

# IFUSS Newsletter

International Forum for U.S. Studies

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## *WE'VE MOVED!*

Dear Colleagues and Friends Around the World,

I am very excited to share the good news of our latest developments with you. In July 2007, IFUSS Co-founders Jane Desmond and Virginia Dominguez moved from the University of Iowa at Iowa City to their new institutional home at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC).

We re-located IFUSS to our new campus, where Jane will serve as Director, and Virginia as Consulting Director. Our staff is newly enlarged with the addition of Program Coordinator, Anita Kaiser, who is joined by two graduate assistants, Lauren Anaya and Melinda Bernardo.

The move, however, did not slow us down. In addition to the physical logistics of moving and setting up operations as a member of the University's International Programs Units, IFUSS welcomed several distinguished scholars to its new home. We sponsored a Spring 2008 Colloquium Series, a Fall 2008 Speakers Symposium, updated our promotional brochure and web site, and participated in the 2007 Third World Congress of the International American Studies Association (IASA) in Lisbon, where Dr. Desmond was elected President of IASA. IFUSS continues to reach out to the international community and is in the process of launching several new exciting collaborations and projects that we describe in this newsletter.

We are enthusiastic about the opportunities for growth promised by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Founded in 1867, the University has earned a reputation as a world-class leader in research,

teaching, and public engagement, and is home to a vibrant, dynamic intellectual community.

Situated about 140 miles south of Chicago, the campus straddles the border between the twin cities of Champaign and Urbana. With a combined population of 105,000, Champaign-Urbana is large enough to support cultural and entertainment opportunities usually associated with major metropolitan areas, yet small enough to maintain its identity as a friendly, midwestern community. Academic resources on campus are among the finest in the world. The University library is the largest public university collection in the world, housing 22 million items in the main library and in the more than 40 departmental libraries and units. It is an exceptional resource for Americanists from around the world.

Since our founding in 1995, we have developed a worldwide network of former fellows, colleagues, collaborators, guests, and affiliates. As we move into this new phase we look forward to nourishing these networks, developing symbiotic relations with other centers around the world, and enhancing transnational scholarly knowledge about the U.S. as a geopolitical entity, a cultural imaginary, and an ever-shifting site of multiple populations and affiliations embedded in global networks.

We look forward to hearing from you. Keep in touch!

Sincerely,

*Jane*

Jane Desmond  
*Co-Founder and Director, IFUSS*  
*Professor of Anthropology and*  
*Gender/Women's Studies*  
*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

## 2007-2008 IFUSS Scholars

IFUSS sponsored the following distinguished scholars at UIUC during the 2007-2008 academic year and the fall 2008 semester:

1. **Dr. Éva Federmayer** was a Visiting Senior Fulbright Specialist hosted by IFUSS August 22, 2007 – February 4, 2008. Dr. Federmayer is a returning Fellow, and an Associate Professor of American Studies at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. She is a former Co-Chair of the Hungarian Association for American Studies (HAAS), and a specialist on African American literature. Her project: “The Cultural Migration of a Musical Idiom: Ragtime in Millennial Budapest.”
2. **Dr. Giorgio Mariani** visited UIUC as an IFUSS Fellow January 21, 2008 – February 11, 2008. Dr. Mariani is a Professor of American Literature at Università di Roma, “La Sapienza.” He is currently the Vice President of the International American Studies Association (IASA), and co-editor of the Italian quarterly of American Studies, *Ácoma*. His research has focused on nineteenth century American literature, contemporary Native American literature, and the interconnections between war, peace, and U.S. literature and film. This issue features an interview with Dr. Mariani.
3. **Dr. Sabine Broeck** visited UIUC as an IFUSS Fellow February 23, 2008 – April 3, 2008. Dr. Broeck is a returning Fellow, and Professor of American Studies at Universitaet Bremen, and the Acting Chair of the program *English-Speaking Cultures*. She is one of the pioneering European scholars in critical race studies. Her teaching and research focuses on the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexualities, with a historical emphasis on modernity, slavery, and the black diaspora, and with a strong postcolonial emphasis.
4. **Dr. Keiko Ikeda** visited UIUC as an IFUSS Fellow March 2, 2008 – March 11, 2008. Dr. Ikeda is Dean of the School of American Studies at Doshisha University, in Kyoto, Japan. While visiting UIUC, IFUSS co-sponsored a talk by Dr. Ikeda with the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies and Asian Educational Media Services.

5. **Dr. Isar Godreau** visited UIUC as an IFUSS Fellow April 5, 2008 – May 9, 2008. Dr. Godreau is a Researcher and the Director of the Institute of Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. Her research has focused on racism, nationalism, the folklorization of blackness, and racism in education in Puerto Rico. This newsletter features an interview with Dr. Godreau.
6. **Dr. Seyed Mohammed Marandi** visited UIUC as an IFUSS Fellow August 29, 2008 – September 19, 2008. Dr. Marandi is the Head of the Department of North American and European Studies at the University of Tehran, where he is also an Assistant Professor. His main interests include American literature, literary theories (especially colonialism and post-colonialism), American history, and American foreign policy.
7. **Dr. Guillermo Eduardo Ibarra Escobar** visited UIUC as an IFUSS Fellow August 20, 2008 – October 3, 2008. Dr. Ibarra is the founder and director of the graduate program in North American Studies at Facultad de Estudios Internacionales y Políticas Públicas, Universidad Autónoma de



Dr. Guillermo Ibarra Escobar presents his research.

Sinaloa, in Culiacán, Mexico, where he is also a Professor. His research and teaching interests include regional development, globalization, migration, the labor market, North American studies, and regional economic history.

8. **Dr. Maureen Montgomery** visited UIUC as an IFUSS Fellow September 8, 2008 - October 4, 2008. Dr. Montgomery is a returning Fellow, and an Associate Professor in American Studies and Chair of the School of Culture, Literature & Society at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. She is also the national president of the Association of University Staff in New Zealand.

While in residence, each Fellow had the opportunity to pursue his/her own research, give a public lecture on his/her project, participate in other events inside and outside the university, and forge important relationships with members of the vibrant UIUC intellectual community.

### Spring 2008 Colloquium Series

During the 2008 spring term, IFUSS sponsored a public colloquium series. The IFUSS Spring Colloquium series involved the following IFUSS-sponsored guests and included the following talks:

1. Dr. Éva Federmayer, January 22, 2008, "The Cultural Migration of a Musical Idiom: Ragtime in Millennial Budapest"
2. Dr. Giorgio Mariani, January 29, 2008, "Give Peace a Chance: War and Peace in the American Imagination"
3. Dr. Sabine Broeck, March 4, 2008, "The Absence of Slavery in the European Humanist Imagination"
4. Dr. Keiko Ikeda, March 6, 2008, "On Another Playground: A Discussion with Keiko Ikeda on Japanese Pop Culture in America"
5. Dr. Isar Godreau, April 25, 2008, "'Scripts of Blackness' and the Racial Dynamics of Nationalism in Puerto Rico" (co-sponsored with the Department of Anthropology)

### Fall 2008 Speakers Symposium

On September 19, 2008, IFUSS held a Fall Speakers Symposium entitled "U.S. Studies in a Transnational Context." The series featured the following speakers:

1. Dr. Guillermo Eduardo Ibarra Escobar, "Immigration from Mexico to California and Arizona"
2. Dr. Maureen Montgomery, "Reimagining American Studies: Conflicts, Dilemmas, and Possibilities"
3. Dr. Seyed Mohammad Marandi, "America and American Studies in Iran"



*During a break in the Fall symposium.  
New Advisory Board member Dr. Alejandro Lugo is at far left.*

**Spring 2009:** Jasmin Habib inaugurates our **new Sabbatical Fellows Program**. Professor Jasmin Habib of the University of Waterloo, in Ontario, Canada, will be in residence at IFUSS for three months, the full spring semester, as part of our new Sabbatical Fellows Program. IFUSS Fellows are chosen through a combination of world-wide competitions for some projects, and direct invitations for others. In addition, through this new initiative, we can now host a group of exceptional scholars who are on sabbatical from their home institutions, which covers their living expenses for extended

stays. *If you are interested in spending your sabbatical at IFUSS, please contact us for further information.*

Dr. Jasmin Habib is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Waterloo (Canada), and author of *Israel, Diaspora and the Routes of National Belonging* (University of Toronto Press, 2004), an ethnographic account of North American diaspora Jews imagining and experiencing Israel. Her current research on transnational relationships explores U.S. Jewish dissidents and activists critical of Israel and its policies. Born in Israel of mixed parentage, she speaks from personal as well as professional experience about the lives of Israelis and Palestinians.

### *Current Projects in Development*

#### **International Anthropology of the U.S. (IAUS)**

In March 2008 IFUSS Co-Founder and Consulting Director Virginia R. Dominguez launched an initiative to locate and promote social science field-based research and scholarship on the U.S. by colleagues and advanced students abroad.

The paucity of field-based research and scholarship of this sort by scholars outside the United States is noteworthy, especially in social/cultural/linguistic anthropology. Determining how much and what kind of work there is, locating allies in this endeavor, exploring the empirical, ethical, political, and theoretical dimensions of this phenomenon, and promoting such work are the goals of this initiative.

So far, Dominguez has created a Working Group on The International Anthropology of The U.S. and employed a Research Assistant to locate existing published and unpublished work of this sort (building up a database of authors, researchers, books, journal articles, book chapters, theses and dissertations).

Several leading colleagues have agreed to serve on the Working Group. They include Professor Keiko Ikeda (Kyoto, Japan), Professor Moshe Shokeid (Tel Aviv, Israel); Professor Jasmin Habib (Waterloo, Canada); Professor Sarah Green (Manchester, England); and Dr. Sara Le Menestrel (Paris, France).

Dominguez met with Dr. Dieter Haller (Germany) in late August, 2008, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, during the

Biennial Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists. Dr. Haller was sponsoring two sessions of related interest at the EASA Meetings and has created a Middle America Anthropology Network with which the IAUS Working Group will seek collaboration and possible shared funding.

The first IAUS working group meeting will take place at IFUSS in March of 2009 to formally launch the new project.

#### **Research Infrastructure in Minority Institutions**

IFUSS has been invited to be a partner in the Research Infrastructure in Minority Institutions program of the National Institutes of Health with the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. The Director of the University's Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, Dr. Isar Godreau, a former Spring 2008 IFUSS Fellow, has initiated this invitation.

If funded, this NIH grant will enable IFUSS to continue to facilitate work on the U.S. by scholars from Cayey, and to explore other collaborative teaching and research possibilities with that institution. Work with and on Puerto Rico is especially interesting to the Forum because, given the long complex colonial history and neo-colonial relations, Puerto Rico both is and isn't a "foreign country," and its political, racial, social, and economic relations to the continental U.S. throw into relief key issues of national identity of the U.S.

#### **"Japan" In the U.S. and the "U.S." In Japan: The Role of National Identity in Global Circuits of Consumption and Exchange**

In between the "local" and the "global" lies the national realm. Despite discourses of "globalization" as either a utopian or dystopian all-encompassing process, the nation, and more importantly national identity, continue to play what we feel is an under-recognized and under-researched role in the dynamic ways that meaning is generated as products, processes, people, capital and ideas move around the globe.

To date, we feel that scholarly attempts to theorize the complexities of what gets termed "globalization" have tended to two extremes: either they sketch in theoretical terms a series of large scale flows across multiple registers with little anchoring data, or they concentrate on the specific impacts of global change

on local communities. As yet, our paradigms of global change have not sufficiently benefited from detailed, comparative, on-the-ground ethnographic analysis conducted in conversation with large-scale theories of the dynamics of these changes.

To address this need for such research, this project constructs a case-study of a bi-national dialectic between the U.S. and Japan, two economic engines with extensive political power, both deeply implicated and imbricated in the dynamics of global flows. We will ask when, how, and with what effects the attribution of national origin makes a difference in how “culture in motion” travels and is received, mobilized, and transformed as it flows from one site to another and back again.

By designing a bi-national, team-based research project that will enable us to work on complex issues in a detailed, grounded manner including multi-ethnographic analyses over a period of multiple years, we hope to contribute substantially to a better understanding of the processes of globalization and the scholarly paradigms currently used to understand them.

IFUSS will partner with the School of American Studies at Doshisha University in Kyoto to develop this project. Academic year 2008-9 will be a planning year, with three years to follow of active research.

### **New Summer Institute**

In 2010 IFUSS plans to launch a new 1-week intensive summer training institute featuring resident faculty from around the world. We will post updates on our website as dates and faculty are confirmed.

### *Interview with Dr. Giorgio Mariani (IFUSS Fellow, 2008): “War,” and “Peace,” and the U.S.*

#### **1. What led you to be interested in thinking about “war” and “peace” in the United States imagination?**

*Mariani:* Well, at Rutgers, where I spent almost a decade, I wrote a dissertation on representations of class and war in Stephen Crane and the American 1890s, and especially the chapter on *The Red Badge of Cour-*

*age* rekindled my interest in the relation between violence and war, on the one side, and culture and the state, on the other. All of a sudden, issues that had been a part of my youthful political activism could be reframed *also* as aesthetic problems, without losing their political and social urgency. More specifically, it seemed to me that critics had been by and large rather uninterested in asking questions regarding the “peace and war politics” of *Red Badge*, something that really struck me, considering that after all Crane’s novel is considered as the founding text of modern American war literature. This led me to wonder whether the idea that all war literature—or at least all “great” war literature—was by default anti-war or pacifist could stand up to rigorous critical scrutiny, and my research so far has shown that it can’t.

#### **2. How does this project fit within the trajectory of your intellectual life? (In other words, why are you, a scholar with a disciplinary background in literature, pursuing this particular intellectual project?)**

*Mariani:* I realized that even though my primary interest was with literary and cinematic representations of war, I could not pursue a meaningful research project in this area without taking into account philosophical, political, and theological debates about war. However, since wars are fought with weapons but also with words—language is in fact crucial in furthering any war effort, as well as resistance to war—I never felt I had ever moved away from literary studies, especially once they had been redefined as part of a larger “cultural studies” field.

#### **3. Are you really interested in “peace” or is it more accurate to say that it is “pacifism” that interests you?**

*Mariani:* I guess that I am interested in both because you can’t understand one without making sense of the other. Pacifism can and has been defined in many ways, but until relatively recently peace has been mostly defined as the absence of war—that is, negatively. Even Kant joked on the ambiguity of a phrase like “eternal peace”. Pacifist practice in history, however, has been crucial in re-inventing peace as something *active*: something you have to *fight for* (which, does not mean something you need to *go to war for*). The problem is of course that since war theorists have always argued that the goal of war is peace, a serious and mature pacifism must of necessity redefine peace

in creative ways.

**4. How do contemporary notions of “war,” “peace,” and “pacifism” differ from early 19th century notions of these terms?**

*Mariani:* Well, this would require a very long answer. Put simply, not only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but well into the 20<sup>th</sup>, few people believed that any major international or internal dispute could be solved without having recourse to war and violence. All Western countries (I am only referring to this part of the world) had a universal draft system—the identity of soldier and citizen was ritually reaffirmed in many ways. Nowadays we have professional armies and we are reluctant to engage in wars as we have traditionally known them. Hence the use of air power and “intelligent bombs” that can substitute for actual troops engaged in land battles—I very much doubt that without 9/11 the American public would have accepted to see US troops once again involved in ground fighting. And of course that is tolerated because there is a “professional army” and most of the soldiers killed are working class. So there is no question that today you would find very few people arguing for the nobility or the beauty of war, which was commonplace one hundred years ago. What is really remarkable is that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century pacifism has been able to grow into mass movements—it is no longer restricted to small circles as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But this is also the outcome of a redefinition of “peace” that, as I have tried to argue, we often associate with Gandhi and King, but actually begins with Emerson and Thoreau.

**5. To what extent is your work on this project influenced by the fact that you are Italian and have spent the majority of your life in Italy? Do you ever think of yourself as “American”? How has the time that you have spent in the United States influenced your choice of project and the ways in which you conceptualize this project?**

*Mariani:* I was a high school student in Rome in 1968 and graduated from the University of Rome in 1978. These were by far the most turbulent, rebellious, and exciting ten years in modern Italian history. Radical change seemed possible, and discussions about which was the best way to achieve it was part of my everyday life. Could revolution be a peaceful affair? To what extent? How should the movement respond to the violence of the State? Within this context, long

before I became professionally interested in America as an object of study, I was not only demonstrating against the war in Vietnam, but had heated debates within Leftist circles on whether Malcolm X or Martin Luther King was right; on whether Vietnamese guerrilla warfare could be practiced outside the Third World; on whether we were contradictory or not when we marched for peace in Vietnam and revolution at home. To me, at some instinctive level, America has always been about both “war” and “peace”: a country fascinated with violence, ruthless in its slaughter of Indians, pursuing imperialist policies, and yet the country of Thoreau, King, and civil disobedience; of the hippies, visionary rock music, and visionary literature.

For example, my understanding of the relation between war and religion—which is crucial to any discourse on war—has been influenced by the work done by some “rebel” Christian thinkers (Ernesto Balducci, Enzo Mazzi, Giovanni Franzoni), silenced and marginalized by the official Catholic Church, but very active in grassroots movements from the 1960s onwards. Their critique of the “sacred”, though similar to René Girard’s, is much more politically conscious and, in the end, more radical. On a different level, I have been a direct witness of how even the best Utopian longings can sometimes degenerate into senseless violence. The terrorism of the Red Brigades is by no means representative of Sixties radicalism, as not only conservatives would have it, but neither is it simply extraneous to it—so I would definitely say that my interest for critiques of violence was deeply influenced by the fact that I saw with my own eyes what happens when you do not make such critiques part of your political program.

As for the second question, I think of myself as American to the extent that anyone who has spent over ten years of his or her life in a given country inevitably comes to think of him or herself as somehow part of that world. Now that I have been back in Italy for many years, I would say that I think of myself as “American” in the sense that I am very resistant to any simplistic view of the US, no matter whether such simplistic understanding comes from the Left or the Right. Like any country in the world America is a complex reality, but I often encounter people who think they can liquidate America with some ready-made formula—these stereotypical views I find offensive in a sort of personal way. Having lived in America does not make me necessarily more knowledgeable about all things American, but I think it has made me very wary of so-called

“experts” (certain kinds of journalists, politicians, etc.) on the US. Of course, despite having lived over ten years in the US and having studied US culture for over thirty years, there are still so many things I do not understand and do not know.

As for the last question, it is quite ironic that I conceptualised my project and did most of the writing for my book actually outside the US. As can be seen from my bibliography, my sources are American, European and International as all ‘global’ scholarship is nowadays. I have to say, though, that if I did not have the opportunity to spend time in the wonderful libraries of some major US universities I probably would have never had a chance to get access to most of these sources to begin with!

**6. What do you see as the role of intellectuals/scholars/specialists on the United States in Europe? Has this changed in recent years? If so, when and in what way(s)?**

*Mariani:* Traditionally the role of the US specialist in Europe was that of translating—in all meanings of this term—America to Europeans, which was an important task when knowledge of the English language was limited and there was a great desire on the part of Europeans to know more about this mythical place called America. Intellectually speaking, scholars had a special role to play up to World War II because the prejudice that the US had neither a proper culture, nor a literature that was worth reading, was very strong. This is no longer the case. If anything, many are envious of what America stands for -- especially the excellence of some of its universities – and there is a strong sense of solidarity for America post September 11, even though most Italians were against the war on Iraq.

And then you have the web—it has become quite easy to have access to loads of information about America so that the intellectual’s duty to process that information has become more important than ever. Unfortunately—and I think this is true everywhere in the world—people tend to ignore that all things are the product of very long historical and cultural processes, so that even though they may be much more informed than they were in the past, they do not necessarily have a better understanding of things. So in some sense the role of the scholar and the specialist remains important.

I also believe that European intellectuals on the U.S. can have a defamiliarising function for American scholars on the U.S. when they ‘make strange’ the object of study, leading to a renewed perception of it. From this point of view I think in Italy we are lucky to have people who do very interesting work on all aspects of US history, culture, and society. But of course intellectuals who are truly worth their salt must also produce critical analyses of America—that is a duty they have not only towards their home public, but towards their object of study, which should never turn, as Djelal Kadir once put it, into an “object of devotion”. In recent years—that is, after 9/11—this has not always been an easy task, as if you criticized the US you were quite likely to be accused of “anti-Americanism” by some self-appointed representative of “America”.

On a personal note, with the development of American literature and language as an autonomous subject within Italian University degree programmes, my role is to inspire my students to study America in original and creative ways.

**7. What do you see as the most critical issue confronting the United States over the next decade? What about Europe? How and to what extent do you see the United States and Europe following similar paths? Divergent ones?**

*Mariani:* I would say that over the next decade Europe and America will both have to do their best to learn from each other in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. Europe is engaged—and I hope it succeeds, even though it is very difficult to be optimistic at a time like this—in a very difficult process of unification that has so far been rather disappointing. We may have one currency, and we may often talk of transnationalism and globalization, but we are far from having acquired the sense of a common destiny. So Europeans will continue to look at America as a source of inspiration, even though they know that US federalism did not have to bring together different nations with different languages, traditions, and cultures, but states that were much more homogeneous. Still, there is a sense that the United States of America may provide a model. My dream is that also Americans may come to feel that there are things they can learn from Europe—for example, they could start by looking at EU national health services as something they could and should imitate, and hopefully even improve upon. I also think that—though this may not happen over the next decade—America will sooner or later have

to realize that it can no longer claim to be that “exceptional” country it pretends to be—that God has not chosen America to guide the world. It is a fiction that as America gets older and more enmeshed with the rest of the world will become increasingly difficult to sustain. For example, I hope the US will come to see that peace and stability can be achieved in the Middle East only if Europe—which is after all the neighbour of both Israel and Arab countries—is allowed to play a greater role. But I am not a political scientist, and as you can see I can talk more about hopes than what may be likely to happen. However, I am convinced of one thing: Europe is becoming more like the US in the sense that it is now attracting and will no doubt continue to attract immigrants from poorer countries, the way the US used to attract large wave of immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is another example of how the US may be, if not always a model, certainly a case to be studied. And this is an area where specialists in US culture and history may have a role to play, as Europe tries to become more and more multicultural. Let me sum up all this with a wish: I hope to see the day when a European of either African or Asian or Arab descent will run for president of the EU.

*Interview with Dr. Isar Godreau  
(IFUSS Fellow 2008): Puerto Rico  
and the U.S.*

**1. You came to the continental U.S. to do your Ph.D. and then held a tenure track position at a major United States institution. Why did you decide to return to Puerto Rico?**

*Godreau:* The short answer is that I was offered a tenure-track position as a researcher at the University of Puerto Rico. As a single mom with no family network in the state where I held my previous position, the possibility of working where my immediate family and friends live seemed really attractive. Yet, this was not the most important reason. The most important reason was that the job offer in PR included the opportunity to develop an interdisciplinary research institute with an applied focus and more time to do research – including fieldwork on issues that mattered to me. I saw it as a great opportunity to contribute to the University of Puerto Rico and to my country. I’ve always liked to work on specific projects and collaborate with other people in the implementation of initiatives — there is a

practical side to this type of activity (creative administration and project implementation) that I really enjoy. So, this job seemed really attractive because it combined both research and management at an interdisciplinary setting. At that time I felt US academia and the road to tenure was a somewhat lonely, individual and too theoretical (not-practical) endeavor. In contrast, the job offer in Puerto Rico included grant writing, project management, making institutional change, helping other faculty develop their research agendas, finding funding, and engaging in new applied research projects and initiatives with people from other disciplines. Teaching was optional. Non-specialized articles targeted at wider audiences were also considered important. Faculty positions such as these are rare, so when the job offer came, I went for it and moved to PR.

**Can you imagine returning to work in one of the fifty states in the future?**

*Godreau:* Well, one should never say “never,” but at this moment I don’t see myself returning to work in the US. Nevertheless, something that has been tremendously helpful for me during these past 5 years is having the opportunity to visit the US for two months or so to do library research as a research fellow at major US Universities. Being an IFUSS fellow during the spring of 2008 was incredibly helpful in this regard, because it gave me the time to share my ideas with other people who are working on similar topics, focus on my writing and work on a future book project. The University of Urbana-Champaign and the community of Orchard Downs where I lived during my stay provided a very supportive atmosphere for writing and I was very happy to have the opportunity to visit. My 10-year-old daughter also enjoyed going to Leal school during those two months and she made friends from different parts of the world.

**2. Based on your dissertation research and the more recent work you have been doing in Puerto Rico, what do you see as the next logical steps in your intellectual life (over the next 5-10 years)?**

*Godreau:* My dissertation research was primarily focused on dominant constructions of blackness in Puerto Rico, with a focus on the folklorization of blackness by the government. I was interested, and still am, in exploring not just the exclusion of blackness from nationalist narratives, but its problematic inclusion and the terms in which blackness is celebrated as part of

the nation. The “next step” for me is to do more applied research on this area, concentrating not so much on the construction of blackness, or even racial identity, but on the effects of racism.

Right now, for example, I am working on an interdisciplinary and ethnographic project that seeks to document the impact of institutional racism in elementary school at the curriculum and everyday level. Our goal is to provide educational materials that can help teachers and social workers tackle the problem of racism. With this in mind, we are developing an anti-racist guide for school personnel in collaboration with teachers and social workers from two elementary schools in Puerto Rico. We are also developing an anti-racist curriculum for teaching children about Puerto Rico’s African Heritage at the elementary level.

Another project I hope to develop in the next 3 – 5 years is to document the impact of racism in specific communities of Puerto Rico that are labeled “black.” In my previous research, I focused on a particular community in PR and questioned its demarcation as a place of “black difference” in the context of dominant discourses that construct blackness as an exception. However, in this new project I want to explore the concrete effects – in terms of life-chances, impact on health, and access to services and resources -- that this racial labeling and displacement has for different towns or communities in Puerto Rico that are also labeled “black.” Thus, rather than focusing on how blackness is constructed as an exception, my goal in this future project is to examine and document the effects (social, economic, health-wise) that such racialization has for the residents of those particular communities in Puerto Rico.

### **3. When you worry about the silencing of an African-origin slave presence in notions of Puerto Rican-ness, what is your main motivation for this?**

*Godreau:* What worries me most about the silencing of slavery is the fact that -- without such historical framework -- people will not understand or be able to contextualize racism and current racial inequalities among Puerto Ricans -- making these inequalities seem natural. I think slavery is a crucial explanatory framework for understanding racism. People need to know the historical origins of racism in order to de-naturalize it and believe they have the power to change its current effects.

Slavery lasted until 1873 in Puerto Rico. This was not so long ago, relatively speaking. Yet, slavery is rarely discussed in Puerto Rico, except when people want to speak about its unimportance for the island economy. And, although the slave population never constituted more than 12 % of the general population, the ideological impact of slavery upon the free people of color (a very large sector of more than 50%) was significant (in terms of how it served to legitimate racism against black people, whether slave or free). I worry that, in the absence of a discussion or even basic education about slavery -- people in Puerto Rico will see the correspondence between blackness and poverty as “natural” -- and not as the long-term effect of historical inequalities.

### **4. To what extent do you think the United States is Puerto Rico, and to what extent do you think Puerto Rico is the United States?**

*Godreau:* This is a complicated question...and one that can kindle heated debates among Puerto Ricans in the Island and the Diaspora. In my mind Puerto Rico is not the United States. I say this, first of all, because we have not been treated as equals by the US government. Also, Puerto Rico has a distinct history, language and distinct debates about language, cultural traditions, and there are ways of being and interacting which not all people share but which people recognize as “Puerto Rican” -- not American. When Puerto Ricans talk about moving to the US, they often say they are moving “afuera” (outside). However, understanding the history of Puerto Rico and other US territories (colonies) is essential for understanding US history and its present international and military policies in the hemisphere. In that sense, Puerto Rico is the United States -- it would be difficult to explain one country without taking into account the other.

### **5. In your mind, is doing work in Puerto Rico the same as doing United States studies?**

*Godreau:* It is not the same, but let’s say that by doing work in Puerto Rico I can understand the US better and that -- in order to explain social and cultural dynamics taking place in the Island - one has to take into account the US, its colonial presence in the Island, and also the impact that the Puerto Rican Diaspora living in the US has upon the Puerto Rican imagination.

**6. You currently direct the Institute of Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. What are the goals of the institute, and what are some of the recent projects being pursued there?**

*Godreau:* The University of Puerto Rico at Cayey is a liberal arts undergraduate institution of about 3,700 students. During the past 8 years of so, faculty and administrators have emphasized the importance of integrating research to the undergraduate experience and curriculum. In this context, the Institute's mission is to promote the development of applied, interdisciplinary research projects that are relevant to the University's service-region. Our goal is to support and facilitate such initiatives among faculty who are often teaching 4 or 5 courses per semester and to integrate students into their efforts so that they may gain experience in research and contribute to the research being done by the faculty. The region we seek to impact is comprised of about 11 municipalities (a population of about 467,000), which is where most of our students come from.

Having an applied, interdisciplinary research agenda such as this makes sense for a small undergraduate institution like UPR – Cayey. Academic Departments are not too big, fostering ample opportunity for people from different disciplines to work together. By impacting the University's service-region, we also seek to get students involved in the development of public policies that have the potential to impact their communities. At the moment, we have about 14 different projects underway (with 16 students involved as research assistants)

Most of the research being carried out is in the area of health, education, and the environment. In the area of health, we have projects that explore the use of medicinal plants in the service area and their efficacy, and the way in which heterosexual women of the region understand the risks of HIV and the prevalence

of particular birth defects among Puerto Ricans. In the area of education, we have projects that explore racism in schools of the region and the conception of Africa in popular education and music. We have also sponsored research projects that integrate theater and plastic arts into elementary school curriculums in the area. In the area of environmental studies, we have researchers working on topics such as how people interact with forests and coastal resources in our service region, xenophobic reaction to exotic species, and issues related to urban reforestation. Faculty involved come from all areas: Humanities, Natural and Social Science. Most of the Natural and Social Science projects are funded with external funds. Our most important contributor is NIH as approximately 70% of our budget comes from a RIMI grant (5P20MD1112-05), which is geared at strengthening research infrastructure at minority serving institutions.



*University of Illinois, heart of campus.*

**7. How does your training in anthropology influence your approach to your current position or the scholarly work you are doing now?**

*Godreau:* I think having an anthropology background makes me very aware of the "institutional culture" where I work at. Even in my administrative role, I often feel like I am doing institutional ethnography.

Being an anthropologist has helped me realized that often – what moves people to promote or hold over institutional change is not just the "big ideas" – i.e. how good are the theoretical or practical principles behind an initiative in the long run -- but the more immediate social consequences in terms of people's perceptions of how change may impact their immediate social networks, privileges, and other social dimensions that disrupt people's comfort zones. As an anthropologist I can understand that all change will inevitably entail resistance and that one should give ample space for the debate of ideas before they are actually implemented. Also, being an anthropologist has prepared me to work with researchers from other disciplines since anthropology with its four-field approach has been such an interdisciplinary discipline to begin with.



### IFUSS Web site

Please visit the new IFUSS web site at <http://www.ips.illinois.edu/ifuss>.

As part of our expansion at the University of Illinois we are revising our website. In the future it will feature news, updates, profiles of current and past fellows, interviews, and special essays by fellows from around the world.

### IFUSS Brochures

IFUSS has brochures with general information about the Forum's rationale and operations. If you would like to receive brochures either for your own use or for further distribution, please let us know and we will mail them to you.

### IFUSS Advisory Board

IFUSS would like to extend its appreciation to Dr. Dudley Andrew, Yale University USA; Dr. Richard P. Horowitz, University of Iowa, USA; Dr. Alcida Rita Ramos, Fundação Universidade de Brasília, Brazil; and Dr. Marianna Togovnick, Duke University, USA for having served on our International Advisory Board for the past several years.

In addition, IFUSS thanks the following International Advisory Board members for their continued service:

1. Dr. Robert C. Allen  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA
2. Dr. Ien Ang  
University of Western Sidney, Australia

3. Dr. Arjun Appadurai  
New York University, USA
4. Dr. Kousar Azam  
Osmania University, India
5. Dr. Enikő Bollobás  
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9. Dr. Janice A. Radway  
Duke University, USA
10. Dr. Geoffrey White  
East-West Center & University of Hawai'i at Manoa, USA



*Standing left to right: Fellows Marandi, Montgomery, and Ibarra Escobar  
Sitting: Directors Desmond and Dominguez*

And we welcome the following new board members

11. Dr. Alejandro Lugo  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
12. Dr. Keiko Ikeda  
Doshisha University, Japan

### **IFUSS Staff**

**Anita Kaiser** joined IFUSS in April 2008 as our new Program Coordinator. Anita has been with UIUC since 1998, and began working with International Programs and Studies in May 2005, as part of the Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Program. She has served on the Provost's Council on Gender Equity since 2007. Anita received her B.A. in Sociology from UIUC in May 2005.

**Lauren Anaya** is a PhD student in Anthropology. She joined IFUSS in July 2007, and assisted with the move from the University of Iowa to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is currently completing coursework and preparing to begin dissertation research in Italy. Her interests include legal anthropology, law and society, family law, culture and identity, international perspectives on the U.S. and Europe, and Mediterranean Europe (especially Italy).

**Melinda Bernardo** is a PhD student in anthropology. Her research interests include Israel/Palestine, the

anthropology of Jews and Judaism, nationalism and belonging, and bureaucracies. She recently joined IFUSS and looks forward to working on several of its new and ongoing projects.

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