Susan Handelman and Martha Nussbaum Visit the CSC as NEH Distinguished Visiting Scholars

The CSC has invited two NEH Distinguished Visiting Scholars in 2003. Susan Handelman, professor of English at Bar-Ilan University, Israel, visited Rice March 17–28. Martha Nussbaum, the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago Law School, will visit September 22–25.

The Distinguished Visiting Scholars program was conceived to enrich the intellectual life of Rice faculty, students, and alumni by providing access to the world’s most distinguished and innovative scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Administered by the CSC, the program is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and other donors.

According to CSC director Werner Kelber, “Professor Handelman was selected as the fourth NEH Distinguished Visiting Scholar in recognition of her notable contribution to integrating Jewish religious thought into the modern humanities and to tracing plausible links between the Rabbinic interpretive tradition and several influential schools in modern and postmodern critical theory.”

Kelber further remarks that “Professor Nussbaum is a model of what the often-invoked interdisciplinarity might look like when enacted knowledgeably and courageously. In her ability to relate ancient Greek philosophy with contemporary moral problems, concepts of feminism, literature, and literary theory, Nussbaum stands in a class all by herself.”

Handelman’s work draws on biblical hermeneutics, ancient and contemporary philosophy, literary theory, theology, and psychoanalysis. She has illuminated the relations between literary criticism and its roots in the Patristic and Rabbinic interpretive traditions. Her work demonstrates the vitality literary criticism can regain when it views itself as the displacement of the humanities and to tracing plausible links between the Rabbinic interpretive tradition and several influential schools in modern and postmodern critical theory.”

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Substantially enhancing existing strengths in the humanities, the CSC last summer fulfilled the requirements for the one-to-four matching grant awarded in 1998 to Rice by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Designed to invite renowned scholars from any part of the world to spend a period of up to three months at Rice, this grant will connect Rice’s humanities and social sciences with areas of knowledge and discourse that lie outside our own intellectual conventions. As reported in the previous issue of the CSC newsletter, we had succeeded in the fall of 2001 in fulfilling the dollar-for-dollar matching grant awarded in 1999 to Rice by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This latter grant is now enabling the CSC to appoint annually one or more postdoctoral fellows for a period of two years. The successful completion of both the NEH and the Mellon challenge grants has been a historic event both for the CSC and for the School of Humanities at large. In adding $4.95 million in endowment to the school, we secured the Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program and the Postdoctoral Fellows Program as permanent features in the humanities at Rice. Separately and jointly, these two endowments will have an immense potential for expanding the intellectual horizon of the humanities at Rice.

We conducted our fundraising campaign and accomplished its
goals under especially challenging circumstances and in less than favorable times. The project of satisfying the substantial matching requirements of two near-simultaneous grants constitutes a daunting task for any school and discipline, most certainly for the humanities. Moreover, the fundraising campaign was conducted during a time of steadily declining fortunes in the U.S. economy. Finally, the initial phase of our fundraising efforts coincided with a turnover of employees in virtually every key position that was directly or indirectly related to the CSC fundraising: provost, dean of humanities, director of development, director of development in the School of Humanities, and director of the CSC itself.

It is with a particular sense of gratitude that I acknowledge the large number of private donors whose contributions have assisted us in reaching the goal. Next, I thank the staff of the development office and its director for their remarkable dedication to the cause. A special word of appreciation goes to the dean of humanities, Gale Stokes, who recognized the significance of these two projects from day one of his deanship and devoted a considerable portion of his time to the task of fundraising. Above all, the CSC owes an enormous debt of gratitude to President Gillis for having provided indispensable assistance at a crucially important stage of the campaign. In the end, it was the president who clinched the success of the campaign.

At the completion of the two fundraising projects, the CSC gratefully acknowledges both the generosity and the intellectual foresight of the National Endowment of the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. At a time when the humanities nationwide very often find themselves in precarious straits, NEH and Mellon have seen fit to give us an exceptional opportunity for strengthening and invigorating the humanities at Rice.

In the year 2002, the CSC functioned as catalyst, sponsor, and administrator of 47 events: 26 lectures grew out of the CSC-sponsored workshops, two lectures were delivered in the University Lecture Series “Technology, Cognition and Culture,” three were international conferences (“Memoria,” “Herder,” “Language/Culture/Mind”), three were symposia (“Queer and There,” “Philosophy of Science,” English education of colleagues in the humanities.

I am happy to announce the launching of a Faculty Exchange Program between the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and Rice University. Beginning in the fall of 2003 and for a probationary period of three years, one member of the academic staff in permanent employment (Natal: lecturer, senior lecturer, associate, and full professor; Rice: assistant, associate, and full professor) will be eligible to participate each academic year. The CSC invites all colleagues in the humanities and the social sciences with a cultural focus to seriously consider embarking upon what can be a unique professional enhancement by way of study in Africa. In connection with the announcement of this CSC initiated and administered faculty exchange program, Rice’s Office of International Programs has asked me to communicate its simultaneous launching of an undergraduate exchange program with the University of Natal, also beginning in the fall of 2003. Rice has thereby established close ties with a leading university in South Africa. It is my hope that we can view this happy development only as the beginning of a steadily growing cultural interaction between Rice and the continent of Africa.

Last but not least, I have asked our colleague George Marcus, chair of anthropology, to revisit for the readers of the CSC newsletter his Late Editions series, a highly acclaimed work on cultural studies reviewing society and culture at the beginning of the 20th century. These eight volumes, edited by Marcus and published by the University of Chicago Press (1993–2000), were a major publishing event, perhaps the greatest publishing feat ever accomplished by a Rice colleague in the humanities or social sciences.

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Visiting Scholars
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During her visit to Rice, Handelman delivered a public lecture and conducted four seminars open to faculty and students. Handelman’s public lecture was “Teaching in the Face of Terror: Strategies of Survival, Humanistic Education, and Cultural Repair.” Her seminar topics included “Knowledge Has a Face, Part 1: The Personal and the Pedagogical in Classical Jewish Sources and Postmodern Theory;” “Knowledge Has a Face, Part 2: Academic Knowledge and Religious Discourse;” “The Student–Teacher Relation, the Construction of Knowledge, and the Rhetoric of Rabbinic Texts, Part 1 and Part 2.”

Prior to moving to Israel, Handelman was on the faculty at the University of Maryland from 1979 to 2000. In 1991, she received a “Teacher of the Year” Outstanding Teacher Award, and in 1992, the student newspaper named her one of the Top Ten Teachers at College Park.

In addition to her appointment at the University of Chicago Law School, Martha Nussbaum also holds appointments in the philosophy department and the divinity school, as well as being an associate in classics, an affiliate of the Committee on Southern Asian Studies, and board member of the Center for Gender Studies. Nussbaum has taught at Harvard, Brown, and Oxford Universities.


In September, Nussbaum will deliver a public lecture, “Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law,” jointly sponsored by the President’s Lecture Series and the CSC. Additionally, the CSC will sponsor three seminar sessions for faculty and students. More details about Nussbaum’s visit will be available on our website at http://culture.rice.edu later in the spring.

The Mission of the Center for the Study of Cultures

The Center for the Study of Cultures exists to promote the study of cultures across time and around the world, both as unique examples of human behavior and creativity and as interconnected phenomena that can illuminate one another. The goal of the center is to provide a forum for the comparative and interdisciplinary conversations that make visible the connection among cultures and the particularities that divide them. Thus, the center seeks to advance humanistic knowledge both by supporting research that deepens our understanding of particular cultures and by encouraging the exploration of new configurations of materials, methods, theories, or cultures through interdisciplinary and comparative collaborations.

Annually supported by generous funds from Rice University, administered through the dean of the School of Social Sciences and the CSC, the Late Editions series discusses the fin-de-siècle challenges and opportunities facing professions, institutions, societies, and countries. These studies reach out globally and cover a dazzling sweep of subjects ranging from corporate cultures to artistic mediations, from fashion to technology, from museum cultures to the commercialization of outer space, and from market economies to ethnic and gender identities, among others, involving diverse places such as South Africa, Russia, Poland, Germany, Canada, Colombia, Papua New Guinea, Martinique, Argentina, etc.

The underlying rhetorical characteristic of these fin-de-siècle studies, Marcus writes, is “the hyperawareness that the velocity and enormity of changes are beyond the conceptual grasp of various kinds to describe and interpret them.” This is so, despite Marcus’s editorial decision, informed by deep awareness of the modern crisis of representation, to encourage all contributors to implement the oral history style of interviews, dialogues, and conversations. While communicating rapid and unrelenting cultural change (severely compounded, we must now add, by the events of 9/11), the series neither claims so-called value-free objectivity nor panders to the ideologies of global pessimism or optimism. It is, and wishes to be, appreciated as a struggle for representation of what seems utterly unrepresentable. The CSC salutes George Marcus for a superb academic accomplishment in editing events and documenting cultural change.
CSC Fellows 2002–03

The Center for the Study of Cultures annually awards three teaching-release fellowships to Rice faculty in the humanities, social sciences, architecture, and music and, to date, has awarded a total of 49. Selection is made on the basis of faculty research proposals, which are evaluated by the center director and advisory panel and by two external reviewers. Fellows are released from teaching for one semester to pursue their research projects. At the conclusion of their leave, fellows present their research in a public lecture to the broader university community.

LYNNE HUFFER, French Studies
Project: “Ethical Encounters: Literature, Philosophy, Politics”

One of the most urgent topics of contemporary intellectual debate is the role of ethical discourse in mapping an increasingly complex political and moral landscape. While the late-twentieth-century postmodern critique of humanism raised questions about the very possibility of ethics, the violences and complexities of a globalized society highlight the continuing need for articulation of normative principles by which to live. Huffer’s project intervenes into this debate about the status of normative claims in contemporary culture in order to develop an ethical theory that can negotiate this tension between antifoundationalism and moral universalism. Specifically, by bringing the tools of interdisciplinarity to bear on the question of ethics, Lynne’s project will bridge the analytical and methodological divides through which literary study, philosophy, and political theory have constituted themselves—especially with regard to ethics—as distinct discursive fields.

Lynne’s work stages a conversation among literature, philosophy, and politics through a series of readings that she characterizes as ethical encounters. These encounters differ significantly from ethical theories elaborated thus far. To be sure, from Aristotle to twentieth-century theorists such as Arendt, MacIntyre, and Habermas, both philosophy and political theory have offered an array of possibilities for thinking about ethics. More recently, literary scholars have begun elaborating a theory of “narrative ethics,” using the insights of postmodernism to engage the ethical dimension of literary texts. However, while literature, philosophy, and political theory all have much to say about ethics, very few ethical models have succeeded in producing a dialogue in which disciplinary differences are seriously engaged. Lynne’s project addresses this discursive and disciplinary gap by creating an interface between the rationalist models of philosophy and political theory on the one hand and, on the other, the literary expression of that which escapes the constraints of rationalism.

SUSAN MCINTOSH, Anthropology
Project: “Ancient Ghana and Mali”

For this project, McIntosh will research and write several new chapters for a revised version of Nehemia Levtzion’s 1973 classic Ancient Ghana and Mali. At the time of its original publication, the only substantial sources for early West African states were Arabic accounts. Subsequently, a corpus of oral traditions and archaeological research have contributed important new information. At Levtzion’s invitation, Susan will collaborate on a new edition of Ancient Ghana and Mali that includes chapters on the prehistoric background and the archaeology of these early states.

The objective for the archaeology chapters that Susan will be working on is to outline the available evidence for the rise of complex societies in the West African Sudanic zone, focusing on those areas identified after 800 CE by Arab sources as state-level societies, including Ghana, Mali, Songhay (all tied to the Middle Niger drainage), and Takur (on the Middle Senegal). In collaboration with Rod McIntosh and others, Susan has done archaeological fieldwork in both river valleys and will consult publications or original data already in her possession. Susan will spend considerable time updating the sections of the book on metal-using societies, the Saharan trade, Takur, and Mali, since ample new research has become available in the past few years. Some of the new material has been contributed by Susan’s graduate students, who have undertaken fieldwork on complex societies on the Middle Senegal and Niger Rivers. Other aspects come out of a variety of research projects carried out by several international teams, as well as Rice projects. A portion of Susan’s time will be spent producing the numerous illustrations that are indispensable to archaeological narratives.
HONEY MECONI, Shepherd School of Music
“Hildegard and Music”

Meconi’s proposed study is a book on the music of Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179). The project would offer the first full-length, broad-based discussion of Hildegard’s music, placing it in the context of her creative life and treating it as both an entity in itself and as a cultural phenomenon that has excited and influenced an audience far beyond that of any other medieval composer. It will address the questions of both her musical popularity and the resistance to that popularity and will also discuss her position within the musical canon. The study will also deal extensively with the performance of her music.

Because Honey’s work with Hildegard’s music has been as both scholar and performer, and because she has considerable experience discussing her music with the lay public as well as with musicologists who are not medievalists, Meconi’s book will provide insight to several audiences. The performance section of the book will critique the available modern editions of Hildegard’s music via comparison with the original manuscripts, explain the different kinds of “neumes” (medieval notational symbols) that Hildegard used, categorize the options for performance that these present, and discuss the choices made by the best-known ensembles in their recordings of the compositions.

DONORS FULFILL CHALLENGE GRANTS

This year, gifts and pledges designated to the CSC Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program topped $570,000, fully satisfying Rice University’s match requirement of the National Endowment for the Humanities grant awarded in 1998. Rice alumni, friends, and trustees successfully achieved the final year’s goal in the prestigious four-year, $400,000 challenge grant, in which Rice was required to raise $1.6 million.

We thank our donors for their generous financial support and the enthusiasm with which they have embraced our vision to build a Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program. Together, these gifts will endow a $2-million fund that provides perpetual support for this program.

This achievement is especially important because it strengthens our capacity to bring exceptional, innovative scholars from around the world to Rice to share their unique knowledge, research, and teaching, not only with our own outstanding professors and graduate and undergraduate students, but with the Houston community as well.

We recognize and deeply appreciate these donors to the CSC Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program.

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We also recognize these generous donors who contributed to our Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. This program began in 1999 with a challenge grant from the Mellon Foundation to bring excellent scholars, who are in their early academic careers, to the Rice campus. This infusion of fresh perspectives and new ideas adds the promise of even more intellectual enthusiasm to our offerings for students and faculty. Our first two postdoctoral fellows have arrived and are actively teaching classes in addition to working on their research. Nancy Deffebach specializes in modern and contemporary Latin American art, and Michael Decker’s area of expertise is ancient economy and history of Roman-Byzantine Near East.

Thank you to the loyal supporters who have made these fellowships possible.

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REVISITING A RICE PUBLICATION OF ENCYCLOPEDIC DISTINCTION

A Reflection on the Late Editions Project, 1992–2000
George E. Marcus

With the publication in 2000 of *Zeroing in on the Year 2000: The Last Edition*, a decade-long experiment in investigation and publication at Rice ended. Organized within the Department of Anthropology, but drawing on the efforts and support of the CSC and that of diverse faculty and students at Rice as well as elsewhere, the collective editorial and investigative group produced eight annual volumes published as a series by the University of Chicago Press. Known as Late Editions, the series was designed to provide a kind of “history of the present,” offering a diverse array of documents of fin-de-siècle change. (Indeed the original title of the series was to have been *Fin-de-Siècle Chronicles*, but the press insisted on the English language.) It was also meant to reflect the critique of straightforward forms of representation and narrative that was so prominent during that period and thus challenge the task of conventional documentary forms of discourse themselves.

Our solution to this seeming contradiction was to provide pieces that experimented with conveying situations of epochal change by encouraging our investigators, mostly academic scholars from a variety of disciplines and places, to produce their work in an interview/dialogic/convitational format with a minimum of conventional, authoritative narrative common to documentary and academic exposition. The idea, then, was to convey a sense of the critical reflections of subjects in a variety of social and cultural situations while exposing the contexts in which these reflections were elicited rather than stating the objective realities of others’ lives. The interview form is just as constructed as authoritative narrative, but at least it both documents and draws attention to how discourses are constructed and motivated. Above all, these pieces invited the active participation of the reader in a critical and observant sifting of what is presented and, in the best pieces, by a vicarious participation in the encounters.


Each year, the group of participants in a particular volume would meet at Rice in the spring for a collective editorial session and small conference. While the emphasis was on reworking pieces for each volume to make them more effective in the dialogic mode of the series, there was also an opportunity to discover the themes that emerged from this editorial work. We also decided on the theme or approach for the following year and drew up a list of participants, each of whom would be invited to return to a place or topic of past special interest to conduct interviews and conversations designed as eventual material for a Late Editions piece. Both the center and the dean of social sciences generously funded these yearly meetings, open to the Rice community.

Each volume then is a thematically organized compendium of edited exposures of situated experiences of change during the 1990s. The favored subjects for interview and dialogue were neither famous persons (whose opinions are regularly sought by media) nor exotic unknowns (who distinguish themselves by eccentricity or idiosyncrasy), but approximate counterparts to investigators themselves in very different situations and often with different backgrounds. It was thus as much the affinities between interviewer and interlocutor that were of interest as obvious differences. In general, the series captured a diverse range of situations of moderately empowered people whose worlds were in radical transformation. The pieces of the series were dedicated to making visible the reflected and contested qualities of these personal accounts while exposing the relations by which these accounts were produced.

In terms of effectiveness, the results were highly varied. We were scholars who, while accustomed to interviews as a means to material (the ethnographic conversation, the sociological interview), were not experienced in actually producing our work in this form. Each volume had bravura pieces, artfully edited, while others perhaps provided too much diffuse material or failed to meet the quotient of interest to our readers. (In fact, these became often-interesting substitutes for failed interviews or mainly narrated profiles of the persons interviewed.) The critical responses to the volumes were strong at the extremes, but invariably in every volume for every reader there were both pieces to love and pieces to hate. The series successfully found nonacademic as well as academic readership.

The series itself spanned the beginning stages of an historic transformation in modes of communication, information, and publication (as partly documented by Late Editions 3, but also registered in many of the other pieces of the series.) One could even say that the appropriateness of a material-rich documentary project in print form itself altered with the institution and increasing use of the World Wide Web over the decade and beyond. In the future, this series, which registered this change, but did not partake of it (though it was definitely affected by it over the course of its decade-long life), certainly will have been defined by it. As a document of its times and of certain problems in intellectual style as well, the relevance of this series lies as much in its rediscovering in the future as in its chronicling of a present just past that is still very much with us.
Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows Arrive

In a program designed to encourage interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching, the Center for the Study of Cultures welcomes the first two Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellows. Michael Decker (Ph.D. 2001, Oxford University, modern history) and Nancy Deffebach (Ph.D. 2000, UT–Austin, art history) began a two-year appointment in July. While at Rice, they will work on research, write in their chosen areas of specialization, and teach two courses per academic year.

Decker’s dissertation, “Agricultural Production and Trade in Oriens, 4th–7th Centuries A.D.,” reconstructed elements of ancient economy and history of the Roman-Byzantine Near East. Upon the recommendation of his dissertation examiners, Oxford University Press has accepted Decker’s thesis for publication. The work will be published in cooperation with the Modern History Faculty at Oxford as part of a new monograph series dealing with Byzantine history, society, and culture. The resulting monograph will be the first scholarly work to synthesize textual and material evidence from the entire Byzantine Near East relating to agricultural practice and exchange.

Decker’s research at Rice will utilize a multidisciplinary approach—historical texts, archaeological material, climatic-geological studies, and travelers’ accounts—to reconstruct the Early Medieval environment of North Africa. While the core scope of his study focuses on the Byzantine period and the Early Islamic transition (6th–8th centuries), Michael will use comparative data for both the Roman-Vandal period and the Medieval Islamic period in an effort to contextualize the Byzantine period within the wider historical framework. Decker has extensive archaeological fieldwork experience in the excavation of a Late Roman town in northern Syria known as Andarin.

As a tutor at Oxford University, Decker taught history of the Near East from Justinian to Muhammad, lectured on the late antique Mediterranean economy and society, and presented seminars on Byzantine archaeology and Byzantine studies.

In fall 2002, Decker taught a course on Byzantium and the Rise of Islam: History and Society from Justinian to the Umayyads. The course explored the culture and society of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world that gave birth to Islam. The political and social history of Byzantium and Byzantine–Arab relations, both pre- and post-Conquest, formed the framework of this course.

Specializing in modern and contemporary Latin American art, Nancy Deffebach plans to convert her dissertation, “Images of Plants in the Art of María Izquierdo, Frida Kahlo, and Leonora Carrington: Gender, Identity, and Spirituality in the Context of Modern Mexico,” into a scholarly book. Her dissertation considers how beliefs about nature and culture are expressed in art. In postrevolutionary Mexico, national identity was constructed as masculine identity; the theories of the muralists embodied this agenda and dominated artistic discourse. This situation presented special challenges to women artists. Nancy’s dissertation looks at how Izquierdo, Kahlo, and Carrington found ways to gain interpretive power and how their images participated in and resisted aspects of artistic and national discourses, particularly with regard to gender and nature.

With previous teaching experience at both the University of Texas and the University of Houston, Nancy is teaching the first courses in Latin American art offered at Rice. Emphasizing the range and diversity of Latin American art, Deffebach’s course, Latin American Art: Independence to the Present, considered a variety of media in terms of contextual, historical, political, social, and cultural developments. Deffebach’s seminar on Race, Class, and Gender in Mexican Art studies representations of race, class, and gender in Mexican art from the 16th century to the present, with emphasis on 20th-century art, especially on images created after the Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920.

Nancy’s professional experience includes curatorial work at the Blanton Museum of Art at UT–Austin and a Latin American film festival for the Blaffer Gallery at UH.
My appointment in the Center for the Study of Cultures at Rice University has both furthered my personal research and afforded a most stimulating opportunity to reflect upon the importance of interdisciplinarity in academic research and instruction. Regarding the latter point, my perspective is naturally the product of my training as a scholar of the history of Asian religions and, in particular, my focus on a tradition, Esoteric Buddhism, which truly is a pan-Asian movement, originating in India but spreading to Central, East, and Southeast Asia. I have discovered that research of this sort does not easily fit into existing academic paradigms.

The broad field of Asian studies, which naturally breaks down into disciplinary specializations, has tended to fragment along regional lines as well, reducing into regional units such as South, Central, and East Asian studies. Such specialization is natural, as few scholars have the ability to cross the major linguistic and cultural divides that more or less separate the civilizations of these regions. However, from the perspective of religious studies at least, these academic divisions can obscure as well as clarify, particularly since many religious traditions—Buddhism being an important, but definitely not the only, example—regularly crossed and recrossed these boundaries. Such cultural transmission is often obscured by the regional specializations, which tend to highlight the perspectives of modern national interests and political formations, often at the expense of premodern formations which diverge from the modern pattern. And religious studies is certainly not an exception; the monks, nuns, priests, and religious laypersons who traversed the Eurasian landmass spreading religious ideas and practices were usually accompanied by (or themselves served in a dual role as) merchants, scholars, and other travelers who also disseminated material goods, technologies, languages, literatures, and so forth.

This “fact,” however, is often not easily accommodated by the academic area studies institutionalization that is the product of 19th- and 20th-century nationalist ideologies and political formations. We are encouraged, after all, to study Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan und Isolde*, the story of the Judgment of Solomon in the Hebrew Bible, the *Arabian Nights*, the story collections of India such as the *Jataka Tales*, and the ”Transformation Tales” (*bian-wen*) of Tang China as examples of national literatures, but we are rarely made aware of the fact that these literatures are interrelated, sharing common elements as a result, no doubt, of the cultural links that traversed Eurasia during the premodern period.

In the past, perhaps, such research was hindered by the dominance of nationalist ideologies, which manifested institutionally in the compartmentalization of knowledge along national and regional boundaries. It seems to me that, however, such interregional research is particularly needed, given the growing awareness of the interconnected nature of global societies, which extends far beyond the now well-known “global economy.” Such research could potentially further challenge nationalist ideologies by demonstrating that even during the past eras long held to be formative for the development of national consciousness, the world-system was interconnected and by showing that the myth of the isolated nation-state is simply that, a myth.

My own contribution to this effort will be, admittedly, a small one. I am currently working on a cultural historical study of the development of Esoteric Buddhism in India and its dissemination to Central and East Asia during the late first millennium of the common era. My study, however, will focus on one particular Buddhist tradition, that of the *Cakrasamvara Tantra*. Although I have made progress on the cultural historical aspect of my work, the majority of my effort this year has focused on the edition and translation of the text itself, which is an essential prerequisite for my larger work. While I have completed my rough draft of both the edition and translation, I have been aided tremendously by the acquisition of two complete Sanskrit manuscripts, from the 11th and 17th centuries respectively, of an important commentary on this text. With the aid of this commentary, I hope to have my edition and translation ready for publication by the end of the year. I will then dedicate the remainder of my time as a fellow in the Center for the Study of Cultures to the completion of my cultural history, which will constitute my second book.
African Connection

The CSC announces the finalization of an agreement between the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and Rice University for the exchange of faculty. The program is effective January 2003. A call for applications for the academic year 2003–04 has gone out to Rice faculty. Each academic year, one faculty person in permanent employment (assistant, associate, or full professor) at either university may participate. The duration of study shall be between several weeks and one academic year, but need not be identical for the two exchange candidates. Faculty from all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences with a cultural focus shall be eligible. Upon proper clearance from their department chairs and deans, faculty participants will receive their regular Rice salaries while on the exchange.

In 1910, partly on the initiative of the Natal Colonial Government, the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg enrolled its first 57 students. Today approximately 6,000 students, of which one-third are graduate students, are enrolled at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Close to numerous game preserves and the dramatic Drakensberg Mountains, Pietermaritzburg is about one hour from the Indian Ocean and Durban. It is distinguished by its pleasant small city atmosphere, Victorian and Edwardian architecture, and lovely forested hills and valleys in the vicinity.

Among the disciplines Natal offers and which Rice faculty might find interesting are art history, biblical studies and biblical languages, classics and classical languages, drama, English, ethics studies, fine arts, French, gender studies, German, history, media and communication, philosophy, political studies, psychology, religious studies, and sociology.

At the same time, Rice’s Office of International Programs has finalized an undergraduate exchange program with the University of Natal, also beginning in fall 2003. This new opportunity will allow Rice students to spend a semester or an academic year at either the Durban campus, which offers an urban setting, or at the smaller, quaint Pietermaritzburg campus. The exchange will also bring South African students to the Rice campus for a semester or a year, broadening their horizons as well as those of the Rice students.

The academic year at Natal commences in February. The spring semester runs from February to late June and the fall semester from August to late November.

Language, Culture, and Mind
Sixth Conference on Conceptual Structure, Discourse, and Language
October 11–14, 2002

The Sixth Conference on Conceptual Structure, Discourse, and Language (CSDL 6) was held at Rice October 11–14, 2002. The biennial CSDL conference is a well-known interdisciplinary and international meeting linking the broad fields of cognitive linguistics and discourse studies. CSDL 6 was organized by Michel Achard (French studies) and Suzanne Kemmer (linguistics), assisted by linguistics graduate student Caleb Everett and a team of graduate and undergraduate students. The conference was sponsored by the CSC, the School of Humanities, the Department of Linguistics, and the Program in Cognitive Sciences at Rice.

The theme of the conference was “Language, Culture, and Mind.” The aim was an exploration of how linguistic structures relate to particular cultures, to aspects of human culture in general, and to cognitive processes, both general and culture-specific. The broad consensus was that although a simple idea of linguistic determinism (i.e., the idea that “the structure of a language determines the patterns of culture and thought of its speakers”) must be rejected, the following more sophisticated view receives strong empirical support from multiple sources of evidence: grammatical and other linguistic systems both reflect and help to reinforce particular cultural features and modes of conceptualization.

General cognitive and social/interactional characteristics and mechanisms shape pan-human cultural features, while at the same time allowing a vast range of culture-specific and context-specific variation. The complex interplay between the universal and the culture-specific is the crux of the problem in determining the influ-
Dialogue

ence of language on culture and mind (and vice versa). Papers featuring the use of a number of new methodologies and analytical tools showed that significant breakthroughs have been recently made that for the first time allow the age-old question of the relation of language, culture, and mind to be pursued with methodological and empirical rigor. This conference has been one of the first to bring together work on this topic from these newer perspectives, generating a synergy that promises to be very fruitful. Our expectation is that this conference will be looked back on as a seminal event on this topic.

The opening keynote lecture by John A. Lucy (University of Chicago) set the theme and tone of the conference. While every language represents a classification of experience for the purposes of speech, a key question for philosophy and for science is the extent to which these classifications have influences on mind and culture more broadly. Yet to date, there is little direct empirical research exploring these possibilities. His paper began by sketching the logical types of language influences that are possible and the ways these present different sorts of impediments to research. The second part described Lucy’s own empirical research that compares Yucatec Mayan and American English in order to assess whether key differences in the classifications implicit in the grammar of these two languages are associated with parallel nonlinguistic patterns. The research reveals that where the languages agree, the nonlinguistic classifications agree, and where the languages disagree, so do the nonlinguistic classifications. A final part of the paper described recent comparative and developmental work suggesting that language patterns are the shaping force in these parallels.

Topics of conference papers included studies of metaphor and metonymy in conceptual structure; discourse patterns in computer-mediated communication; the conceptualization of space and motion; linguistic corpora and frequency data and their relation to conceptual information; aspectual constructions and their relation to temporal perception; social networks, identity, and perspective; grammatical voice and viewpoint; rhetorical stance in grammar; the use of pragmatic scales in reasoning and in humor; the grounding of language in bodily and social experience; the typology of various grammatical and lexical domains; conceptual blending of mental spaces; and the expression and conceptualization of causality. Methodologies included psychology experiments, neural imaging and other modes of brain research, and analysis of large linguistic corpora, as well as the more traditional types of linguistic argumentation and field studies on particular languages. Language-particular investigations included studies of Dutch, Spanish, Finn-
lish, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Arabic, Indonesian, Cebuano, Chontal, Tsou, Tarascan, Yucatec Mayan, Cora, Karo, and Chisukwa as well as English.

There were 115 registered participants at the conference, coming from the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Britain, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Finland, Russia, and Turkey, as well as countries as far away as Brazil, New Zealand, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. In addition to participants from several Rice departments, local registrants included researchers from the University of Houston and the Texas Medical Center. From within the U.S., the largest contingent consisted of researchers at or trained at UC–Berkeley, with slightly smaller groups from UC–San Diego and UC–Santa Barbara. Disciplines represented included linguistics, psychology, anthropology, cognitive sciences, philosophy, computer science, neuroscience, cultural studies, and English literature and rhetoric.

The conference featured three one-hour keynote lectures, as well as 72 shorter talks in two parallel sessions, selected by a broad international group of referees who reviewed abstracts anonymously over the Web. A book display featured 50 books and journals from five publishers. Other activities included a welcoming reception at a local hotel and a memorable conference dinner party at the home of organizer Michel Achar. Conference T-shirts and CDs of the abstracts book were sold. Another feature was a raffle of 10 new books, most by conference authors.

Notables from the field of cognitive linguistics in attendance were Ronald W. Langacker (UC–San Diego) and George Lakoff (UC–Berkeley). Some other major figures who attended the conference included Susanna Cumming (UC–Santa Barbara), a well-known discourse, cognitive, and computational linguist; Arie Verhagen (University of Leiden), the editor of Cognitive Linguistics; metaphor specialist Eve Sweetser (UC–Berkeley); and Rice’s own Masayoshi Shibatan, who gave the welcoming address.

Further information on the activities and talks at the conference can be found at www.rice.edu/csl. Two publishers have expressed an interest in publishing volumes from the conference.

THE JEWISH MUSEUM BERLIN: HISTORICAL ROOTS AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE
W. Michael Blumenthal

Former U.S. secretary of the treasury and current director of the Jewish Museum Berlin, W. Michael Blumenthal, spoke at Rice on November 12, 2002. His public lecture, “The Jewish Museum Berlin: Historical Roots and Contemporary Relevance,” highlighted the museum’s significance for German and European cultural memory. Additionally, the event honored Blumenthal’s diverse contributions to the civilizing process of Western culture.

Born in Oranienburg, Germany, the Blumenthal family fled to China in 1939. The Blumenthals spent the war years in Shanghai, and in 1947, they immigrated to the United States. Following his education in economics at the University of California at Berkeley and at Princeton University, Dr. Blumenthal embarked on an illustrious career in education, business, and government service. In December 1997, Dr. Blumenthal accepted an invitation from the city of Berlin to become director and chief executive of the Berlin Jewish Museum. As the largest Jewish museum in Europe and due to its location in the new capital of the Federal Republic, the museum represents a high-profile German initiative to depict the often tragic past of German-Jewish history. Under Blumenthal’s leadership, the concept of the museum evolved from a museum about the Jewish population of Berlin to one that narrates the history of the Jewish people of Germany and to some extent of Europe. In March 1999, Dr. Blumenthal was awarded the Senior Medal of Merit (Grosses Verdienstkreuz) of the Federal Republic in recognition of his work in Berlin.

Since its opening in 2001, the Jewish Museum Berlin has become an icon among museums in Europe. The subject matter, unique architectural design, and spatial configurations are distinguishing features of this museum. Before any displays were installed, 350,000 people had visited. The museum offers visitors a journey through two millennia of German-Jewish culture from the earliest testimonies through the Middle Ages and on to the present.

Dr. Blumenthal’s lecture reflected on the significance of the Berlin Museum in a culture with deep roots in anti-Semitism, but he presented a cautiously positive picture as far as German-Jewish relations were concerned.

At the public lecture, the CSC hosted an exhibit of photographs of the museum that remained on display in the Fondren Library from November until January. Blumenthal’s book The Invisible Wall: 300 Years of a German Jewish Family was available for signing.
CHINESE TRADITION AND THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNITY: POLITICS, POETICS, AND GENDER IN THE LATE QING PERIOD, 1840–1911
March 7–9, 2003

This symposium-workshop attempted to provide a balanced picture of the interplay between tradition and modernity in late 19th and early 20th-century China, examining the function of classical Chinese literature and art in the evolution of Chinese political, social, and intellectual life. Although the role of women in late Qing literature and art has been generally neglected by both Chinese and western scholars, archival research reveals that the reform period witnessed the emergence of some of China’s most accomplished women writers. A study of gender in the reform era has offered a noninstitutionalized perspective on an influential group that interacted with the male reformers and often contested their dichotomized categories of “old” and “new.”

Organizers of the symposium were Nanxiu Qian (linguistics and Asian studies, Rice) and Grace S. Fong (women’s studies and East Asian studies, McGill).

This symposium-workshop focused primarily on poetic, linguistic, and artistic themes. Participants included Joan Judge (UC–Santa Barbara), Richard John Lynn (University of Toronto), Susan Mann (UC–Davis), Haun Saussy (Stanford), and Ellen Widmer (Wesleyan). Susan Mann served as commentator for the symposium and mediator of the workshop.

Sponsors included the CSC, Asian studies program, study of women and gender program, the dean of humanities, and the Office of the President.

RICE WOMEN’S CONFERENCE
February 7–9, 2003

This weekend-long conference, organized in response to the enthusiasm generated by the 1996 and 1999 Rice Women’s Conferences, brought together diverse groups of women from the Rice community, alumnae, undergraduate and graduate students and their families, staff, faculty, and friends of Rice. The conference focused throughout on two parallel goals: the showcasing of the substantial accomplishments of Rice women, from faculty research to community and professional leadership, and the encouragement of wide-ranging participation in discussions of gender-related topics.

This weekend featured 18 sessions devoted to women’s issues. The keynote address was given by distinguished Rice alumna Le Anne Schreiber, who was sports editor of the New York Times and is now an independent author. Artwork by or about women was exhibited. A celebration of women in the performing arts at Rice, featuring music, dramatic pieces, and dance, closed Saturday evening events.


WOMEN AND GENDER IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES
A Lecture Series

In collaboration with the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, the CSC will debut a lecture series in the spring semester 2003 to discuss the topic “Women and Gender in Islamic Societies.” Planned by Carol Quillen (history, Rice) and organized by Elora Shehabuddin and Werner Kelber, the lecture series will feature three speakers. In February, Zainab Salbi, founder and president of Women for Women International, spoke on “Understanding a Refugee Woman’s Reality.” In March, Amina Wadud, professor of philosophy and religious studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, discussed “Text, Gender, and Reform in Islam,” followed by Azizah Al-Hibri, professor of law at University of Richmond, who visits in April to speak on “The Qur’anic Worldview: A Womanist Perspective.”
These workshops and study groups foster collegiality and collaboration across departments and disciplines by bringing together faculty and graduate students from various fields with shared research interests. The CSC serves as an umbrella for these groups, providing financial and organizational support for symposia, conferences, and lectures by internationally recognized speakers.
bers and students. Professor Beaulieu expressed surprise and pleasure at the presence of the students. He took a lively interest in the AMC program, praised its interdisciplinarity, and hopes to return to Rice.

The second paper, “Frontier Ethnogenesis in Late Antiquity: The Danube, the Tervingi, and the Slavs,” was delivered by Florin Curta, associate professor of history at the University of Florida, in April. His lecture examined the relations between barbarians and the Roman Empire during the 4th and 6th centuries and their impact on the rise of a form of group identity that could be called ethnicity. He stressed material culture in the context of barbarian elites and their manipulation of status goods and “emblemic styles” in the search for status and power. His argument challenged standard explanations of Slavic origins in a provocative and interesting way. The paper was rich and convincing, and discussion with Professor Curta following the talk was quite rewarding.

The final lecture of the year was canceled by the speaker. Future plans include a miniconference on a Roman topic in 2002–03.

The following faculty have been most involved in the ASW over the past academic year: Suchan Chae, Lilly Chen, David Cook, David Gray, Anne Klein, Steve Lewis, Marshall McArthur, Douglas Mitchell, Bill Parsons, Nanxiu Qian, Hiroko Sato, Gautami Shah, Elora Shehabaddin, Chao-mei Shen, Rich Smith, Sarah Thal, Steve Tyler, Kerry Ward, Rina Williams, Insun Yang, and Meng Yeh. Groups of these individuals met a number of times, both formally and informally (often over lunch), to discuss matters of mutual interest. We have also tried to involve our Asian studies majors in at least some of these events, including Brian Greinke, David Ho, Emily Kan, Irene Tung, Nicole Lew, Erin Clark, Anna Ha, Thomas Blaylock, Mu-Yuan Chen, Todd David Wille, Jay Hubert, Garrett Washington, Vivian Chum, Carol Chen, Nicholas Lindsay, Jared Andrews, Isaac Chua, and Carolyn Choi.

The ASW’s discussions were catalyzed by the following major events during AY 2001–02, most of which involved two or three days of related social and intellectual activities.

In September 2001, “Asian Voices Breaking Boundaries” featured readings at Rice by a Chinese American author, Allen Gee, and an Indian Canadian author, Nityanand Deckha. Their readings, complemented by the music of Kayumanggi, a Philippine-centric world beat band, were followed by a downtown reception at Notsuoh Cafe, where refreshments were served by culinary artist Nusrat Malik. Allen Gee received his M.F.A. from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and his Ph.D. in creative writing from the University of Houston. He has recently written a novel, Far From The Beautiful Country, and is currently revising a collection of his short stories for publication. Nityanand Deckha is a graduate of McGill University and holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from Rice University. He has edited an anthology of essays, short stories, poetry, and prose by second-generation South Asians in North America and is currently engaged in a number of projects centering on urban space. Kayumanggi’s music emphasizes the search for Filipino cultural identity, combining traditional Philippine instrumentation with a modern Pinoy rock format, including original spoken word pieces in Tagalog.

In February 2002, professor Haun Saussy of the department of Asian languages and the department of comparative literature, Stanford University, visited Rice. His lecture was titled “Ritual Separates, Music Unites: Why Musical Hermeneutics Matters.” Professor Saussy is a broad-ranging and eclectic scholar, whose research languages include Latin, Greek, German, French, and Chinese. His most recent books are Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural China (Harvard University Press, 2001), a co-authored volume titled Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism (Stanford University Press, 1999), and his prize-winning The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic (Stanford University Press, 1993). In addition to his many publications on Chinese culture, he has written numerous essays on philosophy, translation, and art in the Western tradition, including studies of poets such as Homer and René Bélande and artists such as Andy Warhol and Mark Rothko. He is presently working on three projects: Cao Xueqin’s Dream of the Red Chamber and the creation of a women’s literature, an “ethnography of rhythm,” and a study of three Haitian poets. Thus, he had much to say to many of us.

A lecture titled “China’s Road Ahead: Will the New Leaders Make a Difference?” was presented by Professor Cheng Li, acting chair of the department of government at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, in March 2002. Born in Shanghai, Professor Li grew up during the Cultural Revolution. He came to the United States in 1985 and later obtained an M.A. in Asian studies at the University of Cali-

Asian Studies Workshop (ASW)
Coordinator: Richard Smith (history and Asian studies)

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formia at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in political science at Princeton University. Professor Li is the author of China’s Leaders: The New Generation (2001) and has recently shared his insights into Chinese politics on a number of programs in the American and international media, including the PBS NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, CNN, C-SPAN, BBC, ABC, and VOA. His work has frequently been quoted or reviewed in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Financial Times, Foreign Affairs, and the Far Eastern Economic Review.

Also in March, Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche of Kathmandu, Nepal, lectured on “Mind, Meditation, and Modernity.” Khetsun Rinpoche is renowned in the Tibetan Buddhist world as a historian, scholar, and meditation master. Trained in several Tibetan Buddhist traditions, he is particularly renowned for his expertise in Nyingma, the most ancient form of Buddhism in Tibet. He is the founder and principal of a Nyingma Monastic College outside Kathmandu and the author of a 13-volume series on the history of the four orders of Buddhism in Tibet. His autobiography has been translated into Japanese and he is currently preparing an expanded edition of it. His book Tantric Practice in Nyingma (1980) has been reprinted numerous times and is widely read throughout the English-speaking world.

The Japanese film The Human Bullet (1968) by Okamoto Kihachi was shown at the Rice Media Center in March. This film is one of the most famous and effective satirical critiques of the idiocies of war—in particular, the last few weeks of World War II in Japan.

In April 2002, Martha Chaiklin, curator of Asian history at the Milwaukee Public Museum, lectured on “The Unseasonal Winds of Love: Prostitution and the Foreign Community In Early Modern Nagasaki.” Dr. Chaiklin, who previously taught at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, received her Ph.D. from Leiden University in the Netherlands. Her research focuses on trade relations between Holland and Japan, where she has spent most of the past two decades doing research. She is particularly interested in the way objects imported by the Dutch, such as clocks, glass, and armaments, “taught Japan about the West.”

“Integrating China into the Global Economy” was the topic of a lecture by Dr. Nicholas R. Lardy, senior fellow in the foreign policy studies program at the Brookings Institution. An expert on Asia, and especially the Chinese economy, he has written numerous articles and books on the subject. Lardy’s most recent work, Integrating China into the Global Economy, was published in January 2002. It explores whether the reform of China’s economy and its foreign trade and exchange rate systems following China’s WTO entry will integrate it more deeply in the world economy. In September 1998, Lardy published China’s Unfinished Economic Revolution, a study that evaluates the reform of China’s banking system and measures the economic consequences of deferring reform in the state-owned sector. His current project analyzes the strategic implications of deepening China–Taiwan economic relations.

In the 2001–02 academic year, the Central Europe Workshop concentrated on two problems: the perceptions of minorities in East Central Europe (and the minorities’ perception of the majority) and the aspects of World War II history suppressed by the communist regimes dominating the region. To that effect, four lectures were organized, three of them in the evening with audiences of up to 180.

Professor Harold Segel of Columbia University explored “The Interwar Polish Cabaret: Political Satire, Jews, and Szmonces” in October. Segel noted that satire and sarcasm in cabaret texts were often directed at the Catholic majority, especially as it engaged in politics. However, the “szmonces,” or assimilated Jews, also got their share of ridicule. Unlike the Reformed Jews of Germany, the Polish Jews were largely Orthodox, even Hassidic, and in the 1930s assimilation was still an issue to be debated rather than embraced. In September 2001, Dr. James Bjork of Rice University spoke of the Polish-German struggle in the Catholic parishes of Silesia which was often bilingual (Polish and German) but professed the same religion (Roman Catholicism). Thus the decision concerning the language to be used in parish life was often contended by both sides. Dr. Bjork’s lecture was titled “Nations in the Parish: Catholicism and Nationalization in a German-Polish Borderland.”

In April 2002, Professor Marek Chodakiewicz of the University of Virginia presented his research into war history of a Polish county located in central Poland. By researching the county archives and the national archives in Poland and Germany, Chodakiewicz was able to reconstruct the history of a county that, over the period of six years (1939–1945), was subjected to three hostile occupations: Russian-Soviet, German-Nazi, and then again Russian-Soviet.

Chodakiewicz’s lecture was titled “Accommodation, Collaboration, Resistance in Poland, 1939–1947: A Theory of Choices and A Case Study,” and it was based on his Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University 2001. Chodakiewicz’s research led him to believe that it was often impossible to attach a single label to an individual; in all too many cases, men and women accommodated and resisted the enemy while occasionally being obliged to collaborate with him. Chodakiewicz’s research questions the facile distinctions made by some interpreters unfamiliar with the realities of living under foreign military occupation.

“Sealed Boxcars Moving East: Personal Remembrances of Soviet Russia’s Deportations of Polish Civilians to Siberia and Central Asia, 1939–1940” was the title of Consul Leonard Krazyński’s presentation of his experience as a slave laborer in Soviet Russia during World War II. Krazyński, who is Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Houston, was seized by the Soviet NKVD and dispatched to Siberia and Kazakhstan to work on Soviet enterprises. Krazyński’s presentation was a contribution to the oral history of Soviet deportations of civilians from non-Germanic Central Europe during World War II.

Over the last several years the Central Europe Workshop (formerly the Central Europe Study Group) has held several dozen lectures dealing with non-Germanic Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Russia. Many of these lec-
Workshops and Study Groups

Workshops and Study Groups were organized in collaboration with such Houston institutions as the Holocaust Museum Houston, ethnic organizations in Houston, and other CSC workshops and departments at Rice. Many of the lectures were subsequently published in the Sarmatian Review, giving these lectures an even broader audience. Outside interest in CEW events are illustrated by an article in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on February 23, 2002, and a request from the Legacy Project (http://www.legacy-project.org/) to reprint a text that appeared in the January 1994 issue of Sarmatian Review.

Concepts and Categorization Workshop (CC)
Coordinator: Richard E. Grandy (philosophy)

The CC Workshop was less active in 2001–02 than in recent years. A visit by Alan Leslie from the Cognitive Sciences Program at Rutgers was canceled. A talk by David Schneider (psychology, Rice) was substituted.

Schneider’s topic, “Social Stereotypes and Psychological Essentialism,” was chosen because it was appropriate to our ongoing discussions but also because of its relevance in the aftermath of the events of 9/11. The talk explored what is currently known about the extent to which stereotyping is a cultural phenomenon and the extent to which stereotyping is the inevitable result of processes intrinsic to concept formation. The talk was well attended and a lively discussion ensued.

Because of other commitments (search committees, travel, etc.), there was no feasible date for a spring talk before April, and we were unable to match a speaker and April date that did not conflict with previously scheduled talks of interest to the same general audience. Consequently, no outside talks were sponsored in the spring.

During the year, several planning meetings were held that focused on possible future speakers for 2002–03. Future plans would return the workshop to the previously successful model in which the visiting speaker would meet for intense discussion with a small interested group who would read material in advance to discuss work in progress. The speaker would also present a public lecture of general interest to students and faculty in humanities and social sciences and visit with relevant classes and meet with students to discuss their work.

Additionally, we intend to expand the group by inviting new faculty from UH and Rice and selectively adding graduate students.

Cultural and Social Theory Group (CST)
Coordinators: Odila Triebel (German and Slavic studies), Nana Last (architecture)

The Cultural and Social Theory Workshop creates a multidisciplinary context in which to explore the implications of research of new theoretical studies in the humanities. The CST Study Group provides a forum for Rice faculty to present works in progress in an environment that allows for constructive interdisciplinary discussion. The group is open to all kinds of research, but has particularly sought out work that invokes or applies contemporary theory in innovating, challenging ways. Under the broad title “Forms of Culture and Institutional Critic” in 2001–02, the program focused on the interplay of social and cultural/textual studies.

After soliciting papers and participation from all faculty in the humanities and participating social science departments, the following meetings were scheduled: Jim Faubion (anthropology), “Towards an Anthropology of Ethics: Foucault and the Pedagogies of Autopoiesis”; Florian Kreutzer (sociology), “Medium/Form-Evolution: On the Semantics of Skilled Work in a State Socialist Society”; Chris Kelty (anthropology), “Of Polymaths and Transhumanists: Networked Scientific Laities”; and Odila Triebel (German and Slavic studies), “Configurations of the Big Other: Poe, Nerval, Hoffmann.”

Participants in the Cultural and Social Theory Group have benefited from making connections among research interests. Presenters found the discussions to be extremely valuable in clarifying, expanding, or revising their projects and in providing opportunity for strengthened interrelations between humanities and the social sciences.
This year, the Feminist Reading Group focused on the theme “Feminism and the Law in Cross-Cultural Perspective.” We understood this theme to embrace not only specifically legal debates but also questions of gender and public policy, both in the U.S. and abroad, global human and women’s rights initiatives, international labor patterns and practices, and reproductive issues. We chose this theme because it connected well both with the discussions that took place at our 2000–01 conference, “The Future of Feminist Critique,” with the research of many of our participants, and with the ongoing work of other groups at Rice, thereby allowing many opportunities for joint sponsorship and cross-disciplinary conversation.

Our activities this year began with a reception and meeting designed to publicize the existence of the reading group and to encourage broad participation among faculty and graduate students. After this initial meeting, our work this year involved a works-in-progress series and a lecture series. The works-in-progress series offers an opportunity for our members (and sometimes visitors to campus) to present ongoing research in a forum that is both challenging and supportive. We planned four talks this year, two in the fall and two in the spring. In the fall, our speakers were Deepa Reddy, an anthropologist and Rice Ph.D. who now teaches at the University of Houston–Clear Lake, and Joy Ezeilo, a Nigerian lawyer and activist. Our scheduled spring speakers were Allison Sneider, assistant professor in the history department, and Susan Lurie, associate professor in the English department. Because of conflicts with job candidates this spring, Susan Lurie’s talk has been postponed until the fall.

Initially, we planned to bring three outside lecturers from different fields to Rice to speak on our general theme. However, after September 11 and especially after the U.S. made clear its intention to send the military to Afghanistan, we decided to devote most of our budget to an expert on Islamic law and to use the remainder to co-sponsor lectures with other groups whose work related to our theme. While this represented a change from our original plan, the steering committee thought that it was very important to bring to campus someone who could speak authoritatively on Islamic law and particularly on its diverse contemporary interpretations. We have submitted a separate proposal for a lecture series titled “Women in Islamic Societies,” which we hope to organize in 2002–03.

We chose to co-sponsor lectures by Elizabeth Clements, Ellen DuBois, Janice Radway, and Alice Fhahs. For 2002–03, the Feminist Reading Group proposes the topic “Feminist Futures” that will explore, from a variety of perspectives, the constructive directions for feminist critique that have emerged in the wake of feminism’s dialogues with other critical discourses, namely Marxism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, critical race studies, and human rights activism. We plan to bring in speakers who will address three specific foci under this rubric: “feminism and the public sphere,” “feminism and narrative,” and “feminist reconfigurations of the political.” These foci will help us to envision feminism as more than the amalgamation of the separate concerns of plural disciplines, methodologies, and political projects. Indeed, we believe our topics will open space for displacing theoretical impasses (for example, the perennial opposition between equality and difference, debates between critical race theory and postcolonialism, and the tension between activist and academic feminism) that have persisted in spite of the recent proliferations of feminisms. Along with outside speakers on these topics, FRG will continue its successful works-in-progress series for faculty and graduate students who are working in these areas. Helena Michie (English) has already agreed to give a works-in-progress talk next semester.

The Feminist Reading Group is thriving. Susan Lurie will serve as the contact person. The steering committee includes four faculty members and one graduate student.

In AY 2001–02, the History of Philosophy Workshop began its first year under that name (replacing the long-standing “Continental Philosophy Workshop,” which itself replaced “Rice Circle”) and devoted itself to the topic of problems in the historiography of philosophy. At present, when a general model of cultural production in the humanistic disciplines tends to emphasize historical and cultural contexts as the most telling explanatory matrix for philosophical and scientific inquiry, the workshop’s first year aimed to uncover some of the reasons for this shift from a philosophical to a postphilosophical framework and to assess the consequences for the self-presentation—and finally self-assertion—of work in the humanities. It also provided a theoretical and historical basis for our continuing work in 2002–03 and possibly after.

The workshop’s mailing list consists of 17 people. Regular attendees include Steve Crowell, Donald Morrison, Rachel Zuckert, and Mark Kulstad (philosophy); Jack Zammito (history); Gregory Kaplan (religious studies); Harvey Yunis (classics); Uwe Steiner (German); Florian Kreutzer (sociology); Lane Kauffman (Hispanic studies); and David Mikics (English, University of Houston).

Three meetings in the fall were devoted to Edmund Husserl’s late book, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, in which a narrative about the history of philosophy serves to identify what Husserl takes to be the crisis in European culture in the mid-1930s and also to suggest a way of responding to that crisis by means of a renewed conception of rationality. This was followed by an examination of the writings of Aristotle (Metaphysics) and Cicero (De Natura Deorum) in which they construct doxographies of earlier philosophers.

The spring semester was devoted to analysis of the “Introductions” from several 19th-century German (and one British) histories of philosophy: Rudolf Haym’s Hegel und seine Zeit, Eduard
The main event of the year was an interdisciplinary conference on lesbian and gay tourism titled “Queer and There: Travel and Commodified Desires.” (See Conferences, Symposia, and Speakers, page 26.)

Inquiries meets regularly as a reading group to discuss recently published books and articles on queer theory. In April, Puar’s essay “Global Circuits: Transnational Sexualities and Trinidad” from Signs; Lee Badgett’s “Towards Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Perspectives in Economics” from Feminist Economics; and chapters from Altman’s recently published book Global Sex were analyzed.

Inquiries sponsors lectures by prominent speakers from other universities as well as in-house talks by Rice scholars concerning their work in queer theory. In October, Margot Backus from the University of Houston lectured on a pederasty scandal in a Roman Catholic school in Ireland during the 1970s. Her paper raised potent issues regarding the relation of male same-sex desire to pedophilia, a provocative and timely problem.

Deborah Needleman-Armintor, a Ph.D. in English in 2002, gave a lecture in December regarding the diminution of phallic power and the assumption by women of masculine authority in 18th-century English literature. Drawing on work for her dissertation, Deborah argued that female sexual agency was represented by dildos in popular literature of the period prior to their association with homosexuality.

Regular attendees at meetings include professors Krista Comer, Jose Aranda, and Colleen Lamos (English) and graduate students from anthropology and English including Liz Fenton, Brian Riedel, Priscilla Ybarra, Chris Peterson, Marshall Needlemen-Armintor, Deborah Needlemen-Armintor, Ayse Celikoll, David Messmer, and Lulu Alverto. The steering committee this year consisted of professors Comer and Lamos, who will continue serving as coordinators next year, and graduate students Fenton and Riedel.

Inquiries intends to continue interrogating cutting-edge issues in queer theory. As our recent conference attests, the impact of consumer culture on the formation of sexual identities, practices, and communities is sure to remain at the forefront of scholarship in the field. Next year, we propose to deepen our exploration of this crucial topic, turning our attention to the relationship between youth and consumer culture.

Specifically, we plan to examine the effects of consumer culture on the production of youthful sexualities in the so-called “Generation X” as well as the “hip-hop nation” (an African American analogue to the largely Caucasian Gen X). Important aspects of this discussion will include the commodification of sexuality and the construction of heteronormativity.
In 2001–02, the Judaic Studies Workshop of the Center for the Study of Cultures sponsored four events on the Rice campus: three public lectures and one conference.

The first lecture, titled “Women in the SS: Feminist Theory and the Perpetrators,” was delivered by Dr. Susannah Heschel, the Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, in November 2001. This event was co-sponsored by the Houston Jewish Community Center. Approximately 45 people attended. Heschel cited striking historical evidence about women’s participation in the Nazi regime: some 4,000 women served as guards in the SS, constituting roughly 10 percent of camp employees, in addition to nearly 240,000 wives of male guards who resided at concentration camps. She provided the specific example of Irma Grese, who was hanged by a British tribunal in 1945 at 22 years of age for her participation alongside the notorious Dr. Mengele. Heschel argued that most feminists still portray women as victims or, at best, as imitators of masculine ideals. However, in Heschel’s view, the SS offered a precious opportunity for women to take a centrally important role in the Nazi regime, allowing women guards to mold and express feminine “ideals” conforming with sexuality.

The second lecture, titled “Jewish Law and Bioethics,” was delivered in February 2002 by Dr. Daniel Lasker, the Norbert Blechner Professor of Jewish Values at Ben-Gurion University, Israel, and the Horvizt Visiting Scholar at the Houston Jewish Community Center. Approximately 31 people attended. Lasker proposed that Judaism is structured according to a legal system and not defined by moral values. A Jewish legal reasoning does not necessarily express the Jewish moral position and vice versa. He applied this hypothesis to the test case of cloning. Jewish law (halakha), in his view, offers no precedent for making judgments about cloning. An intuitive moral stance on cloning, for instance as a marker for discerning lineage, has no basis in the Jewish legal system. Therefore, Jewish law is ill-equipped to make judgments about serious moral quandaries that result from advances in technology.

The third lecture, titled “Extravagant Perception” in the Book of Deuteronomy,” was delivered by Dr. Steven Weitzman, associate professor of religious studies at Indiana University, in April 2002. A conference titled “Abraham’s Conversion to Judaism and Christianity” was held in March 2002. It featured Dr. Jon D. Levenson, Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies at Harvard Divinity School, and Dr. Walter Moberly of the University of Durham, England. Approximately 240 people attended. This conference brought together two scholars to discuss the role of the figure Abraham, especially as presented in Genesis 22 and viewed from the perspectives of Jewish and Christian biblical theology. In the first part of his presentation, Levenson demonstrated how Jewish sources remember Abraham as an observant Jew who fulfilled all of the biblical commandments even before they were issued at Sinai, whereas Christian sources celebrated Abraham for his faith regardless of works. However, Levenson qualified this stereotypical bifurcation by citing sources that claim the opposite, namely that Abraham was remembered by some Jews as a hero of faith, while Abraham was noted by other Christians for his works. Moberly presented a chronological survey of the Christian reception history of Genesis 22, the near-sacrifice of Isaac by his father, Abraham. He began with an exposition of the biblical text, moved on to the New Testament, the church father Origen, the reformer Martin Luther, and the modern critic Gerhard von Rad, and concluded with his own reading to point to the ways in which Isaac served as a prefiguration for the death and resurrection of Christ.

The Judaic Studies Workshop has issued invitations to two distinguished scholars to present their work to the Rice community in 2002–03. Dr. Paul Mendes-Flohr, professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Chicago, and Dr. Charlotte Fonrobert, assistant professor at Stanford University, have accepted offers to speak. Professor Mendes-Flohr enjoys international renown as a leading historian of modern Jewish thought, and Dr. Fonrobert is an up-and-coming major scholar of gender construction in rabbinic Judaism.

Six events were sponsored or co-sponsored by the Medieval Studies Workshop during the 2001–02 academic year. Activities opened with a talk on September 24 by new Rice University medieval studies faculty member David B. Cook, assistant professor of religious studies, who spoke on “Gospel Materials in Arabic and the Position of Jesus in Early Islam.” Cook dealt with the surviving Gospel fragments in Arabic, positing relationships among the fragments themselves and to a possible Muslim translation of a part or whole of one of the Gospels (probably Matthew).

The workshop sponsored a “Halloween Special” on October 30. Michael Hoenicke Moore, the Carolyn Grant Fay Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at the Honors College of the University of Houston, discussed “Itineraries of the Demonic in the Early Middle Ages.” Linking his subject to the development of All Souls’ Day (November 2) shortly after the year 1000, Moore showed the continuing relevance and flexibility of ancient demonic traditions from Judaism, Ancient Greek polytheism, and Gallic and Germanic paganism and addressed the implications of the medieval assumption of the active opposition to human affairs by evil spirits.

Two numismatically related lectures took place a month apart on October 29 and November 29. The first, co-sponsored with the department of history, featured Jere L. Bacharach, director of the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington and past president of the Middle East Studies Association. In his talk “Islamic Coins as a Source for Art History,” Bacharach discussed the domination by European currency (primarily the Venetian gold ducat and silver grosso) of Egyptian markets from the end of the 14th century. Bacharach
then traced the initial failure and eventual triumph of Islamic coinage through the strategies of the Mamluk sultans. In the second lecture, “The Mint in the Life of Medieval Venice,” visiting professor of history Alan Stahl examined three episodes in 14th-century Venice where changes in coinage and the operation of the mint, one of the main sources of the city’s income, were reactions to the problems presented by war, famine, and plague.

In the spring semester, Professor John Howe of Texas Tech University presented a talk on “Music of the Spheres: Astronomical Antecedents of the Staff System of Musical Notation,” drawing on the fields of music, astronomy, and art history to highlight previous unnoticed parallels between early representations of the musical staff and contemporary astronomical drawings.

The main event of the year was the Third Triennial Neil J. O’Brien Symposium in Medieval Studies, presented April 7–9. Organized by medieval studies faculty member Eva Haverkamp, the Anna Smith Fine Assistant Professor of History, the topic “Memoria: Memory and Commemoration in Medieval Christianity and Judaism” brought an international slate of 10 speakers from seven disciplines to campus. (See Conferences, Symposia, and Special Events, page 24).

Plans for the 2002–03 academic year include a screening of the films of Icelandic director Hrafn Gunnlaugsson and the inaugural lecture in the International Center for Medieval Art (ICMA) Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series. Medieval studies faculty member Jane Chance (English) is organizing the visit of Hrafn Gunnlaugsson, and Linda Neagley (art and art history) is the liaison for the ICMA talk.

Still shaping up are possible interactions with the Texas Medieval Association, whose annual conference is being held in Houston in October. We also plan to continue our tradition of featuring Rice faculty and other local faculty members in our series: Assistant professor of classics Scott McGill has agreed to speak, as has assistant professor of Chinese literature Nanxiu Qian, who will discuss relationships between the Chinese Shih-shuo tradition and the Western Theophrastan tradition.

The Medieval Studies Workshop continues to attract a diverse audience to its events. Medieval studies faculty and other Rice faculty, faculty from other campuses in Houston, undergraduate and graduate students, medieval studies majors and nonmajors, and community members are among those who frequently attend.

With co-sponsorship by the French studies department and the dean of humanities, we invited Larry Schehr from the University of Illinois in the spring semester. Larry’s talk, “Seducing Straight Characters: The Case of Vautrin and Lucien,” drew a remarkable crowd of more than 30 people, with faculty in attendance from art history, religious studies, English, French, and history. On Saturday, February 9, NICE enjoyed enormously discussing Larry’s paper “Cooking with Zola,” an essay that brings together discourses of cuisine with the politics of consumption and of gender in the 19th century. Present at the session were Bob Patten, Deborah Harter, Jan Hewitt, Theresa Papanikolas, Lynn Huffer, and Thad Logan. Patten, Harter, Huffer, and Logan then accompanied Larry to lunch, where our discussions continued unabated. As the organizer of this event, I can say quite confidently that Schehr’s visit was a huge pleasure both for the speaker and for our 19th-century group.

NICE’s final meeting was a discussion of topics (and works in progress) on which to focus next year and a consideration of the speakers who would most enrich our discussions. We normally meet three to four times per semester.

In our meetings next year, we hope to focus on the individual work of each of our members, taking special stock of the directions our colleagues are taking and benefiting from the input of our larger group. Essentially, we hope to have a very full series of work-in-progress presentations. We would also like to organize several meetings around next year’s Victorianist conference, “Disciplinary Flash Points: Victorian Historicity in Interdisciplinary Age.”

There is no question that Rice boasts an unusually strong set of scholars across several disciplines whose major interests lie in the 19th century and who enjoy immensely sharing in discussions that bring their work together. NICE has continued to provide for these scholars a rich cross-disciplinary forum, unavailable within individual departments, for the exchange of ideas and an active community within which to present work in progress. Our most regular attendees are Bob Patten, Helena Michie, Scott Derrick, Thad Logan, Alan Grob, Caroline Levander, and Deborah Harter. Lynn Voskuhl from the University of Houston, Lynn Huffer, and Theresa Papanikolas (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) also joined us this year.

During the fall semester, we engaged in a fruitful Saturday-morning seminar meeting with Eric Lott, a visiting guest speaker for the English department, who met with us to discuss today’s changing models for Americanist studies.
From April 8 through 20, 2002, Michel Serres served as the CSC’s third Distinguished Visiting Scholar. The author of more than 40 books on culture, science, and philosophy, Serres is a member of the Académie Française. In the discipline of academic philosophy he is best known for his two-volume work *Le système de Leibniz et ses modèles mathématiques* (3rd ed. 1990). Apart from his Leibniz studies, Serres has written extensively on a vast array of different academic disciplines and subject matters, ranging from the sciences to the social sciences and the humanities, including the arts and poetry. He is best known for his sustained efforts in seeking connections between the humanities and the sciences.


Preeminently, Serres is a thinker not of systems but of synthesis. As far as systems are concerned, he seems unwilling to attribute to any discipline, or mode of thinking, a homogeneous, hermetically closed status. Closed systems, in his thinking, are doomed to implosion, and what prevents systems from collapsing, he frequently asserts, is an element of disorder, of turbulence, of chance, of entropy—in short, of contingency. As far as synthesis is concerned, Serres takes great pleasure in leaping over barriers. Tracing interfaces among the sciences, the humanities, and the arts, he seeks to unite different stories into what he has termed *le grand récit*.

While at Rice, Professor Serres delivered one public lecture and conducted four two-hour seminars for faculty and graduate students. His public lecture was titled “Sciences and Humanities: The Case of J. M. Turner.” The British landscape painter Joseph William Turner, who was also a professor of perspective at the Royal Academy of Arts, was an ideal figure for Serres because this painter has shaped scientific perspective and artistic sensibilities into paintings of stunning beauty. The seminar sessions dealt with the following topics: “Euclidean First Definitions,” “Time in Plato’s *Timaeus*,” “Clinamen in Lucretius’s *De Natura Rerum*,” and “Pascal’s Geometry.” In each instance, Serres showed how the great questions of science concerning the birth of the universe, the nature of time, the origin of geometry, the mechanism of atoms, the nature of solids and fluids, etc., had been anticipated by the ancients both in their scientific and in their poetic narratives. In fact, one of Serres’s principal points was that the poetic narratives such as Lucretius’s *De Natura Rerum* need to be revisited because in it physics was born.

Serres’s uncommonly interdisciplinary thinking resonated well with his audiences. His lecture and seminars attracted a broad section of Rice faculty, among them the dean of engineering and the dean of architecture, and graduate students from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, and architecture, as well as academicians from across Texas and beyond. Members of the French community in Houston were present both at the lecture and at the seminar sessions. For some of them, it was their first exposure to the humanities at Rice. Additionally, academicians from Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge traveled to Houston to attend Michel Serres’s public lecture, thus giving the Distinguished Visiting Scholar program a welcome regional exposure.

During Serres’s tenure at Rice, the French department served as host, arranging lodging, inviting him to cultural events, and hosting a departmental party in his honor. It needs to be pointed out, finally, that our first three scholars left Rice with words of the highest praise for the intellectual vigor and enthusiasm they had encountered at the CSC, as well as for Rice’s hospitality and the beauty of the university campus.
Technology, Cognition & Culture

A Lecture Series

Jointly sponsored by the CSC, the Computer and Information Technology Institute, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer at Rice, this lecture series, consisting of two lectures annually, will trace the evolution of information technologies and their influence on civilization. It will explore the passage from oral to written, from manuscript to print, and from print to electronic communication and its global network that instantaneously transmits words, numbers, ideas, and images to all corners of the earth. The influence of these communications media on the management of knowledge, cognitive and technological developments, and cultural history will be examined, as well as the role these media play at the interfacing of scientific, humanistic, and social history and scholarship.

Two Cultures—Plus One

Neal Lane

In April 2002, the second lecture in the Technology, Cognition, and Culture series featured Neal Lane, University Professor, professor of physics and astronomy, Senior Fellow in the Baker Institute for Public Policy, and former science advisor in the Clinton administration. Lane’s talk was titled “The Two Cultures—Plus One.”

Lane used C. P. Snow’s small book The Two Cultures as a starting point. Published in 1959, Snow argued that a communications gap had formed between the scientists and humanists in England and that this gap was dangerous for society. Much has changed in five decades. The world is a great deal more complex today, in part due to the impacts of technology, as well as being more crowded, noisy, and dangerous. Science, engineering, and technology have become a nearly seamless enterprise. And the scientists have gone directly to the public—a “third culture”—without worrying about trying to close Lord Snow’s two-cultures gap, therefore without having the benefit of perspectives from the humanists, social scientists, and the broader scholarly community. In turn, most people, convinced of the value of science and technology, have welcomed the changes science and technology are making in their lives and tend to give their elected policy-makers almost carte blanche to sort out the good from the bad. Unfortunately, at a time when the pace of discovery and technological innovation is accelerating, neither the public nor the policy-makers know much about science and technology. This state of affairs is unsustainable.

The goal of Lane’s talk was to address this “third culture”—society at large—and the need for a conversation involving the public, their elected policy-makers, scientists, and other scholars. Fortunately, at Rice, the conversation has already begun. Lane selected global climate change, human genome (and biomedical research), and missile defense as examples of policy issues the public ought to care about.

Literature in the Twenty-first Century: A Technological Revolution

N. Katherine Hayles

In October 2002, Katherine Hayles, a professor of English at UCLA, continued the Technology, Cognition, and Culture Lecture Series with the lecture “Literature in the Twenty-first Century: A Technological Revolution.” Hayles explored the cultural and critical issues raised by electronic literature, particularly connections between the means of representation (that is, digital technology) and what is represented.

Hayles suggested that a revolution is underway as writers create literary works for digital media. The digital computer, with its ability to simulate almost everything, has already radically changed what “literature” means in an electronic context. Electronic literature, written on computers and meant to be read on them, has moved into multimedia, combining the traditional art of language with animation, graphics, images, and sound. Far from being a passive delivery vehicle, the technology has actively changed the look, feel, and content of these electronic works. This conjunction between literary art and technology is apparent, for example, in works that combine natural language with code to reimagine the past and future of human identity.

Judging by attendance, the recently inaugurated Technology, Cognition, and Culture Lecture Series is a success. The combination of engaging speakers and pertinent topicality brought 130 people to Lane’s lecture and, despite severely inclement weather, 60 people to Hayles’s lecture.
PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE CONSORTIUM

With the sponsorship of the CSC, Rice philosopher Sherrilyn Roush organized a meeting of the Central Texas Philosophy of Science Consortium at Rice in March 2002. The consortium consists of faculty from the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M, and Rice and welcomes participants from other schools. The consortium was formed in order to make better use of resources in the historical, philosophical, and anthropological study of science that exist in the region and to expose graduate students in the various programs to a variety of research work.

The consortium meets once a semester. Speakers at the Rice meeting were Richard Grandy (Rice philosophy) and Cory Juhl and Sahotra Sarkar (both philosophy, UT–Austin). Grandy spoke about recent work in cognitive psychology suggesting that infants have a general concept of “object.” Because some psychologists might claim the concept to be false or trivial, Grandy described how to define the object concept to avoid such a problem. Juhl tried to revive the analytic-synthetic distinction, rejected by Quine long ago, by developing a different conception of how mathematics is grounded. Sarkar’s topic was recently popular efforts to use ‘evolutionary biology’ to illuminate human psychology. Hannah Landecker (Rice anthropology) spoke at the fall consortium meeting at Texas A&M in September.

CONFRONTING STATE POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Building on the successful workshop conducted at Rice co-sponsored by the CSC in March 2001, Ussama Makdisi (history) invited two speakers to discuss the theme of memory and violence, one in an Arab context and the other in a U.S. context. The goal was to show how similar themes and experiences of violence (state sponsored or civil war) and memory operated in radically different contexts.

The first speaker was Elizabeth Thompson (history, University of Virginia), who is an expert in modern Middle Eastern history. She spoke on her ground-breaking book Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon (Columbia University Press, 2000), which received the American Historical Association Joan Kelly Memorial Book Prize and the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians First Book Prize in the year 2000. Her presentation, titled “Constructing Citizenship in a French Colonial Context,” offered a serious gendered perspective into the history of mandatory Syria and Lebanon. Rather than limit her analysis of citizenship to the political language of constitutions—that is to say a judicial approach to citizenship—she traced the emergence of a hierarchical colonial citizenship defined largely by the dislocation and memory of the First World War. She explored the social policies of the French mandatory state mediated by male elites—religious patriarchs, urban notables, and rural landowners—and contested by women’s organizations, labor, and Islamic populist movements who challenged the gendered hierarchy of colonial power.

The second talk was given by Alice Fahs who spoke on her recent book, The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861–1865 (University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Dr. Fahs’s talk was very well attended by members of the department of history and by members of the Houston Area Southern Historians (HASH).
MEMORIA: MEMORY AND COMMEMORATION IN MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM
The Neil J. O’Brien Conference for Medieval Studies

The Neil J. O’Brien Conference for Medieval Studies builds on an existing tradition of excellence in medieval studies at Rice. Endowed by a generous gift from Neil J. O’Brien, this triennial symposium creates an interdisciplinary forum in which to address broad themes in medieval culture. In 1995, the topic was “The Body of Christ in the Late Middle Ages,” while in 1998 the conference presented “Constructing Hildegard of Bingen: Reception and Identity 1098–1998.”

In April 2002, the conference “Memoria: Memory and Commemoration in Medieval Christianity and Judaism” explored the broad range of aspects of memoria and their complexity, as well as the interconnections between these qualities. It brought together scholars from the fields of medieval and ancient history, religious studies, literature, philosophy, and the arts. An additional unique characteristic of the conference was the comparative approach used to prove the validity of the search for interactions between Christianity and Judaism. Topics included memoria in historical consciousness and conceptions of historiography (use of history, fiction, foraging, use of history in polemics); ways of memory as ways of knowledge (Augustine’s concept, memory of God, mnemotechnic resources, apocalypse); socialization of remembrance (in community, brotherhoods, and their realization in space); and the formation of memoria in material and pictures (monuments, cemeteries, painting).

The group of distinguished scholars created an interdisciplinary, international, and unique forum for the study of memoria in medieval Christianity and Judaism. Professor Mary Carruthers (New York University) was the keynote speaker. Her books Book of Memory and Craft of Thought: Rhetoric, Meditation, and the Making of Images, 400–1200, have revolutionized the field of memoria research and shaped the area of medieval studies in fundamental ways. Janet Coleman (London School of Economics and Political Science), author of Ancient and Medieval Memories, was one of the speakers.

The symposium was open to the public and especially targeted the broader Houston community, Rice students, alumni, as well as faculty. Faculty and graduate students from the University of Texas at Austin as well as colleagues from the University of Houston and the University of St. Thomas attended the conference.

In addition to the CSC, co-sponsors of the conference included the Neil J. O’Brien Endowment, the dean of humanities, the medieval studies workshop, and the Departments of History, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Art and Art History, English, French Studies, and Hispanic and Classical Studies.

SPEECH PERCEPTION IN CONTEXT: BEYOND ACOUSTIC PATTERN MATCHING
Ninth Biennial Rice University Symposium on Linguistics

In March 2002, this symposium brought together scholars from several different fields involved in the modeling of the speech perception process. Each of the participants shared his or her research demonstrating that listeners use knowledge beyond that gained from the acoustics of a speech signal; that is, listeners exploit information from several different sources in their attempts to understand speech signals. Though the symposium was not divided formally into sessions, on the first day of talks, speakers presented research involving general information systems involved in speech perception. On the second day, speakers presented research specifically related to the information gained from perceivers’ expectations of talkers’ social categories. On the final day, speakers presented information about specific auditory processes and their relation to the knowledge systems presented on the previous two days.

The sessions were attended by faculty and students from linguistics, psychology, cognitive science, electrical engineering, and computer science. The conference was sponsored by the CSC, the Department of Linguistics, the Dolores Welder Mitchell Trust, and the dean of humanities.
Mikko Sams (Helsinki University) spoke about his research designed to show the strong influence that visual information has on the perception of speech. He presented several studies on the McGurk Effect, a well-known phenomenon whereby listeners are so influenced by what they visually perceive that they misinterpret the acoustic signal and “hear” what they expect to hear based on visual input.

Howard Nusbaum (University of Chicago) presented research that revealed the effect that the label “speech” versus “non-speech” has on listeners’ perceptions of identical acoustic signals. Listeners that are told that a given signal is speech perceive phonemic properties in that signal, but those that are told that the signal is not speech do not report such perceptions. He also discussed research involving brain activation patterns of audio-visual versus audio-alone perception.

Richard Wright and Gabriel Webster (University of Washington) showed that the ability to identify a particular talker (or characteristics of that talker) is crucial for successful phonemic identification, but that the reverse is not true: listeners do not use specific acoustic information about phonemes to categorize specific speakers. Furthermore, listeners tend to use a different set of acoustic cues in noisy versus quiet environments.

Suzanne Curtin (University of Pittsburgh) discussed the effect that rhythm information has on the perception of acoustic signals, specifically in infants. Her talk demonstrated that listeners are conditioned to attend to rhythm information from an extremely young age; thus, rhythm information has a significant effect on adult speech perception.

Nancy Niedzielski (linguistics, Rice) discussed her research involving the influence that perceived social categories of a speaker has on the perception of that speaker’s vowels. She showed that by manipulating regional labels of a speaker on a test tape, she was able to influence how subjects perceived specific phonemes, suggesting that subjects’ expectations of how a speaker “should” sound had a significant effect on what they “heard.”

Keith Johnson (Ohio State University), reporting on research involving identical twins, showed how speaker identification is not merely a matter of attending to information based on speakers’ anatomical structures.

Peter Cariani (Harvard University and the Eaton-Peabody Laboratory) discussed auditory processing and brain activation patterns, revealing that the brain is not a mere acoustic processor but rather an active interpreter of acoustic signals. He discussed pitch perception at length.

Dennis Preston (Michigan State University) reported on research that showed that speakers from one region of Japan used such devoicing in the determination of the pitch-accent of a given Japanese vowel, but that speakers from a separate region did not. Bartek Plichta (Michigan State University) showed that reaction times were shortened and category boundaries were easier to identify if listeners had priming information about a speaker before the identification task began. He hypothesized that information about speaker characteristics reduced the cognitive load for phoneme recognition.

Cynthia Clopper and David Pisoni (Indiana University) reported on their work on categorical perception and regional dialect. They found that the number of speakers from a given region to which a subject is exposed in an experimental setting had an effect on the placement of category boundaries, suggesting that “training” on a given vowel system takes place and subsequently influences vowel perception.
QUEER AND THERE: TRAVEL AND COMMODOIFIED DESIRES

An interdisciplinary conference on lesbian and gay tourism was held on April 13, 2002. The conference featured two major speakers in this emergent field: Professor Dennis Altman of La Trobe University in Australia and Professor Jasbir Puar of Rutgers. Leaders from Houston and Galveston’s tourist industry participated in a roundtable discussion of the practical implications of the ideas raised by the lectures.

“Queer and There” was a rare occasion in which academic experts and business people came together in a dialogue concerning a matter that has both local and global ramifications. A range of topics were examined, including the ethics and politics of the lesbian and gay tourist industry, the commodification of lesbian and gay sexual identities, the multiple directions of tourist flows to and from first- and third-world countries, the global effects of the “pink dollar,” and racial and gender differences in lesbian and gay tourism.

Among those attending the daylong conference were Rice professors and graduate students from anthropology and English and faculty from UT–Austin and UT Health Science Center. The mayor’s liaison to the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community and the executive director of the Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce also participated.

Graduate students Brian Riedel (anthropology) and Liz Fenton (English) organized the conference that addressed a significant issue that lies at the crossroads of current debates concerning global capitalism, neocolonialism, gay and lesbian identities, and LGBT sexual practices. The conference was sponsored by the CSC, the dean of humanities, and the dean of social sciences as well as the Departments of Anthropology and English.

ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

“Shifting Terrains: Translations and Identity-Formations in an Era of Transnationality”

Organized by English graduate students Ayse Celikkol and Priscilla Ybarra in February 2002, this symposium brought together graduate students and professors from the English, history, and anthropology departments. Exploring the dynamics of imagining and establishing connections between the particular and the global, the panelists approached the logic of globality from various angles. From “National and Natural Borders: An Ecocritical Approach to the U.S.–Mexican Border” presented by Lourdes Alberto (English) to “Anthropology of a Difficult Object: EU Law and Greece” presented by Brian Riedel (anthropology), the papers reflected the participants’ diverse interests and attracted a multidisciplinary audience.

The keynote address was delivered by Paula Moya, associate professor of English at Stanford University, who is the author of Learning from Experience and the editor of Reclaiming Identity. In addition to giving the keynote address titled “Globalizing Minority Studies: The Persistence of Identity in Contemporary Literary Theory,” Dr. Moya attended and responded to the panels.

The symposium’s featured speaker was Hosam Aboul-Ela, assistant professor of English at the University of Houston. Dr. Aboul-Ela’s lecture was titled “Caliban, Sutpen, and the Rhetoric of the Global.” The symposium featured a second roundtable discussion, “Chicanos on Television: Identity and Assimilation in Gregory Nava’s American Family.”

The symposium gave graduate students from various departments an opportunity to familiarize themselves with each other’s work and areas of interest. Graduate student and faculty responses to the panels provided valuable feedback and discussions. Sponsors included the dean of humanities, the CSC, the Departments of English and History, the Chicano faculty and staff of Rice University, and the Center for Excellence and Equity in Education.

WORLD HISTORY PROGRAM WORKSHOP

As part of the consideration to initiate a major program in world or global history, the Department of History hosted the World History Program Workshop with four panelists from outside Rice. Well attended by both history faculty and graduate students, the workshop focused on the administrative and practical aspects of program building.

Four scholars with experience in establishing graduate programs in world history came to campus to participate in an open discussion on how to shape a graduate program: Michael Adas (Rutgers University, editor of the AHA series on world history), Jerry Bentley (University of Hawaii, editor of the Journal of World History), Patrick Manning (Northeastern University, director of the World History Center), and Kenneth Pomeranz (University of California, Irvine, author of The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy) are each well respected for both their programmatic experience and their promi-
The speakers gave short presentations, based upon their institutional and professional experience, covering some of the following topics:

- What kind of coursework should be required for a graduate field in world, global, or comparative history?
- What should such a field be called?
- Is such a field feasible as a primary graduate field, or should it be only a secondary field?
- How best might one organize a seminar in world, comparative, or global history?
- What kind of language training should be required?
- What is the current state and probable future of the employment market?
- What are the most successful (or unsuccessful) structural or administrative ways to build a program?

**Musiqa at the Rothko Chapel**

With this event in April 2002, Shep-herd School of Music faculty members Karim Al-Zand, Anthony Brandt, Shih-Hui Chen, and Pierre Jalbert inaugurated a new series of contemporary music concerts in Houston. Their aim is to present concerts featuring a variety of aesthetic viewpoints and high-level performances. Their group celebrates the ongoing force and vitality of musical thought in a way that is memorable and accessible. Educating audiences on the vitality and relevance of contemporary music is also a significant part of Musiqa’s mission.

Featuring music from a wide variety of aesthetic perspectives, the program included two world premieres and five works composed within the last 15 years. The event attracted a capacity crowd to the Rothko Chapel, one of the country’s most celebrated and beautiful monuments to creativity and spirituality. The program included works by Musiqa’s artistic directors as well as American masters Morton Feldman and Earl Kim. The performers included acclaimed Houston musicians and the New York-based Flux Quartet, one of the country’s most celebrated young string quartets. Keeping with the promise that every concert will have a surprise, a new poem was commissioned and read by poet Edward Hirsch, a MacArthur Award and Rome Prize winner and until recently a professor at the University of Houston.

The concert was preceded by a lecture titled “Hearing New Music for the First Time.”

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