The Center for Gender Studies

Volume III, number 1 - Autumn 1998

Director's Note

Welcome back! The third year of the Center for Gender Studies will see the continuation of projects launched in earlier years as well as the starting of new ones. 1998-1999 will be the second year that the Center for Gender Studies will welcome you to its (newly-expanded) office on the fourth floor of Judd Hall. We are continuing to enjoy the space and to brainstorm about how to put it to even better use. After two successful art exhibitions last year, we hope to continue to use the walls to display work related to gender, sexuality, and race. We will also continue to house visiting scholars and advanced graduate students in our cubicles, and to provide a comfortable and friendly space for student meetings as well as workshops, brown bags, and special events.

In the domain of teaching, our first Gender Studies concentrators will be formally declaring their majors this year and our work with graduate students seeking additional course work in gender and sexuality will continue and expand. Lesbian and Gay Studies will resume after a one-year hiatus during which the Sawyer Seminar provided an intense and very productive context for discussion of work on sexuality. The Gender and Society workshop will again provide a forum for presentation of work related to gender and feminism, especially in a cross-cultural context. We are especially pleased to welcome back Linda Kerber for our October 21st meeting, when she will do a reading from her just-published book, No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship (Hill and Wang, 1998).

We will also be following up on our public sphere activities. Our third annual fall lecture (funded in part by the College and co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture) will be held on October 23, when Linda Gordon of the University of Wisconsin, Madison will speak on "How Welfare became a Dirty Word", Some of the themes raised in last year's "City and the continued on Page 8

The Chicago Humanities Festival

November 5-8, 1998

The ninth annual Chicago Humanities Festival ventures beyond the battle of the sexes to probe the eternal mystery of He/She. From birth to death, male/female relationships constitute the single most pervasive, influential, and uncertain forces which shape our lives. This Festival presents the multifaceted variations of He/She relationships: mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters, lovers, spouses, and working artistic partnerships. Learn of the intense competition and passion of Gertrude Stein and her brother Leo; of suffragette and single mother Synthia Pankhurst, who reared her son Richard alone in Ethiopia; and of the sex life and secret pleasures of the middle class as documented by Peter Gay. Celebrate the centennials of George Gershwin, Lotte Lenya, and Paul Robeson, as well as the 75th birthday of American composer and author Ned Rorem. Study men and women throughout history, including Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, Mae West, Elvis Presley, Sylvia Plath, Carl Sandburg, photographer Edward Steichen, and sex chroniclers Sigmund Freud and Alfred Kinsey.

A few of the CGS faculty participating in this year's Humanities Festival, include George Chauncey, Professor of History, chair of the Lesbian and Gay Studies Project of the Center for Gender Studies at the University of Chicago and the author of Gay New York. He has written on the history of sexuality for the New York Times, New Yorker, Village Voice, and Out. Professor Chauncey will address "The Strange Career of the Closet: Gay Culture, Consciousness, and Politics from the Second World War to the Stonewall Era," a look at why American society became dramatically more hostile toward homosexuals in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, when it forced homosexuals to go into hiding ("the closet"). And why a generation of gay people decided to come out of the closet in the 1960s and 70s. He explores these questions in relation to broad shifts in twentieth century American culture in the definition of "normal" and "queer" sexuality and in the relationship between our public and private selves. continued on Page 8

How WELFARE Became a DIRTY WORD

Third Annual CGS Fall Lecture

by Linda Gordon

The Third Annual CGS Fall Lecture will be held Friday, October 23, 1998 at 4:30 pm in the Judd Hall Auditorium (5835 South Kimbark Avenue, 126). Our speaker will be Linda Gordon, the Florence Kelley and Vilas Distinguished Research Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Professor Gordon is the author of Pitied but not Entitled: Single Mothers and the Origins of Welfare, the winner of the Berkshire Prize for the best book in women's history and the Gustavus Myers Award of the best book on human rights in North America of 1994. Some of her other works include Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence; Women's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America, as well as numerous articles, lectures and reviews. Her current project is entitled "In Defense of the Race: the Arizona Orphan Abduction of 1904."
Gender and Society Workshop

This workshop in cross-cultural feminisms provides an interdisciplinary forum for the development of critical perspectives on gender. Its primary purpose is to promote analyses of the ways in which categories of gender intersect with other practices, constructs, or systems of domination. Readings will include published articles and works by guest speakers focusing on this theme; in addition, the workshop will also serve as a forum for the presentation of graduate student papers. Workshop participants will share responsibility for choosing readings and speakers and for evaluating the effectiveness of the workshop's interdisciplinary process. We welcome new and old members to the workshop.

CONTACT: Leora Auslander (SS 222; 702-7940; lausland@midway.uchicago.edu), Leslie Salzinger (SS 320; 834-1271; l-salzinger@uchicago.edu), or Rochana Majumdar (rmajumda@midway.uchicago.edu).

TIME: Alternate Wednesdays (beginning October 15). 4:30-6:30 p.m. in J422.

Lesbian and Gay Studies Workshop

Participants in this workshop present and discuss interdisciplinary work in progress by graduate students and faculty who study the historical, cultural, and textual construction of lesbian, gay, and queer identities and subcultures; analyze the dominant culture and social theory from the perspective of sexuality or queer theory; or engage in other critical studies of sexuality. It draws participants from numerous departments including History, Anthropology, Human Development, English, Art History, East Asian Studies, Political Science, and Sociology. We do not have a specific thematic focus this year but will meet biweekly to discuss drafts of articles and dissertation chapters on a wide range of topics written by graduate students, university faculty, and visiting scholars.

CONTACT: Elizabeth Povinelli (H 331; 702-7714; epovinell@midway.uchicago.edu), or Tara Tremmel (J 422; tetremmel@midway.uchicago.edu).

TIME: Alternate Tuesdays at 4:30pm

EMBODIED UTOPIAS WORKSHOP & CONFERENCE

The Embodied Utopias Project of the Center for Gender Studies, funded by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies, will sponsor a series of workshops that will culminate in a major conference April 16-18, 1999. The workshops and conference will explore a variety of gendered projects of social change or improvement as a crucial factor in the intentions and avowed ambitions of architects, designers and urban planners, and also in the unexpected consequences and sometimes idiosyncratic (re)use of existing space. The conference will illuminate gendered aspects of buildings and urban spaces designed to create or promote social ideals, of spaces designated as “safe” for survival or play, and of spaces that become centers of political action. The workshop sessions will consist of discussions of articles and other work; all events are open to the public. The Project aims to make issues of space, architecture and visual culture central to the study of gender and sexuality at the University of Chicago and to produce a major contribution to the study of architecture, gender, and society.

Confirmed participants at the conference include: Elizabeth Grosz (Keynote Speaker), Diana Agrest, Grant Kester, Addin Kusno, Ira Tattleman, Anthony Vidler, Beverly Willis, Elizabeth Wilson, and Andrew Woods.

Workshop Schedule:

Thursdays, 7:00pm at the CGS - Judd Hall, 5835 S. Kimbark Ave., 422.

October 29: Does Size Matter? Architectural scale and utopian longings

November 12: Avante-garde Projects and Masculinity

December 17: Global Space and Local Interests

January 14: Politics and Open Space

February 11: Shopping: Public Space and the Gender of Commerce

March 11: Arts and Crafts Movement: Domestic Aesthetic

May 13: Looking Back/Summing Up: Conference review

Workshop topics subject to change. Please contact the CGS for more information.

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Politics, Rights, and Representation:
Gender and Racial Equality in the United States, France, and South Africa
CONFERENCE -- OCTOBER 14-17, 1999

The Center for Gender Studies is organizing an international conference on "Politics, Rights, and Representation: Gender and Racial Equality in the United States, France, and South Africa." This conference will analyze both the theoretical questions concerning the definition of representation and the strategies used by women, by racially-defined groups, and by sexual minorities in their efforts to achieve equity in the political sphere, while keeping the issue of women's access to full political citizenship at its center.

The conference will also assess the effectiveness of different forms of political engagement for bringing about social justice. To this end, the conference will be doubly comparative. It will compare the inclusions, exclusions and demands of these three different groups in three democratic regimes—the United States, South Africa, and France—of the late twentieth century. We have selected these three polities because their conceptualizations of the relation between the individual and the state and their histories and practices of gender, racial, and sexual equity, inclusion, and exclusion differ and coincide in and important and illuminating ways. Although the focus of the conference will be on access to, and use of, the formal political process, the conference will be equally concerned with the limitations of those processes.

We will open with a pair of sessions discussing the meaning of representation and of political interest groups or constituencies. Who defines which "groups" are entitled to representation? In what context are constituencies defined by gender, sexuality, or race? How are the rights of individuals and collectivities defined constitutionally in different democratic regimes? What shaped those constitutions? What would it mean to have a political system actually based on individual rather than collective representation? The next sessions will focus on political process. One will address the tactics used by groups who find access to political office difficult. How do they define effective strategies for electing politicians who will represent their interests—electoral reform, grassroots mobilization, non-governmental organizations, media pressure? A second will analyze how under-represented groups behave politically—do they use their right to vote more or less than those more central to political power? Do they have a distinctive voting pattern? When elected to political office, do they behave differently than those in the majority? The third panel will evaluate the impact of activism, NGOs, the courts, and international organizations for social change at the national level. The conference will end with a discussion of how change beneficial to marginalized groups actually happens. Does having elected representatives matter? If so, how? If not, are the courts, grassroots politics, international organizations, or media pressure more effective strategies for change?

Confirmed participants at the conference include: Mary Becker, Iris Berger, Jacqueline Bhabha, Wendy Brown, Barbara Burrell, George Chauncey, Cathy Cohen, Georgia Duerst-Lahti, Françoise Gaspard, Neville Hoad, Linda Kerber, Sabine Lang, Claire Moses, Martha Nussbaum, Barbara Ransby, Chris Riddiough, Elaine Salo, Lynn Sanders, Joan Scott, Gay Seidman, Amy Dru Stanley, Cass Sunstein.

The conference is made possible by support from the Provost's Office, the Center for Race, Politics, and Culture, and the Chicago Group on Modern France. —Leora Auslander

Would you like more information about POLITICS, RIGHTS, AND REPRESENTATION and how you might participate? Call Julia at 773-702-9936 or email org-cgs@uchicago.edu

Bernath Research Fellowship
The Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations offers two Myrna F. Bernath Research Fellowships of $2,500 each to women scholars to do research in foreign relations. Preference will be given to graduate students and new Ph.D.s. The subject matter should be historically based. The submission deadline is November 15, 1998. For information, contact: Carolyn Eisenberg, Department of History, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11550.

The Coordinating Council for Women in History + the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians announce the 8th annual competition for two $500 Graduate Student Awards to assist in the completion of dissertation work. The CCWH/Berkshire award will be made to a woman student in a history department; the CCWH/Ida B. Wells award will be made to a woman student in any field working on an historical project. Request information or an application from Professor Gina Hames, Awards Committee, Department of History, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA, 98447; e-mail: hamesgl@plu.edu.

Saturday, October 17, 6:00 p.m.: The Prairie Fire Organizing Committee presents a slide show with speakers and discussion on Engendering Colonialism: the Effect of 100 Years of US Colonialism on Women in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines. DePaul University, Schmitt Academic Center, 2320 N. Kenmore Avenue, Room 254. Suggested donation is $5. For information, call 773-278-6706.
Leora Auslander, Associate Professor of History and Founding Director of the Center for Gender Studies. Professor Auslander is especially interested in issues of gender in history. Her books on this topic include The Everyday Citizenship: France and Germany 1900-1935, a discussion of how different views of citizenship shape the status and experience of women and men, and Good Taste and the Modern Nation: Consumption in Post-Revolutionary England, the U.S., and France, which probes the question of why taste matters in the study of history. She co-edited Diference des sex et protection sociale, a study of how the state in England, France, and the U.S. has shaped the gendering of the workplace, and Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France (Berkeley, 1996), reveals how the aesthetics of everyday life are as internal to political events as to economic and social transformations.

In her Festival presentation, Professor Auslander examines the history of the sex of furniture by examining treatises which were written in the 19th century about the sex of furniture, and exploring how it worried people when they shopped for it and lived with it.

Martha Nussbaum’s presentation, Sappho, Antigone, Lysistrata: Women as Social Critics in Ancient Greek Literature examines the sex strike in Lysistrata and other power plays between men and women in classic dramas with performances by Chicago actors. Professor Nussbaum, the Ernst Freund Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, is interested in gender issues in literature and society and classic Greek and Roman texts, particularly the way scholars have historically tried to mask the ribald material within them. She is the author of six books that have overturned long-held assumptions about the staid classical canon. She also teaches courses in feminist philosophy, and team-teaches with Federal Judge Richard Posner in the ways emotions and imagination shape moral decisions.

Tickets are needed for all events and can be purchased on the internet at www.chfestival.org or at Symphony Center. The presentations described are scheduled as follows, Sappho, Antigone, Lysistrata: Women as Social Critics in Ancient Greek Literature will be held at The Chicago Public Library - Harold Washington Library Center - Auditorium 400 South State Street, Friday, November 6, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Does Furniture Have a Sex? will be held at Chicago Historical Society at North Avenue and Clark Street, Sunday, November 8, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. The Strange Career of the Closet: Gay Culture, Consciousness, and Politics from the Second World War to the Stonewall Era, will be held at the Gleaner Center (450 N. City Front Plaza Drive) Sunday, Nov. 8, 2:30-3:30. We hope that you will join us at the Chicago Humanities Festival for a cerebral celebration of what George Gershwin called "boy/girl stuff".

The University & The City
a conference - Spring 1998

On May 8 and 9, 1998, the Center for Gender Studies, in conjunction with the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture and the University Community Service Center, sponsored a conference, entitled "The City and The University: Gender, Race and the Built Environment."

Highlights of the conference ranged from Neil Harris’s concise overview of the plans for the University of Chicago as well as the actual physical development of the campus and Robin Bachin discussing how the University sought to embody different gendered views: at times attempting to mold the women to be lady-like at other moments to cast itself as a thoroughly masculine domain. Roberta Feldman presented a case-study of women residents at Wentworth Gardens (a Chicago Housing Authority Development), and how they took over the running laundry, grocery, and recreation facilities which had been neglected and closed by the CHA, and Sudhir Venkatesh discussed his study of Black Sisters United, a girl gang at the Robert Taylor Homes (CHA) and how they saw themselves as a communal support network and quite different from their male counterparts.

The Architectural Considerations of University Planning panel compared and contrasted the ideal visions of three Chicago campuses -- University of Illinois at Chicago, Illinois Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago -- with the actual community impact the building and expansion of these universities has had on the surrounding communities. Some of the volatile history of relations between the University of Chicago with its near neighbors - Woodlawn and North Kenwood - was hashed out by the community and university participants in a roundtable discussion. On a less formal note, Linda Seldel led a walking tour of Gendered Gyms at the U of C. and Timuel Black and Jamie Kalven narrated a bus tour of Hyde Park, Woodlawn, Kenwood and the Greater Grand Boulevard neighborhoods. A photo exhibit of work by Brett Jones and Henry Bozeman gave both face and emotion to topics discussed.

Overall, the City and the University did come together at this conference and the continuing discussion was enriched by the meeting of discourses on gender, race and class.

Please Let Us Hear From You:

For more information about the Center and its activities, if you would like to respond to any item in the newsletter, or if you have something that you would like to share with us, please contact:

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or visit us on the web at http://www.spc.uchicago.edu/CGS/
The 1998 Ruth Murray Essay Prize Winners

The Ruth Murray Prize prize is awarded for the best essay written by a University of Chicago undergraduate or graduate student in the area of women's studies, feminist criticism or gender studies. It is in memory of Ruth Murray who died in 1991, having served as Bibliographer for the Education, Psychology, Sociology and Women's Studies Collections at the Regenstein Library for many years. Ruth Murray had a strong interest in encouraging scholarship in women's studies and often served as a stimulus and facilitator of work by students and faculty in the area. It is the intent of the Ruth Murray Prize Committee that the essay competition sustain and encourage scholarship in women's studies, as Ruth Murray did during her lifetime. The 1998 Ruth Murray Prize Reading Committee included Martha Ward, Associate Professor, Art History and Lynn Sanders, Assistant Professor, Political Science.

1997 RUTH MURRAY PRIZE RECIPIENT UPDATE

The CGS is pleased to announce that Rebecca Lee's essay, "Romantic and Electronic Stalking in a College Context," which won the 1997 Undergraduate Ruth Murray Memorial Prize, was published in the William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law, Volume 5, 1998. Ms. Lee is currently residing in the San Francisco Bay Area, teaching in an inner-city middle school as a corps member with the organization Teach for America.

KO'A-A-HI FROM STAGE TO TELEVISION:
On the ontology of gender identity and the transformation of visual culture in Taiwan
TERI SILVIO, Anthropology, PhD 1998

This paper explores a genre of musical theater in Taiwan. This genre is one in which women play both male and female roles, it is the only "local opera" which has been fully adapted to the television media while remaining a form of temple fair offering, and it plays a prominent part in the construction of a new, nostalgic Taiwanese ethnicity.

Teri Silvio graduated in August 1998. She is presently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of California - Berkley. Her broader research interests include the ethnography of mass media, especially East Asian media fan cultures and their relation to gender identity formation.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE WAYS COLLEGE STUDENTS ENVISION THEIR FUTURES
KATIE HASSON, COLLEGE - 3RD YEAR

Preparing and planning for the future requires a detailed and inspiring vision of what that future will be. College is a crucial transitional period in adolescent lives where a strong emphasis is placed on preparing for the future, and thus is a time period when students begin to form their visions of the future and the plans through which they will achieve this future. Using a grounded theory approach, this paper examines the gender differences in the ways college students envision their futures through interviews of ten current University of Chicago college students. It finds distinct male and female forms of this process for envisioning a future. The male process involves selecting and following a socially pre-determined linear path. The female process is often motivated by a "fear of being stuck" and thus involves an initial (often subjective) evaluation of options and ensures flexibility by planning opportunities for the re-evaluation of choices. The existence of a distinct female process of envisioning a future would have important consequences within the context of educational, occupational, and other social processes which are often dominated by the male-associated linear conception of career and achievement paths.

A Room of One's Own

at the Center for Gender Studies

Graduate Students and Post-docs working on questions of

SEXUALITY
GENDER
MASCULINITY
MEN
FEMINISM
WOMEN

To apply, please send a letter with your name, department, and year, plus a description of your current research and how an office would be useful to you, to org-cgs@uchicago.edu. Deadline: October 23, 1998.

CURRENT CGS FELLOW

Amy Doherty is a Ph.D. candidate in English and American Literature from Tufts University, writing her dissertation under the direction of Elizabeth Ammons. In her dissertation, she is exploring cosmopolitanism in early twentieth-century women's fiction, focussing on the work of María Cristina Mena, Willa Cather, and Nella Larsen, who published in New York City between 1915 and 1929. With the help of a grant from the University of Houston's Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project, Amy wrote a critical introduction to The Collected Stories of María Cristina Mena, recently published by Arte Publico Press.
Courses of Interest in Gender Studies
1998-99

Autumn

GendSt 101 (English)
GendSt 169 (English)
GendSt 207 (Near East)
GendSt 212 (Anthropology)
GendSt 220 (Art History)
GendSt 223 (Divinity)
GendSt 231/318 (Philosophy)
GendSt 238 (Germanic Studies)
GendSt 252 (History)
GendSt 257 (Germanic Studies)
GendSt 270 (Romance)
GendSt 272 (Political Science)
GendSt 282 (South Asia)
GendSt 285 (History + East Asian)
GendSt 317 (Romance)
GendSt 319 (Philosophy)
GendSt 367 (Psychology)

PROBLEMS IN GENDER STUDIES – 1
GENDER AND POLITICS IN RENAISSANCE ENGLAND
WOMEN IN PERSIAN LITERATURE
INTENSIVE STUDY OF CULTURE: YORUBA
MAIDENS AND MARTYRS
MYTHS AND SYMBOLS OF EVIL
HISTORY OF SEXUALITY AFTER FOUCAULT
STAGING THE FEMININE: GENDER/OPERA/FILM
U.S. WOMEN AND GENDER
WEIMAR BODIES: ART, LITERATURE, SCIENCE, MEDICINE
VIOLENCIA/FANTASIA ARGENTINA
UTILITARIANSM/IDEALISM/SOCIALISM
DIASPORAS: ASIAN MIGRATION-1
FETISHISM/GENDER/SEXUALITY/CAPITALISM
LE ROMAN DE LA ROSE
HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATURAL LAW
SEXUAL DIFFERENCES IN COGNITIVE SKILLS

Deborah Nelson
David Bevington
Heshmat Moayyad
Andrew Apter
Linda Seidel
Anne Carr
Arnold Davidson
David Levin
Amy Stanley
Sander Gilman
Patrick O’Connor
R. Bart Schultz
Carol Breckenridge
Karen Duys
Candace Vogler
Susan Cohen Levine

Winter

GendSt 102
GendSt 205 (Political Science)
GendSt 215 (Sociology)
GendSt 226 (Sociology)
GendSt 243 (Anthropology)
GendSt 270 (English)
GendSt 271 (Sociology)
GendSt 277 (Political Science)
GendSt 283 (Germanic Studies)
GendSt 284 (South Asia)
GendSt 294 (East Asian)

PROBLEMS OF GENDER STUDIES – 2
THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
SOCIOLOGY OF WORK
SEX, RELIGION and the SOCIAL ORDER
MEDICINE AND CULTURE
FICTION OF THREE AMERICAS
SOCIOLOGY OF HUMAN SEXUALITY
DEWEY: PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY
HUMANISM/FEMINISM/ANTIFEMINISM
DIASPORAS: ASIAN MIGRATION – 2
GHOSTS in the CHINESE LITERARY IMAGINATION

Elizabeth Povinelli
Deborah Gould
Leslie Salzinger
Dawne Moon
Jean Comaroff
William Veeder
Edward Laumann
R. Bart Schultz
Samuel Jaffee
Carol Breckenridge
Judith Zeitlin

Spring

GendSt 208 (Human Development)
GendSt 222 (English)
GendSt 282 (History)
GendSt 285 (Cinema + Media)
GendSt 293 (South Asia)
GendSt 294 (Art History)
GendSt 297
GendSt 299
GendSt 351 (East Asian)
GendSt 539 (Anthropology)

SEX IDENTITY/LIFE CRISIS/LIFE STORY
ANGLO-AMERICAN GOTHIC FICTION/19TH C
AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN: LIVES/SYMBOLS
MASTROIANNI AND KEITEL
GLOBALISM/HEALTH/ENVIRONMENT
FEMININE SPACE IN CHINESE ART
READING/RESEARCH: GENDER STUDIES
B.A. PAPER PREP: GENDER STUDIES
SELF-REPRESENATION/AUTO-BIOGRAPHY
CRITICAL STUDIES OF SEXUALITY

Bertram Cohler
William Veeder
Julie Saville
Rebecca West
Carol Breckenridge
Wu Hung
Staff
Staff
Judith Zeitlin
Elizabeth Povinelli

For more information, call 773-702-9936,
check the CGS website (www.spc.uchicago.edu/CGS/) or the current Time Schedule
Voice Snatching: Hystoria, Silva’s De sobremesa, the Journals of Marie Bakshirteff

a talk by Sylvia Molloy

by Patrick O’Connor, Assistant Professor, Romance Languages and Literatures

Where did male intellectuals at the fin-de-siècle get their notion of what women sounded like, or should sound like, and to what uses did they put that notion? Sylvia Molloy, Albert Schweitzer Professor of the Humanities in Spanish and Comparative Literature at New York University, took her audience through an itinerary of responses and uses of the Journals of Marie Bakshirteff on Friday, April 24th at 3pm at the University of Chicago.

Professor Molloy is author of numerous articles and the books Las letras de Borges (1979) (tr., Signs of Borges), At Face Value: Autobiographical writing in Latin America (1990); she coedited the anthology Women’s Writing in Latin America and is the author of the novel En breve carcel (1981) (tr., Certificate of Absence). Her talk was co-sponsored by the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, the Committee for Latin American Studies, and the Center for Gender Studies.

The two anchor points of Professor Molloy’s presentation were Paris and Bogota. On the one hand, she presented the Journals of Marie Bakshirteff, “the most famous woman of the fin-de-siècle” and “Our Lady of Perpetual Desire,” who died of consumption at twenty-six in 1884, daughter of a family of the minor Russian nobility. And on the other hand, Molloy told us of Jose Asuncion Silva, one of the early poets of the Latin American decadent movement called modernismo; a man of somewhat ambiguous sexuality and a failed businessman, Silva committed suicide in 1896 with the manuscript of his posthumously published novel De sobremesa on the same writing table where he took his life. De sobremesa is a novel primarily in the form of a diary written while the protagonist was in Europe; that diary begins with a long reaction to the pre-Freudian psychologist Max Nordau’s book Degeneracy and to Bakshirteff’s Journals.

Bakshirteff’s voice, already problematized by her early failed attempts at becoming an opera singer, appears in her voluminous, openly narcissistic Journals as the almost self-parodical femininity which we associate now in the twentieth century more with drag queens than with real women, according to Molloy; men as well as some women (such as Bakshirteff’s mother, who edited her daughter’s diary for publication and constructed a mausoleum that was a replica of her daughter’s atelier) had an interest in canonizing that voice as the voice of Woman: Bakshirteff knew the famous Doctor Charcot of the Salpetriere and toyed in her diaries with the idea that some of her disease’s symptoms were actually the products of hysteria. Molloy emphasized that the skill which young Marie displayed in occasionally taking the position of doctor, or of voyeur, of her own body in her Journals disrupts any easy categorization of her writings into the history of male victimization of women: whether as painter or social climber, Marie was the embodiment of femininity “and something else”; that disturbing “something else” made her attractive to a writer such as Silva, whose character Juan Fernandez identifies with her in De sobremesa. Fernandez’s gender signs are extreme: simultaneously a rastaquouere (swashbuckling rich Latin American in Paris) and a sensitive aesthete, a potential Latin American dictator and a recluse surrounded by a few male friends and many objets d’art, he also careens wildly in the novel from aggressive health to distress illnesses, treated by doctors who give very similar advice to what Marie receives in her Journals. Finally, reading how a young Russian girl “performs Frenchness” allows Silva to attempt to perform Frenchness in an equally feminine mode, as those passages in De sobremesa move from third-person paraphrase to first-person impersonation to imagining scenes of Marie that are not even in the Journals. Such imaginations, Molloy argues, haunt representations of women’s voices even today, especially in cross-cultural and seemingly ironic milieux.

Brown Bag Lunch Discussion Series

Gender, Human Rights and the Law

October 16
Not Adults in Miniature: Children and Human Rights
Jacqueline Bhabha, Law School and Human Rights Project

October 30
Martha Nussbaum, Law School, Classics and Philosophy

November 13
To be announced

December 4
Candace Vogler, Philosophy

Gender, Sexuality and Science

October 23
Genetic is not gender neutral
Mary Mahowald, MacLean Center for Medical Ethics

November 6
To be announced

November 11
To be announced

December 11
To be announced

Brown Bag Lunches are from 12:15 - 1:30 in the CGS - Judd Hall, Room 422, 5835 S. Kimbark Ave. and are open to the public
continued from page 1 University conference will be explored from a different angle in this Spring’s "Embodied Utopias" conference (funded by a grant from the Graham Foundation). The conference will be preceded by a monthly workshop in which students and faculty will lead discussions of articles related to gender, urban planning, and architecture. Our brown-bag lunch series will resume on Fridays around the themes of "gender, sexuality and science" and "gender, human rights and the law." Finally, several members of our faculty will be presenting work at the Chicago Humanities Festival.

Last, but certainly not least, Abby O'Neil and Carroll Joyneres have very generously offered to continue their hosting of twice-yearly gender-studies evenings at their home. At these evenings, faculty and students connected with the Center present their work. It is exciting to have these opportunities to discuss work on gender and sexuality with a general audience. ❖ Leora Auslander

**Queer Republic?**

Homosexuality in Greek Politics and Political Thought
Saturday, Feb. 13, 2-6 PM at the Richard Franke Institute for the Humanities

This half-day conference will look at the ways that the popularity of homosexual relationships in Classical Greece reflected and transformed the political dynamics of the city-state and provided powerful imagery for those writers of the time who were developing political philosophy. In both papers and discussion, this conference will address the question of whether homosexual relationships were central to the development of the idea of the republic we have inherited from the Greeks. ❖

**Speculative Identities:**

The Past and Future of Difference in Speculative Fiction

*A conference with acclaimed authors
Octavia Butler and Samuel R. Delany
February 18-19, 1999*

Butler and Delany are acute observers of how racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies shape identities and societies of both the future and the (fantastical) "past", and the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture is extremely excited to bring them to campus, with assistance from the Richard Franke Institute for the Humanities, The Stars Our Destination bookstore, the Renaissance Society, MAPH Program, and the Center for Gender Studies. ❖

**Center for Gender Studies**

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