THE SOCIETY OF FELLOWS AND
HEYMAN CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2019–2020
THE SOCIETY OF FELLOWS AND
HEYMAN CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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The Explorations in the Medical Humanities Synapsis Writers Retreat. Pictured (left to right): Travis Lau, Chia Lien, Emilie Egger, Diana Rose Newby, Kaitlin Pontzer, and Arden Hegele.
REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

designating as it does the extraordinary community of postdoctoral fellows and colleagues past and present, the “society” in Society of Fellows has made chairing the Governing Board of SOF/Heyman these past three years a singular honor and a truly unforgettable experience. In Spring 2020 that experience, like virtually all others, was fundamentally altered in a manner that these remarks will strain to record. Anything I say here cannot begin to capture the challenges and uncertainties, both personal and institutional, faced by SOF/Heyman administrative staff, fellows, and faculty over this period. We all, of course, recognize the privilege that has enabled us to navigate these challenges successfully, and I must begin by thanking all those at the Heyman Center and at the University whose work has made ours possible. Most fundamentally of all, I thank Eileen Gillooly for her vision and insight in giving that “society” the many meanings that have enabled it to thrive.

I want also to begin this brief report by recalling with no small hint of melancholy a dinner with SOF/Heyman colleagues in late January 2020, immediately following a grueling—but intensely inspiring—day of interviews. Among that group was Dr. Rishi Goyal, a scholar in the medical humanities and member of the Governing Board who is also an emergency room physician. Over dinner, we nervously grilled Dr. Goyal about the deadly virus that had begun spreading around the world. Three months later, Dr. Goyal took time between ER rotations treating COVID-19 patients...
to join an online writing workshop with the current Fellows, in which he responded eloquently to the work-in-progress circulated, and then stayed on to discuss his own work both in the ER and as a scholar, and especially how we, as custodians of humanistic thought, might share in that work. I suspect that despite (or maybe because of) the Zoom-enhanced alienation we all felt, that particular gathering—one among so many—will be long remembered by all present. This, too, is what the “society” in Society of Fellows has come to mean.

Like Columbia’s other academic units, SOF/Heyman transferred its work online in early March 2020. Up to that point the year had been, like its predecessors, punctuated by the rhythms of weekly lunchtime talks, periodic writing workshops, committee meetings, and ongoing collaborations with colleagues with whom the Society shares the Heyman Center building. We continued virtually all this work online. We also found ways to sustain those conversations previously held over lunch, drinks, or dinner related to a presentation we had just heard, a paper we had just read, or the news of the world by which we were most troubled. In particular, the retrospectively foreboding fall of 2019 had been enlivened by a running conversation stimulated by the Fellows’ work that, regardless of discipline or archive, regularly referred the scholarship back to the great themes of our times: social and economic inequality, racial justice, ecological crisis, and more. All of this had been shadowed by thoughts, worries, and hopes about the future even before the pandemic-induced crisis fully formed. Those to whom the academy has been entrusted bear a special responsibility to care for what remains all too human about the humanities. For the opportunity to exercise that responsibility, and for much else, I will be forever grateful.

Reinhold Martin
Governing Board Chair of the Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities

“Those to whom the academy has been entrusted bear a special responsibility to care for what remains all too human about the humanities.”
This past academic year—our second operating as the Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities (or SOF/Heyman) and our forty-fifth as a society of postdoctoral humanists—began much like any other. Over the summer of 2019, we welcomed five new Fellows to their offices in the Heyman Center and to the departments and centers in which they hold their teaching appointments. Nisrin Elamin (Stanford PhD), an anthropologist working on Sudan, joined the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies. Fernando Montero (Columbia PhD), who studies everyday life under military occupation in the Afro-Indigenous Moskitia region of Honduras/Nicaragua, was appointed to both Anthropology and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race. Tyrone S. Palmer (Northwestern PhD), whose current work focuses on the failure of Affect Studies to account for the singularity of Blackness, joined Columbia’s new Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies. Allison Turner (U Chicago PhD), appointed in English and Comparative Literature, writes about how our modern concept of environmental waste has its origins in British texts of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And Zaid Jabri, an oft-commissioned composer who earned his doctorate from the Academy of Music in Krakow, joined the Departments of Anthropology and Music, having spent the previous year as an inaugural Fellow at Columbia’s Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris.
These five scholars—together with returning second-year Fellows JM Chris Chang (Columbia PhD), a historian of contemporary China working on declassified dossiers during the Maoist period, and Ardeta Gjikola (Harvard PhD), a historian of European science (sixteenth to nineteenth century) who explores the relations between objectivity and subjectivity in science and art—comprised our newest cohort. (Please take a look at the Fellows in Residence profiles for a better understanding of the work of these remarkably interesting people.) Following long-standing tradition, the Fellows took turns in presenting their research to the Columbia community in the SOF Fall Thursday Lecture Series. They also gathered monthly throughout the academic year to share work in progress, a practice we began some eight years ago. Customarily, these Friday Fellows Workshops, guest-chaired by a Board member, ended with our collective decampment to a nearby pub for further conversation, where we were often joined by other members of the Board. Alas, this custom, along with so much else, was abruptly halted in mid-March by COVID-19. We relocated the workshops themselves, as well as the works-in-progress seminar of the Heyman Center Fellows, to Zoom, where we have all become accustomed to living our intellectual and social lives of late—even though most of us still occasionally forget to unmute. (More information on the Thursday Lecture Series and the Heyman Center Fellows can be found within this report.)

Upend, shutdown, pivot: these are words that have come to describe our year of living pandemically. Browse through these pages to learn about some of the fifty-five SOF/Heyman events that took place (IRL) before all was so thoroughly upended. Some of these occurred in our “New Books in the Arts and Sciences” series, now in its fourth year, which is cosponsored by the Office of the Divisional Deans of Arts and Sciences and celebrates recent publications by Columbia and Barnard faculty across the humanities and humanistic social sciences. Others comprised the fifth season of the 13/13 series, organized by Bernard Harcourt (SOF/Heyman Board, 2015–2018) on the theme of Critique. Among the stand-alone events that we sponsored in part or in full were The Novel and Its Discontents: A Conversation with John Banville and Richard Ford; the New York City premiere of The Assistant (directed by Kitty Green), co-produced by James Schamus (SOF/Heyman Board, 2018–2021); the Theater of War Productions reading and discussion of Sophocles’s Ajax; Critical Caribbean Feminisms: Staceyann Chin and Alexis Pauline Gumbs; and Uncertain States: Narrative Journalism and Its Limits, organized by Brian Goldstone (SOF 2012–15) and Rachel Nolan (SOF 2018–19) and featuring a roster of award-winning long-form journalists, including Rachel Aviv, Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, and Sarah Stillman.

Before the general shutdown—when crossing national borders was still a viable option—we partnered with Columbia’s Global Center in Rio to host a meeting of the Global Humanities Institute project on Crises of Democracy. This multiyear project funded by the A.W. Mellon Foundation through the Consortium
of Humanities Centers and Institutes brought together faculty and early career researchers from Columbia, Trinity College Dublin, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and the Universities of Zagreb and São Paulo to identify the challenges to democratic values facing societies throughout the world and how best to address them. We look forward to partnering with Columbia Global Centers on more cross-institutional collaborations of this kind—both on location, once we are again permitted to travel, and until then, virtually.

The Ides of March ushered in the shutdown, and we spent the ensuing weeks indefinitely postponing the dozens of events that we had scheduled for the second half of Spring 2020. Among these were the annual Edward W. Said Memorial Lecture (by Marina Warner); a conversation with the Booker Prize winners Bernardine Evaristo and Marlon James; and a panel discussion hosted by Sam Lipsyte and Colm Tóibín on new Irish fiction, with Colin Barrett, Kevin Barry, Nicole Flattery, Mike McCormack, Belinda McKeon, and Sally Rooney.

But curiously, serendipitously, this thorough upending of business as usual also opened up programming opportunities previously unimagined. Pivoting online, we were able not only to welcome guest speakers from around the world, via Zoom, but also to expand our audience reach. From late April through May, the SOF/Heyman partnered with the Trinity Long Room Hub (Dublin) on a five-part series entitled Rethinking Democracy in an Age of Pandemic, which asked what COVID-19 might mean—both in the immediate and long term—for democracies and democratic values. Each episode focused on a different, but overlapping, theme (Nations and Borders, Marginalized Groups, Inequality, The Everyday, and Democracy Without a Public Sphere) and brought together speakers and attendees from four continents (with audiences, comprising both live-streamers and recording-viewers, reaching into the thousands).

Faced with the cancellation of their in-person conference Care for the Polis—which focused on the intersection of health, policies, publics,
and the built environment—María González Pendás (SOF 2016–2019), who manages our Public Humanities Graduate Fellows program, and Arden Hegele (SOF 2016–2019), who coordinates cross-campus efforts in Medical Humanities, pivoted to an online format. Here they reimagined their collaboration as a series of conversations between architectural historians, designers, physicians, disability scholars, and others about the impact of the pandemic on the economy, on public care and public reconstruction, on police violence, and on the visibility of systemic racism. María also relocated the presentations of the 2019–2020 Public Humanities Graduate Fellows to Zoom, where the Fellows not only described their civically engaged projects but also addressed how COVID-isolation required them to rethink their goals and to experiment with new methods as well. More information about our Public Humanities Initiative—including our Mellon-funded Justice-in-Education Initiative—and Explorations in the Medical Humanities can be found on our website, along with links to videos and podcasts related to these initiatives and other SOF/Heyman activities.

Although we were prevented by the shutdown from celebrating our departing Fellows and welcoming our incoming ones at our annual end-of-the-year dinner party, I am happy to do so here. Starting in Fall 2020, Nisrin Elamin joins Bryn Mawr College as Assistant Professor of International Studies, and Zaid Jabri returns full time to composing, including his collaboration with Barnard and Columbia colleagues Yvette Christiansë and Rosalind Morris on Southern Crossings—an opera about the fateful meeting between John Herschel and Charles Darwin in 1834.

We will welcome (in some cases virtually, at least to start) eight new Fellows to the Society in Fall 2020, bringing our overall number to a record thirteen Fellows for 2020–2021. Renzo Aroni (UC Davis PhD) will be Lecturer in History and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race; Leah Aronowsky (Harvard PhD) will be Lecturer in History; and Naeem Mohaiemen (Columbia PhD) will be Lecturer in Anthropology. Megan Boomer (U Penn PhD), Tingting Xu (U Chicago PhD), and Benjamin J. Young (UC Berkeley PhD) will all be appointed Lecturers in Art History, and Ruth Opara (UC Boulder PhD) and Suzanne Thorpe (UC San Diego PhD) will be Lecturers in Music.

A reminder to send us your news, including notice of your new publications. As you know, the SOF/Heyman established a “New Books in the Society of Fellows” series, which celebrates recent work by our alumni Fellows. While these have been hitherto imagined as in-person events, recent experience has taught us that book celebrations are exceptionally well-suited to a Zoom format.

Eileen Gillooly
Executive Director of the Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities
MEMBERS OF THE
2019–2020 GOVERNING BOARD

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Anthropology
Barnard College

Alexander Alberro
Art History
Barnard College

Eileen Gillooly*
Executive Director
English and Comparative Literature

Robert Gooding-Williams
Philosophy

Rishi Goyal
Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
Department of Emergency Medicine

Turkuler Isiksel
Political Science

Eugenia Lean*
Seminar Co-Director, Heyman Center Fellows
East Asian Languages and Cultures

John Ma
Classics

Sharon Marcus
English and Comparative Literature

Reinhold Martin*
Chair of the Governing Board
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

Alessandra Russo
Latin American and Iberian Cultures

Emmanuelle Saada*
French and Romance Philology

James Schamus
Film
School of the Arts

Elaine Sisman*
Chair, Music Humanities
Music

Pamela H. Smith
History

Josef Sorett
Religion

Joanna Stalnaker*
Chair, Literature Humanities
French and Romance Philology

Dorothea von Mücke*
Seminar Co-Director, Heyman Center Fellows
Germanic Languages

Gareth Williams*
Director, Friends of the Heyman Center
Classics

*Ex officio
FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL SOCIETY OF FELLOWS COMPETITION

The forty-fifth Society of Fellows in the Humanities fellowship competition closed on 2 October 2019, with 848 applicants vying for the three fellowship positions available for 2020–21. Representatives from twenty-two departments, institutes, and centers conducted the first round of vetting. Each application recommended for advancement to the next level of competition received three readings: two by members of the Governing Board and one by a current Fellow. Each applicant was ranked on a scale of one to five and subsequently reviewed by the selection committee, a subcommittee of the Governing Board. In mid-December, the committee invited fourteen applicants to campus for interviews, which were held in January 2020 at the Heyman Center.

The three available fellowships for 2020–21 were offered to and accepted by Renzo Aroni, Leah Aronowsky, and Naeem Mohaiemen. Additionally, five Mellon Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows in Art Humanities and Music Humanities were invited to join the cohort. They are Megan Boomer, Ruth Opara, Suzanne Thorpe, Tingting Xu, and Benjamin J. Young. This expanded group of incoming Fellows will bring to the Society a multiplicity of perspectives and methodological approaches—spanning the visual arts, music, anthropology, history of science, and film—that promises to enrich our discussions and intellectual collaborations throughout the year.

Fellows for 2020–21

Renzo Aroni: PhD in History, University of California, Davis
Leah Aronowsky: PhD in History of Science, Harvard University
Naeem Mohaiemen: PhD in Anthropology, Columbia University

Mellon Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows for 2020–21

Megan Boomer: PhD in Art History, University of Pennsylvania
Ruth Opara: PhD in Musicology (Ethnomusicology), University of Colorado, Boulder
Suzanne Thorpe: PhD in Integrative Studies, University of California, San Diego
Tingting Xu: PhD in Art History, University of Chicago
Benjamin J. Young: PhD in Rhetoric, University of California, Berkeley
### DEPARTMENT

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FELLOWS IN RESIDENCE
2019–2020
JM Chris Chang is a historian of modern China whose research examines systems of personnel filing and bureaucratic paperwork in the socialist era. His current project, “The Dossier: Archive and Ephemera in Mao’s China,” is a history of the institution of individual personnel dossiers on Chinese subjects known as *dang’an*. His research draws upon “grassroots sources”—files previously discarded from official archives and since resold in old book and paper markets—in order to address the intersection of political surveillance and human resources management in the lives of everyday Chinese citizens under Maoism.

In December 2019, Dr. Chang published an article drawn from his book manuscript in a special issue of the journal *Administory*, edited by Matthew Hull and Stefan Nellen. The article was a case study of dossier justice involving an alleged “hooligan” at the time of China’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The case centered on a construction worker in Hebei who was zealously investigated by his work unit for having an extramarital affair in 1974. The investigation gathered seized love letters, dubious confessions, and salacious bureaucratic reports into a thick dossier totaling hundreds of pages, revealing how the demands of documentation motivated the disciplinary process. A version of this article was previously presented to the Society of Fellows as part of the fall lecture series in 2018, and conversations stemming from the talk were invaluable in revising the piece for publication.

Dr. Chang co-organized a grassroots methodology workshop called “Revolutionary Routine: Work, Family, and Private Life in Mao’s China” with the support of a Luce-ACLS Collaborative Reading Workshop Grant for 2019–20. The workshop took place over three days in September 2019 and brought together over twenty invited scholars from China and North America to read and discuss grassroots sources relevant to key methodological and thematic questions in modern Chinese history. Working closely with colleagues from a university in China, Dr. Chang co-edited a “Grassroots Source Reader” of unique documents that served as the empirical basis for the workshop seminars. Dr. Chang was previously scheduled to present two papers in Spring 2020, the first as part of a University Seminar and the second at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies in Boston; however, both events were canceled due to COVID-19.
Nisrin Elamin is a cultural anthropologist whose current research project explores the connection between land, race, class, religion, and geopolitics in central Sudan. Drawing from her training in Africanist anthropology, feminist studies, and critical race theory, she uses land and disputes over land as a lens through which to examine state surveillance of Sahelian migration as well as Gulf Arab corporate and political interventions in Sudan and the broader Sahel region.

Dr. Elamin defended her dissertation, “‘When Mud Comes Between Us’: Land Enclosures and the Cultural Politics of Belonging in Central Sudan,” in December 2019 at Stanford University. In June 2020, she then published an essay entitled “‘Beyond regime change’: Reflections on Sudan’s ongoing revolution” in the Project on Middle East Political Science journal’s Africa and the Middle East: Beyond the Divides issue.

She presented her work in multiple forums throughout the year, before going on maternity leave in January 2020. In November, she participated in the Africana Studies and the Future of Freedom Conference at Vassar College in celebration of the 50th anniversary of its Africana Studies program, giving a talk entitled “How we talk about African Uprisings and what we can learn from them.” At the African Studies Association Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, she served as a panelist on the Africa Now Roundtable: “After al-Bashir: What Now for Sudan and South Sudan?” and presented a paper entitled “Negotiating Corporate Capitalism: African Encounters with Agribusiness and Extractive Industries.” In January 2020, she was invited to present her work at the Environment, Development, and Sustainable Communities in Africa Symposium at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Her ongoing commitment to public scholarship included talks and commentary on Sudan’s ongoing revolution. In May 2019, she coauthored an article entitled “The Many Mothers of Sudan’s Revolution” in Al Jazeera Opinion for which she interviewed Sudanese and South Sudanese women activists. Also in May, she presented on the role of labor unions in the Sudan Uprising to the City University of New York’s International Committee of the Professional Staff Congress, and in June she presented her work and participated in a panel, “On the Sudan Revolution,” at the University of Toronto. In November, she discussed issues related to land reform during Sudan’s transitional period as a panelist at the #KeepEyesonSudan Event at the City University of New York’s School of Law.

In Fall 2020, Dr. Elamin will begin a new position as Assistant Professor of International Studies at Bryn Mawr College.
Ardeta Gjikola is a historian of science who is broadly interested in early modern Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Her current work focuses on the relations between science and art, objectivity and subjectivity, and attitudes towards antiquities. Her book project, “The Finest Things on Earth: The Elgin Marbles and the Sciences of Taste,” analyzes the formation and circulation of aesthetic taste judgments by following the reception of the Parthenon sculptures in Britain in the early nineteenth century. Scholarly approaches have tended to consider taste judgments as either radically subjective or socially overdetermined. She examines instead the concrete observational and evaluative practices whereby artists and connoisseurs came to judge the Parthenon sculptures as “the finest things on earth” and to consider such judgment as certain as judgments of truth. During the academic year 2019–2020, Dr. Gjikola continued to revise her book manuscript.

Dr. Gjikola also began a side project based on an epistemological question raised by artists’ study of human anatomy in sixteenth-century Italy. While there was agreement about the fact that such study was desirable, the degree to which artists ought to engage with anatomical knowledge became a matter of debate. She relates some responses to this predicament to the features of the artistic and scientific fields artists navigated. In addition, Dr. Gjikola worked on a longer-term project that examines Ottoman modes of valuation of antiquities during the early modern period. These modes were not so much informed by classificatory or aesthetic frameworks as by a belief that antique remains possessed numinous qualities. She analyzes such beliefs in the context of healing and apotropaic practices, as well as theories about the makeup of the human body, the work of the senses, and the nature of materials. She was invited to present her work and serve as a respondent at the British History Seminar and the Italian and Mediterranean Colloquium at Columbia University.

In addition to planning an interdisciplinary workshop with the theme “The Science of Aesthetics and the Aesthetic of Science,” which will examine how aesthetic judgments are stabilized, and how they function as resources for the objectification of scientific claims, she designed and taught a new course at the Department of History. Titled “Science and Art in Early Modern Europe,” the seminar traced how the changing definitions of “art” and “science”; common norms and practices of representation; and the circulation of tools, materials, and techniques between the laboratory and the artist workshop—as well as a range of other factors—created conditions for extensive interactions between the two cultural domains.
Zaid Jabri is a Syrian music composer who works at the intersection of Western and Middle Eastern musical traditions. During the academic year 2019–2020, Dr. Jabri had the chance to work with the librettists of his new opera, Professors Rosalind Morris and Yvette Christiansë. Titled Southern Crossings, this chamber opera is set in Cape Town on a single night in March 1834, and it stages multilayered conversations about time, evolution, and freedom, between Charles Darwin and John Herschel; Herschel’s wife, Margaret; and their indentured servants, January and Leah. Dr. Jabri completed and revised the score, as well as writing the piano reduction of the work.

Together with his librettists, Dr. Jabri presented the public lecture “Southern Crossings: Composition and Collaboration” at the Maison Française in December 2019. Other public engagements during the academic year included a conversation with writers and literary theorists on translation and transliteration in literature and music composition.

Dr. Jabri also wrote a new piece for virtuoso soloist and electronics in collaboration with the Philadelphia-based cellist Kinan Abou-afach. The twenty-five-minute, one-movement piece, rich with microtones and clusters, explores the sonic possibilities of the amplified cello and the multilayer electronics for creating a concerto. The piece will be premiered at Columbia University’s Global Center in Paris, Reid Hall, in 2021.

Another piece Dr. Jabri started working on while a Fellow is titled “Hemispheres.” Commissioned by the Essen Philharmonic, this chamber music piece is for flute with double bass flute, oboe, clarinet with double bass clarinet, trombone, accordion, violin, viola, cello, and percussion, with a text by Yvette Christiansë. The premiere, performed by the Essen-based E-MEX-Ensemble for contemporary music, will take place at Festival NOW 2020, on 1 November 2020, in Essen, Germany.
Fernando Montero is an anthropologist specializing in security regimes and the War on Drugs in the Americas. This past year, he worked on his book manuscript, “Martial Love: Articulation and Detachment in the Military Occupation of the Moskitia (Nicaragua/Honduras),” which examines the everyday life of military occupation in the Moskitia region of Central America, inhabited by the Afro-Indigenous Miskitu people. Centering on the sexual and romantic affairs between Miskitu women and Nicaraguan and Honduran soldiers in Miskitu coastal villages recently occupied by the military, the book interrogates Central American security regimes, not only in relation to the history of war and extractivism in Afro-Indigenous regions, but also vis-à-vis Afro-Indigenous kinship and gender norms, property forms and economic practices, and overlapping jurisdictions of regional governance.

He has also continued working on revisions to his coauthored book manuscript, “Cornered: The Carceral-Psychiatric Nexus in Puerto Rican North Philadelphia,” which is under contract with Princeton University Press. Written in collaboration with the anthropologists Philippe Bourgois, Laurie Hart, and George Karandinos, the book is based on his half-dozen years of team-based, participant-observation fieldwork on the gendered and racialized interface between mass incarceration and the United States’ Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program for psychiatric disability.

Dr. Montero presented his work on the Moskitia in various forums throughout the year, including an invited lecture at the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He co-organized a panel on “Intimate Encounters Across Military, Urban, and Clinical Contexts” at the 2019 American Anthropological Association Meeting.

Other collaborations include working with an interdisciplinary team on the National Institutes of Health–funded study “Heroin in Transition” (PI Daniel Ciccarone). The study examines the transformations in heroin supply and consumption throughout the United States from the 1990s to the present.

Next year, he will be providing expert witness testimony at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in San Jose, Costa Rica, for a case involving Miskitu lobster divers in Honduras and the US restaurant franchise Red Lobster. With Anthropology professors Claudio Lomnitz and Naor Ben-Yehoyada, Dr. Montero received Columbia’s “Humanities War and Peace Initiative” grant for 2020–2021. The grant will fund their ongoing collaboration on criminalization and the permutations of organized and disorganized “crime” in their respective regions of study.
Tyrone S. Palmer is a critical theorist whose work foregrounds the interventions of Black literature and expressive culture into discourses of affect and (post-)humanism, poetics, metaphysics, and continental philosophy. This past year he began work on his book manuscript, “Black Negativity: Unthinking the Grammars of Affect,” which explores how key Black literary and political texts theorize the failures of universalist conceptions of affect to account for the structures and grammars of feeling that emerge out of the singularity of Black experience. In addition to the book manuscript, Dr. Palmer spent much of the year working on an article entitled “Otherwise Than Blackness: Feeling, World, Sublimation,” which has been accepted for publication and is forthcoming in the journal *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, published by Duke University Press.

In November 2019, Dr. Palmer presented a paper entitled “Originary Defacement” at the American Studies Association Annual Meeting in Honolulu, HI, and moderated a panel celebrating the Thirtieth Anniversary of Hortense Spillers’s seminal essay “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book” at the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) Annual Meeting, hosted by Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. Additionally, he has had numerous papers accepted to conferences this academic year, including the American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL; the Caribbean Philosophical Association Annual Meeting at the University of the Virgin Islands, Saint Croix; and the SPEP Annual Meeting in Rochester, NY.

Dr. Palmer was also selected as a member of the inaugural cohort of the Being Human Summer Institute, a three-year summer session for early career scholars devoted to groundbreaking work on the question of the human in the humanities, organized by the Center for Religion and the Human at Indiana University Bloomington. Additionally, he has been invited to serve as a Visiting Fellow at the Affective Societies Center at the Freie Universität Berlin (Free University of Berlin) in Summer 2021.

Alongside writing and presenting his work across the country, Dr. Palmer spent the bulk of this past year teaching the yearlong sequence of the Contemporary Civilization Core course. This coming spring he plans to teach a course on negativity in Black political thought in the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies.
Allison Turner is a literary scholar whose research and teaching interests include eighteenth-century British literature and culture, the environmental humanities, global/emprise studies, and the history and theory of the novel. In their first year at Columbia, Dr. Turner continued to revise and extend their book manuscript, “The Salvaging Disposition: Waste and the Novel Form,” which locates the emergence of a distinctly modern sense of waste in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Baconian science and European colonialism began to conceive of the New World as an untapped spring of inexhaustible resources. In particular, Dr. Turner’s research examines the impact of new thinking about waste (as an ecological, economic, and political concept) on literary form in the eighteenth century, especially the novel. One of the central claims of the project is that the novel emerged in the period as a form for managing the waste generated by a rapidly shifting global economy.

Over the past year, Dr. Turner had papers accepted at the annual conferences of the American Comparative Literature Association and the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, as well as at the annual meeting of the Bloomington Eighteenth-Century Studies Workshop. In addition, Dr. Turner was invited to contribute an essay on political ecology to a special issue of the journal Eighteenth-Century Theory and Interpretation, which is now under review. The essay, entitled “Disposable World(s): Race and Commerce in Defoe’s Captain Singleton,” shows how Defoe’s fiction dramatizes the racial hierarchy that was essential to the theory of global commerce he was advancing in his economic writings. Dr. Turner’s essay argues that this racial hierarchy served not only to enrich Europeans but also to protect the white human against the very disposability that the economic system depended on.

This year, Dr. Turner also taught two courses, including a self-designed seminar in the Department of English and Comparative Literature called “Castaways and Containers: Modernity at Sea,” which investigates the ambitions, challenges, and failures of globalization through the lens of castaway literature from the eighteenth century to the present. As part of this course, Dr. Turner organized and led a field trip to the Red Hook Container Terminal, Brooklyn’s last operating port, where students got to witness firsthand the complex network of agents and infrastructures upon which their transatlantic lives depend. In Fall 2021, Dr. Turner will begin a new position as Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University Bloomington.
THURSDAY LECTURE SERIES
26 September
Cold War Drugs and the First Era of Psychedelic Science, 1945–65
Benjamin Breen, Assistant Professor of History, University of California, Santa Cruz, SOF 2015–16

In 1952, psychiatrist Ronald Sandison paid a visit to Sandoz Laboratories in Basel, Switzerland, where he met chemist Albert Hoffman, today best remembered as the discoverer of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). Hoffman and his associates, Sandison recalled, “spoke of LSD as enabling them to hold a mirror to themselves, of enabling them to understand and see things in themselves which they had not known before.” From 1952 until the mid-1960s, Sandison began to systematically prescribe LSD to his psychiatric patients—and to himself. This talk was part of a research project on this largely forgotten first era of “psychedelic science,” which spanned the period between 1945 and 1965. It is a story that ties together, in surprising and sometimes profound ways, the histories of Cold War intelligence agents, experimental anthropologists like Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, early computer science researchers, and a generation of psychiatrists whose utopian ambitions faltered in a nascent age of anxiety.

3 October
The Void of Faceless Faces: Ralph Ellison and the Matter of Black Affect
Tyrone S. Palmer, Lecturer in African American and African Diaspora Studies

What is a face? And what might it mean to be without one? In his talk, Tyrone S. Palmer posed these, and related, questions through a reading of Ralph Ellison’s seminal novel Invisible Man. Specifically, he considered the deployment of the concept-metaphor of “facelessness” in Ellison’s text as a means of theorizing the matter of Black affect. He argued that Ellison’s rendering of Blackness as facelessness makes a key intervention into theories of affect that center on the face as the primary site of the affective encounter. Breaking with dominant conceptions of the face as a universal, anatomical reality or an ethico-affective horizon, Ellison demonstrates that the face is the product of obliterative violence—a social, political, and historical construction contingent on Black abjection.

10 October
Contemporary Land Enclosures in Central Sudan: Troubling the Romanticization of the “Commons”
Nisrin Elamin, Lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies

In this talk, Nisrin Elamin situated contemporary Saudi and Emirati large-scale land investments in central Sudan within a layered history of enclosures and unequal landed relations shaped by legacies of colonialism and enslavement. Using a fine-grained analysis of several moments drawn from ethnographic fieldwork in the Gezira region of central Sudan, Dr. Elamin argued against a tendency within the contemporary literature on land grabs to romanticize and dehistoricize “the commons” and the social relations that govern access to communal land and water resources. She aimed to trouble
the idea of “community” that prevailing conceptions of the “commons” rely on, to show how rights and access to land in central Sudan has long been shaped by hierarchical social relations. To do so, Dr. Elamin demonstrated that ongoing processes of land dispossession are gendered and racialized, while examining how race, class, gender, and enslaved descent shape the different forms resistance to these processes can take.

17 October

The Voice and Historical Conscience
Zaid Jabri, Lecturer in Anthropology and in Music

Composers have long used the human voice as a medium of expressing and critically addressing the historical moment, and they have done so in very different ways, from Donizetti to Schoenberg. In this talk, composer Zaid Jabri discussed the ways in which he has used the human voice in his own compositions over the last decade. These works include “Love and Mercy” for chorus and large symphony orchestra, a piece based on a text by Bar Hebraeus, written during the Mogul invasion of Syria; “Variations on (R)evolution” for soprano, violin, and piano, text by Yvette Christiane, commissioned by Beethoven Fest in Bonn to be performed in concert about the Arab Spring; and “30 Articles for Viola and Electronics,” commissioned by Salt Festival in Victoria, Canada, and premiered in Ravensbruck concentration camp, as well as large-scale and chamber operas. The talk included a presentation of scores and recordings. Dr. Jabri was joined in conversation by Professor Rosalind C. Morris.

24 October

Martial Love: Intimacy Without Incorporation in the Military Occupation of the Moskitia (Nicaragua/Honduras)
Fernando Montero, Lecturer in Anthropology and at the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race

Nicaraguan and Honduran soldiers occupying Caribbean coastal villages in the Afro-Indigenous region of Moskitia habitually entangle themselves sexually or romantically with one or more local women during their three-month rotations. The extensive practice of intimacy with soldiers in the Moskitia does not lead to the military’s local “incorporation,” nor to a peaceful synthesis of soldier-resident cohabitation, but to a predatory relation of domination in which the military remains an awkward appendage to Miskitu villages, restricted to strategic but peripheral geographic and quotidian locations. This “intimacy without incorporation” is reflected in the kind of local knowledge soldiers acquire and produce, as well as in the kinds of value they extract from economies deemed legal or illegal. In this talk, Dr. Montero outlined the implications of “martial love” for the literatures on the War on Drugs, indigeneity and multiculturalism, and punitive prohibitionism.

7 November

The Form of Forms: Tables, Information, and Nonsense in the Maoist Dossier
JM Chris Chang, Lecturer in East Asian Languages and Cultures

Beginning around 1945, the Chinese Communist Party drastically
redesigned its dossiers. Replacing narrative evaluations and epistolary reports, the Party adopted new forms that reorganized information on persons of interest into neat fields of questions and answers with headers, labels, and tables, all locked into the graphic device of the rectangular grid. These new dossier templates were part of a process of formalization in the 1940s that transformed the paper instruments of bureaucratic work. They established a visual style for Chinese paperwork that persists in official documents to this day. Biographical facts and political histories of cadres and enemies alike had to be abstracted, simplified, and reconfigured to fit the parameters of grid-lined fields. In this talk, Chang revisited several examples of Party personnel forms to show that, even as these new forms were not inherently more efficient in capturing information, they served to communicate technocratic regularity as a distinct visual aesthetic.

14 November
Byproducts and the Novel from Defoe to Richardson
Allison Turner, Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature

Allison Turner argued for the central importance of waste to the cultural, social, and economic transformations that took place over the course of the long eighteenth century. Dr. Turner demonstrated how novelist Samuel Richardson adapted the commercial logic of salvaging in order to reconceive the literary domain as a set of materials itself in need of maintenance. In doing so, Richardson developed the notion of literary plotting as a mechanism for recollecting textual byproducts—the discarded characters and sequences of events generated by episodic fiction. By making the recovery of these characters a condition of narrative closure, Richardson’s novels helped establish a literary framework in which disparate persons could appear both as the components of a single plot and as members of a social totality more generally.

21 November
The Judgment of a Connoisseur
Ardeta Gjikola, Lecturer in History

The first Parthenon sculptures arrived in London in 1802. Initial remarks about them were few and far between, but it was a different matter when in 1806 Richard Payne Knight pronounced a judgment upon them. A wealthy British connoisseur and a member of the Society of Dilettanti, Knight judged the sculptures—by then known as the Elgin Marbles—as aesthetically worthless. He would repeat in years to come that he had “looked over” the marbles and arrived at the same conclusion, a conclusion that stalled Lord Elgin’s efforts to sell the marbles to the British Government. This talk considered two related questions: why did Knight consider a quick visual examination of the marbles sufficient for estimating their value, and why was his judgment influential? Rather than taking connoisseurial authority as an automatic attribute of social or institutional positions, Dr. Gjikola’s talk examined how such authority was produced and circulated in early nineteenth-century London.
20 February  
**Ambivalence and (anti)Blackness: A Prolegomenon**  
Selamawit D. Terrefe, Assistant Professor of English, Tulane University

What, precisely, is the Black's relation to her own death—unyielding in its familiarity, belated in its arrival, unheimlich in the effects its fantasies engender? This talk mapped ambivalence within the Black psyche's wrestling with, and wrestling itself of, the death-drive on two primary fronts: a retreat within, or return to, fantasy; and the destruction of the notion of the subject, or the political, itself.

27 February  
**Atmospheric Misogyny and the Lyric Tradition**  
David Simon, Associate Professor of English, University of Maryland

This presentation described the role of levity in the reproduction of gender subordination. David Simon argued that lyric poetry, with its fine-tuned instruments of attention management, is an especially useful site for exploring the relationship between literary atmosphere and gendered habits of perception. Looking to poems by John Donne and Aphra Behn, and giving special attention to Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress," Simon described a version of levity that depends on an incomplete or frozen decision that someone or something is unworthy of attention—a decision that establishes an experience of ambivalence in which the outcome is determined but not actually pursued. In these cases, the gendered conferral of triviality on someone or something does not direct attention elsewhere but instead reframes attention as pleasurably superfluous. Simon argued for the importance of levity, understood in these terms, as a subject for feminist and queer inquiry, and reflected on the challenges of cultivating an antipatriarchal sensorium.

5 March  
**“Europe Does Not Know Anything about the Orient”: A Proto-Saidian Discourse**  
Zeynep Çelik, Distinguished Professor, Hillier College of Architecture and Design, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Reacting to the misconceptions, distortions, and factual errors in European representations of the "Orient," a passionate Ottoman discourse emerged in the 1870s and continued with fervor into the 1930s. Well-acquainted with the European political and cultural scene and charged with their own ideological agendas, the Ottoman and early Turkish Republican intellectuals turned and twisted the familiar debates around in an attempt to deconstruct the tired clichés. Listening to their voices forty years after the publication of *Orientalism* helps to recontextualize and complicate Edward Said's important arguments from an unlikely perspective. In her presentation, Dr. Çelik unpacked several themes that dominated this response.
The screening of the Water, Sound, and Indigenous Series film *Ushui* was followed by a conversation with Amalia Córdova, NYU; José Gregorio Mojica Gil, Researcher; Rafael Mojica Gil, Photographer; and the series organizers—Ron Gregg, Film and Media Studies; and Ana María Ochoa Gautier, Music.
YEAR IN REVIEW

Total Number of Events, Fall 2019: 40

Total Number of Events, Spring 2020: 40

35 Events Cancelled or Postponed Due to COVID-19

COLLABORATED WITH 39 UNITS ON CAMPUS

Anthropology
Art History and Archaeology
Barnard Center for Research on Women
Barnard Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
British Studies
Brown Institute
Buell Center
Butler Library
Center for American Studies
Center for Ethnomusicology
Center for Justice
Center for Science and Society
Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race
Center for the Study of Social Difference
Columbia Center for Contemporary Critical Thought
Committee on Global Thought
Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma
English and Comparative Literature
European Institute
Harriman Institute
History

Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
Institute for Ideas and Imagination
Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life
Institute for Research in African-American Studies
Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy
Institute of Latin American Studies
Italian Academy
Lenfest Center for the Arts
Maison Française
Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies
Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
Office of the Dean of Humanities
School of General Studies
School of the Arts
Sociology
University Seminars
Weatherhead East Asian Institute
The Society of Fellows has been a significant financial supporter of Heyman Center events ever since the latter began producing public programming in 2005. Now that the Society and the Heyman Center have become a single entity, all Heyman Center programming is a product of their joint efforts. Both SOF Fellows and Board Members have been especially active this past year in organizing lectures, workshops, roundtables, and performances for audiences on campus and beyond—events that explore, from the perspectives of the humanities and humanistic social sciences, issues of particular urgency and interest. Many of these are highlighted below. Additional programming and further details—including information about speakers and co-sponsors—may be found at www.sofheyman.com.

18 September
The Novel and Its Discontents: A Conversation with John Banville and Richard Ford

John Banville and Richard Ford, authors of many novels, winners of many prizes, and decades-long friends, engaged in a spirited, untheoretical back and forth about the supposed pleasures of the text. This event was organized by Sam Lipsyte and co-sponsored by the Writing Division of the School of the Arts, a frequent partner of SOF/Heyman. John Banville’s first novel, Nightspawn, came out in 1971, followed by Birchwood (1973), Doctor Copernicus (1976), Kepler (1981), The Newton Letter (1982), Mefisto (1986), The Book of Evidence (1989), Ghosts (1993), Athena (1995), The Untouchable (1997), Eclipse (2000), Shroud (2002), The Sea (2005), The Infinities (2009), and Ancient Light (2012). Richard Ford is a novelist, story writer, and essayist—in addition to being a professor in the Columbia Creative Writing Program. He is the author of seven novels and four (soon-to-be five) collections of stories, plus a memoir; and his work has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize, the Carnegie Gold Medal for Fiction, and the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction, among many other distinctions.

4 October
Uncertain States: Narrative Journalism and Its Limits

This symposium, organized by Society Fellows Alumni Rachel Nolan and Brian Goldstone, explored the possibilities and constraints of narrative journalism as it is practiced today. Participants reflected on issues central to this mode.
of journalism, which are nevertheless rarely scrutinized: choices of tone and structure, selection of themes, front stories, arguments, or central characters, and how to portray situations that don’t lend themselves to tidy conclusions. What’s at stake, they asked, in embracing the murky and indeterminate—the less immediately sympathetic protagonist, the not-so-easily-resolved predicament—at a time when the demand for moral and political decisiveness, for clear-cut villains and victims, has grown acute? How do journalists handle issues of translation not simply across languages but across sensibilities and worldviews? What are the implications of long-term, immersive reporting that resists the immediacy of the news cycle? Participants also asked the question of intervening—or not—in the lives of those we write about, particularly in the context of suffering or injustice. The conversation that ensued covered the limits of journalistic “objectivity,” entrenched notions that journalism and advocacy are distinct endeavors, and moments of reporting when these lines have become blurred, perhaps necessarily or productively so.

10 October
Water, Sound, and Indigenous Film: Ushui

This screening and discussion of the film Ushui was organized by former SOF/Heyman Board Member Ana María Ochoa Gautier (Music) along with Ron Gregg (Film and Media Studies) as part of the Water, Sound, and Indigenous Film Series. This series focused on indigenous film productions that have engaged with local environmental struggles between indigenous communities and transnational agribusinesses, hydroelectric projects, and mining corporations. These films also presented unique, radical aesthetics and sounds through the influence of indigenous experience and understanding of sustenance, environment, nature, and conservation. This film screening of Ushui was followed by a conversation with Amalia Córdova (NYU), José Gregorio Mojica Gil (Researcher), and Rafael Mojica Gil (Photographer). Ushui is about Sagas—women shamans—and their wisdom and relation to water; how to give birth and raise children, to sing to the spirits, and what to do when they turn against us like Shekuita, the bad thunder that destroyed the town of Kemakúmake. It was produced by the Bunkuaneyuman Communications Collective of indigenous Wiwa people of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia.

30 October
Dialogues in Translation

Karen Van Dyck, Xiaolu Guo, Kaiama L. Glover, and Zaid Jabri, all inaugural fellows of Columbia’s Institute for Ideas and Imagination, discussed their diverse practices of translation and transliteration, and the artistic and political consequences of living, working, and moving between languages. The conversation began in Spring 2019 at the Institute in Paris around Karen Van Dyck’s research on translingual writing of the Greek Diaspora, which addresses the multilingual lives of migrants as a resource for literature, translation, and social policy. Using two different writing systems (Chinese ideograms and the English alphabet), Xiaolu Guo then discussed migrant writers’ use of a second
language to express their histories and illustrate ways in which writers play with time and grammar to express a different point of view. Zaid Jabri spoke about his strategies of translation and transliteration in composing vocal music that draws on a variety of alphabets and languages, and takes into account the performance of the text in his piece “Love and Mercy” for chorus and large symphony orchestra based on text by Bar Hebraeus, sung in Syriac. Kaiama L. Glover addressed the ethics of literary translation as an act of representation within contexts of material and social disparity, focusing on the stakes and the practice of translating René Depestre’s 1988 novel Hadriana dans tous mes rêves, first to the space of metropolitan France and, subsequently, to an anglophone reading public—that is, to a global readership that most often views Haiti through the lens of irrevocable, demeaningly racialized difference. The discussion was moderated by Susan Boynton. This event was part of an ongoing collaboration between SOF/Heyman and the Institute for Ideas and Imagination beginning with last year’s Crises of Democracy.

6–7 November
Theater of War

As part of the Humanities War and Peace Initiative sponsored by the Office of the Dean of Humanities, Theater of War Productions brought Sophocles’s Ajax to Columbia over two days in staged readings held at Miller Theatre and Riverside Church. Theater of War works with leading film, theater, and television actors to present dramatic readings of seminal plays—from classical Greek tragedies to modern and contemporary works—followed by town hall–style discussions designed to confront social issues by drawing out raw and personal reactions to themes highlighted in the plays. The guided discussions underscore how the plays resonate with contemporary audiences and invite audience members to share their perspectives and experiences, helping to break down stigmas and foster empathy, compassion, and a deeper understanding of complex issues. Theater of War Productions was co-founded in 2009 by Bryan Doerries and Phyllis Kaufman, and Doerries currently serves as the company’s artistic director. Since its founding, Theater of War Productions has facilitated events for more than 100,000 people, presenting over twenty tailored programs targeted to diverse communities across the globe.

4 February
Splicing Cultures: Xiaolu Guo on Novels and Filmmaking

In a conversation with Carol Gluck (History), Xiaolu Guo presented her work in words and film and drew connections to her own life. Xiaolu Guo is a British Chinese novelist, essayist, and filmmaker. Her memoir, Nine Continents, received the National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography in 2017. She was an inaugural fellow at the Columbia Institute for Ideas and Imagination at Reid Hall in Paris in 2018–19, where she was Abigail R. Cohen Fellow. She is currently a writer in residence at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute; a visiting fellow at the SOF/Heyman; and a visiting professor in East Asian Languages and Cultures, the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, and the School of the Arts. This
event was co-sponsored by the Maison Française and Institute for Ideas and Imagination as part of the Institute at the Maison series.

6 February and 5 March
Columbia/Brown Joint Seminar: The Visual Frequency of Black Life

This innovative seminar, led by former SOF/Heyman Board Member Tina Campt in parallel with Saidiya Hartman, brought together students at Columbia and Brown University to discuss how one represents Black life. Over a series of cross-campus discussions, students considered what forms of accounting or reckoning are enacted by Black photo books. Defined by Gerry Badger as “a book—with or without text—where the work’s primary message is carried by photographs,” these texts offer densely layered accounts of Blackness and Black sociality that are not restricted to the visual—they are haptic and sonic engagements and improvisations that render Black life through visual frequencies that register well beyond what we see in their images. Placing a series of historical and contemporary Black photo books in conversation with sonic scripts, embodied performances, and moving images inspired by and in dialogue with them, the seminar unpacked the multiple visual frequencies of Black life articulated in and through these works with an eye toward understanding the practices of Black refusal and futurity that structure their varied creative practices.

11 February
Critical Caribbean Feminisms: Staceyann Chin and Alexis Pauline Gumbs

Staceyann Chin and Alexis Pauline Gumbs were joined in conversation with Kaiama L. Glover (Ann Whitney Olin Professor of French and Africana Studies, Barnard College) for a discussion organized by former SOF/Heyman Board Member Tina Campt. Poet, actor, and performing artist Staceyann Chin is the author of the new poetry collection Crossfire: A Litany for Survival and the critically acclaimed memoir The Other Side of Paradise; co-writer and original performer in the Tony Award–winning Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry Jam on Broadway; and author of the one-woman shows Hands Afire, Unspeakable Things, Border/Clash, and MotherStruck. She proudly identifies as Caribbean, Black, Asian, lesbian, a woman, and a resident of New York City, as well as a Jamaican national. The Anguilla Literary Festival called Alexis Pauline Gumbs “the pride of Anguilla.” She is the author of Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity, M Archive: After the End of the World, and Dub: Finding Ceremony and co-editor of Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Front Lines. Alexis lives in Durham, North Carolina, where she stewards the Mobile Homecoming Trust Living Library of Queer Black Brilliance.
13 February  
**Water, Sound, and Indigenous Film: *Antonio and Piti***

This film screening and discussion of *Antonio and Piti* was part of the Water, Sound, and Indigenous Film Series organized by former SOF/Heyman Board Member Ana María Ochoa Gautier (Music) along with Ron Gregg (Film and Media Studies) and Maria Fantinato (Music). The film is set along the Amônia River, which runs near the border of Brazil and Peru and where both indigenous Ashaninka people and white settlers live in the municipality of Marechal Thaumaturgo. Produced by the Vídeo nas Aldeias collective, *Antonio and Piti* explores the love between a Peruvian-born indigenous man and the daughter of Chico Coló, a white rubber tapper soldier. The film tells the story of their community-led reforestation project and the pressures of a predatory and extractive economy. The screening was followed by a discussion with co-directors Vincent Carelli and Wewito Piyako and a response by Esther Hamburger (School of the Arts).

28 February  
**New Political Economies of the French Empire 19th–20th Centuries***

While the cultural, political, legal, and social aspects of French colonialism have received much attention over the past thirty years, the political economy of the French colonial empire has been largely neglected. This conference, organized by SOF/Heyman Board Member Emmanuelle Saada along with Gregory Mann (History) and Madeline Woker (History), brought together a new generation of historians and economists whose work engages with the nature and workings of French colonial capitalism; the reorientation of capital and labor from Haitian independence to the colonization of Algeria; economic life in France’s informal empire; the circulation, production, and consumption of commodities; colonial public finance and inequality; the intersection of racial ideologies with the political economy of late colonialism; and the economic and financial dimensions of decolonization. The conference delineated the contours of a new political economy of French colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

5–6 March  
**Music and Migration Conference***

Co-organized by Alessandra Ciucci (Music) and former SOF/Heyman Board Member Ana María Ochoa Gautier (Music), this two-day conference included panels on performance, longing, belonging, subjectivity, and materiality in music and migration. Participants included Alejandra Bronfman (SUNY Albany); Julia Byl (University of Alberta); Claire Clouet (Basque Anthropological Research Institute); Brigid Cohen (New York University); Denis Laborde (CNRS, EHESS); Nicolas Puig (IRD, CNRS); and Adelaida Reyes (New Jersey City University), as well as Columbia faculty and graduate students Nandini Banerjee-Datta, Alessandra Ciucci, Emily Hansell Clark, Andrés García Molina, and Althea SullyCole.
SERIES
The Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities sponsored several new and ongoing series: Care for the Polis, Critique 13/13, New Books in the Arts and Sciences, and Rethinking Democracy in an Age of Pandemic.

Care for the Polis

Care for the Polis is a conversation that took place in a multitemporal and virtual space, a space designed to reimagine how medical humanities and public humanities shape, and are shaped by, the city and its diverse publics. In a series of weekly panels, invited speakers discussed the effects of health on the conception of cities and publics—including, in the context of pandemic, the foreclosure of public space and what it means to become an online yet domestic-bound public. It was organized by Arden Hegele, Medical Humanities Fellow and Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature (Columbia) and María González Pendás, Coordinator of the Public Humanities Initiative and Lecturer in Art History and Archaeology (Columbia).

1 May
**Germ City Exhibition: A Conversation on Cities, Health, and Public Humanities**
Rebecca Hayes Jacobs (CUNY Graduate Center), Arden Hegele (Columbia), and María González Pendás (Columbia)

7 May
**Emergency by Design**
Rishi Goyal (Columbia) and Graham Mooney (Johns Hopkins)

14 May
**Designs of Urban and Medical Exclusion**
Alexandre White (Johns Hopkins) and Leslie Topp (Birkbeck)

21 May
**Collectives of Care**
Meredith TenHoor (Pratt) and Camille Robcis (Columbia)

28 May
**Urban Infrastructures of Violence**
Amy Chazkel (Columbia) and Jonathan Metzl (Vanderbilt)

4 June
**Expanding Ecologies of Care**
Rachel Adams (Columbia) and Bryony Roberts (Columbia)

11 June
**Toxic Bodies in Place**
Samia Henni (Cornell) and Chisomo Kalinga (University of Edinburgh)

12 June
**Speaking of Worlds Without Police**
María González Pendás (Columbia), Arden Hegele (Columbia), and Amy Chazkel (Columbia)

18 June
**Ethics of Care and Space**
Kathryn Tabb (Barnard) and Joy Knoblauch (University of Michigan)

25 June
**Speaking of COVID-19, Now and in the Future**
Rita Charon (Columbia) and Margaret Crosby-Arnold (Southern University)
Critique 13/13

Critique 13/13 is the fifth 13/13 seminar series held over the course of the academic year at the Columbia Center for Contemporary Critical Thought. Organized by former SOF/Heyman Board Member Bernard E. Harcourt, these seminars focus, each year, on a different set of topics at the heart of contemporary critical thought and action in philosophy, politics, law, and social inquiry. The seminar for 2019–2020 examined the current state of critical theory and asked how contemporary critical thought and practice functions in these troubled times. In approaching these texts again today, the idea was to find new ways to use them, not to tear them down and criticize them for their faults but to discover what we can do with them today.

11 September
In Search of a Method
Amy Allen (Pennsylvania State University), Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia), Étienne Balibar (Columbia), Linda Goehr (Columbia), Joshua Simon (Columbia), and Nadia Urbinati (Columbia)

25 September
Horkheimer and Adorno, Critical Theory and Actuality of Philosophy
Axel Honneth (Columbia) and Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia)

16 October
Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex
Judith Revel (Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense) and Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia)

22 October
Paolo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Maria Inês Marcondes de Souza (PUC-Rio University), Cecilia Boal (Director, “Theater of the Oppressed”), Alessandra Vannucci (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), Antonio Pele (PUC-Rio University), and Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia)

13 November
Louis Althusser, Reading Capital
Étienne Balibar (Columbia) and Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia)

4 December
Michel Foucault, Les Aveux de la Chair
Guillaume le Blanc (University Paris-Diderot) and Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia)

18 December
Theodor Adorno, Negative Dialectics
Martin Saar (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main) and Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia)

15 January
Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition
Seyla Benhabib (Columbia) and Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia)

19 February
Jean-Paul Sartre, Critique of Dialectical Reason
Noreen Khawaja (Yale), Jesús Velasco (Columbia), and Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia)
New Books in the Arts and Sciences

Co-sponsored by the Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for Humanities, the Office of the Divisional Deans in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, and the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, this series celebrates recent work by the Columbia Faculty with panel discussions of their new books.

26 September
Nara B. Milanich, Paternity: The Elusive Quest for the Father (Harvard University Press)
Nara B. Milanich (Columbia), Dorothy Y. Ko (Barnard), Maya Jasanoff (Harvard), and Emmanuelle Saada (Columbia)

14 October
Sharon Marcus, The Drama of Celebrity (Princeton University Press)
Sharon Marcus (Columbia), Alan Stewart (Columbia), Alisa Solomon (Columbia), and Arianne Chernock (Boston University)

21 November
Brendan O’Flaherty (Columbia), Rajiv Sethi (Barnard), Valerie Purdie Greenaway (Columbia), Suresh Naidu (Columbia), Carla Shedd (CUNY Graduate Center), and Miguel Urquioia (Columbia)

2 December
Gil Eyal, The Crisis of Expertise (Polity Press)
Gil Eyal (Columbia), Peter B. de Menocal (Columbia), Steven Shapin (Harvard), Diane Vaughan (Columbia), and Shamus Khan (Columbia)

4 December
Sarah Cole (Columbia), Jed Esty (University of Pennsylvania), Victor LaValle (Columbia), Sharon Marcus (Columbia), and Alan Stewart (Columbia)

28 January
Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, School Photos in Liquid Time: Reframing Difference (University of Washington Press)
Marianne Hirsch (Columbia), Leo Spitzer (Dartmouth College), Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (New York University), Gil Hochberg (Columbia), Oluremi C. Onabanjo (Columbia), and Jack Halberstam (Columbia)

19 February
Mariusz Kozak, Enacting Musical Time: The Bodily Experience of New Music (Oxford University Press)
Mariusz Kozak (Columbia), Elizabeth Margulis (Princeton), George Lewis (Columbia), Patricia Dailey (Columbia), and Ana M. Ochoa Gautier (Columbia)
20 February
Stephanie McCurry, *Women’s War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War* (Harvard University Press)
Stephanie McCurry (Columbia), Drew Gilpin Faust (Harvard), Camille Robcis (Columbia), Jeremy Kessler (Columbia), and Christopher Brown (Columbia)

24 February
Jennifer Wenzel (Columbia), Mary Louise Pratt (New York University), Eleanor Johnson (Columbia), Elizabeth Povinelli (Columbia), and Mamadou Diouf (Columbia)

4 March
Rashid Khalidi (Columbia), Rosie Bsheer (Harvard), Manan Ahmed (Columbia), Gil Hochberg (Columbia), and Nadia Abu El-Haj (Barnard)
Rethinking Democracy in an Age of Pandemic

As the world grappled to deal with the fallout from COVID-19, this special series of workshops explored the impact of the pandemic on democracies worldwide. The workshops were organized by the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute in partnership with the Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities and were part of the Crises of Democracy Global Humanities Institute project sponsored by the A.W. Mellon Foundation.

27 April
**Behind the Headlines: Democracy in an Age of Pandemic**
Peter Baldwin (UCLA), Lillith Acadia (Trinity College Dublin), Shamus Khan (Columbia), and Ahuvia Kahane (Trinity College Dublin)

6 May
**Marginalized Groups**
Rosemary Byrne (NYU, Abu Dhabi), Rose Anne Kenny (Trinity College Dublin), and Vincent Schiraldi (Columbia)

13 May
**Inequality**
Colm Tóibín (Columbia), Shamus Khan (Columbia), and Sucheta Mahajan (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

20 May
**The Everyday**
Shane O'Mara (Trinity College Dublin), Rita Duffy (artist), and Rishi Goyal (Columbia)

27 May
**Democracy Without a Public Sphere**
Bill Emmott (formerly editor-in-chief of *The Economist*), Melody Barnes (Virginia), and Fintan O'Toole (*Irish Times*)

29 April
**Nations and Borders**
Susan McKay (writer), Sarah Stillman (Columbia), and Etain Tannam (Trinity College Dublin)
The Medical Humanities Initiative and the Public Humanities Initiative co-sponsored a series of weekly panels on the effects of health on the conception of cities and publics. For more information on the series, see page 34.

Collaborating Departments

• Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities
• Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
• Department of English and Comparative Literature
• Department of Medical Humanities and Ethics at the Columbia University Irving Medical Center

Medical Humanities Initiative

As a set of disciplines, the humanities face the challenge of how to write about embodied experiences that resist easy verbal categorization such as illness, pain, and healing. The recent emergence of interdisciplinary frameworks such as narrative medicine has offered a set of methodological approaches to address these challenges. Conceptualizing a field of medical and health humanities offers a broad umbrella under which to study the influence of medico-scientific ideas and practices on society. At stake are the problems of representation and the interpretation of cultural products from the past and present through medical models, and the challenge of establishing a set of humanistic competencies (observation, attention, judgment, narrative, historical perspective, ethics, creativity) that can inform medical practice.

The Medical Humanities Initiative, organized by Arden Hegele (Medical Humanities Fellow and Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature at Columbia), provides an ongoing forum at SOF/Heyman to explore these challenges and to continue to discover new methodological approaches.
Explorations in the Medical Humanities Series

The Explorations in the Medical Humanities Series explores the enigma of how what we write relates back to the experience of bodies in different stages of health and disease. Our speakers consider how the medical and health humanities build on and revise earlier notions of the “medical arts.”

22 November
Medical Humanities
Synopsis Writers Retreat

This workshop brought together past and present writers for *Synopsis: A Health Humanities Journal* (medicalhealthhumanities.com), which *Dr. Arden Hegele* and *Dr. Rishi Goyal* have co-edited since 2017. It continued the work of the Explorations in the Medical Humanities Series (launched in 2017), with a new emphasis on creating collaborations among early career scholars from a variety of institutions.

17 April

**Big Pharma and the Opioid Epidemic: Buying Its Way Out of Accountability?—Online Event**

In this virtual conversation, Chris McGreal, reporter for the *Guardian*, discussed his new book *American Overdose: The Opioid Tragedy in Three Acts*. A former correspondent in Johannesburg, Jerusalem, and Washington, DC, he has won awards for his reporting on the Rwandan genocide, on Israel/Palestine, and on the impact of economic recession in America. McGreal was awarded the James Cameron Prize for “work as a journalist that has combined moral vision and professional integrity.” He won the Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism for reporting that “penetrated the established version of events and told an unpalatable truth.” Chris McGreal was joined by Joanne Csete (Mailman School of Public Health) in a discussion moderated by Lara J. Nettelfield (Institute for the Study of Human Rights).

**Synapsis: A Health Humanities Journal**

Co-edited by Arden Hegele and Rishi Goyal since 2017, *Synapsis* produced a COVID-19 **special issue** in May 2020 that featured a “Letter from the Emergency Room” documenting Dr. Goyal’s first-person experience of COVID-19 in New York City at the height of the first wave. In their long-form articles, our writers addressed topics related to the pandemic that are global in scope, from the microstructures of individual feeling to ideological superstructures such as politics and religion.

**Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes**

Following the success of the 2019 Summer Institute at Columbia’s Global Center in Paris, the annual meeting of the Medical and Health Humanities Network, part of the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes, was hosted virtually by Columbia University representatives Rishi Goyal (the chair of the Steering Committee) and Arden Hegele (the Network administrator) in May 2020. The meeting boasted strong attendance (75+ participants) as groups reported on progress in the medical and health humanities at their institutions, as well as on their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. A new interinstitutional Focus Project on COVID-19 is featured on the Network’s website. The Network’s next Summer Institute will take place in a hybrid form in Denmark in 2021.

**Motherhood and Technology Working Group**

The Center for the Study of Social Difference at Columbia has selected a new working group, Motherhood and Technology, for sponsorship beginning in 2020. The group is co-organized and co-directed by Rishi Goyal and Arden Hegele; and it features participants from literature, obstetrics, sociology, law, and other disciplines. Dr. Goyal and Dr. Hegele presented the new group to the Women Creating Change Leadership Council in June 2020.
Public Humanities Initiative

The Public Humanities Initiative at the SOF/Heyman promotes civically engaged and public-facing modes of pedagogy and scholarship through a variety of fellowships, events, and mentoring to answer the question of how the humanities can address and now help repair and reinvent our publics using our disciplinary strengths. Today, humanists are called on to operate in an expanded media field, to engage with publics well beyond academia, and to better think through the conditions of social inequality that concern them. Critical new arts and humanities research and teaching now develops in close collaboration with communities and institutions that exist outside of academic silos, beyond campus and the canon. Across Columbia University, graduate students are increasingly imagining experimental modes of engaged scholarship—work that spills out of disciplinary-bound methods. This work not only speaks to broader publics and tackles issues of racial, environmental, gender, ableist, and ethnic justice but also expands graduate students’ career prospects. The SOF/Heyman Public Humanities Initiative provides such students, as well as faculty, a space and resources to engage in the urgent and rapidly developing field of public humanities. In this year of unprecedented public health crises, the Public Humanities Initiative worked alongside the Medical Humanities Initiative to co-sponsor a series of weekly panels on the effects of health on the conception of cities and publics.

For more information on the series, see page 34.

2019–2020 Public Humanities Graduate Fellow Projects

As part of the 2019–2020 SOF/Heyman Public Humanities Initiative, seven Public Humanities Graduate Fellows, including two co-fellows with Humanities New York, designed and implemented six projects. This year’s cohort included students from the History, Classics, English and Comparative Literature, and Latin American and Iberian Cultures Departments and the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. The group met regularly under the mentorship of the Public Humanities Coordinator, María González Pendás, to discuss project development, community organization, and the broader challenges pertaining to public humanities work. Fellows presented their projects in the Zoom workshop series Building Publics: Humanities Combating Isolation in the summer of 2020.
Building Publics: Humanities Combating Isolation

*Wednesdays, 13 May–17 June*

In the spirit of the collective nature of the public humanities, and as a way to peek into the many conversations and interactions that define the work, each session included a conversation between the fellows and guest scholars, community partners, and civic partners who had been part of the development of the project. Together, they discussed the origins of each project in a commitment to break out of academic silos, how their understanding of the public humanities shifted as they encountered and worked with one another, and how—amid the isolation brought about by lockdown—they reinvented their scope and methods of public engagement. In all, the series highlighted ways to promote humanistic thinking beyond the university and through a variety of media.

We heard about podcasting and mapping as technologies that can help tell new stories and reach new audiences; we heard about how Google forms can help reinvent elite curatorial settings, in particular how a Met show can be re-designed to help Latinx youth communities build narratives of self-representation; we discussed ways to generate public consciousness on environmental justice, whether inside a classroom or walking by a river; and we addressed the vivid inequities of the digital divide in pedagogy and heard how Luddite approaches—from letter writing to coloring and collaging—can help build connections and enrich the meaning of the humanities in certain contexts, including prisons. Such diverse tools helped our fellows build communities but also produced new forms of reciprocal knowledge critical, they argued, to the future of the humanities.

*Please see the SOF/Heyman website for event descriptions and bios of the Public Humanities Fellows (www.sofheyman.com).*

13 May 2020 | 4:00 p.m.
**Audio Media and New Orientations in the Humanities**
Milan Terlunen and Olivia Branscum with Michelle E. Wilson and Sierra Eckert

20 May 2020 | 4:00 p.m.
**Podcast as Research**
Milan Terlunen and Olivia Branscum with Mary Miss and Emily Bloom

27 May 2020 | 4:00 p.m.
**Walking, Mapping, and Reimagining the Environment**
Scot McFarlane with Wright Kennedy

3 June 2020 | 4:00 p.m.
**Multilingual Youth as Curators**
Alexandra Méndez with James Doyle and Carisa Musialik

10 June 2020 | 11:00 a.m.
**New Pedagogies in Justice**
Erin Petrella and Meadhbh McHugh with Mia Ruyter, Joseph Howley, and others

17 June 2020 | 4:00 p.m.
**New Pedagogies in Climate**
Akua Banful with Ashna Ali and William Hinrichs
Funded by the Office of the Executive Vice President for Arts and Sciences, the Heyman Center Fellowships provided three junior and four senior Columbia faculty with course relief during the academic year. These fellowships allow faculty to reduce their teaching loads to a minimum of one course per semester during the award year in order to conduct research and to participate in a regular weekly seminar, chaired by seminar directors Eugenia Lean (East Asian Languages and Cultures) and Dorothea von Mücke (Germanic Languages). Five post-MPhil graduate students were appointed as Heyman Fellows and received a $5,000 research allowance for their participation. In addition to providing the opportunity to present works in progress, the seminar fostered discussion across disciplines and fields, creating opportunities for collaborative research and teaching in future semesters.

“This fellowship year has challenged my capacity to present my research to distinct audiences in a legible and engaging manner. This practice in framing my work for new audiences also developed my abilities as a teacher—both in engaging students and in working with students to be deliberate about crafting information for a specific audience in their own writing projects.” —Danielle Drees, English and Comparative Literature
Zainab Bahrani  
(Art History), “Landscape and Monumentality”

Patricia Grieve  
(Latin American and Iberian Cultures), “The 16th-Century Mediterranean and Transatlantic Worlds of Flores and Blancaflor”

Stephanie McCurry  
(History), “Postwars: Reconstructing Lives Amidst the Ruins, United States, 1865–1918”

Deborah Steiner  

Charly Coleman  
(History), “Transmutations: Economic Theology and the Catholic Origins of Capitalism in the Age of Lights”

Hannah Farber  
(History), “Underwriters of the United States”

Aubrey Gabel  

Danielle Drees  
(English and Comparative Literature), “Staged Sleep: Sleep Theatre in Late Capitalism”

Ibrahim El Houdaiby  
(Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies), “A Corporate Route: The Suez Canal Company as Government”

Brianna Nofil  

James Purcell  
(History), “Parsing Truth in Merovingian Gaul: Evidence and the Early Medieval Critic”

Miriam Schulz  
(Germanic Languages), “Gornisht iz nit fargesn, keyner iz nit fargesn: Soviet Yiddish Culture, the Holocaust, and Networks of Memory 1941–1991”

“We also experimented with various modalities of discussion that allowed for intellectual inventiveness and broke down the hierarchies that too often impede frank discussion. Having participated in countless workshops and seminars in my time at Columbia, I can honestly say that the Heyman fosters constructive, critical engagement as well as, if not better than, any other group with whom I have the honor of collaborating.” —Charly Coleman, History
ALUMNI FELLOWS NEWS


D. Graham Burnett (1997–99) addressed the challenges of the current coronavirus pandemic by bringing together a set of weekly international “Quarantine Gatherings” via Zoom to think about the issue of “Attention” (his ongoing research interest). These virtual gatherings brought together 50 people a week over the course of 10 weeks.

Lorraine Daston (1979–80) retired as director at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, in June 2019 but continues to teach on a part-time basis at the University of Chicago. Her latest book, *Against Nature*, was published by MIT Press in 2019 and has been translated into German and Dutch. In 2020 she was awarded the Heineken Prize for History by the Royal Netherlands Academy and the Humanities Prize by the Gerda Henkel Foundation in Germany.


Murad Idris (2016–17) published *War for Peace: Genealogies of a Violent Ideal in Western and Islamic Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2019), which won the Best Book Award from the International Ethics Section of the International Studies Association (2020). Dr. Idris also published *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2020) this academic year, a project he started as an SOF Fellow and which he edited with Leigh K. Jenco and Megan C. Thomas.

In 2020, Susan A Manning (1987–88) co-edited an anthology with Janice Ross and Rebecca Schneider, titled *Futures of Dance Studies*, which was published by the University of Wisconsin Press. The anthology featured research by twenty-eight emerging scholars who had taken part in the Mellon-funded initiative Dance Studies in and the
Humanities, which Manning had directed from 2012 to 2019. In addition to sponsoring postdocs in dance studies at Northwestern, Brown, and Stanford, the project staged intensive summer seminars for emerging scholars. A cluster of essays that she edited on South African artist Nelisiwe Xaba in *TDR: The Drama Review* came out this summer.

**Rachel Nolan** (2018–19) published a review essay titled “A Jagged Scrap of History: On the Shining Path” for *Harper’s Magazine* and has another essay on deportation history coming out in *Harper’s* in August. She also reported, for the *New Yorker*, on asylum seekers who speak Mayan languages at the border. During her time at SOF/Heyman, she organized a conference on the history of gossip and rumors, which led to a special issue that is now under peer review at the *Journal of Social History*.


**William Sharpe** (1981–83) was a Fellow at the Columbia Institute for Ideas and Imagination at Reid Hall in Paris in 2019–2020, working on the visual history of walking.

**Will Slauter** (2007–09) was elected Vice President of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP) in 2019. His book *Who Owns the News?: A History of Copyright* (Stanford University Press, 2019) received the 2020 History Book Award from the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC).
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