OF BLACK WOMEN'S STUDIES AND POETRY

When Gloria Hull began working on black feminist literary criticism, there was no such formally recognized category. In the early 1970's, both women's studies and black studies were struggling for legitimacy, but one focused primarily on white women and the other on black men. "A whole generation of us (black women scholars) came together and nurtured ourselves." Out of that was born the still fledgling category of black women's studies. Out of this also came Hull's first book, edited with two other women, All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies.

Gloria Hull is spending her Ford Foundation grant year as a visiting scholar at the Institute. This interview began on a cheerful note over her two recent achievements. First, she has just accepted a chaired position at the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, Virginia—as Cummings Professor of American Studies and English.

"Since earning her doctorate from Purdue University in 1971, Hull has been at the University of Delaware, where she has moved up the ranks from instructor to professor. "It was time to move on," she says. "Delaware was a very good place for me to grow up. There I figured out that I wanted to do black feminist criticism." Striking the mystical or providential theme that marks her vision of life, she notes that there are times when one needs to change. "I am convinced that when it is time to make a change, you can go willingly or the universe will thrust you into it, kicking and screaming." It is time for her to move on—"A new place seems wider. There are more ways to be the 'you' that you are—or even a more stupendous version."

Hull's "really big news," her second announcement that evoked obvious deep pleasure, is that a volume of her poetry will be published. With a vast publication list, including three books, a prodigious number of articles and reviews, and, newly released from Oxford, a three-volume edition of Alice Dunbar-Nelson's Works, her delight at publishing a volume of her poems is palpable.

For years she has written and even published poems, but literary criticism has always taken precedence, for several reasons. In order to become an established literary critic, it was important to concentrate her efforts. But also, she felt deficient about her poetry. She again invoked a providential theme: "When you are ready for something, the opportunity happens."

A quietly intense, reflective, gentle woman, Hull's conversation sounds like poetry. Her language is rich; she searches for the words that will best express the truth of her vision; she is open about her feelings, beliefs, ideas. She grew up in Shreveport, Louisiana, in the 1950s—"the segregated South"—and referencing her earlier comment about moving, she notes, "They didn't have to kick me out. I went gladly." It was the height of the civil rights movement and "I was glad to be one of the 'young Blacks of promise' who were let into traditional graduate schools, with government support."

While in graduate school, her son Adrian, now a sophomore at Brandeis, was born. It was not an easy time; "both his father and I were graduate students." Hull timed her baby's arrival for three weeks after her masters exams and six weeks before the beginning of Fall term, when she would be a teaching assistant. She is convinced that there is no perfect time for having children. "I am so glad I did. He is a joy."

Scholarship

Gloria Hull's scholarship has focused on what she has called "the second Harlem Renaissance." She means the revitalization of the original 1920's phenomenon but this time acknowledging the role of women writers. In a literary tradition that has primarily praised black male artists and writers, Hull's mission is to promote the reputations of women whose works were either deliberately obscured or lost.

Hull sees a strong black female literary tradition, not only from that era, but before and after. Circumstances, both racist and misogynist, have caused these women to be ignored. Her goal is to reclaim them for the literary and historical record.

Perhaps most significant to her work was her discovery of Alice Dunbar-Nelson. "I stumbled on her. She was introduced to Dunbar-Nelson's niece, who had inherited an entire literary legacy. "It turned out to be a trove. So much came out of this." Hull edited the diary, 2,000 handwritten pages (1984), wrote a long biographical critical piece in Color, Sex, and Poetry: Three Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance (1987), before the three-volume edition of Dunbar-Nelson's Works.

ASSOCIATES' DAY

The twelfth annual Associates' Day was held on February 2. Over 115 associates and guests were present for the exciting program, which featured Jing Lyman, president of HUB Co-ventures for Women's Enterprise; Nannerl Keohane, president of Wellesley College, and Marilyn Yalom, former deputy director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

Following director Deborah Rhode's opening remarks, Marilyn Yalom, currently senior scholar in residence at the Institute, described highlights from her recent lecture tour of Japan and China. The purpose of her trip was to establish contact with colleagues around the Pacific Rim with the goal of establishing a Pacific Rim Consortium of women's research centers.

Yalom noted that in Japan, ten percent of the colleges offer vigorous programs in women's studies. But although more females go to high school and earn better grades than males, they do not do as well on the job market. Companies do not recruit as many women because

—continued on page 6
**SCHOLARS’ COLUMN**

Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum has received an appointment for the months of March and April to the American Academy in Rome, where she will conduct research on feminism and socialism in Italy.


Phyllis Koestenbaum has been awarded a one-month Djerassi Foundation Residency during the summer. Two of her poems are forthcoming in the *Scholars’ Column*.

Matteo spoke on eating disorders to the *Fact to Fiction. Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America*, February 28.

Linda Lomperis presented papers at both the December MLA convention in San Francisco and the March meeting of the Medieval Association of the Pacific in Tucson. She has received a summer research grant from North Carolina State University to complete an article on Chaucer.


In March, Karen Offen gave a keynote address at the Washington, D.C., conference on Women and the Progressive Era. She also gave the Dorothy Lambert Whisnant Lecture at Clemson University during National Women’s History Week and lectured at the University of South Carolina and San Diego State University.

Lillian S. Robinson’s article, “Canon Fathers and Myth Universe,” appeared in *New Literary History* 19 (1987-88). During the last quarter she gave papers at the MLA, Rutgers, Occidental, Scripps, and the University of Colorado.

Elizabeth Roden’s play, “Insiders-Out,” opened on March 9 for a two-week run at the Climate Theater in San Francisco, to be followed by a tour of recovery centers and hospitals in California, Oregon, and Washington. “Dorothea,” her play based on the life of Dorothea Lange, had a staged reading at Fort Mason in October and will be produced by two companies in 1988. Roden spoke on “Researching Historical Drama” at a January conference on California Women in Theater.

Women Teaching for Change, a study of feminist high school teachers, by Kathleen Weilman, was published in 1987.

Marilyn Yalom, Institute senior scholar, will be spending the month of April at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy, where she will be working on her study, “French Women’s Autobiographies, 1793-1939.”


**WOMEN AND THE CONSTITUTION**

In 1787 the Founding Fathers wrote a Constitution that was silent about women. When in 1987 their descendants celebrated the bicentenary of the Constitution, that same silence prevailed. As a consequence, a small group of women, including academics, political activists, and professional women, organized “Women and the Constitution: A Bicentennial Perspective.”

The two-day symposium, attended by more than 1,500 women, took place in Atlanta, Georgia, on February 11-12. It featured speakers, panels, discussion groups, and entertainment, focusing on the role of women in the development of the Constitution—that which has been accomplished and what is yet to be done. Deborah Rhode, director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, and affiliated scholar Edith Gelles attended the conference as panelists. Former scholars, Joanna Gillespie, now of Brown University’s Women’s Center, and Bernice Sandler, of Washington, D.C., also presented papers.

The dominant themes of the conference—the exclusion of women from the public sphere, gender differences, and a call to political action—were sounded by Barbara Jordan, former Congresswoman from Texas, in her opening address. “The central biological difference between men and women is that only women have the capacity to create a human being,” Jordan stated, and the rest of history has been the story of men’s efforts to compensate for that fact. “The reality of sex-based physical differences poses a difficult problem to a society committed to equality.”

The theme of “differences”—biological, cultural, legal, political, economic, racial, and psychological—ran through most talks. Coretta Scott King asked, “If women don’t lead the struggle against poverty, racism, and militarism, then we must ask, who will?” Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor discussed the history of Constitutional cases that affected women. “The Supreme Court is reactive, not active,” she stressed. “The case of women is illustrative of this.”

Geraldine Ferraro said, “If you don’t run, you can’t win,” and she urged women to run for office. Her message was echoed in a resplendently fiery talk by Bella Abzug who also noted the daunting costs—financial and emotional—for women who run for public office. Rosalynn Carter and Lady Bird Johnson, who talked about their lifetimes spent in public service, urged women to run for office and to support women who run.

Deborah Rhode gave a paper on “The Politics of Paradigms: Gender Difference, Gender Dominance, and Gender Disadvantage.”

Edith Gelles appeared on a panel that explored the historical role of women in the era of the Constitution.

The conference was, however, more than the sum or the summary of these talks. It was the excitement, the energy, the inspiration, the latent and actual power, both intellectual and political, that infused the atmosphere. It was the presence of women who had affected the course of history—Rosa Parks who had refused to move to the back of the bus, and Leola Brown who had sued the Topeka Board of Education to admit her six-year-old daughter to the local white elementary school. It was the art exhibit, called “Heystory” at the High Museum of Art. It was “Sweet Honey in the Rock,” the choral group whose roots are black American jazz and gospel music. It was 1,500 women from fifty states and ten foreign countries, finding common ground in the issues of their womanliness. And it was the challenge to spread the word about how far we have come since 1787, and how far we have yet to go.

—E. G.

**WISH LIST**

We are immensely grateful to the many people who, over the years, have generously contributed time and resources to the Institute. However, as the world becomes more mechanized and technological, our needs have expanded. We have decided to advertise some of our current needs and would appreciate donations of the following items:

- IBM-AT’s or IBM-XT’s so that our staff and scholars will be able to connect to University-wide accounting information and statistical analysis programs, as well as national data bases.
- A Macintosh for the graphic artists and typesetters among us.
- A laser printer.
- A carousel slide projector.
- A Polaroid camera.

—Sherri Matteo
Jing Lyman Lectures
Spring 1988: Women Making Music

APRIL 20
12 noon, Tresidder Union, Oak West
"The Man Who Mistook a Woman for an Artist"
Tamara Brooks, Conductor
Co-sponsored by the Stanford Music Department

APRIL 30
5:15 - 6:30 p.m., Cubberley Auditorium
Sing-Along with Judy Fjell, concludes "Dimensions of Differences" Conference

MAY 4
7:30 p.m., Tresidder Union, Oak Lounge
"Sing to Me the Dream"
Holly Near, Musician, Feminist, Activist
Co-sponsored by Gay and Lesbian Awareness Week

MAY 11
7:30 p.m., Tresidder Union, Oak Lounge
"A Chording to the People"
Lecture by Mary Watkins
Music by Mary Watkins Quartet

MAY 18
12 noon, Tresidder Union, Oak West
"Making a Show of It: Women, Culture and Institutions"
Panel Discussion with Ginny Z. Berson, Program Director, KPFA; co-founder of Olivia Records
Penny Rosenwasser, Producer, Fifth Annual Sisterfire Festival: Tour Coordinator/Promoter for Women Performing Artists
Carmen Vazquez, Activist: Board President, San Francisco Women's Building

Co-sponsored by The Women's Center, Graduate Women's Network, The Program in Feminist Studies, STARTS (Student Arts at Stanford), Institute for Research on Women and Gender

All programs are free and open to the public For further information, call 415/723-1995

Constitutional Celebrations:
Views from the Margins — Women, Law and Public Policy
Thursday, April 28, 1988

12 noon to 1:30 p.m.
Panel Discussion
Room 290, Law School
Overview:
Deborah L. Rhode, Professor of Law, Stanford; Director, Institute for Research on Women and Gender
Panelists:
Angela Glover Blackwell, Executive Director, Urban Strategies Council
Christine Curtis, Of Counsel, New Ways to Work; Department of Industrial Relations, State of California
Mary C. Dunlap, Civil Rights Attorney; Lecturer, Stanford Law School

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
A Look at Women and the Law through Film
Law Seminar Room 280A
"Question of Silence"
Law Seminar Room 185
"Jury of Her Peers"

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Reception
Crocker Garden, Law School
(In the event of rain, Law Lounge)

7:30 p.m.
Room 290, Law School
"Do Women Have Constitutional Rights?"
Catharine A. MacKinnon, Visiting Scholar, Institute for Research on Women and Gender

Co-sponsored by Stanford Law School, Women of Stanford Law, Institute for Research on Women and Gender
Dimensions of Differences

Celebrating the Diversity of Women

Saturday, April 30, 1988, Cubberley Auditorium

8:30-9:00 Registration

9:00-10:30 Keynote Speaker: Joanne Loulan, Psychoterapist, Sex Educator, and Author. Women and Self-Esteem: Lesbians and Straight Women in the 1980's.

10:45-12:15 Sources of Power: Sex, Politics, and Spirituality
Maggi Rubenstein, R.N., M.F.C.C., Ph.D.
Health Educator, Licensed Counselor and Sexologist. Conducts workshops at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality. Co-founder of San Francisco Sex Information, the Bisexual Center, and the Bay Area Bisexual Network.

12:15-1:30 Lunch

12:15-3:15 Linking Across Our Differences
A working workshop dealing with racism, sexism, adultism, ageism, lesbian/gay oppression, class oppression, and anti-Semitism.
Hilda Gutierrez Baldoquin, Human Resources Trainer and Consultant.

1:30-3:15 Occupation, Opportunities, and Tolerance in the Workplace
Yolanda Gallegos, M.A. Candidate, Department of Communication, Stanford University; Manager, Pacific Bell.
Chris Nuñez, Chair of the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Health and Family Life Education for the San Francisco Unified School District.
Helen Stewart, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, Labor Relations Advocate, San Francisco State University.
Ellen Stromberg, Investment Consultant, Progressive Asset Management.

3:30-5:00 Re-Creations—The Woman Artist and Her Medium
Kitty Tsui, Poet, Editor, Author of The Words of a Woman Who Breathes Fire.

5:15-6:30 A Final Note: Judy Fjell, Performer, Singer, Songwriter.

6:30-7:30 Social Hour

All events are open to the public. Advance registration is encouraged. For more information, please call The Graduate Women's Network at (415) 723-5829.
CONSTITUTIONAL CELEBRATIONS: VIEWS FROM THE MARGINS—WOMEN, LAW, AND PUBLIC POLICY

The Institute for Research on Women and Gender, in conjunction with the Law School and Stanford Women of Law, will host a half-day symposium on Thursday, April 28, which, in the bicentennial spirit, will reflect on the place of women in law.

The symposium will open with a panel discussion introduced by Deborah L. Rhode, director of the Institute and professor in the Law School. The first panelist, Angela Glover Blackwell, executive director of the Urban Strategies Council, will focus on issues of minority women. Christine Curtis, Of Counsel, New Ways to Work, and the California Department of Industrial Relations, will address economic questions, such as pay equity, pregnancy, and parenting leave. Mary C. Dunlap, civil rights attorney, will examine civil and constitutional rights causes, including gay and lesbian issues.

Two films, which stress women's role in the legal system, will be shown in the late afternoon—"Jury of Her Peers" and "Question of Silence." A reception will follow these showings in the Crocker Garden of the Law School.

In the evening, Catharine A. MacKinnon, author of Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law, will address the question, "Do Women Have Constitutional Rights?" MacKinnon will trace the historical development of women's issues in the legal system, noting the progress that has been achieved and what is yet to be done.

—Linda Jean May

ASSOCIATES' DAY — continued

women are expected to quit once they are married or become mothers. This older, more traditional view is in conflict with women's economic reality which requires them to work outside the home.

A similar pattern emerged in China, with women's economic reality which requires them to work outside the home.

companies. They provide two-thirds of initial work experience and training programs in the United States.

Despite the four million women-owned businesses that produce $88 billion in annual income, our society ignores the role such businesses play in economic revitalization. Moreover, it ignores the specific needs of women who wish to become economically self-sufficient. This observation was the driving force behind Lyman's formulation of HUB Co-ventures for Women, an organization designed to help communities recognize the needs of women going into business. HUB (not an acronym, but used to reflect the centrality of women to the workforce) provides training programs, lectures, forums, coalition building, and acts as an educational clearinghouse, depending upon the needs of the community.

The final speaker, Nannerl Keohane, cast a more historical and theoretical view on women's positions in the "public" sector. She addressed the issue of why more women have not held positions of power and/or authority in society by focusing on three questions: What have the obstacles been? How have those few women who have been in positions of authority behaved? Would a female model of authority, different in kind from the present male model, emerge if more women moved into powerful positions?

In delineating the obstacles women face in obtaining positions of authority, Keohane revisited the gender differences argument: that because women can reproduce, separate and largely unequal distinctions have been formed between men's work and women's work; between nurturing and hard labor; and between public and private spheres of influence. Such distinctions have created and maintained myths about women's lowered capacity for rational decision-making; women's alleged lack of desire for power and authority; and women's uncontrollable sexuality.

Because so few women have held positions of authority, Keohane felt "we are still inventing ourselves," looking for role models in distant as well as recent history. Historically, women have held authority as saints, mothers, seducers and as would-be men. Keohane ended by suggesting that when women become the powerful majority, we will probably not transform power to a completely feminine model nor will we mimic the male warrior. Rather, we will most likely let our individuality show through and demonstrate some combination of feminine and masculine traits.

—Sherri Matteo

SPRING SERIES ON WOMEN MAKING MUSIC

Tamara Brooks, conductor, will open the Spring Jing Lyman lecture series on Wednesday, April 20. Brooks will look at gender questions in music, addressing issues such as why it is that a female violinist may be touted for excellence during training, but not achieve the position of first violinist. A graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, Brooks is a conductor of note in this country, and was also the first woman to conduct in Austria, Turkey, and Cyprus. She has been a professor of music, a college president, a researcher in gender issues, a recipient of National Endowment for the Arts grants. Her passion for her field is evident in her discourse as well as her music. She will speak on "The Man Who Mistook a Woman for an Artist."

The second event, a sing-along with Judy Fjell, concludes the afternoon session of the conference, "Dimensions of Differences," organized by the Graduate Women's Network. Fjell is a multidimensional singer and songwriter, who communicates a wide range of emotions in music with wit and good humor. She sings about the weird and wondrous variety of life surrounding us.

Holly Near, known for her music as well as her social activism and feminism, will lecture during Stanford's Gay and Lesbian Awareness Week. In her lecture, "Sing to Me the Dream," she will look at the many forms of social activism, including music. She will discuss how she has successfully bridged cultural gaps, incorporating world music into her own.

Mary Watkins began her professional career at age eight with the Children's Choir by composing and improvising at the piano. Later she earned a degree in music composition, worked as musical director for the theater group, "Ebony Improvoul," worked as producer of six albums, and recorded three albums of her own. She composed a piano and orchestra piece for the Bay Area Women's Philharmonic, wrote a musical score for the Dance Brigade, and was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Performance Grant. In her lecture, "A Chording to the People," Watkins will share her experiences as a composer. A performance by the Mary Watkins Quartet will follow the half-hour lecture.

The series concludes on May 18 with a panel discussion, "Let's Make a Show of It: Women, Culture, and Institutions." The panelists, Ginny Z. Benson, Carmen Vazquez, and Penny Rosenwasser, are Bay Area cultural activists. Their presentation will provide an overview and critique of the intersection of culture and political expression in the women's movement in this country.

—Linda Jean May

Editor: Edith Gelles
Associate Editor: Lorraine Macchello
A real bond exists between us," Hull responded to the question about her relations with Dunbar-Nelson. "That woman bothers me... I dream about her... I am sort of her agent. I am doing what she wants done." The bonding has had its difficulties. Working at first in close association with Dunbar-Nelson's niece, she was cut off after discovering that Dunbar-Nelson had engaged in lesbian relationships, which the niece did not want revealed. Hull felt it was her duty to report the whole story. "We have not told our story for centuries. I know better than to continue that (the silence)." The parting with the niece is still a painful episode, but she adds, "I felt Alice wanted it known. She left the stuff in her diary. She was preserving it for me, for someone of my generation to come along and be prepared to deal with it."

While carving out a place in literary history for black women writers, Hull has been carving out a professional identity of her own. "I realize that we haven't had any models. I've always had a tremendous feeling of trying to make myself up." She has been "blessed" with people and circumstances that have "enabled" her career. Her mother, who had to leave school in seventh grade to work, "sacrificed everything" to provide for her children. "She is very smart; she encouraged us to become educated." Some teachers, too, spotted her as a person of promise. "I had luck—the fellowship to go to school." But as for models, "We were a whole generation who made models in our heads and used each other to grow on. She adds, "Women can be each other's mirrors. That is one of the things we can do for each other."

Several themes have emerged in this exchange about women writers and role models. One is the continual referencing of herself in the second and third person—or even first person plural—almost a studied avoidance of the first person singular. Another is Hull's sense of her developing self as a part of a group. Finally, she talks directly about her need for community. "It was that community that made black women's studies the practice that it is... Hull sees herself as distinctive; she has a personal mission and pride in her own work, both her criticism and her poetry, which she believes defines her as a "whole person." But she also sees herself as a part of a community—the we, you, and they of her comments—and it is the community that feeds her personally and gives power to her work.

Politics
"Everything is political," she responds to my question, "Do you think literary criticism is political?" "Literature is aesthetic and it is political." It is wrong to consider the term as meaning only that which overtly refers to issues of power and justice. I am motivated by the need and desire to transform the world—working with everyone else who sees the need to change. Collective energy is what I strive to be a part of. That's what both my living and my writing are about. She adds, "Everything I do is political—and everything that other people don't do is political too."

There is passion in Hull's sense of mission. That became more clear when she was asked what inspired her to pursue the study of black women writers. She chuckled and turned the question on me. "What you are asking is 'Who gave you permission to do this work?'" We both knew the answer.

Asked about the future of black women's studies, she responded that "a transformation has occurred in fifteen years. I go to conferences and see bright young black women who have fellowships to Yale and Harvard, and they say 'I'm going to do my dissertation on black women, or Alice Walker, or Caribbean women. They're lucky. That couldn't have happened for me.'"

Because of scholars like Hull, there now exist courses devoted to the study of black women. "That makes me feel good. The struggle made space for these transformations." At the same time, she acknowledges the evidence that things haven't changed that much. For instance, the passing-over of Toni Morrison for the National Book Award in favor of a male war novelist indicated that the judges did not know how to read Beloved. "Not everyone is able to read black and female. All that blackness—all that femaleness—all that magic is something different."

Another potential problem exists for the future of black women's studies. Success has its price, and the price that Hull is concerned about is the disconnection from radical political consciousness and community. Her current work, those issues that she is exploring while in residence at the Institute this year, bear on this problem. She is studying literary theory, but with an agenda. As black women's studies has found its place in the academy, so there exists the pressure to do literary theory—to be academically trendy—"to do theory in the abstract theoretical way that it is done." The problem, as Hull sees it, is the risk that it will become so rarefied "that we will be writing only for ourselves. Then how do we reach other black women?" She is not opposed to theory or to change. Both, she stresses, are the signs of success, but she fears something might be lost.

That ambivalence about the future reflects Hull's similar ambivalence about her own past. "It was hard, but there was more freedom. I would have liked... but maybe it was better..." Clearly the future holds yet more challenges for the new Cummings Professor of American Studies and English.

—Edith Gelles

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GRANT RECEIVED
A major grant has been awarded by the Russell Sage Foundation to director Deborah Rhode, affiliated scholar Annette Lawson, and Janie Kritzman of the Center for Research on Women, Barnard College. The grant will help to fund a conference and publication on adolescent pregnancy, scheduled for Spring 1989 at Stanford.

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