can be picked up at the Institute.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>MARCH 15</td>
<td>8:30-10:30 A.M.</td>
<td>POLICY BREAKFAST SERIES: &quot;Diversity: Trends and Responses to Differences in the Workplace.&quot; Cessie Alfonso, A.C.S.W.; Madeline E. Heilman, Ph.D.; Harilyn Rousso, C.S.W. Cornell University Institute for Women and Work 16 East 34th Street, 4th Floor. Call K.C. Wagner to register at (212) 340-2836.</td>
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Howard, continued from page 6

FN: How does a feminist approach affect the way in which Early Modern scholars think about the material of culture?

JH: It depends on the field, but if we make gender part of our analysis of the material of culture, we're going to get a much broader picture, because gender-blind analyses leave out so much. We're going to deal with new areas of experience that people don't normally talk about: bailiwicks that are women's domains. But we don't want a "ghetto" analysis. We want breadth—this stage of feminist work is not interested in simply discovering women's domains and writing about them, but in seeing how those domains are constructed in a larger social context.

FN: What bearing does the reconstruction of historically distant cultures have on today's moment?

JH: We can never simply know a past culture. It is never transparent. We're only able to look for and at those things which we've identified as important. The contemporary moment changes our emphases for looking. It doesn't mean, therefore, that we get the "true" Renaissance—we get a different Renaissance, one that seems urgent to look at because we recognize certain things as urgent in our own culture. This doesn't mean a "presentist" or "relativist" Renaissance: we still have to look at all the evidence that we can bring to bear on a problem. We have to work as if we're constructing a true picture of the past, even though we know it's an impossible task—we're looking at the past in terms of categories and questions that engage us now. That seems to me the only way in which living exchanges occur in historical inquiry. Otherwise we're simply taking antiquarian stock, digging up things that are unconnected to anything. This is a feminist seminar; it's motivated by a feminist concern to see how gender and sexuality were constructed in the past, and the reason we want to know that is because we're feminists now. It's partly a retrieval of our own history: it's partly about wanting to know more fully the cultures which we've devoted our lives to studying. The renaissance that I studied in graduate school is not the one I'm constructing now in my own research, and that's exciting.

—Lisa Sack

The Material of Culture in Early Modern England

Seminar Participants

At Columbia:
John Archer, Department of English
Jo Ann Cavallo, Department of Italian
Kathryn Gravdal, Department of French
Jean Howard, Department of English
Martha Howell, Department of History
David Kastan, Department of English
Eugene Rice, Department of History
Simon Schama, Department of History

At Barnard:
Keith Moxey, Department of Art History
Deborah Valenze, Department of History

At New York University:
Romeo Po-Chia Hsia, Department of History

At Queens College, City University of New York:
Barbara Bowen, Department of English
Richard McCoy, Department of English
James Saslow, Department of Art History

At the College of Staten Island, City University of New York:
Nanette Salomon, Department of Fine Arts
The Lesbian and Gay Studies Group: A Paradigm for Interdisciplinary Scholarship

The longevity and vibrancy of Columbia's Lesbian and Gay Studies group are remarkable. Many student-run organizations fold when members' personal and academic obligations take precedence over group activities. But the Lesbian and Gay Studies Group, since its inception in October, 1990, has flourished.

It all began with a seminar led by lesbian academic Valerie Traub. Traub, a Renaissance scholar at Vanderbilt University, had been invited to present a paper to Columbia's English Department. At the request of some of the department's graduate students, Traub agreed to lead a seminar examining an exchange of letters between Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, the "doyenne" of Lesbian and Gay Studies, and David Van Leer, a gay critic, that had appeared in the journal Critical Inquiry. Their correspondence raised many provocative questions about Lesbian and Gay Studies as a discipline: what is it; who "owns" it; should it be institutionalized? About 30 people came to the seminar, which was held at the Institute. Thus was Columbia's Lesbian and Gay Studies Group born.

Three years later, the group boasts a mailing list of close to 200 members and produces colloquia twice a month (for which relevant written materials are assembled and circulated in advance) on such diverse subjects as the lesbian and gay presence on computer networks and queer architecture. And that's not all: the group has also brought many of the discipline's luminaries, including Sedgwick, Martin Duberman, Douglas Crimp, Judith Butler, and Diana Fuss, to Columbia's campus to speak.

What accounts for the group's success? Certainly it is due, in part, to the drive and energy of its founding members: Sarah Chinn, Mario DiGangi, Julia Giordano, and Patrick Harrigan. Together, they have handled most of the administrative tasks necessary to keep the group functioning. But it is the need for such an organization on campus and the lack of any other venue for critical scholarship about lesbian and gay issues that keep the group flourishing.

"There wasn't any place where you could discuss gay and lesbian issues," Julia Giordano says, "and we all wanted to, because we were interested in those issues for our own work. I also feel the group would never have continued if it hadn't appealed to personal issues as well: we talked about marriage, about love, about sex. Because they had no other outlet, people kept coming."

The "people who keep coming" to the colloquia and lectures are graduate and undergraduate students from various departments including English and Comparative Literature, History, Art History, Architecture, Music, and Political Science. Participants also come from the Law School, the School for International and Public Affairs, Teacher's College, and Union Theological Seminary. The Lesbian and Gay Studies Group offers them an intellectual, political, social, and emotional community willing to explore both theoretical and practical pedagogical issues in a relaxed, non-competitive atmosphere. Everyone is welcome to the programs regardless of whether they've done the reading. Process is as important as the end result; following each meeting, participants

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WHAT'S IN A NAME: "Queer" Versus "Lesbian and Gay" Studies

The word "queer," which in the past was used disparagingly to describe homosexual people, has made its way back into the academy thanks to radical political activists of the '80s. Members of groups like ACT UP have effected a deliberate reclamation of the word. Some members of the academy consider it an inappropriate term to apply to a discipline. But it is being used more and more frequently to delineate a perspective: one that, like feminism, questions assumptions about sexuality and gender. The term "lesbian and gay studies" has begun to signify a more particular focus: work that reclames members of the gay community (e.g., reading Virginia Woolf, Walt Whitman, or Fulke Greville as homosexuals) and has distinct pedagogical implications—being "out" in the classroom as role models and providing alternative readings of texts.

"There's an interesting conjunction between being a gay or lesbian person at this moment and then doing work that comes out of that perspective or identity but is not limited by that identity," notes Mario DiGangi. That's how he distinguishes between "queer" and "lesbian and gay." Queer means adopting a different perspective that is not considered normative in relation to any number of ideologies or practices. It's a way of thinking that is not necessarily dependent on one's sexual identity (as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick proves, though there is some tension and conflict within the lesbian and gay community about heterosexuals doing this kind of work). Says DiGangi, "My work comes out of my experience as a gay man: I am angry when I see how things have been read through distorting ideologies. I want to change that. But the interesting question becomes, how does that personal desire to work in a field like the Renaissance transform the field and allow different questions to be asked, as well as show something about the history of gay identity and its origins in that period?"
evaluating the program's format and make changes, as necessary, to promote discussion. "Our impulse is democratic," says Sarah Chinn. "We try to get members of the group to articulate what they want to do, and then do it." The group pays close attention to the balance of its programming: if members feel that too much attention has been placed on theory, the group will offer non-academic programs, such as the ethics of intergenerational sex. Or, it invites members of ACT UP to speak about their work and the kind of relationship that organization would like to have with the academic community.

At least once a semester, the Studies Group holds a works-in-progress session where graduate students present a portion of their own projects and receive feedback from the group. These sessions have encouraged many of the group's founders to explore lesbian and gay themes in their academic work. Mario DiGangi's dissertation examines the homoerotics of Renaissance drama in England; Patrick Harrigan's looks at 20th century queer critics and how their identity affected their reading of American Renaissance texts. If not explicitly on lesbian or gay topics, the work has a queer perspective (for a discussion of "queer studies" versus "lesbian and gay studies" see "What's In A Name," page 8). For example, Sarah Chinn's dissertation, on heresy in American women's writing from 1630-1930, considers how those writers engaged dominant modes of discourse and cultural ideas. Julia Giordano, whose dissertation is on the homosexual Renaissance poet Fulke Greville, feels strongly that the Studies Group empowered her academic work: "I don't think I would have chosen this topic without the group. No one's ever written about Greville as a homosexual, and nothing

This outsider status very much describes the relationship of the Studies Group to the scholarly community at Columbia: in its start-up phase, the group's sole supporter was the Institute, which donated money and space to the group's efforts. "If it weren't for the Institute, we would never have survived," remarks Sarah Chinn. Now the Studies Group receives financial support from university, but its members would like to see more faculty participation in its programs. On a one-to-one basis, faculty have been supportive, but their attendance at lectures has been negligible. Members feel that a stronger faculty presence would show greater institutional respect for the group's efforts.

On the other hand, a lack of institutional support means the group is completely autonomous and able to concentrate entirely on the programs it wants to do. Perhaps the most ambitious event the group has produced thus far was its March, 1992 conference called "Crossing Over: Queer Graduate Students in the Academy." More than 200 lesbian, gay, and bisexual students from 15 schools in the northeast attended. Rather than mimic a typical academic conference where the audience spends the bulk of its time listening to three or four speakers. "Crossing Over" was conducted as a dialogue between audience and panelists. Presentations were kept short to allow as much time as possible for discussion. And like the Studies Group's smaller gatherings, conference attendees considered pedagogical issues from practical as well as theoretical angles: what is it like to be queer in the academy; how does it affect research and work with advisors; how does one come out to one's students; what does it mean to do queer-oriented work?

This coming semester, the Lesbian and Gay Studies Group will once again produce a variety of programs (see calendar insert). In doing so, it will continue to validate the discipline. And though its founders are dispersing, the group shows no signs of folding. Other members have willingly stepped forward to take the group wherever its collective imagination will lead. By its very existence, the Studies Group shows the university the need for such programming and encourages more formal avenues for this kind of work. And as its members leave Columbia to become faculty at other institutions, we can hope to see the transformation of Lesbian and Gay Studies from a minority discipline to a full-blown branch within the academy.

—Lisa Sack

For further information about the Studies Group, call the Institute or Sarah Chinn at (718) 780-2073.

Good News!

The Institute's Reading Room, 760 Schenley Road, is now open from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. In addition to eight study carrels, the Reading Room, which we share with the Institute for Research in African-American Studies, has a small library of feminist books and journals, and will shortly house all required texts for Women's Studies core courses (Women and Men: Power, Politics, and Poetry; the Junior Colloquium on Feminist Theory, and the Senior Thesis Colloquium). All reading materials for the graduate course, Feminist Paradigms, will also be available. If you'd like access to the materials, please see the receptionist in the Institute office. (Sorry, books cannot leave the premises.)
Where They Are Now: Columbia’s Women’s Studies Majors in the World

What’s become of Columbia’s Women’s Studies majors since their graduation? Some have remained in New York City. Some have ventured west to California, north to Canada, or south to Florida. Others are in Europe. Still others may be in Mexico, Egypt, Thailand, or Australia. Those majors we were able to contact were happy to talk about what they’re doing, their ambitions for the future, and the impact of Women’s Studies on their lives and careers. Though generalizations shouldn’t be made from such a small sampling, it’s interesting to note that everyone we spoke to has entered public service. Oh brave new world that has such women in it...

Nineteen ninety-two graduate Carolyn Farhie, whose senior thesis was on domestic violence in lesbian communities, has just become a case manager at the Lower East Side Family Union. Farhie serves women who have tested positive for the AIDS virus; she makes hospital referrals and helps these women and their families with housing and public assistance. Being a Women’s Studies major “definitely influenced my career choice, especially the junior colloquium with Professor Tally Kammen, where we were encouraged to work in the field.” Before joining the Lower East Side Family Union, Farhie worked with HIV patients at Manhattan’s Spellman Clinic. She says the most important lesson she learned from being a Women’s Studies major was that women are not a homogenous group. Questions of class and race must be considered when looking at women: “Women’s Studies is a useful rubric, but not really accurate. I learned to look at people, at women as individuals. I’m able to deal with difference.”

Jennifer Friedman, a 1993 graduate with a concentration in Women’s Studies, has definite plans for the future. She intends to go to law school and pursue public interest law—perhaps women’s advocacy. “The legal system does dominate our culture in many ways; it could use a lot of reform, and there’s a lot of interesting feminist legal theory that I’d like to study.” Like Farhie, Friedman thinks one of the great benefits of pursuing Women’s Studies was the emphasis on multiple perspectives and the tolerance and sensitivity such study fostered. After graduation, she found a job as a researcher in the health policy department of the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, which is loosely affiliated with Columbia University.

Her work in Women’s Studies “definitely” changed the way Friedman sees power relations: “Women’s Studies gave me a sense of self, and tools with which to understand things that I already knew existed, but didn’t know what to call them, or ways in which to think about them. If I were made to feel uncomfortable in any environment—work or personal—my Women’s Studies background has given me a context and a language with which to talk about issues, voice concerns, and deal with them.”

We caught up with Karin Konkle, class of 1991, just as she was about to return to Barcelona where she has lived for the last year and a half. While teaching English to support herself, Konkle began to study polarity therapy (a massage technique that mixes Western chiropractic and shiatsu) and will finish a two-and-a-half year training program in it this coming fall. After that, she plans to study osteopathy and holistic medicine in England or in Oregon. Konkle’s spiritual orientation has been clear since her undergraduate days, when, as a Women’s Studies major, she concentrated in religion and studied Eastern cultures. After graduation, she spent a year working at the Hunt Alternative Fund, a foundation that supports non-profit organizations for women. But she discovered that the Foundation’s traditional hierarchical structure didn’t suit her. Konkle was very involved with the Women’s Center as an undergraduate and much preferred its collective approach to decision making.

The most important lesson Women’s Studies taught her was “a method of analysis: a way to break things down and find out their sources. We studied things people continued on page 11

WHAT’S NEW AT THE INSTITUTE...

We extend a warm welcome to Alana Erickson, our new Research Assistant for Electronic Databases. Erickson, who will also assist the Institute for Research in African-American Studies, will be working with our faculty, staff, and students to help them keep pace with the world of computerized scholarly resources. A Ph.D. candidate in the History Department, Erickson has considerable expertise using all on-line resources, e-mail, ColumbiaNet, CloPius, and the Internet. Erickson’s office is just next door to the Institute’s main office at 760A Schermerhorn Extension. She will be in every afternoon from Monday through Friday. Daily hours vary, so call her directly at (212) 854-7034 for more information.

Interested in being on the mailing list for Feminist News? Call the office today at (212) 854-3277.
Majors, continued from page 10

take for granted, like gender relations and how society is structured—who has power, who doesn’t, how the structure is created and how it’s maintained. That analysis is useful in everyday life.”

Amy Smoyer, another 1992 graduate, has, for the past year, been a human services counselor in the consumer relations unit of Florida’s Medicaid program, where she helps clients understand their benefits and sort out their bills. Prior to that, Smoyer lived in Newfoundland, Canada, and worked for a health services network that coordinated health care for people in remote regions of the country. But her favorite job thus far was the one she held just after graduation: Smoyer served as a park ranger at the National Historic Park in Seneca Falls, New York, which commemorates the first women’s rights convention (held there in 1848) and honors Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the convention’s organizers.

Being a Women’s Studies major didn’t influence Smoyer in her job search (she has always been interested in public service), “but the major certainly inspired me. What I found most valuable about being a Women’s Studies major was the idea of diversity and coalition building. Our professors made a great effort to help us think about the ways people from different classes and races have looked at feminism over the years. I find that approach very helpful now in my work, because my clients are very different from me, not only in terms of economics, but in educational, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Being a Women’s Studies major exposed me to many different perspectives and taught me that people struggle in different ways, and that that should be respected.” Most of the employees in Smoyer’s office are women. It’s a supportive atmosphere, one that places no limitations

on the work offered to women. “It’s a feminist atmosphere,” Smoyer says. “Our office wants everyone to figure out what their Medicaid benefits are and use them—to me that’s empowerment, that’s feminism, that’s people looking after themselves and learning skills to do well in life.”

If she had her college career to do over, Smoyer says she would certainly major in Women’s Studies again. “It’s the best major to have—the only major where the professors know who you are. There a great sense of community over at Schermerhorn. I liked being part of that. I don’t have any grand plans for the future, but whatever I do, my perspective will remain the same. Women’s Studies carries into everything.”

We wish you all success, Carolyn Farhie, Jennifer Friedman, Karin Konkle, and Amy Smoyer. And to those Women’s Studies majors we couldn’t reach, we wish you the same. Keep in touch.

Gender and American Studies Lecture Series: Off to a Successful Start

The Gender and American Studies lecture and discussion series began this fall with two programs offering thought-provoking approaches to the study of gender in American culture.

In September, Christine Stansell, Associate Professor of History at Princeton University, explored the way in which conventional historical narratives fail to capture the discontinuities in many women’s lives. Her study of Louise Bryant’s maturation, from the archetypal “New Woman” of the 1910s to the alcoholic wife of a rich businessman, led Stansell to a broader assessment of the significance of women who “drop out of history.” Rejecting interpretations of Bryant as heroine-turned-victim, Stansell urged a heightened consciousness of how we construct women as historical subjects and what such constructions leave out of our narratives.

Gillian Brown, Associate Professor of English at the University of Utah, visited the Columbia campus in November to present a chapter from her forthcoming book on gender and the logic of consent in early American literature. Brown argued that 18th century seduction stories, such as The Coquette by Hannah Foster, dramatized anxieties about the dual nature of consent as both an ideal of self-representation and an act prescribed by social convention. An extended discussion and dinner with Brown brought together faculty and graduate students from the departments of English and History.

The series continues this spring on Thursday, April 28th at 4 pm in 754 Schermerhorn Extension, with a talk by Kathleen Brown, Assistant Professor of History at Rutgers. In a recent article in the William and Mary Quarterly, Brown formulated the concept of “gender frontiers” as a key to understanding the interaction between English and Indians in British North America. Her talk, “Gender and the Anglo-Indian Struggle for Power,” will employ this concept in an analysis of cultural interaction in the 17th century Chesapeake. Brown received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin in 1990, then taught at Princeton University and the College of William and Mary. She received two Postdoctoral Fellowships from the Institute of Early American History and Culture.

—Cori Field

The Gender and American Studies series is co-sponsored by the Institute for Research on Women and Gender in collaboration with History and American Studies. All graduate students and faculty interested in gender and culture are welcome to attend.
New York City Resource File:  
CATALYST Assists Women in Corporate America

What’s happened to the thousands of women who’ve joined the workforce in the last several decades? How well are they able to advance within a given field and how sensitive is the corporate world to their needs? CATALYST can answer those questions. A not-for-profit national research and advisory organization based in New York City, CATALYST works with corporations to foster women’s career development. When Felice Schwartz founded the company in 1962, its mission was to help individual women enter or re-enter the marketplace. By the early ‘80s, Schwartz realized that the challenge was no longer recruitment of women, but their retention and advancement in the workplace. So CATALYST changed its mission statement. It now offers research and advisory services to corporations to help them do just that: retain and advance women.

CATALYST’s 35 staff members do two types of research: they conduct nationwide studies across an industry, e.g., Women in Engineering, Women in Corporate Management, Women in Sales, to evaluate women’s status and the issues they face. CATALYST then publishes its data, analyses, and recommendations, which are in turn promoted through the media, direct mail, and presentations made by CATALYST’s staff to corporate audiences, trade associations, and women’s groups. The research and advisory department also does “Environmental Assessments”: evaluations of the status of women and the problems they encounter within an individual company.

Each year, the organization produces a conference series and an awards dinner where it presents the Catalyst Award to companies with innovative, replicable programs to advance women. For their bold initiatives to shatter the glass ceiling, the 1994 award winners are the Bank of Montreal, Pitney Bowes Inc., and McDonald’s.

CATALYST also maintains an Information Center for its contributors and the media—a library housing materials on women and work. The company also has a corporate board placement service to identify and recruit women to serve on Boards of Directors. Summer internships (unpaid) are available for college students.

CATALYST is located at 250 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003. Telephone: (212) 777-8900. Felice Schwartz retired as president in 1993; the company’s new president is Sheila W. Wellington.