NEWS FROM THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CULTURES AT RICE UNIVERSITY

DIALOGUE

Spring 2005

MARTIN WIENER » CSC FELLOWS 2004–2005 » NEW CSC DIRECTOR
9) At this point, the CSC is annually involved in approximately 50 academic events ranging from individual lectures to postdoctoral searches all the way to international conferences.

And lastly, but importantly, the CSC, together with the dean of humanities, has inaugurated a three year series of Mellon Graduate Research Seminars which are designed to develop new models of research collaboration between humanities faculty and PhD candidates and to enhance the originality and interdisciplinary scope of dissertations. The CSC has the intellectual oversight over these seminars. I express my sincere appreciation to Dean Wihl: he deserves full credit for the idea and for securing the funding for these seminars. The first round of seminars, conducted by Caroline Levander (English) and Rafael Salaberry (Hispanic studies) and with graduate students from diverse humanities departments participating, is presently underway. The faculty leaders for the second round, beginning this fall, will be Steven Crowell (philosophy) and Harvey Yunis (classics).

As I step down as director, I am more than ever convinced of the great importance of the mission of the center. I warmly welcome my successor in the directorship, Caroline Levander. The CSC will be in very good hands.

—Werner Kelber

From the Director

When the Rice Center for the Study of Cultures was founded in 1987, it was charged with the mission of advancing faculty research in the broadest context of academic pursuits. I often have commented on the fact that the mission statement of the CSC is one of the most comprehensively, indeed globally, formulated of all mission statements of U.S. centers of humanities and cultural studies I have seen.

During the past five years, I have sought to implement this mission with a view toward fostering explorations of traditional fields and topics from novel perspectives, enriching the humanities and social sciences with subjects and ideas currently not adequately represented, seeking to connect disparate intellectual endeavors and inquiries, and linking Rice humanities with international scholarship.

At the end of my five year term as director, I should like to summarize basic features and accomplishments:

1) Two substantial endowments have been secured to establish a Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program (NEH) and a Postdoctoral Fellows Program (Mellon).

2) The annual newsletter Dialogue is now being published in the form of a magazine.

3) To date, the CSC has awarded 55 one-semester teaching-release fellowships.

4) The CSC has hosted, altogether, seven distinguished visiting scholars: Aleida Assman, Jan Assmann, Michel Serres, Susan Handelman, Martha Nussbaum, Jean Comaroff, and John Comaroff.

5) Presently, the CSC administers eight faculty workshops, among them three that only recently have been constituted: Cultural Studies of Science and Technology, Early Modern Study Group, and Global Hispanism.

6) During the last six years, the CSC has been able to secure tenure-track positions for three of our postdoctoral fellows in classical studies, Byzantine history and Asian studies. Moreover, this coming fall, the CSC will be able to make three postdoctoral appointments.

7) In what constitutes a remarkable interdisciplinary project, Charles Henry (vice provost), Moshe Vardi (Computer and Information Technology Institute), and Jan Odegaard (Computer and Information Technology Institute) have joined ranks with the CSC in administering the annual university lecture series Technology, Cognition, and Culture.

8) During the last five years, the CSC has initiated, sponsored, and administered 40 conferences, symposia, and colloquia that drew hundreds of humanistic scholars from around the country and internationally to Rice.
CSC Fellows 2004-05

The Center for the Study of Cultures annually awards teaching-release fellowships to Rice faculty in the humanities, social sciences, architecture, and music and, to date, has awarded a total of 55.

Selection is made on the basis of faculty research proposals, which are evaluated by the center director and advisory panel as well as by two reviewers, one selected by the applicant and one external reviewer selected by the CSC. 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. This year, new faculty fellowships were awarded to Richard Grandy (philosophy) and Caroline Quenemoen (art history and classical studies).

Richard Grandy
Philosophy
Project: “Soft Borders, Bright Colors: The Cognition and Metaphysics of Everyday Objects”

Everyday objects are a basic part of the world according to our common sense view. Advances in physics over the past three centuries have led many to question the significance of these objects. The central goal of Grandy’s project is to reveal the flaws in arguments against the common sense view. This project will entail not a critique of physics but rather of the interpretation of its significance by most philosophers and many scientists. In so doing, he will examine mereological debates concerning the status of physical objects, looking particularly at the criterion of maximal dynamic cohesiveness, which is a fundamental property of physical objects, namely the fact that moving one part of an object tends to move the whole. He will analyze the two approaches to maximal dynamic cohesiveness, namely the one that calls for a sharp boundary on cohesiveness, and another that accepts a fundamental vagueness in the idea. Grandy will argue for the latter position, and will develop a many-valued logic approach that does not require a revision of our fundamental logic principles. He also will build on the work of Spelke, Xu, and other developmental psychologists to argue for a technical conception of the objects known as “Spelke objects,” which he will argue are a significant subset of the too-inclusive and arbitrary “Quinian objects.”

While Spelke objects and common sense objects do not exactly coincide, the former provide a conceptual scaffold for understanding the latter. Failure to recognize their status prevents recognition of important aspects of the structure of the world, namely those involving maximal cohesive objects. Grandy will show that philosophically rigorous argumentation appealing to logical and scientific principles need not undermine common sense but can provide a deeper justification of the everyday and situate philosophy in the familiar world of people and things. Grandy will make these arguments in a book project that he hopes to complete during summer 2005.

Caroline K. Quenemoen
Art History and Classical Studies
Project: “Architecture and the Empire: The Significance of the Palatine Complex for Roman Identity Formation in Italy and the West”

Between 27 BC and 14 AD, Augustus radically transformed the political and social landscape of the Mediterranean world, unifying ethnically and geographically diverse populations into an empire centered on both Rome and himself. A fundamental agent in the creation and consolidation of the Augustan empire was the art and architecture of the capital city, just as mass media and the Internet permit the creation of a connected global culture today, portraits of Augustus and marble temples in cities from Spain to Egypt made visible the provincial cities’ relation to Rome and, just as importantly, to each other. The cultural and social mechanisms by which these monuments expressed and enabled identity within the Roman empire at the local, regional, and global level are the subject of Quenemoen’s research.

Quenemoen proposes that Augustus’s Palatine Complex in Rome, a multifunctional terraced sanctuary that included a temple,
Martin Wiener: Profile as a Scholar

I began college as a physics major, enthralled by the vision of a “deep order” underlying the natural world’s apparent infinite multiplicity and randomness. Within my first year, however, I was turned, by several brilliant teachers at Brandeis University, to the study of history, which had always been my other intellectual fascination.

To this new study, I brought the same desire to uncover hidden patterns shaping the surface chaos, this time of human affairs rather than of nature. So from the first, I was set to be what historian, J. H. Hexter called a “lumper”—a historian who, without violating the professional canons of caution and skepticism, seeks to build up larger patterns—as opposed to what he called a “splitter,” the kind of historian who specialized in analyzing, modifying, and often destroying overly-sweeping generalizations put forth by lumpers. Naturally, we lumpers like to think of ourselves as the true creative artists of our profession, although the intellectual trends of this past generation have tended more to support the analytic—I might even say deconstructive—activity of splitting than the more speculative and synthetic one of lumping. I am happy to see signs in recent years that the historical profession is turning back to a more sympathetic appreciation of the speculative and synthesizing frame of mind.

The kind of history I was immediately drawn to at Brandeis was one that particularly flourished in a faculty many of whose senior members had been émigrés from Germany: the history of ideas. Consequently, my doctoral thesis at Harvard and first published book was an intellectual biography of a turn-of-the-century Englishman, Graham Wallas, one of the founders of Fabian Socialism and also of the discipline of political psychology. Even then a lumper, I aimed not simply to recount the development of Wallas’s ideas or to analyze their coherence but to show how his career as a late Victorian intellectual was shaped by the interplay of two broader histories in nineteenth-century England: those of Evangelicalism and Benthamism.

While writing my book on Wallas, I found myself increasingly dissatisfied with the narrow focus on a small number of exceptional minds that then characterized intellectual history. Instead, I found even more interesting the far less sophisticated or rigorous attitudes and sentiments held by large numbers of persons, which formed a “mental climate” rather than a specific set of ideas. All my work since has been a series of explorations of such climates and their practical significances.

The first such mental climate that drew my attention was the pervasive strain of anti-industrialism and rural nostalgia that surprisingly pervaded late Victorian and Edwardian social discourse—a strain that, as yet, barely had been noted. Through this, I was led to larger questions of social structure, economic behavior, and
national identity. The book that resulted, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850–1980*, argued that in the later 19th century, a cultural reaction against industrialism, urbanism, and modernity in many aspects set in in England—one that increasingly worked to muffle and muddle the economic dynamism unleashed by the industrial revolution. Understanding this reaction, the book insisted, was a necessary part of grasping the problems of economic retardation that had come to afflict 20th-century Britain.

Appearing just as Margaret Thatcher was beginning her overhaul of the troubled British economy, this book was much commented on in Britain and translated into Italian and Japanese. It contributed usefully, if certainly very controversially, to general public discussion in Britain and also has since stimulated a great deal of academic research in both Britain and America in two separate areas: the relations between culture and economic behavior and the construction of national identities.

My next project was quite different—still concerned with ideas, but on a very different subject: criminality. Crime and criminality was just beginning to be seriously studied by scholars. I sought here again to do something rather different from most of these scholars: to write a cultural history of criminality, that is, to explore the changing constructions of human nature and social agency underlying the formation of policies to deal with crime in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. The resulting book, *Reconstructing the Criminal: Culture, Law and Policy in England, 1830–1914*, has had some influence on scholarly work in the history of crime and criminal justice, not only in Britain but in Europe and America as well.

It certainly wasn’t in my mind at the time I wrote that book, but I found the realm of criminal justice to be so fertile for getting at all sorts of things reaching far beyond its own sphere that that book turned out to be the first of what I hope will be a “criminal trilogy.” My gaze turned next from the level of general policy-making about crime and criminals to that of actual criminal trials, and from crime in general to homicide in particular—especially that (the great bulk) perpetrated by men. Yet as always, the concern remained getting “behind the veil” of events to deeper mental patterns.

A leading British historian, Robert Shoemaker observed just last year in a survey of scholarship on the history of crime in Britain that recent work on this subject “has divided into two contrasting approaches. On the one hand, there is a continuation of the social historical approach of the 1970s and 1980s, researching judicial archives and using statistical techniques to document patterns of pros-

execution and punishment. . . . A second approach opened up in the 1990s, examining ideas and representations of crime and deviance using the methodologies of cultural history. . . . The challenge for historians of crime is to bring these two very different approaches together.” This is just what my next book, *Men of Blood: Manliness, Violence and Criminal Justice in Victorian England*, published just as Shoemaker was writing his observations, tries to do. In it, I combined cultural and social-scientific history by constructing comprehensive databases of homicide trials in England 1840–1900 to be able to reach firm quantitative conclusions about how the English government dealt with such crimes, while simultaneously exploring, through particularly revealing cases, the contending constructions of masculinity, femininity, and the social relations of men and women developed by a wide range of social actors and brought to bear in the criminal courtroom. This book also aims to join the history of criminal justice and the history of gender.

I am now working on the final volume of my criminal justice project: a book examining trials of interracial homicides in the British Empire. By closely examining trials of either the killing of a “native” by a Briton or the killing of a Briton by a “native” in a wide range of locales—the Caribbean, East Africa, India, Singapore, and Australia—the book will focus on the way these cases exposed a deep fault line running through British imperial authority everywhere. This was the “contradiction” between its justification of bringing the “rule of law” to despotic or anarchic societies and the racism that accompanied Britons, and Westerners generally, wherever they settled, traded, or ruled. This contradiction became increasingly sharp in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as British society became ever more based on “liberal” ideas, but the empire this society constructed and extended remained authoritarian. The fundamental question involved is indeed one with much relevance today: can a liberal society run an empire resting ultimately on force without undermining the empire and, at the same time, without itself being corrupted?

Interracial homicide cases, for the most part ignored by historians, seem to be a promising avenue of approach to this question, for they forced the underlying contradiction up to the surface of consciousness, where one can watch it being confronted. Did the unequal handling of these crimes demonstrate that British colonial governments were, in effect, racist autocracies? Or did the principle of the rule of law provide a real check to arbitrary rule, and did its corollary—the equality of legal subjects—mitigate racism? I hope to be able to provide some answers to these questions in the next few years.

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—Martin Wiener
The CSC Welcomes Two New Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows to Rice

In a program designed to encourage interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching, the Center for the Study of Cultures made the second pair of appointments in the Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. The new fellows, Thomas H. Chivens (PhD 2004, University of North Carolina, anthropology) and Zoe Knox (PhD 2002, Monash University, European studies), began their two-year appointments in July 2004.

Dr. Thomas H. Chivens

Thom Chivens’s current project is the anthropology of policy transfer. His research focuses on Poland’s accession into the European Union with specific attention to the circulation of human rights policies. The project considers the relationship between human rights-based restructuring, models of professionalization, and changing discourses of security. This is of particular interest in a context where multiple layers of sovereignty are shifting in the face of new resources and demands. Chivens’s project addresses the practical consequences of framing social problems, such as gender-based violence, as human rights issues and investigates the cultural and technical infrastructures that are created for intervention into human rights issues. This project was inspired by his dissertation research. Chivens received his PhD in anthropology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2004. His dissertation is a study of the transfer of domestic violence policing policies from the U.S. to Poland and explores the transnational circulation of domestic violence intervention expertise. It draws on fieldwork conducted with police officers, social workers, NGO rights activists, and criminologists in the United States and Poland. He is now preparing the manuscript for publication.

In his PhD research, Chivens followed a domestic violence intervention protocol from its development in the United States to its inchoate implementation in Warsaw. His dissertation illustrates how a police intervention program can circulate as both a development project and a commodity and is transformed across heterogeneous local historical terrains. The cultural and political field in which experts seek to develop an infrastructure to render populations of batterers and victims visible is highly contested, flexible and partial. He finds that the American model of domestic violence intervention is rearticulated in transit with a number of unexpected objects of concern ranging from child abuse and car theft to the families of police officers themselves. His writing has addressed issues of policing and civil society, gender, transnational feminism and postsocialist power, constructions of violence, domesticity, and the state. He also is interested in problems of framing contemporary anthropological projects, doing fieldwork, and writing ethnography on ethnographically saturated field sites.

Chivens teaches courses on gender and Eastern Europe, post-socialist transition, cultural anthropology, and ethnography, and is developing courses on policy transfer and human rights. In fall 2004, he taught the interdisciplinary seminar “Gender and Post-Socialist Transformation in Eastern Europe.” The seminar addressed a range of issues made salient in Eastern Europe since 1989, from labor, childcare, political participation, and reproductive rights to meanings of feminism, domestic violence, and trafficking in women. In spring 2005, he taught a course titled, “Culture, Security and Human Rights,” cross-listed with the Departments of Anthropology and History and the Program for the Study of Women and Gender. The course addresses how theories of ‘risk society’ can be used to understand contemporary reorganizations of cultural, domestic, and geopolitical space.

Dr. Zoe Knox

Zoe Knox’s postdoctoral research project comprises a comparative analysis of religion, politics, and society in postcommunist East and Central Europe. The project arose from the recognition that, although religion has exerted a significant sociopolitical influence in the late 20th and 21st
centuries, contradicting the theory of secularization, according to which religion loses relevance with the advancement of modernity, there have been few comparative studies of the role of the dominant churches in the development of civil societies throughout postcommunist Europe. Churches and religious dignitaries, often public figures, take part in social, intellectual, and political debates and shape public life in important, sometimes highly visible, ways. The roles of religious institutions and religious leaders are particularly important in countries experiencing major ideological transitions. In postcommunist Europe, the dominant churches have particular authority by virtue of their links with national identity, the experience of communist religious repression, and foreign domination. Knox’s research focuses on the influence of religion in the region and the extent to which this is shaped by the process of secularization and, conversely, by the ‘deprivatization’ of religion. It is anticipated a book will arise from this research.

This project extends the research undertaken for Knox’s last book in a comparative direction. Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism (RoutledgeCurzon, 2004) examines the Church’s shift in status since the demise of Soviet communism. The passage of a controversial federal religious law in 1997 brought the role of Russian Orthodoxy in the country’s post-Soviet development to the fore of social and political debate. The book analyses key issues in that debate, such as religious pluralism; church-state relations, Orthodoxy, and national identity; and religion and democratization. The book’s publication was featured in an article in Rice News on October 28, 2004. Knox also had a chapter titled “Civil Society, Russian Orthodoxy and Democracy: Theoretical Framework/ Conceptual Clarification” published in the edited collection Burden or Blessing: Russian Orthodoxy and the Construction of Civil Society and Democracy.

In October 2004, Knox was awarded an Open Society Archives Research Grant to work in archives housed at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. The Grant was awarded to support research on religious life in the Soviet bloc, providing the historical context for examining developments since the collapse of communism in 1989. Knox was one of an international consortium of eleven faculty awarded a grant for a research cluster project titled “Cultural Borders and Bridges: Europe and Asia,” funded by Monash University, where she is an honorary research associate.

In January 2005, Knox participated in a joint presentation with Thomas H. Chivens. Her half of the presentation focused on Patriarch Aleksii II’s response to religious and ideological pluralism in the Orthodox Church. In April, she will present a paper at the Association for the Study of Nationalities convention at Columbia University. She also has been invited to participate in a week-long workshop on the history of Christianity in eastern Europe to be hosted by Calvin College (Michigan) in June.

Knox has introduced two upper-level courses to Rice, offered by the Departments of Religious Studies and German and Slavic Studies. In fall 2004, she taught “Religion in Post-Soviet Russia,” which examined religious life since the collapse of the USSR in 1991. The course focused on the Orthodox Church and its relations with other religions and denominations in the Russian Federation. In spring 2005, Knox taught “Religion in Eastern Europe under Communism”, an interdisciplinary study of religion and society. The class explored issues such as religion in Marxist and Leninist philosophy, church–state relations in Catholic and in Eastern Orthodox countries, religious minorities throughout the communist bloc, and religion and the dissident movements. Knox completed an interdisciplinary PhD in the Centre for European Studies at Monash University in October 2002.

As Chivens and Knox are both conducting research on postcommunist Europe, on January 31, 2005, they gave a joint CSC presentation titled “Postsocialist Transitions.” Their presentations illustrated diverse routes and meanings of transition from authoritarian to liberal democratic states and social structures. The presentation focused on key institutions in transitional states; Chivens addressed the circulation of policing models and expertise between the U.S. and Poland, and Knox addressed the response of the Moscow Patriarchate—the governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church—to religious pluralism in Russia. The talk underscored the range of empirical, methodological, and theoretical tools required to understand the complex transformations in Eastern Europe since 1989.

The former Andrew Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows, Michael Decker and Nancy Deffebach, both have moved on to positions at other universities. Decker is now an assistant professor of history at the University of South Florida in Tampa, and Deffebach is a visiting lecturer at Georgia State University in Atlanta.
Jean Comaroff, the Bernard E. and Ellen C. Sunny Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology and Social Sciences, and John L. Comaroff, the Harold H. Swift Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology and Social Sciences, both at the University of Chicago, visited Rice University March 28–31, 2005, as the sixth and seventh CSC Distinguished Visiting Scholars. The Distinguished Visiting Scholar program was conceived to enrich the intellectual life of 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.

The Comaroffs are cultural anthropologists who have made a major impact on the field, enriching our understanding of contemporary Southern Africa, the area in which they have conducted extensive fieldwork. Their work also has had a significant theoretical dimension that has transcended their discipline, attracting the attention of scholars working in other disciplines such as history, political science, religious studies, and sociology. According to CSC director Werner Kelber in his introduction of the Comaroffs to the Rice community on March 28, the Comaroffs’ scholarship has four characteristics that account for the remarkable impact it has attained. First, he noted that their work thrives on the resonance between anthropology, history, sociology, religious studies, and economics. Second, their work bridges the gap between dichotomies such as local versus global perspectives and structuralist versus developmental models. Third, in highlighting the interaction of indigenous social orders with global capitalism, they have written the inner history of colonialism. Lastly, drawing on postapartheid experience, their work has turned to mercantile capitalism.

Following Kelber’s introduction, Jean Comaroff delivered her public lecture titled “Criminal Accounting: Quantifacts and the Production of the Unreal.” In it, Comaroff noted how an obsession with counting and probability has increasingly characterized societies from the 19th century onward. South Africa, like other nations, produces its own tide of numbers, particularly in the area of crime statistics. Much of this is characterized by the assumption that countering disorder must begin with counting it. She observed that the growing sovereignty of crime statistics has given rise to three phenomena. First, as these statistics have been subject to widespread abuse, there is significant distrust in their veracity. Second, they induce both alienation and intimacy; statistics reduce distant events into first-person experience. Third, they not only mirror reality but have become pervasively existent phenomena unto themselves. She then traced how their ubiquity has been tied to the rise of the neoliberal state. They have been essential factors in the remaking of nation-states, particularly in the processes of deregulation and privatization. She noted how, in the South African case, crime statistics have been widely manipulated and utilized for “the production of the unreal,” i.e., the generation of exaggerated sense of fear regarding violent crime. This has served the interests of multiple groups, such as the private security industry, which has profited from this socially constructed sense of disorder.

The following evening, March 29, John Comaroff presented his lecture titled, “On the Commodification, Consumption, and Construction of Cultural Identity in a Brave Neo World,” following an introduction by Dr. Elias Bongmba. In his lecture, Comaroff observed how global market forces have had a corrosive effect on the modern nation-state, which had often been the locus of cultural and political identity in the past. This has led to a global rise of “hetero-nations,” alternate nations based on construction of identities among indigenous peoples who have been marginalized during the colonial period. Using examples from both America and Africa, he argued that there is an increasing tendency for indigenous groups to organize themselves into corporations and commodify their cultural identities as products to be bought and sold in the global marketplace. In
Mellon Graduate Research Seminars

Shortly after joining the Rice University community in 2003, dean of the School of Humanities Dr. Gary Wihl announced his intention to seek new and innovative ways to augment graduate studies in the humanities. Wihl pursued this goal successfully, and applied for and received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to create a new series of doctoral research seminars highlighting faculty and graduate research in spring 2004. These seminars, which began in the spring 2005 semester, are based on a program of research that requires doctoral students to advance and contribute to a major work in progress by the faculty leader of the seminar. The goal of the program is to facilitate faculty/graduate student research collaboration with the hope that such collaboration will catalyze faculty research as well as help graduate students develop strong research skills. This should not only lead to improvements in graduate student dissertation projects but also aid humanities graduate students in developing strong research programs that will extend beyond the dissertation and guide their work as young scholars. The seminars are being administered by the CSC, which has the role of providing intellectual overview for them. Two seminars were selected for the spring 2005 semester and were designed and taught by Dr. Caroline Levander and Dr. Rafael Salaberry.

Caroline Levander, associate professor, English, is leading a seminar titled “Toward a Hemispheric America.” This seminar will provide a cutting-edge immersion in the field of American studies through adopting a comparative, hemispheric approach that is gradually reorganizing the fields of literature, history, and religious studies, challenging new scholars to both broaden and deepen their analysis of the cultures of the Americas. Through emphasizing a comparativist method that remains attentive to local distinctions while bringing a hemispheric approach to bear on the nation-state, this year-long seminar will work toward sharpening the writing of the next generation of Americanist scholars and toward developing a model for the reorganization of American studies in the 21st century. Unlike either the Americas Colloquium or graduate seminars within particular departments, the
Rafael Salaberry, associate professor of Hispanic studies and linguistics, is leading a seminar titled “Language Policies as Markers of National and Cultural Identity.” This seminar is based on the analysis of case studies on the topic of language as a marker of national and cultural/ethnic identity, with a particular emphasis on language planning, language policies, and political debates on language use. Language planning refers to the ways in which organized communities united by religious, ethnic, political, or social factors attempt to influence language use. Concrete manifestations of such policies are obvious in the case of bilingual education, the establishment of an official national language, the control over gender-biased language, etc. Some of the topics being investigated by the graduate students in the seminar include: “Framing Language Policy and Language Identity: The Case of the Saami of Northern Europe,” “Language Use and Linguistic Evidence in Conflict Resolution and Interethnic Conflict,” “Language as Property and Identity in Canada and France in the Context of ‘Divagation’,” “Language Variation and Language Prestige in Legal and Political Debates with Emphasis on Hungary,” and “Bilingual and Bicultural Identities in Russian–French Writers.”

Two seminars have been selected for the fall 2005 semester. Steven Crowell, the Mullen Professor in Humanities and chair of philosophy, will lead “The Existential Sources of Normativity”; and Harvey Yunis, professor and chair of classical studies, will lead “Plato’s Phaedrus and Classical Hermeneutics.”
Reinventing Hispanism in the Age of Globalization

This symposium, held February 26, 2005, was the first conference organized by the Global Hispanism Workshop (of the Center for the Study of Cultures), a group founded almost two years ago as an interdisciplinary forum for scholars at Rice and neighboring institutions to explore the complex historical reality of the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian cultures in Europe and the Americas. Since then, not only linguists, literary critics and theorists but also scholars from the disciplines of history, sociology, art history, anthropology, archaeology, and cultural studies have been meeting every six weeks or so during the academic year to pursue that inquiry.

This symposium was an outgrowth of the workshop, and its aim was to reflect on the status and function of Hispanism in the cultural and academic imaginations of the contemporary Americas and Spain and to begin to construct a more adequate framework for understanding the cultures referenced by the term and their role in the world today.

In this conference, seven leading scholars from prestigious universities around the country presented papers addressing the status, orientation, and future of Hispanic studies. The symposium papers and discussion indicated several things. While Hispanism—for better and for worse, but mostly for better—is no longer what it once was, it is surely alive and well in the U.S. academy. Moreover, Hispanists are engaged in serious reflection on the ideological and institutional history of Hispanism and in rethinking its place, nature, methods, and role in the curriculum. The older Hispanism was typically Spain-centered, monolingual, restricted to one or two disciplines (literature and linguistics), and acknowledged Latin America but barely acknowledged U.S. Hispanic/Latino literature. However, the newer incarnation of Hispanism—and whether one may still properly call it that—is a much discussed question at the symposium—tends to be critical of Spain’s historical hegemony, multidisciplinary and multicultural, bilingual or even multilingual in theory and practice (acknowledging the importance of the various peninsular languages as well as the indigenous American languages displaced or affected by Castilian Spanish), and attuned to trans-Atlantic issues and relations and particularly to U.S. Latino culture and to North America, as the crucial contact zone and center of new energies and developments in the Hispanic cultures. In this respect, the symposium was a further step in the re-conceptualization of Hispanism that is going on in leading universities in the Americas and in Europe today.

The symposium began with opening remarks by Gary Wihl, the dean of humanities, and Werner Kelber, director of the Center for the Study of Cultures. These were followed by introductory remarks by Lane Kauffmann, coordinator of the Global Hispanism workshop, and Beatriz González-Stephan, the Lee Hage Jamail Chair of Latin American Literature and chief organizer of the symposium, both of Rice. The first morning session, moderated by Maarten van Delden of Rice, began with a presentation by Jorge Gracia of the State University of New York at Buffalo titled “Hispanic Identities: The Global vs. Particular Dilemma.” This was followed by “Labor of Love: Hispanism as Hispanophila,” presented by Sebastiaan Faber of Oberlin College. The second session, moderated by Kauffmann, opened with a presentation by Joan Ramon Resina of Cornell University titled “Hispanismo y Estado: Crepúsculo de las Filologías Nacionales” (“Hispanism and the State: The Twilight of National Philologies”). It concluded with a lecture by Alvaro Félix Bolaños of the University of Texas at Austin titled “Hispanism and Its Literary Icon’s Exclusions: Moors and Indigenous Peoples in Reading Don Quixote Today.”

The afternoon program consisted of two conference sessions. The first, moderated by Kate Jenckes of Rice, opened with the presentation “Contemporary Hispanism: The Place(s) of Brazil,” given by Candace Slater of the University of California at Berkeley. This was followed by a talk by José F. Aranda of Rice titled “The Places of Modernity in Mexican American Literature and Culture, 1848–1960.” The last session, moderated by Anadeli Bencomo of the University of Houston (and a Global Hispanism Workshop member), opened with a presentation by Marc Zimmerman, also of the University of Houston, titled “Latinos and Transnational Processes in the New World (Dis)order.” The sessions were capped off by a round-table discussion moderated by Beatriz González-Stephan and involving all seven presenters.

The symposium was extremely well attended, with approximately one hundred participants present throughout the day, including faculty and students of Rice and the University of Houston and many other institutions in the Houston academic community, as well as by faculty from Texas A&M University, the University of Texas at Austin, Southwestern University (Georgetown), and Texas State University (San Marcos). The conference was sponsored by the Center for the Study of Cultures, the dean of humanities, Fondren Library, the Department of Hispanic Studies of Rice University, the Department of Modern and Classical Languages of the University of Houston, the Institute of Hispanic Culture of Houston, and the Consulate of Spain.

An important collection, with essays by symposium speakers, visiting speakers hosted by the Global Hispanism Workshop, and several workshop members, will issue from this symposium. It will be co-edited by González-Stephan and Kauffmann.
Beyond Tradition and Modernity: Gender, Genre, and the Negotiation of Knowledge in Late Qing China

This conference evolved from a CSC-funded symposium in March 2003, titled “Tradition and the Challenge of Modernity: Politics, Poetics, and Gender in Late Qing China, 1840–1911.” Its papers were published one year later as a special issue of the journal, Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in Early and Imperial China (6.1, March 2004), and again as the book, Beyond Tradition and Modernity: Gender, Genre, and Cosmopolitanism in Late Qing China (Brill, 2004).

The participants of the 2003 symposium enthusiastically agreed that it would be both important and timely to hold a follow-up conference that would sharpen the focus of a number of issues discussed at the symposium while broadening the parameters of investigation both substantively and chronologically. All participants felt that while the preliminary symposium succeeded admirably in raising important questions related to China’s reform era (1890s–1910s), it also revealed how much has yet to be done in order to understand these crucial but still surprisingly understudied decades. The reform era had been represented in modern Chinese historiography as either a transitional period between the death of the traditional Confucian imperial order and the enlightened embrace of modern ideas in the New Culture Movement (c. 1915–1925) or as the first stage in a process of gradually replacing Chinese values with Western ideas. The proposed follow-up conference would therefore join the new scholarship on the reform period to dismantle these binary constructs (tradition versus modernity and China versus the West) in favor of a more nuanced approach to historical and cultural analysis.

The follow-up conference, titled “Beyond Tradition and Modernity: Gender, Genre, and the Negotiation of Knowledge in Late Qing China,” held March 4–6, 2005, was co-organized by Professors Nanxiu Qian and Richard J. Smith at Rice, and Professor Grace Fong at McGill, and it received generous funding from the National Endowment for Humanities and Rice University, specifically, the Center for the study of cultures, the office of the dean of humanities, the See Family Funds for Asian Studies, and the Program for the Study of Women and Gender. The preparation and arrangements were administrated by Sandra Gilbert, associate director of the CSC, with help from Dee Garza, coordinator of Asian Studies, and Melissa Bailar, graduate student assistant to the CSC.

Twenty-two international scholars participated in the conference. The 17 papers presented were divided into four panels:

1) Competing Visions of Womanhood
2) Re-presenting Women and Performing Gender
3) The Formation of Intellectuals: Politics, Poetics, and Knowledge
4) Producing Gender and Genres in Print Media

The conference began with enthusiastic greetings from Professor Werner Kelber, the distinguished director of the CSC, who was extremely supportive to both the 2003 symposium and this follow-up event. Professor Richard J. Smith then laid out the general historical and intellectual backdrop of China’s reform era. He also punctuated the significance of the topics to be treated in the conference. At the official reception/dinner session, President David Leebron, Provost Eugene Levy, and Dean Gary Wihl all offered insightful welcome remarks.

This conference had two special features. First, the participants brought to light new literary, artistic, and historical sources and archives. In papers based on original research, they challenged and nuanced existing views of the late Qing reforms of 1898–1911. Second, the participants focused on three important and interrelated issues that defined the important changes taking place in this era: the construction of new gender roles, the profusion of literary and artistic genres, and the negotiation of knowledge—themes that had been ignored or understudied in the existing literature. The papers provided a fresh perspective on social, intellectual, and cultural life in the late Qing period, expanding the boundaries of modern Chinese historiography by moving beyond the political, military, and economic themes that had domi-
nated scholarship on this period. They also uncovered the writings and experience of a range of individuals, making it possible to transcend the particular preoccupations of individuals such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, who had for so long stood at the center of scholarship on the reform era.

The conference further demonstrated that the standard image of the reform era as a period of anxiety and self-doubt is misleading. Western and Japanese imperialism did engender various forms of nationalism in China and did provoke the questioning of inherited values and the advocacy of China’s rapid modernization. Later interpreters of this period, however, have focused almost exclusively on the most visible political figures in assessing these processes while paying insufficient attention to broader cultural trends and contested social meanings of both nationalism and modernity. Many Chinese intellectuals—both men and women, with women often the more determined and motivated reformers—were not swept up by a hegemonic nationalist discourse as conventional accounts of the reform period often suggest, nor did they feel the need to make an either/or choice between traditional Chinese ideas and modern Western ones. Rather, they were committed to integrating ideas derived from Japanese and Western sources into their own cultural repertoire without abandoning their allegiance to inherited values. These scholars, writers, artists, and journalists were neither crippled by their Confucian past nor intimidated by newly imported concepts. They were able to creatively use China’s own historical legacy and new foreign resources to grapple with China’s changing geopolitical and cultural circumstances.

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Beyond the Clash of Civilizations:  
Missionaries, Conversion, and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire Conference

In April 2004, an innovative group of scholars gathered at Rice University for an interdisciplinary conference on the political and historical impact of religion in the Ottoman Empire. This conference was organized by Ussama Makdisi, and it was sponsored by the CSC, the Department of History, and the office of the dean of humanities.

The conference began on Friday, April 2, with opening remarks by Makdisi and Werner Kelber, both from Rice. This was followed by a panel chaired by Paula Saunders of Rice University on the topic of conversion in the early modern Ottoman Empire. It consisted of two presentations. The first, by Tijana Kristics of the University of Michigan, was titled “Trampling on the Turban: Conversion to Islam, Apostasy, and Martyrdom in Ottoman Rumeli (15th–17th centuries).” Cengiz Sisman of Harvard University then presented “Gradual Conversion vs. Mass Conversion: Emergence of Messianic Ottoman Sabbatian Community in 17th-Century Salonica.” This was followed by a panel on the topics of religious reform, inquisition, and resistance, chaired by Ilham Khuri Makdisi of Northeastern University. Akram Khater of North Carolina State University presented the paper “From Saint to Harlot: Hindiyya al-'Ujaymi, Jesuits, Gender, and Christianity in 18th-Century Bilad al-Sham.” Ray Moawad of the Université St. Josephs then spoke on “Resistance to Latin Rites and Monastic Rules in the Maronite Church between the 15th and 18th Centuries.”

The second day of the conference was occupied by three panels. The first, chaired by James Gelvin of UCLA, looked at the topic of “Debating Tolerance.” Dina Khoury of George Washington University spoke on “Debating Tolerance, Debating Conversion: Wahabis, Khalidi-Naqshbandis and the Ottoman State in Baghdad.” Next was the presentation “Competing for the souls of Aleppo: A Comparison of Catholic and Protestant Missions in the City,” given by Bruce Masters of Wesleyan University. This was followed by a panel on the topic of Protestant missionaries and modernity in the Late Ottoman Empire, chaired by Ussama Makdisi. The panel began with a presentation by Asli Gur of the University of Michigan titled “New England Gentleman of the Orient: American Higher Education and the Question of Local Agency in Constantinople in the 19th Century.” This was followed by the paper “Missionaries, Merchants, and Colonial Modernity,” presented by Leila Fawaz of Tufts University. The panel concluded with a talk by Zeynep Turkyilmaz of UCLA on the topic of “An Uneasy Encounter: Protestant and Ottoman Missionaries Among the Al-evis.” The final panel, chaired by Daniel Cohen of Rice, explored the historiography of minorities within the Ottoman Empire. Mary Wilson of the University of Massachusetts presented the paper “Not to Mention Anti-Semitism: The French in Syria 1840.” The panel concluded with a presentation titled “Minorities, Historiography and the Ottoman State,” given by Najwa Qattan of Loyola Marymount University.

Overall, the conference represented the latest scholarship on the question of missionaries and tolerance in the Ottoman empire. The conference was well-attended and attracted a considerable audience from Rice as well as from the larger Houston community.
Stancetaking in Discourse: Subjectivity in Interaction

The 10th Biennial Rice Linguistics Symposium

The 10th Biennial Rice Linguistics Symposium took place in early April 2004, organized by Robert Englebretson. This was a successful interdisciplinary, international conference in the burgeoning field of interactional linguistics and an outgrowth of a joint research project among linguistics faculty at the University of Oulu (Finland), the University of California Santa Barbara, and Rice University. Participants presented quantitative and qualitative research on the practices that speakers use to construct and maintain stance in everyday talk in interaction and in languages as diverse as conversational English, Finnish, Indonesian, and Sakapulteko Mayan.

While traditional linguistic approaches to this issue have tended to focus on 'subjectivity' in the monologic world of a single speaker, the symposium sought a richer and more unified understanding of stancetaking by integrating linguistic research with sociologically- and anthropologically oriented work. Key themes and questions addressed at the symposium included:

- How to define and operationalize the notion of 'stance', and how to more clearly operationalize that speakers/writers are "doing" stancetaking
- Resources (grammatical, lexical, prosodic, interactional, gestural, etc.) for creating, co-constructing, and maintaining stance
- The consequences of stancetaking for language form, function, and interaction, i.e., the ways in which grammar, lexis, turn-taking, and gesture/gaze reflect the ecological pressures brought to bear by the needs of language users to take stances
- The cultural contingencies of stancetaking, and the deployment of stancetaking in the creation and maintenance of cultural constructs

In addition to the invited participants from the U.S., the U.K., and Finland, faculty and students from Rice, UT--Austin, and the University of Houston also attended sessions. The symposium was sponsored by the Stance Research Group at the University of Oulu, the Rice Department of Linguistics, and the CSC. A volume of papers based on the symposium talks is anticipated for publication in 2005.

Joanne Scheibman (Old Dominion University) presented research on 'generalizations' in American English conversation, as observed in a corpus of naturally-occurring spontaneous discourse. Scheibman demonstrated that 'generalization' is both a subjective and intersubjective phenomenon—subjective in that these statements are expressive of the individual who utters them, and intersubjective in that they are designed to align with other interlocutors based on shared cultural beliefs and attitudes.

Tiina Keisanen (University of Oulu) described the action sequences and prosodic features of negative polar questions in a corpus of American English conversation. Because of the presuppositions embodied in these types of utterances, Keisanen argued that speakers use them as an intersubjective resource to co-construct an interlocutor's stance.

Susan Hunston (University of Birmingham, U.K.) discussed crucial methodological issues in using large electronic corpora for investigating stance. She demonstrated the advantages and drawbacks in both quantitative and qualitative approaches and advocated an approach to stance based on 'grammar patterns,' or the recognition and identification of co-occurring units in texts.

Pentti Haddington (University of Oulu) examined a corpus of televised political interviews to explore the relationship between interviewers’ and interviewees’ stances. He observed that, by means of interactional resources of positioning an alignment, the interviewer dialogically constrains and shapes the stances of the interviewee.

Geoffrey Raymond (UC–Santa Barbara) presented research co-authored with John Heritage (UCLA) on assessments in American English. Working within a Conversation Analytic framework, he explored the differential between interlocutors in initiating and responding to assessment sequences. He demonstrated how the rights and epistemic authority to initiate or maintain these sequences are distributed differently among interlocutors and how this is indexed within talk itself.

Robert Englebretson (Rice University) examined several aspects of the grammar of colloquial Indonesian and demonstrated how general grammatical resources are used for specific purposes in stancetaking. Through a close analysis of extracts from a corpus of colloquial Indonesian conversation, he discussed the multiple first-person referential forms available to Indonesian speakers, the verbal diathesis system, and the epistemic -nya suffix. In each case, Englebretson explored the interrelatedness among the functional and communicative needs of speakers to take stances, how these specific forms are grammatical resources which are available for doing so, and the interactional environment in which this is manifest.

Robin Shoaps (University of Massachusetts at Amherst) discussed stancetaking in Sakapulteko Mayan from an ethnopragmatic perspective. She examined instances where speakers reported the stances of others and illustrated how this activity is uniquely situated in Zakapultek culture.

Barbara Johnstone (Carnegie Mellon University) presented a sociolingustic study of aspects of the phonology of “Pittsburghese.” She explored the complex relationships between local-sounding speech and identity, arguing that different kinds of stance (and different phonological features) are indexed by norms of local speech itself and by discourse about local speech. Johnstone demonstrated that local-sounding speech functions quite differently in stancetaking, depending on who the speakers are and what they are doing.

John W. Du Bois (UC–Santa Bar-
Gender, History, and Memory Conference of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association

The 2004 annual conference and business meeting of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association (MALCA) took place at Rice University on April 22–25, and it focused on questions of “Gender, History, and Memory.” More than 60 experts in Austrian Studies from Europe, Canada, and the U.S. participated in the conference, which turned out to be an exciting and energizing intellectual event. The conference site and the topic are chosen by the MALCA executive committee based on proposals submitted by members of the association. It is in the interest of the organization to offer broad and rather general themes for its annual gatherings so that a variety of scholars in German and Austrian studies can contribute their research findings. Furthermore, a wide scope in perspectives allows MALCA steadily to expand its membership and promote professional networking that also benefits (joint) projects in research and teaching.

The participants of this year’s MALCA conference sought to help correct a blind spot in the fascinating field of Gedächtnisforschung (Aleida Assmann, Jan Assmann, Anselm Haverkamp, Ruth Wodak, et al.), which has largely overlooked the question of gendered subjectivity and gender-related forms of memory. The complex nexus between history, memory, and the imagination (artistic work) demands multifaceted approaches. Conference participants interested in exploring various gender-related aspects of Austrian collective memory—comprising the orally transmitted experiences/events of communicative memory as well as the commonly shared, normative cultural memory—were given a series of prompting questions inviting their comments:

• In what ways do different kinds of representation, such as literary texts, visual texts, the press, or historiography, contribute to the construction of cultural memory in Austria? What kinds of Geschichte(n) (history/stories) and counter-narratives have been produced that have shaped cultural memory in modern Austria?
• What lines of tradition have emerged from the artistic contributions to cultural memory in Austria? What roles have artists/intellectuals played in transforming actualized cultural memory by reaching into unformed “archives of memory?”
• What convergences and divergences can we discover in the forms of historical and cultural memory—and in their discursive representations? What are the possible reasons for those developments? What kinds of patterns can we discern when looking at Austrian culture over a longer period of time?
• What difference does a gender perspective make to inquiries into cultural memory? Have alternative memories in Austria emerged from marginalized social groups? What kinds of Erinnerungsgemeinschaften (communities of memory) need to exist in order to transform the status quo of cultural memory? Can one distinguish “gendered” memories?

Given the fact that an examination of these provocative issues necessitates practitioners of literary and cultural studies to reach out to disciplines beyond the humanities (e.g., sociology, psychology, discourse studies, applied linguistics), it was important to identify a keynote speaker who would be able to set the theoretical stage for our inquiry. Dr. Doris Goedl from the University of Salzburg and long-term research fellow of the university’s Institut für Alltagskultur and Institut für Sozialforschung und Entwicklung opened the MALCA conference with her reflections on the interdependence between individual and collective memory. Her empirical research con-
nected with women victims of the war in the former Yugoslavia provided her with examples illustrating the tension-ridden relation between personal representations of truth (of the past) and collective renditions thereof. In her approach—informed by psychoanalysis—Goedl discussed remembering as a gender-specific process of Vergegenwärtigung, which is significantly shaped by discontinuities and ruptures. Examining the particular intersections between (hi)stories of memory, Goedl took a close look at the special function of communication. Her presentation provoked lots of questions and contributed to an atmosphere of lively dialogue characterizing the entire conference.

If the keynote address was stimulating and thought provoking, conference attendees were also excited about this year's Austrian guests from the art scene. Thanks to the generous support of the Austrian government (courtesy of the Austrian Cultural Forum), Harald Friedl, filmmaker and writer, as well as Doron Rabinovici, writer, historian, and public intellectual, presented their work on two evenings. Participants thoroughly enjoyed Rabinovici's delightful way of reading from his creative (and always humorous) prose and Friedl's fascinating film-image of Austria, Land ohne Eigenschaften, seen through contemporary writers' lenses. Both events engaged the listeners and viewers in passionate debates about the process of constructing Austrian cultural memory.

The conference presentations—stretching from Friday morning to Sunday noon—encompassed theoretical investigations into the impact of collectively shared (mythologized) historical figures on literary memory representations and explorations of cultural memory and its influence on the national identity of Austrian literature as well as analyses of the function and aesthetic utilization of memory in the works of individual writers. Discussions regularly continued into the breaks and allowed the participants, on a more personal level, to exchange views and research findings.

In addition, this year's conference also provided members with a forum to present "Best Practices in Austrian Studies." The poster presentations in this category were wide-ranging, from particularly successful ways of integrating Austrian literature and intellectual history at the graduate level or exemplifications of cross-cultural learning via Austrian literature to interdisciplinary immersion courses in (and about) Vienna and effective (and Austria-related) forms of addressing cultural illiteracy in German language courses.

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Annual English Graduate Symposium

The annual English Graduate Symposium, this year titled "Locating Pop Cultures: Negotiating Place, Interrogating Class, Constructing Identity," took place on March 12–13, 2004. The call for papers—posing the questions "What constitutes popular culture," and "Who constitutes popular culture?—stimulated scholars to consider questions of popular culture and its study and to interrogate and negotiate the boundaries of popular culture. It urged potential participants to consider the multiple meanings of the term "pop" itself—as an invocation of "popular" of course, but also as a shorthand for terms like "populations" or "populace," terms that shift the focus of cultural study onto multiple and multifaceted audiences.

The conference organizers were seeking definitions for a term more often assumed than delineated. Popular culture has worn other names, like "low" or "lowbrow," "escapist," and "mass entertainment." It has been implied to be and explicitly marked as qualitatively inferior to some other, "higher" aesthetic ideal, making the study of popular culture itself the study of common and artistically incapable people and the insurmountable forces of production and consumption. Popular culture is assumed to be Western, American, and 20th century. It is soup cans, television sitcoms, radio commercials, and casual fashion. But such assumptions neglect the history of collective enjoyment and neglect its geography. Instead, the organizers sought responses that would measure the importance of place and community in the study of popular culture—investigations that would engage the spatial aspect of cultural experience.

An impressive array of responses were received, which collectively begin to formulate a description of popular culture that is marked by interdisciplinary critical thinking, drawing research from history, religious studies, French studies, and English, among other disciplines. Popular culture thus covers an extensive historical range, from 16th-century Europe to contemporary Central America. It grasps tangible cola cans, imagines irretrievable Early Modern theatrical productions, considers cartoon icons, and rationalizes psychoanalytic religion.

The various presentations offered diverse interpretations of these central questions, from analyses of 16th-century imperial conquest to investigations of contemporary cola wars in Turkey. Overall, abstracts for 34 individual presentations and one full panel presentation were received. These included 19 from Rice's English, history, religious studies, and French departments, as well as 15 from individuals representing other graduate institutions. For the first time in symposium history, concurrent panel sessions were held in order to accommodate all of the applicants.

The actual symposium consisted of nine panels of student presentations, a plenary address by Dr.
Frederick Aldama, and a keynote presentation by visual artist Alma Lopez. Presentations began on the afternoon of Friday, March 12, and continued through the evening of the next day. Aldama, an associate professor of 20th-century literature at the University of Colorado at Boulder, has three books in print and four more in press. His published work has spanned postcolonial, postnational, Chicano/a, and Latin American literary and cultural studies. Aldama delivered a paper titled “Latino/a Popular Culture,” which drew on an impressive array of sources and sparked a lively discussion between Aldama and the audience. Lopez presented her own multimedia work as a forum for discussing the production of art and its connection to community and political activism. Aldama and Lopez attended the entire symposium, engaging with students and providing feedback on the many presentations they witnessed.

During the past three years, the symposium has grown in size and scope, attracting greater numbers of presenters and audience members, from both within and outside Rice University, and now includes increasing numbers of graduate student participants whose first language is not English. This year the symposium was sponsored by the Center for the Study of Cultures; the dean of humanities Gary Wihl; the Departments of Anthropology, English, and History; and the Program for the Study of Women and Gender. The symposium offers graduate students at Rice a forum for sharing and promoting their work, not only with each other and not only within their own home departments but, increasingly, with graduate students from other institutions and from across the humanities.

Dr. Nanxiu Qian (linguistics), edited volumes resulting from the CSC-sponsored conference Tradition and the Challenge of Modernity: Politics, Poetics, and Gender in Late Qing China (spring 2003).

Dr. Michel Achard (French studies and linguistics) and Dr. Suzanne Kemmer (linguistics), edited a work from the CSC-sponsored Language, Culture, and Mind conference (fall 2002).

public libraries, and Augustus’s own residence, served as a valuable model for expressing provincial identity precisely at the critical transition from republic to empire. She will test this hypothesis by examining six provincial terraced sanctuaries in Italy, Gaul, and Spain. Her study of these sites will draw on archaeological, epigraphic, numismatic, and literary evidence. This research will contribute to the completion of the final chapter in a book project. The earlier portion of this book argues that the architectural design and decorative program of the Palatine Complex articulated a vision of empire and Augustus’s central position within it. By identifying provincial terraced sanctuaries modeled on the Palatine Complex, Quenemoen will build on that conclusion to reveal how the monument simultaneously facilitated the creation of that empire, through both the replication of physical form and the celebration of the imperial cult.

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opment is a product of the neoliberal obsession with intellectual property. He concluded by noting that this phenomenon of cultural branding is not new but is a hyperextension of an old phenomenon, from the colonizers to the postcolonial world in which it had not previously existed.

The lectures were followed by a series of two afternoon seminars conducted by both Comaroffs. The first, “Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism,” was held March 30, and the second, “New Religious Movements in the Age of Neoliberalism,” the next day. These events were well attended by Rice faculty, undergraduates, and graduate students as well as by members of the Houston community.

Born in South Africa, the Comaroffs received their undergraduate educations at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. They pursued graduate education in Great Britain, earning doctorates at the London School of Economics, and both have taught at the University of Chicago since 1978. At Chicago, each has served as chair of the anthropology department and both have trained a generation of anthropologists. Jean has published _Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People_ (1985), and John has published (with S. A. Roberts) the book _Rules and Processes: The Cultural Logic of Dispute in an African Context_ (1981). In addition, they have co-authored several books: _Of Revelation and Revoltion, Volume I: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa_ (1991), and _Ethnography and the Historical Imagination_ (1992). _Of Revelation and Revoltion, Volume II: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier_ (1997). They also have published eleven edited or co-edited books and numerous articles.

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so doing, they often are not merely deploying cultural identity as an inherited birthright but are engaging in elective self-production. These groups have asserted their rights in legal systems, encouraged by the increasing tendency of jurisprudence to replace politics. He observed that the more indigenous groups become like corporations, the more stress is placed on blood and genetic descent rather than culture. He noted examples in which virtually extinct indigenous groups were revived through the intervention of outside groups in order to establish ventures such as casinos, often on the basis of land claims established through litigation. Once such ethno-enterprises are established, cultural identity is then later produced as a commodity for consumption. When these groups have achieved official recognition, usually via litigation, they have increasingly tended to assert their autonomy vis-à-vis the state. Ethnic corporations often use the legal systems to assert exclusive control over ideas, symbols, and agricultural products. This devel-
Workshops and Study Groups

NEWS FROM THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CULTURES AT RICE UNIVERSITY

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.

Asian Studies Workshop
Coordinator: Jeffrey J. Kripal
(Religious Studies),
Director of Asian Studies

The Asian Studies Workshop (ASW) sponsored two types of activities during the 2003–04 academic year: 1) a series of reading luncheons during which colleagues commented on the works-in-process of specific Rice faculty working in the area of Asian studies (this involved our sponsorship and administrative support but no actual funds); and 2) the hosting of a series of visiting speakers.

The Asian Studies Reading Group met several times during the fall semester. On September 17, Richard Smith shared a paper titled “Jesuit Interpretations of the Yi-jing in Historical and Comparative Perspective,” a selection from his forthcoming multivolume work on the history of the global reception of the Yi-jing. The Reading Group gathered again on October 16 to discuss Jeffrey Kripal’s paper “Being John Woodroffe: Some Mythical Reflections on the Postcolonial Study of Hindu Tantra,” a theoretical essay on the political and ethical complexities of western scholars who choose to study the esoteric traditions of Hindu tantra. This was followed by a meeting on October 30, in which Elora Shehabuddin hosted author, novelist, and activist Bapsi Sidwa at a Cohen House luncheon event with students and faculty. Sidwa then visited ASIA 211 to discuss her autobiographical novel on the Pakistan/India partition, Cracking India.

The ASW also hosted four visiting speakers during the Spring semester. On February 3, Wendy Doniger, the Mircea Eliade Distinguished Professor of the History of Religions of the University of Chicago, spoke to almost 150 people on “The Mythology of Marital Resurrection: The Falsely Accused Woman Who Returned from the Dead.” Doniger also met with 15 to 20 faculty and graduate students from which colleagues commented on the works-in-process of specific Rice faculty working in the area of Asian studies (this involved our sponsorship and administrative support but no actual funds); and 2) the hosting of a series of visiting speakers.

On February 10, Dr. William Radice from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, spoke to seven individuals on the Bengali poets Rabindranath Tagore and Michael Dutt here at Rice and delivered a formal poetry reading titled “Brahma Be My Beauty” to an enthusiastic crowd of approximately 50 people at the Rothko Chapel the following evening. On March 16, Dr. Thomas McEvilley, distinguished lecturer at Rice, delivered a one-hour synopsis of his recent magnum opus, The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies. Approximately 30 people attended this special event. Refreshments were served. On March 22, Professor Paul Courtright of Emory University spoke on “The Study of Religion in an Age of Terror,” discussing Internet harassment, book banning, and threats he suffered last fall for his psychoanalytic interpretations of the Hindu god Ganesha to an appreciative and very engaged audience of 15 to 20 faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. Finally, Professor Douglas Wile of the State University of New York was scheduled to speak on Taoist sexual yoga (12 April 2004) but had to cancel at the last minute due to schedule and flight conflicts. Fortunately, this talk was rescheduled for the fall 2004 semester.

African Studies Workshop
Coordinator: E. S. Atieno Odhiambo
(History)

The African Studies Workshop (ASW) continued its tradition of lively seminars throughout the 2003–04 academic year. The ASW provides an opportunity for Rice faculty and students to engage with an intellectual community of Africanists locally, nationally, and internationally. In conjunction with the Houston Area African Studies Group (HAASG), the African Studies Workshop sustains an ongoing dialogue with Africanist scholars and students across a broad range of Houston and Texas institutions of higher learning including Rice, the University of Houston, Texas Southern University, UT Medical Center at Galveston, Texas A&M, UT Health Sciences Center, and Texas Tech. The ASW and HAASG present recent research and work in progress on Africa that challenges knowledge on and about Africa in the past and present and in future conjectures. This past year, the ASW has had a particular focus on interrogating the production of scientific knowledge in and about Africa. All these activities...
combine to generate what is possibly the most interinstitutionally vibrant African studies seminar series in the U.S., and promotes Rice’s reputation in Africa and elsewhere as a leading center for African Studies in this country.

The ASW seminars presented a wide-range of current research on Africa. The focus on the production of science and technology was explored by a presentation on African scientists in Africa and the Americas (Ojwang’) and with a discussion on the digital divide in Africa (Tenede). The limits of African history and biography were explored through the life experiences of an indigenous African woman who traveled to Europe during the era of slavery (Scully). The politics of indigeneity in post-apartheid South Africa (Biesele) also addressed issues of identity and authority in Africa. A presentation on the concept of juok explored the production of indigenous knowledge among the Kenya Luo (Masolo).

During the past year, the ASW brought a broad range of visitors to campus. In the fall 2003 semester, two speakers were invited. In September, Joshua Ojwang’, of Zymex Inc., spoke on “An African Scientist: Challenges and Opportunities.” This was followed in October by a presentation given by D. A. Masolo of the University of Kentucky on the topic of “The Concept of juok Among the Kenya Luo.” There were three speakers during the spring 2004 semester. In January, Leonard Tenede, of Kellogg, Brown and Root, gave a presentation titled “Africa and the Digital Divide.” During February, ASW scheduled a lecture on “Sarah Baartman and the Boundaries of African History,” given by Pamela Scully of Denison University. Lastly, in April Megan Biesele, the coordinator of the Kalahari Peoples Fund, spoke on “San Identity Politics in Southern Africa: Interactions of Peoples’ Organizations and NGOs.”

2004–05 Workshop and Study Group Coordinators

Back Row, from left to right: Steven Crowell (history of philosophy), Lane Kauffmann (global Hispanism), Gregory Kaplan (Judaic studies). Front Row, from left to right: Steve Lewis (Asian studies), Liz Dietz (Early Modern Reading Group), Hannah Landecker and Christopher Kelty (Cultural Studies of Science and Technology), Helena Michie (Feminist Reading Group).


The CSC mourns the death of Elizabeth Dietz, who served as coordinator of the CSC Early Modern Reading Group.
The meetings of the Concepts and Categories Workshop (CC) consist of preparatory discussions before a visit during which they discuss current research by the visitor. During the visit, we have an intensive discussion with the core members of the workshop and other interested parties and a public lecture of more general interest. The core members of the workshop, in addition to Richard Grandy, are Eric Margolis and John O’Neal (an advanced graduate student) from philosophy, David Schneider (psychology), Ann Jacobson (engineering and philosophy), University of Houston), and Jim Garson (philosophy, University of Houston). Others always are invited and attend in varying numbers depending on the specific topic.

Last spring (2003), CC had a visit by Professor Claudia Uller from the Institute for Cognitive Science at the University of Louisiana–Lafayette. Her title was “Number and Language: Developmental, Evolutionary and Neurological Evidence for Two Independent Systems of Knowledge.” She also met with the workshop for an extended discussion of her current and recent work which includes the study of cognitive systems for number in infants, nonhuman primates, and nonprimate species. The focus of her research is on how the cognitive system that processes number concepts is related to other cognitive systems, such as that for language.

The fall visitor (November 21, 2003) was Professor Lawrence Hirschfeld, who is co-director of the Culture and Cognition Program at Michigan. His research interests are primarily in the border area where anthropology and psychology overlap, and they include cognitive development, cultural psychology, social cognition, and the anthropology and history of childhood. He is best known for his monograph Race in the Making: Cognition, Culture, and the Child’s Construction of Human Kinds (MIT, 1996). Among other topics, he explores the extent to which children have an innate theory of society that includes a strong tendency to form stereotypes. Although the particular contents of stereotyping vary greatly from society to society, the existence of stereotypes seems to be culturally universal. His lecture, “Does the Autistic Child Have a Theory of Society?” was attended by about 70 people, including a large number of students and non-Rice participants from the medical center. On the day prior to the lecture, he met with the members of the workshop and discussed his current research. He also met with various members of the philosophy and psychology departments and with Rick Wilson of political science.

The CC intends that these visits contribute to the general awareness of current research on concepts and categories on campus and that the workshop discussions contribute to the ongoing research of workshop members. The topics span philosophy and psychology in a way that is not addressed in either department. Margolis and Grandy are both working on issues about the development of number concepts, and Schneider just completed a monumental book on stereotyping.

In 2003–04 the Workshop for the Cultural Studies of Science and Technology (CSST) ran a miniseries on biology in contemporary culture, focusing on two highly political instances of biological science: biodefense research and pharmaceutical advertising. On February 23, 2004, Dr. Nicholas B. King, presently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Michigan, gave a presentation titled “Biodefense: History, Politics Ethics.” On March 22, 2004, Dr. Joseph Dumit, an anthropologist of science from MIT, spoke on the topic of “Managing Mind and Mood through Facts and Pharmaceuticals.” Both speakers are dynamic scholars beginning new research projects in these areas and gave excellent talks. Both events were well attended, in part because the graduate seminar Anthropology 455/655 Introduction to Science and Technology Studies came as part of their class activities. Also in attendance were members of the Rice Association for Biologically Inclined Students (RABIES, as they call themselves), who have in the past asked Hannah Landecker to speak to them and expressed interest in being involved in the workshop’s activities. Both speakers spent time talking with interested faculty and students during their visits.

With funding from the Computing and Information Technology Institute and the Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology, the CSST has also been conducting research over the past year. They have been interviewing Rice University scientists in information technology and nanotechnology about the historical, political, social, and ethical features of scientific activity. Aided by a group of anthropology graduate students and one interested undergraduate history major, they have been developing a technique called iterative interviewing, in which a series of fully transcribed interviews serve as a concrete basis for the conversation across the respective disciplines of anthropology, philosophy, and computer science, chemistry, or engineering. This technique has thus far proved highly successful in breaking down some of the usual incommensurability that arises when putting scientists and humanists in a room together. It also has proved to be a very useful pedagogical stage for teaching graduate students to wade into what seems at the outset to be frighteningly technical literature, and come out confident that they can grasp the central philosophical, historical, or social questions raised by these scientific activities. Their first workshop resulting from this research was held on May 14–15, 2004, and involved three Rice computer scientists (Peter Druschel, Moshe Vardi, Dan Wallach), three outside anthropologists/historians of science (Michael Fischer, MIT; Geoff Bowker, UCSD; Biella Coleman, Chicago), and the CSST research group.

Anthropology graduate student Anthony Potocznik presented pre-
Dialogue was lively and well attended, raising a number of questions regarding the relationship between 9/11 and the lives of women in Afghanistan.

The spring semester was devoted to exploring this question more deeply by looking at the effects of U.S. actions after September 11 on the lives of Afghan women. While the plight of Afghan women received extensive media coverage following the events of September 11, the topic has received less attention since that time. In addition, with the world’s attention turned toward the unfolding events in Iraq, the question of the status of women in Afghanistan has been all but forgotten. In that context, FRG decided to devote the spring semester to exploring this neglected topic.

In addition to our normal CSC funding, FRG secured additional funding from the CSC as well as funding from the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University in order to make this event possible. The result was two-day symposium titled “Afghan Women After 9/11,” held on March 18–19, 2003. The symposium featured speakers and the screening of a film-in-progress. The first presentation on March 18 featured Professor Anne Brodsky, an assistant professor of psychology and women’s studies at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, who has done extensive work with RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan, and has recently published a book documenting their struggle: With All Our Strength: The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan. Brodsky spoke and gave a PowerPoint presentation in the Kyle Morrow Room on the topic “An Incomplete Liberation: RAWA, Afghan Women, and the Continued Need for Resistance.” The presentation was attended by 30 to 40 people, and was followed by a reception.

The second guest, Meena Nanji, is an independent documentary film maker based in Los Angeles and New Delhi who is completing a film about Afghan women refugees living in Pakistan. The film, titled View from a Grain of Sand, was screened on March 19 at the Baker Institute. About 40 people attended the screening, which also included comments by the film director.

The third speaker, Sonali Kolhatkar, is a radio host for Pacifica station KPFK–Los Angeles, and co-Director of Afghan Women’s Mission. She has traveled to Afghanistan both before and after 9/11 and extensively researched the lives of Afghan women in relation to U.S. foreign policy. She spoke on March 19 at the Baker Institute on her view of the current situation of Afghan women. About 40 to 50 people attended her lecture. The presentations by Nanji and Kolhatkar were followed by a reception hosted by the Baker Institute.
The purpose of the Global Hispanism Workshop (GHW, approved in May 2003) is to provide an interdisciplinary forum for scholars at Rice and in the local academic community to explore the complex historical reality of the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian cultures in Europe and the Americas. GHW is pleased to report that attendance and participation in our workshop have been enthusiastic. Participants in its monthly sessions, starting in September 2004, have included: from Rice, Katharine Donato (sociology), Nancy Deffebach (Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow; CSC; Latin American art history), Fernando Casas (lecturer in humanities, Rice PhD in philosophy, interests in Latin American art and culture), Kate Jenckes (Hispanic studies), Rafael Salaberry (Hispanic studies and linguistics), Maarten van Delden (Hispanic studies), Beatriz González-Stephan (Hispanic studies), Lane Kauffmann (Hispanic studies); from the University of Houston: Marc Zimmerman, chair, modern and classical languages, Latin American and Latino studies), Anadeli Bencomo (modern and classical languages, Latin American studies), Karina Wigozki and María Teresa Vera (doctoral students in Spanish), María Elena Solíño (Spanish and gender studies), Sue Kellogg (history), Rex Koontz (art history), Andrew Gordon (anthropology); and from the Houston community, Fernando Castro (well-known Peruvian photographer and art critic). The GHW has invited interested faculty from Texas A&M University to attend in the future. Advanced graduate students from Rice and the University of Houston pursuing research in related areas have attended and participated by invitation.

The GHW devoted the academic year 2003–04 to the study of efforts by contemporary scholars to create an interdisciplinary framework in which to rethink the evolving relations among Hispanism, Latin Americanism, and Latino studies—the academic traditions corresponding to the three major historical and geographic instances of Hispanic culture. Readings have included substantive articles by leading contemporary scholars from Europe, Latin America, and the United States, drawn from special issues and collections devoted to this topic of burgeoning interest. The focus this year stems from members’ interests and from a panel on “Pan-Hispanism Revisited: Transatlantic Identity Formation (1940–2000)” organized by van Delden—with papers by van Delden and Kauffmann among others, and attendance by several others who subsequently joined the workshop—held at the Latin American Studies Association meeting in Dallas in March 2003.

On February 20, the GHW hosted a successful lecture and workshop session by Professor Sebastián Faber (Oberlin College), who spoke on the topic of “Scholars Take Sides: The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on British and American Hispanism.” Our other major visitor, John Beverley (University of Pittsburgh), lectured at Rice and led a Global Hispanism Workshop session on April 23. Both visitors have published important works on the relations between peninsular and Latin American studies and on the prospects of interdisciplinary Hispanism. Many of our students attend these lectures. It is worth mentioning that Beverley’s lecture is part of a two-lecture series called “Towards a New Latin Americanism,” co-hosted by the University of Houston’s Department of Modern and Classical Languages. Beverley delivered the first of these two lectures, titled “In the Wake of Empire: Hardt and Negri, Alberto Moreiras’s The Exhaustion of Difference, and Gayatri Spivak’s Death of a Discipline and gave a workshop to the Latin American Studies Faculty Interest Group at the University of Houston on Thursday, April 22. On Friday April 23, he lectured at Rice on the topic of “Latin Americanism after 9/11: The Question of the Nation (A Dialogue with Samuel Huntington).” This lecture was followed by a GHW session. The two-day event, jointly organized by faculty at both institutions who are members of the GHW—including Marc Zimmerman, chair of modern and classical languages at the University of Houston—represents the first instance of major intellectual collaboration between the two programs in recent decades, if not ever.

The historical and theoretical perspectives opened up by the GHW already are enriching the scholarly projects and courses of individual faculty members in several disciplines. They also will play a shaping role in the identity and profile of the Hispanic studies program at Rice. GHW organizers are in contact with colleagues around the country who have begun to comment on the ferment and coalescing of interest that is represented by the workshop. Through interaction and collaboration with distinguished visitors, through a planned volume which will publish invited essays along with revised versions of visitors’ lectures, and through a publication series to follow, the workshop will influence the direction of interdisciplinary Hispanic studies in the United States.
Crowell, Mark Kulstad, Rachel Zuckert, and Donald Morrison (all from philosophy); Jack Zammito (history); Gregory Kaplan (religious studies); Lane Kaufmann and Kate Jenckes (Hispanic studies); Philip Wood and Louisa Shea (French studies); Uwe Steiner, Christian Emden, and Klaus Weissenberger (German studies); and Florian Kreutzer (sociology). Several faculty members from the wider Houston community also take part. The aim of the workshop is to foster research communication and occasional collaboration across disciplines in, primarily, the humanities. Under different names (Continental Theory Workshop, The Rice Circle) the workshop has been in existence for more than 20 years, and at one time or another several different research foci have constituted its core. The impact of the workshop can be traced in the publications of its members, though I will not try to do that in this report.

In fall 2003, the workshop focused on the concept of the infinite and the history of mathematics. Initial reading was Counet’s *Mathematiques et dialectique chez Nicolas de Cuse*, followed by Cusa’s *de docta ignorantia*. Our first visitor was Professor Burt Hopkins (professor of philosophy, Seattle University), who talked on “Husserl, Klein, and the Origins of Mathematical Formalism” on December 4. In addition, the workshop co-sponsored the Walter Benjamin Lecture Series (organizer: Uwe Steiner), so we also devoted discussion to Benjamin’s “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia” in preparation for a visit by Irving Wohlfahrt (UC-Irvine), who spoke on this text.

The spring 2004 semester opened with a reading of Warren Breckman’s article on “The Symbolic Dimension and the Politics of Young Hegelianism,” picking up on our theme, broached in the discussion of Benjamin, of the relation between politics and imagination. Professor Breckman (associate professor of history, University of Pennsylvania) visited the group on February 26, giving a talk on “Politics in a Symbolic Key: Pierre Leroux, Romantic Socialism, and the ‘Schelling Affair.’” The HPW’s next meeting was devoted to the question of the future of the humanities in the university as theorized by Jacques Derrida in his essay “The Future of the Profession, or The University without Condition (thanks to the ‘Humanities’, what Could Take Place Tomorrow.” A final meeting, on April 12, continued work on Derrida and the university with a reading of his essay “Mochlos, Or the Conflict of the Faculties.”

The Judaic Studies Workshop (JSW) serves a fledgling but aspiring concentration of faculty members and students. Internationally, Judaic Studies programs and tracks in various departments are growing strong and contributing to the humanistic studies. At Rice, the official auspice for gathering parties involved in Judaic Studies is this CSC workshop. Around this workshop, a Rice Judaic Studies cohort continues to solidify and expand. It now comprises younger and senior faculty members, including Daniel Cohen, David Cook, Eva Haverkamp, Matthias Henze, Gregory Kaplan, and Paula Sanders. In addition, several undergraduate and graduate students have committed themselves to the study of Jews and Judaism, whether as minor concentration (for the PhD) or as a track of concentration within a major (e.g., religious studies).

During the past few years, the JSW has focused its resources on a few widely attended academic events each year. Generally these events have been very well attended by a wide array of humanities faculty and students as well as by Houston community members. Of late, however, the Judaic Studies cohort has expanded and solidified enough to launch an ongoing reading group in addition to sponsoring visiting lecturers.

In academic year 2003–04, the JSW hosted three lectures. On November 17, Dr. Martin Rösel from the University of Rostock, Germany, spoke on “The First Bible of the Church: The Septuagint and Its Theology.” On February 23, Dr. Steven Nadmit, professor of philosophy and director of the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies, University of Wisconsin at Madison, spoke on “Four Myths about Spinoza.” Nearly 50 people attended, including several faculty members from a half-dozen departments. Lastly, on March 8, Dr. Alan Udoff, professor of philosophy and religious studies, St. Francis College, spoke on “‘Linger on the Threshold’: On the Origins of Jean Améry’s Auschwitz Book,” with approximately 40 people in attendance.

The JSW’s activities are indispensable to the health of Rice’s contact with the internationally vibrant interdisciplinary field of Judaic studies. This field has an impact on all of the departments in the humanities. At Rice, the field draws together a passionate constituency of faculty and graduate students from the departments of anthropology, history, languages and literatures, philosophy, and religious studies. In short, the field is a shining example of how the study of humanity can be reflected in and refracted through one particular historical and cross-cultural element of it. And the JSW is the only forum for nurturing this field at Rice.
On February 25, Jeffrey Hamburger, professor of the history of art and architecture at Harvard University, led an ad hoc seminar in discussion of his forthcoming article “The Various Writings of Humanity: A Sermon by Johannes Tauler on Hildegard of Bingen’s Liber Scivias.” Copies of the article were circulated in advance so that interested faculty and students could best prepare themselves for discussion. After opening with a brief synopsis of the material, Hamburger led students and faculty in a dialogue for the next two hours. Hamburger had made the exciting discovery that famous mystic Johannes Tauler had preached a sermon in 1339 to the convent of St. Gertrude’s in Cologne that referred to a painting in the nun’s refectory based on an image taken from Hildegard’s first theological work, Scivias. Hamburger pointed out the ways in which Tauler had reinterpreted Hildegard’s image and noted as well the significance of the sermon: it is the first record we have of the reception of the illustrations of her visions. The seminar was particularly timely in that it followed an interdisciplinary seminar on Hildegard given last fall by musicologist Honey Meconi, who organized Hamburger’s visit in conjunction with Linda Neagley. The evening was co-sponsored by the Department of Art History.

On March 11–12, Ann Marie Rasmussen, associate professor of Germanic languages and literature at Duke University, visited campus for a lecture and a reading. The lecture on March 11 concerned “Comic Confessions in Late Medieval German Literature,” a series of (usually anonymous) texts that situated often bawdy dialogues or stories within the ritual of confession. Working with both visual images of confession and the texts themselves, Rasmussen introduced the audience to a hitherto unstudied genre and generated much conversation on the nature of confession in the 15th century as well. The following day, Rasmussen and Rice faculty member Sarah Westphal-Wihl, organizer of Rasmussen’s visit, read lively excerpts from translations of these texts, generating both laughter and discussion.

The final component in the medieval Germany series was a lecture on March 26 co-sponsored by the Department of History and organized by medieval studies faculty member Eva Haverkamp. Israel J. Yuval, professor of Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and currently at Princeton University, spoke on the most famous prayer for Rosh Hashanah, the “Unetane Tokef.” Titled “From Metaphysical Holiness to Martyrological Sacredness: The Story and History of ‘Unetane Tokef,’” the lecture traced the prayer from its origins in the first centuries CE to the Middle Ages, when it became part of the Ashkenazi prayer book accompanied by a martyrological narrative linked to R. Amnon of Mainz. Yuval discussed the transformation of the original meaning of the prayer in response to the persecution of Jews in Germany as a result of the Crusades.
In 2003–04, the Nineteenth-Century Enquiry Workshop (NICE) was led by Thad Logan, Department of English. Members included Helena Michie, Robert L. Patten, Alan Grob, Martin Wiener, Deborah Harter, Thad Logan, Caroline Levander, Scott Derrick, Logan Browning, Janice Hewitt, and three members of the University of Houston faculty: Karen Fang, Natalie Houston, and Lynn Voskuil. NICE’s goals have been, and continue to be, threefold: 1) to meet approximately three times a semester for the purpose of discussing current work in 19th-century studies, 2) to bring speakers to campus for public talks and informal seminars that allow faculty and students to engage with nationally and internationally recognized scholars, and 3) to foster connections across disciplinary boundaries within the humanities in order to better produce knowledge about the cultures and histories of the 19th century.

Readings for this year have centered on empire and globalization. In October, NICE revisited seminal essays on Jane Eyre in the context of Erin O’Connor’s recent polemic against postcolonial criticism (Victorian Studies, winter 2003), and debated the extent to which postcolonialist readings of British classics by Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak have usefully shaped the current field of 19th-century literary studies. December’s reading focused further on the work of Edward Said, as the workshop considered multiple legacies and revaluations. In February, NICE met to discuss two new articles by Romanticist Ian Burnham, Mellon Assistant Professor of English at Duke University, author of Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity, and editor of a recent special issue of the PMLA on globalization. The workshop’s discussions are lively, as members explore and articulate different perspectives, disciplinary methods, and positions.

In November 2003, NICE cosponsored a visit by Deborah Cohen, assistant professor of history at Brown University, including a Friday afternoon lecture on Cohen’s work on the first world war titled “The War Comes Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany 1914–1939,” which was open to the Rice community. This was followed by a Saturday meeting with NICE members to discuss her current project, Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions, 1840s to 1950s, which considers links between material culture and Victorian moral discourse.

In March 2004, NICE joined with the Victorian Studies Seminars (VSS) directed by Helena Michie to meet with Rebecca Stern and Louise Penner, both former graduate students in the English department, who now both hold assistant professorships and whose work on 19th-century culture is innovative and exciting.

Through liaison with VSS, NICE members have repeatedly stressed the importance to their own work of the readings and conversations offered by NICE. Along these lines, it has been a special pleasure to welcome colleagues from the University of Houston, all of whom are active and innovative scholars. Their commitment to NICE has been exemplary, and the NICE organizers are particularly happy to encourage an intellectual connection with their institution.

CSC Advisory Panel Members 2004–05

From left to right: Marcia Citron (Shepherd School of Music), Thomas Haskell (history), Caroline Levander (English), Kate Jenckes (Hispanic studies)
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.

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