What we talked about when we talked sex and gender:

Violence, Tolerance, Utopias

During January and February the Center hosted more events than it is possible to narrate fully. January 13, a workshop on Sexuality, Feminism, and their Futures was held, with forty participants from around the U.S., including many from the Chicago area. This exhausting and exciting daylong workshop, which went late into the day (formally) and late into the night (informally) tracked the variety of spaces that feminism has been institutionally, theoretically, and politically since the mid 1970s. Which projects around feminism and sexuality continue to exert pressure on us, and what new domains are making claims on our commitments? Rather than merely see this as a one-time event, the participants voted to organize in clusters around particular topics (such as Race, Nation, and Globalization; Sexual Freedom; Feminist Punditry; Affects and Publics), moving toward different future events. CGS, the Lesbian and Gay Studies Project, and Barnard College’s Center for the Study of Women and Gender sponsored this Workshop.

Shortly thereafter, Millennial Scholar Wendy Brown of Berkeley gave a paper on the theory, history, and ideology of toleration as well as a workshop on Left Melancholia. Ruthie Gilmore, also of Berkeley, opened the Late Liberalism series on Violence and Redemption with a series of lectures, workshops, lunches, and dinners that spanned the relations among the history of national-capitalism; the transformation of agricultural communities into spaces for the prison industrial complex; the political organizing among mothers and families—mainly, but not entirely, African-American and Hispanic—whose relatives are increasingly under the control of the carceral state.

We also hosted some fantastic brown bags, notably Froma Walsh’s presentation on marital bargaining in the contemporary United States and Dorothy Wong’s presentation on the contemporary Asian-American poet, Mei-mei Bessence Brugge. And more!

Soon up: Marta Rodriguez on human rights in Colombia, Avery Gordon on the aesthetics and politics of utopian thought, Priscilla Wald on community, contagions and social control and the “Sex Norms, Sex Agents” conference explores the intersections of sexuality, normativity, and agency.

-Lauren Berlant

Inside this issue:

• Coming this quarter-Martas Rodriguez, Avery Gordon, Priscilla Wald and a special farewell lecture by Jacqueline Bhabha!

• Dissertation Fellowship and Ruth Murray Prize deadlines—page 2.

• “Sex Norms, Sex Agents” and “Trading Fours” conferences.
CENTER FELLOWSHIPS, PRIZES AND OPPORTUNITIES

For the first time ever, The Center for Gender Studies will be offering a Dissertation Writing Fellowship. Funding secured from a private donor will allow us to provide $18,000 a year for two consecutive years. University of Chicago Ph.D. candidates from all disciplines are encouraged to apply. Applications, available at the Center, are due April 13.

Our annual selection of Center Fellows is underway. The search for co-teachers for our core courses has also begun. The application deadline for both is April 27. Center Fellows earn an office at the Center. Co-teachers receive a stipend and teach in conjunction with Center faculty.

The Ruth Murray Essay Prize deadline is April 23 at 5 p.m. This annual competition is open to both undergraduate and graduate students for the best essay written on a feminist/gender issue. The winner will be awarded $300.

For details, check the website or email org-cgs@uchicago.edu.

CONFERENCES

The Working Group on Sexuality, Normativity, and Ethics of the Center for Gender Studies will host a conference, “Sex Norms, Sex Agents,” on May 4-5, 2001. The conference will feature plenary addresses by Joan Copjec (SUNY Buffalo), Michael Thompson (University of Pittsburgh), and Michael Warner (Rutgers University), as well as panels featuring papers by visitors and by Chicago faculty (including Candace Vogler and Beth Povinelli). The purpose of the conference is to bring together people from a variety of disciplines who work on sexuality and normativity, and who find the topic of agency - conceived both as a matter of political concern and as a subject for conceptual analysis - particularly in need of rethinking in that context. For more information, contact Kathleen Fredrickson at ksfreder@midway.uchicago.edu. The conference is tentatively scheduled for the Swift Hall third floor Lecture room. Check the CGS website for more details.

“Trading Fours: Jazz and it’s Milieu” will be sponsored by the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture on May 11 in Judd Hall. (Co-sponsored by the Center for Gender Studies.)

“Trading Fours” refers to a form of musical dialogue between improvising musicians. The conference will reflect on the significance of improvisational jazz music in relation to the life of a community, and the role of musicians and organizations of musicians in that community, with special, but not sole, emphasis on education. In pursuing this discussion, we will draw on the methods and perspectives of historians, musical theorists, cultural theorists, philosophers and artists themselves. Not only scholars, but community members, educators and musicians will be invited to reflect on these questions, and in doing this, upon significant dimensions of their lives. The targeted audience includes Asian- and Black Americans, musicians, scholars, secondary school teachers and their music and social studies students, nearby community members, college and university students and faculty, and others interested in urban culture and society.

For more info, email csrpc@midway.uchicago.edu

BROWN BAGS: FRIDAYS AT 12:15 P.M.

March 30
“Lyz’s Dress up Event”
Lyz Nagan, BA student

April 6
“Knowledge for What?”
Avery Gordon

April 13
Melissa Harris-Lacewell,
Political Science
Co-sponsored with RSVP

April 20
“Imagined Immunities”
Priscilla Wald

April 27
TBA
Cosponsored with RSVP

May 16
Michael Hanchard, Northwestern University, Co-sponsored with the Center for Race, Politics and Culture

May 18
“Post Mortem”
Mary Patten, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

May 25
TBA
MILLENIAL SCHOLARS SERIES / LECTURES

March 28: MARTA RODRIGUEZ
Internationally renowned documentarian Marta Rodriguez will screen her work and discuss the urgent situation of indigenous communities in Colombia trapped by war. Her work includes: Chiricales/ The Brickmakers, her 1971 anthropological investigation into the lives of displaced workers south of Bogota; Amor, mujeres y flores/Love, Women and Flowers, her 1984 investigation into the hazardous labor conditions of the 70,000 women who work in the Colombian flower industry; and her latest film, May It Never Happen Again, an exposé on the massive forced displacement of indigenous communities due to the armed conflict raging in Colombia.

This event will take place March 28, 5:30 p.m. at Biological Sciences, Room 115 (924 East 57th Street). Presented by CGS; The Human Rights Program; The Center for Latin American Studies; The Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture; Committee on Cinema & Media Studies.

April 2-6: AVERY GORDON
Avery Gordon, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California at Santa Barbara, will deliver lectures on Monday, April 2 and Thursday, April 5, both at 4:30 p.m. in SS 122. She will give a brown bag presentation at the Center for Gender Studies in Judd 422 at 12:15 p.m. on Friday, April 6. She will also lead a Theory and Insurgency Workshop presentation on Tuesday, April 3.

The title of the lecture on Monday, April 2 is "Some Thoughts on the Utopian." In this talk, Prof. Gordon will explore some of the hesitations experienced before the idea of the utopia with the aim of overcoming them. "Some thoughts on the utopian" is a work-in-progress and part of a larger book she is writing, entitled In the Shadow of the Bottom Line.

On Thursday, April 5, Prof. Gordon will deliver a lecture on "Something More Powerful than Skepticism: Toni Cade Bambara's Utopian Thinking." In this talk, she will present Toni Cade Bambara as a great twentieth-century utopian thinker, in spite of, or, because she is nowhere treated as such. Prof. Gordon will suggest what her thinking achieves and how it redefines what the utopian means.

Prof. Gordon's special areas of research include social theory, race, gender, class and culture. Her main publications are Ghostly Matters (1997); Mapping Multiculturalism (editor, 1996); "White Philosophy," in Critical Inquiry (co-author, 1994); and Body Politics (editor, 1993).

April 19-20: PRISCILLA WALD
Priscilla Wald, Associate Professor at Duke University; Co-editor, American Literature, Author of Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative will deliver a lecture and brown bag talk.

On April 19, 4:30 in Judd 126, Professor Wald will present "Spatial Promiscuity: From 'Typhoid Mary' to 'African Eve'."

On April 20 from 12:15-1:30 p.m., she will present "Contagion and Community", a brown bag based on her essay, Imagined Immunities.

As a Society for the Humanities Fellow at Cornell University, Wald conducted research for a book in progress, tentatively entitled Cultures and Carriers: Contagion, Americanism, and the Science of Social Control, in which she examines the impact of what she calls "Carrier Narratives," fictional and nonfictional accounts of carriers of contagious disease and of genetic "abnormalities." She is interested in how bacteriological discoveries at the turn of the 20th century changed the way people thought about social interactions and the idea of community and about how contemporary genetic discoveries are similarly changing ideas about human being and population. The work ranges from studies of the Jewish ghetto in the early 20th century to explorations of the contemporary global village and considers the influence of bacteriology on the study of culture as it was imagined by sociologists and literary critics at that time.

Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form examines how subjects who are legally and/or rhetorically silenced work to write themselves into the national narrative, and, in the process, disclose the formal strategies by which Americans are constituted.

May 17: JACQUELINE BHABHA
Jacqueline Bhabha will deliver a farewell lecture as CGS Distinguished Lecturer on Thursday, May 17. This event will take place in Judd 126 at 4:30 p.m. and will be followed by a reception. This special event for Gender Studies Faculty is also open to students.
### SPRING COURSES

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