FROM THE DIRECTOR

Institutional identity is to no small extent contingent on a spatial component, a place on which to stand and from which to operate. With the move in January 2004 to its new location on the third floor of renovated Herring Hall, the CSC has now acquired a spacious arrangement of offices and a seminar room. For the first time since its founding in 1987, the Center will be able to house its Postdoctoral Fellows, Distinguished Visiting Scholars, workshop meetings and visiting lecturers at a central place. This marks a milestone in the history of the CSC. On behalf of the CSC, I extend a warm welcome to visit our new location.

In the year 2003, the CSC sponsored, initiated, and/or administered altogether 50 academic projects/events: 24 lectures that grew out of CSC sponsored workshops; two lectures in the University lecture series Technology, Cognition and Culture (Edward Ayers, Stephen Murphy); altogether six conferences (“Rice Women’s Conference: Connections, Communications and Networking,” “Heidegger and Transcendental Philosophy,” “The Young Leibniz,” “Orality and Literacy: Memory,” “38th Annual Western Literature Conference,” “The Return of the Repressed: Working Through Freud in Religious Studies”); two symposia (“Tradition and the Challenge of Modernity: Politics, Poetics and Gender in Late Qing China, 1840-1911,” “Gender and Visual Culture”); one ad hoc lecture series (“Women and Gender in Islamic Societies”); two public lectures and five faculty seminars presented by two CSC Distinguished Visiting Scholars (Susan Handelman and Martha Nussbaum); five CSC fellowship lectures (Paula Sanders, Honey Meconi, Lynne Huffer, Susan McIntosh, Michel Achard); and a Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral fellow lecture (David Gray). In addition to these 50 events, the eleven faculty workshops involved over one hundred faculty from Rice and other institutions, providing an (inter)disciplinary infrastructure to the School of Humanities.

Without, of course, minimizing the accomplishment of any single conference or lecture, I wish to single out three events that seemed to me to have been exceptional. The Heidegger conference, initiated and hosted by Stephen Crowell, brought 14 of the foremost Heidegger scholars to Rice, and the International Leibniz conference, hosted and organized by Mark Kulstad, President of the Leibniz Society of North America, was the largest and most international Leibniz conference ever held in North America. The intellectual tribute of these two conferences was of such superlative academic quality that, in my view, any of the foremost Universities in the Western world would justly have been proud of hosting them. Publication of the papers of both conferences are pending. The lecture series on “Women and Gender in Islamic Societies” was memorable for different reasons. Initiated by the CSC Feminist Reading Group and jointly sponsored by the CSC and the Baker Institute, it brought two Islamic scholars, Professors Azizah Al-Hibri and Amina Wadud, and the founder and president of Women for Women International, Zainab Salbi, to Rice. These three speakers critically examined prevailing Western assumptions about Islam, Muslim communities, and the Qu’ran. Attracting a very large constituency of Houston’s Muslim community, Rice faculty and students, these three lectures on the status of women in the terrors of war and in the Islamic intellectual and specifically Qu’ranic traditions constituted an event of rare educational significance.

It is easy to forget that these conferences, lectures and workshops have come about largely as a result of volunteer efforts on the part of dedicated faculty. We do not have an institutional system which palpably rewards colleagues for conference and workshop work. And yet, these 50 events have substantially contributed to the intellectual vitality of the humanities and culturally oriented social sciences at Rice. Apart from their intrinsic intellectual value, they have played a major role in publicizing the Rice humanities both nationally and internationally. Not very long ago, humanities conferences of this scope and quality were unthinkable at Rice. Now they are doable. I, therefore, thank those colleagues who have carried the often arduous burden of organizing conferences and coordinating workshops, and all those hundreds of colleagues from Rice, from across the nation and from many countries who have participated in and contributed to these events.

I warmly congratulate the four Rice colleagues who have been awarded a one-semester teaching-release CSC fellowship: Deborah Harter (French), Christopher Kelty (Anthropology), George Sher (Philosophy), and Richard Smith (History). This brings the fellowships awarded by the CSC to Rice colleagues to 53, an altogether substantial contribution to humanistic research and scholarship.

I thank the coordinator of the workshop on Judaic Studies (Gregory Kaplan) for having developed a website (www.rice.edu/judaic). In listing faculty, courses, bibliographical items, research materials and links, websites can serve a useful function...
Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff CSC Distinguished Visiting Scholars

The anthropologists Jean Comaroff, the Bernard E. & 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, will visit Rice during Spring 2005.

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

Professors Comaroff are ideally representative of the type of scholars the program was designed to bring to Rice. According to CSC director Werner Kelber “Professors Jean and John Comaroff have separately and jointly produced a unique body of work situated at the intersection of the social sciences and the humanities, including anthropology, legal sociology, ethnology, religious studies, political science, and literary theory.

Trained as cultural anthropologists, they have vastly transcended their discipline and developed postcolonial, African perspectives that speak to the broader domains of human culture and consciousness.”

Born in South Africa, the Comaroffs received their undergraduate education at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. They pursued graduate education in Great Britain, earning doctorates at the London School of Economics. They have both 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. Among their vast literary output is a total of seven co-authored books, and eleven edited or co-edited books.

Jean Comaroff has conducted fieldwork in southern Africa and pursued study in colonialism, ritual power, gender, modernity, and consciousness. Her specific job of research have included the religion of Southern Tswana peoples (past and present), Christian evangelism and liberation struggles in South Africa, healing and bodily practices, global modernity and commodification. Her current research concerns issues of public order, state sovereignty and policing in postcolonial states, and the threat of disorder in postcolonial contexts.

John L. Comaroff has conducted extensive research among the Tswana peoples in South Africa focusing on politics and law, the cultural dimension of economic development, and occult-related violence. His scholarly interests include colonialism and post-colonialism, social theory, and the history of consciousness. More recently, he has written on politics, law, the historical anthropology of apartheid, neo-Protestant ethics, and millennial capitalism.


During their visit at Rice, Jean and John L. Comaroff will each deliver a public lecture, and they will jointly conduct two seminars for faculty and students. For these Rice events, they will draw on their ongoing research in 'Policing the Postcolony,' which explores current conundrums of statehood, social order, and political subjectivity under neo-liberal conditions. In doing so, they plan to focus on the transformation of South Africa as an exemplary instance which carries wider historical implications. They will address a series of related questions about the rationale for crime and punishment which has become central to popular understandings of governance and the civic good, and explore how administrators and subjects of the state construct each other in ever larger measure through significations of criminal justice. Their presentations will also offer insights into the uneasy cohabitation of democracy and deregulation, and suggest key changes in the relationship between the public and private ownership, the sacred and the secular.
CSC Fellows 2003–04

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 53. 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.

Harter’s proposed study is a book which will be entitled *Imagining Excess: Portraits of Pathology from Balzac to Kafka, Géricault to Silence of the Lambs*. In a work of comparative and interdisciplinary breadth, Harter will examine a variety of representations of excess in art and fiction from the French, American and Russian literary and artistic worlds of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her work will take as its deeper focus the ways in which art and fiction, in the particular domain of the portrait, seek (and often fail) to frame, and to contain, excess. She will also ask whether these literary and visual portraits—framed as they are within the more intuitive, less-measured domains of art, but also defying these frames that seem so conveniently to contain them—function to provide us with some sort of “cultural unconscious,” formulating and reformulating both our common, and our private, visions of ourselves in the world.

The works that Harter will discuss include Flaubert’s “Julien l’hospitalier,” Kafka’s “Josefine, die Sängerin oder das Volk der Mäuse,” Balzac’s “Chef-d’oeuvre inconnu,” Wilde’s Picture of Dorian Gray, Maupassant’s “Mme Hermet,” Carver’s “Cathedral,” along with Van Gogh’s self-portraits and other works by Melville, Géricault, Poe and Rachilde. While Deborah Harter was awarded a fellowship for the 2003-2004 academic year, she will take her leave during the 2004-2005 academic year.

CSC Fellows 2003–2004
*From left to right: Richard Smith (History), Deborah Harter (French Studies), Christopher Kelty (Anthropology), and George Sher (Philosophy)*
It has become commonplace to suggest that the internet is changing people’s lives and transforming society. While there is no shortage of speculation and anecdote on the subject, the more difficult question of how exactly to study—or to understand—a culture transformed by its technical and scientific products meets with few satisfying theoretical or methodological suggestions. Kelty will address this lacuna by suggesting that in order to understand the cultural changes wrought by these technologies, it is necessary to look closely at the very aspects most often deemed to be a-cultural, such as programming languages, technical standards, and communications protocols.

Kelty will address these issues by writing a book which will be based on research he has conducted for the past few years in Berlin, Bangalore, and across the United States. Naturally, his research will focus on the internet, which he sees, following Mary Douglas, as a set of “institutions” that are responsible for ordering cultural life through the collective representations that actors have of them. These shared representations, he will argue, are specific to language, media and communication—the institutions most central to the technology and science of the internet as a communication medium.

It is widely thought to be unfair to treat people differently, or to allocate benefits or burdens among them on the basis of factors beyond their control. This assumption underlies claims with which we are all familiar—for example, that people should not be blamed or punished for that which they cannot help, that wages should reflect effort rather than achievement, and that gross inequalities of wealth and income are acceptable when they stem from the parties’ choices but not when they are due to luck. Because these claims are generally not advanced with skeptical intent, we may infer that many of their proponents also assume that the range of acts, outcomes, and traits over which people exercise control is sufficiently large and well-defined to sustain a variety of determinate moral conclusion.

Sher will write a book that challenges both of these assumptions. Reduced to its essentials, the book’s overall thesis will be, first, that people exercise far less control over what they do and are than is commonly supposed, but, second, the conclusion is not particularly distressing because our degree of control over what we do and are has far less bearing on what desert and justice require than is commonly supposed. With regard to the first point, Sher will explore the role that the imagination, which he believes is beyond our control, plays in determining the choices we make and the ways in which we put them into action. He will also critique the Kantian principle of fairness that is central in contemporary ethical thought.

Over the past two millennia or so, the Yijing (I Ching; Classic of Changes) has been, with the notable exception of the Bible, the most widely read and most extensively commented upon book in all of world literature. Having emerged in China about three thousand years ago as an occult prognostication text, the Yijing attained the status of a “classic” in 136 B.C.E. Over the next several centuries its influence spread to other areas within the Chinese cultural orbit—notably Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Tibet. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Jesuit missionaries brought knowledge of the classic to the West, where it has found ardent admirers, ranging from Leibniz to Jung. The Yijing has been translated into dozens of European languages, and has inspired countless commentaries and other derivative works. It is presently used for insight and guidance by millions of people worldwide, not the least in the People’s Republic of China, where “Yijing Fever” gripped the nation during the 1990s, generating a vast popular literature as well as a steady stream of scholarly studies on the subject.

Having already done extensive archival research on the subject, Smith is investigating these phenomena in the book he is writing, which is tentatively titled “Ordering the World and Fathoming the Cosmos: The Yijing in Global Perspective.” Among the issues he addresses in it are: 1) the process by which the Yijing, a rather obscure divinatory text, became a “classic;” 2) the cultural significance of the Yijing; 3) its transnational spread and enduring significance; 4) the comparison of the Yijing to other “classics” as works of truly global significance.
In my thinking I have been guided by what Hegelian philosophers call the power of the negative. Hegel’s notion of the Absolute both reflects and transcends a struggle with the non-existence of all things and with the maximum disvalue that can be attributed to the world. Hegel insists that we must “look the negative in the face and tarry with it.” Still, for Hegel the consummation of history lies in a self-realization of the Absolute that entails the ultimate overcoming of the negative. By contrast, I maintain that my task, the task of a postmodern philosophy, is to articulate the play of insurmountable expressions of negation in multiple contexts.

In reflecting upon manifestations of the negative, I divide it into four interrelated moments or conceptual frameworks. The first is a moment in which the negative is actualized as nihilatory force, which attempts to eliminate through techniques of mass extermination those people to whom negative value is ascribed. In contrast, the second is an ethical moment expressed in acts of magnanimity or generosity. The negative is an annulment of the egocentricity of the self when in proximity to the other, revealed not through her properties or characteristics but rather in her irreducible exteriority. With the entry of the other into one’s existence, a moral claim is exerted upon the self, the proscription of violence. Third, negation can manifest as desire, as a yearning for that which is not yet or which simply cannot be. The elaboration of desire may be fruitful when exploring the meanings that can be attributed to transcendence, to an exteriority that resists description. Fourth, I consider negation expressed in the context of history and memory as an unbridgeable rift between the sensed immediacy of a present and a past that can never be made present. The historian is inevitably involved with the ontological and ethical implications of this negation in her effort to bring the past into the present.

In Spirit in Ashes I consider the first moment of negation, the attempt to achieve the eradication of the maximum number of persons within the briefest time frame and focus upon the social, political and cultural nexus that rendered this destruction possible. I call the various manifestations of this nihilatory process -- from artificially created famine to the wars of the twentieth century -- the death event. This globalized process is contrasted with the creation of local enclaves of destruction that are designated “death worlds.” With the development of these circumscribed enclaves, immediate qualitative experience is transformed into relations of utility and number. What presuppositions allow for the transformation of the inhabitants of concentration or slave labor camps into commodities while determining their depiction as demonic agents? With the emergence of the death event and death worlds, what had previously been an exercise in thought, the premonitory speculations of thinkers such as Nietzsche, became actual in the upheavals of the twentieth century.

In the second or ethical moment of negation my thinking has been deeply influenced by the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. For Levinas, the advent of the other who breaks into the life of the self as a demand for self-giving is a transcendental condition for ethics. For him ethics is prior to metaphysics. Here I can only note that an ethics grounded in alterity or the other provides a warranty for the integrity of one’s philosophical claims.

Remaining within the ethical mode, I argue in Saints and Postmodernism that to live a life driven by relinquishing self-interest on behalf of the other, one must look not to moral theories but rather to narratives, the hagiographic texts that embody idealizations of compassion and generosity in diverse religious traditions. Still, how can one put together the generosity spurred by the advent of the other with the postmodern notion of a self as an always already broken subject?

Rather than beginning with the self as already fragmented by critiques from Hume to Nietzsche, I consider first the descriptions of traditional saints, whose lives as depicted may be sinful but bear no scars of this primordial brokenness. How can the fissured postmodern self, a self that cannot identify with itself, allow for the self-giving of the earlier model? Can there be lives that exhibit both the magnanimity described in hagiographic accounts and the antinomian fracturing described in recent French and German thought? I find such fractured lives, the lives of saints whom I call “saints of depravity” depicted in the fictional narratives of writers as diverse as Genet, Borges and Shisaku Endo. These “saints of depravity” do not function as moral paradigms, but rather exemplify the struggle to live out the conflicting impulses of unconstrained desire and unbound altruisim.

In this context, I began to reflect upon the relation of self-mortification, as described in conventional hagiography, to contemporary accounts of the body. The traditional corporeal practices of self-discipline appear to conform to Nietzsche's depiction of ascetic piety as hatred

manifestations of the negative within the ethical mode

a reflection by edith wyschogrod

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Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows Began their Second Year

In a program designed to encourage interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching, the Center for the Study of Cultures has been fortunate to have the continued presence of the first two Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellows, both of whom are in their second year at Rice. Michael Decker (Ph.D. 2001, Oxford University, history) and Nancy Deffenbach (Ph.D. 2000, UT-Austin, art history) are continuing their two-year appointment that began in July 2002.

Dr. Michael J. Decker

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

In the Fall of 2002, Decker taught a course entitled Byzantium and the Rise of Islam, an interdisciplinary study of political and social history that included elements of economic study, readings from primary religious texts and primary historians and the use of archaeological excavations and art history to create a picture of the 6th-7th century Levant. In the Spring and Fall of 2003, Decker taught a two-part medieval survey course (about 400 - 1100 A.D.). These courses utilized a similar approach, examining primary text sources within the framework of secondary studies on political history, religion, philosophy, music, literature and architecture. In the Spring of 2004, he is teaching a course surveying ancient and classical Greek cultures entitled The Hellenistic World.

In November, 2002, Decker gave a talk for the Center for the Study of Cultures series on the wine trade in the Eastern Mediterranean in Late Antiquity. He followed up this talk with a conference on wine production and trade in Cilicia in Oxford for the ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian studies. This paper will be published in the Syriac journal ARAM early next year. During the 2003-2004 academic year, Decker will present several papers. In November, he spoke on fortified farms, towers and the landscape of rural Syria in the Byzantine period at the American Schools of Oriental Research annual meeting in Atlanta. Also in November, Decker delivered a paper entitled “Digging up one Empire while Tearing Down Another: Scholars, Missionaries and Spies in the Ottoman Middle East” at the XXVII International Colloquium of Art History in Vera Cruz, Mexico. At the Byzantine Society’s Spring Symposium (the major annual conference for Byzantinists in the British Isles) in March, Decker will speak on the late antique wine trade of Egypt. Also in March, in the ongoing conference series of Late Antiquity, Decker has been asked to deliver a paper on irrigation technology in late antique societies. The proceedings of this conference will be published by Brill.

In addition, Decker has been named Director of Survey for the Oxford Excavations at Androna, Syria for the next three years. He is planning archaeological investigations in the countryside of a Roman-Islamic village beginning with field work next May.

Decker’s project proposal “Near East Explorations: Integrating a Digital Archive of Unique Travel Narratives into Teaching and Research” was awarded an “Enriching Rice through Information Technology” Computer Information Technology Institute Grant. The project plans to collect more than 100 texts and illustrations from British travelers to the Middle East in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. These texts will be of exceptional value for students

continued on pg. 8
and scholars interested in the history of colonialism, gender studies, art history, Victorian cultural attitudes, historians of ideas, English literature and archaeology. One of the more exciting elements of the project will be a series of interactive digital maps with links to satellite photos of the regions that the travelers visited.

Since arriving at Rice University, Deffebach has presented her research in several forums. In October 2002 she gave a talk at the Center for the Study of Cultures titled “Mother of the Maize: María Izquierdo’s Images of Rural Gardens with Granaries in the Context of Postrevolutionary Mexican Art.” In spring 2003 the Museum of Fine Arts Houston invited her to speak about Frida Kahlo to the Latinas Arts Council. In September 2003 she delivered a research paper, “La historia de una fotografía” (The History of a Photograph), at an international art history conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. “La historia de una fotografía” examines the creation and afterlife of one photograph, an untitled studio portrait of Frida Kahlo. At the time of the conference the text was published in Discutir el canon: Tradiciones y valores en crisis (Buenos Aires: CAIA, 2003). An English version of the text, “The Magenta Rebozo,” will be published in The Covarrubias Circle: Nickolas Muray’s Collection of Twentieth-Century Mexican Art (Austin: University of Texas Press, in press). In February 2004 Deffebach presented a paper titled “Viernes de Dolores: Altars to the Virgin of Sorrows” at the annual meeting of the College Art Association, in Seattle.

Deffebach was awarded a Brown Teaching Grant, which provided funding so that her Latin American Art class and other undergraduate students could travel to San Antonio to see the collection of Latin American art at the San Antonio Museum of Art in fall 2003. The Brown Teaching Grant also brought Dr. Amelia Malagamba to campus to talk about Chicano art to undergraduate students in the spring of 2004.

Dr. Nancy Deffebach

Nancy Deffebach is transforming her dissertation into a book manuscript titled “Other Routes: The Art of María Izquierdo and Frida Kahlo in the Context of Postrevolutionary Mexico.” The book manuscript deals with the ways in which the two best-known Mexican women artists of the postrevolutionary period negotiated female identity in their work, especially the ways in which they resisted the construction of national identity as masculine, while affirming their profound ties to Mexican culture. Deffebach seeks to place Izquierdo’s and Kahlo’s art into the artistic, intellectual, and nationalistic discourses of postrevolutionary Mexico and to understand how the two artists created oeuvres that not only still speak to wide and diverse audiences, but were accepted and appreciated during their lives, despite their considerable deviation from postrevolutionary orthodoxy.

Photography, film, installations, and conceptual art - and discussed the art in terms of historical, political, social, and cultural developments in Latin America. The class explored issues such as the construction of national identity, the debate between national and international currents in art, the relationship between media and message, the role of public art, and the reception of Latin American art in the United States. In spring 2003 Deffebach led a seminar in Race, Class, and Gender in Mexican Art, and in spring 2004 she is teaching a lecture course in Modern Mexican Art.

Deffebach has taught the first courses in modern and contemporary Latin American art ever offered at Rice. In fall 2002 and 2003 she taught a course titled Latin American Art: Independence to the Present, which emphasized the range and diversity of Latin American art. The class studied work in a variety of media - mural painting, easel painting, architecture, prints, sculpture,
Orality and Literacy III: Memory

*Third International Conference on Orality and Literacy*

October 10–12, 2003

In October 2003, a group of thirty-nine scholars from a variety of fields in the humanities and social sciences gathered to attend the third international conference on Orality and Literacy at Rice University. In August 2001 this series of conferences was launched at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, under the topic “Orality and Literacy I: Colonialism.” The second conference was convened in October 2002 at the Free University of Brussels and titled “Orality and Literacy II: The World of the Spirits.” Following the previous two conferences, the Rice conference was focused on the topic of memory.

In the 20th century, memory has steadily emerged as a central term in cultural studies and as principal topic of research in the humanities and social sciences. In view of a veritable avalanche of books and articles on memory and remembering, mnemonics and memorial processes, memory images and memory places, the ethics of remembering and damnatio memoriae, commemoration and memory theater, one cannot escape the impression that memory has risen to the status of paradigmatic significance in the human and social sciences.

Organized by Elias Bongmba, Sandra Gilbert and Werner Kelber, the conference brought together faculty and graduate students from Africa, Europe and the United States. In keeping with the global mission of the CSC and in deference to Mnemosyne (memoria), the goddess of imagination and memory, and her all-inclusive embrace, no cultural, chronological or historical limits were imposed on the papers. A large group of papers dealt with African topics linking memory with such themes as historical time, language, healing, gender and womanhood, myth, ethics, and others. Other papers discussed Western themes reflecting on memory in relation to counter-memory, political resistance, classical memory systems, mmenotechnics, Merckbilder, Josephus’ appropriation of the past, the commemoration of Caesar, Freud’s Moses and Monotheism, Plato and the electronic media, and more. A number of papers discussed biblical topics focusing on biblical storytelling, and memory in the Jesus tradition and in the gospels of Mark and Matthew.

Presentations and discussions demonstrated multiple ways of memorial interfacing with orality and literacy. Oral cultures assign memory certain roles and functions in the context of mobilizing cognitive processes and techniques of knowledge retention. Literacy, and subsequent media reconfigure knowledge management and revise, undercut even, memory’s individual and collective arbitrations.

The conference opened with a keynote address by Jan Assmann of the University of Heidelberg titled “Cultural Memory and Cultural Texts.” This was followed over the next two days by a series of panels, featuring half-hour presentations by the thirty-nine participants, with ample time for discussion following each panel. Saturday afternoon was reserved for a presentations (with slides) jointly delivered by Mary Nooter Roberts, Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, and Allen F. Roberts, Department of World Arts and Cultures, UCLA, on “‘Between Memory and History’: Visual Hagiographies and Lieux de Memoire in Congo and Senegal.” On Sunday afternoon two final presentations were likewise addressed to the full conference: Anne C. Klein spoke on “The Land Remembers: Living Landscape and Soulful Spirits of the Tibetan Plateau,” and John M. Foley concluded the papers with a programmatic presentation on “Memory and Oral Tradition.”

The conference was brought to a stunning conclusion with dinner and a dance performance by YinMei Critchell, professor at Queens College (CUNY), whose two pieces “Asunder” and “Empty Tradition/City of Peonies” highlighted the theme of memory.

The conference was initiated by the Center for the Study of Cultures, and co-sponsored by the Office of the President, the Provost, and the Dean of Humanities.
The Return of the Repressed: Working Through Freud in Religious Studies
December 5-7, 2003

From many quarters the charge has been leveled that Freud is dead, that his original ideas have exhausted their contemporary relevance. However, Freud’s seminal contributions cannot be repressed without an illicit return. Numerous diverse approaches to religious studies have, in fact, found Freud to make an indispensable contribution. Feminist theory, biblical studies and scriptural exegesis, the critique of intercultural and interpersonal violence and reconciliation, the analysis of mysticism and esoterism, and even the philosophy of religion cannot ignore Freud without impoverishing, perhaps even endangering, their respective enterprises.

A three-day conference highlighting Sigmund Freud’s contributions for understanding religious behaviors and beliefs was convened at Rice University in December 2003. The purpose of the conference was to explain how Freud’s analytical project is effective even though he was unsuccessful in his effort to turn the art of analysis into a credible scientific theory. Freud remains a pivotal figure because his ideas have proven to be useful for clinical therapy and are also useful for exploring the dynamics of human nature and culture. Sponsored by the Department of Religious Studies, the CSC and the Dean of Humanities, the conference was co-convened by Gregory Kaplan, Jeffrey J. Kripal and William B. Parsons of the Department of Religious Studies at Rice University. It opened on the evening of December 5th with the lecture “Father Abraham and Dr. Freud” by Joseph Montville, director and founder of the Center for the Study of International Diplomacy and senior fellow for the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University.

On Saturday the 6th, there were six presentations. Michael Carroll, Professor of Sociology at the University of Western Ontario spoke of the topic of “Love the mother, hate the father: Understanding the vehement rejection of Freud among American sociologists studying religion.” Jacob Belzen, Professor of the Psychology of Religion at the University of Amsterdam, presented a talk entitled “Desiderata and possibilities for the psychological study of religion: How to enlarge the place of Freudian thought in Religious Studies?” Peter Homans, Professor Emeritus of the Psychology of Religion at the University of Chicago, spoke on “Why psychoanalysis and religious studies belong together in the same division of the university, and why no one ever puts them there.” This was followed by the talk “From Kant to Freud on Religion as Ethics” presented by James DiCenso, Associate Professor of the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. Diane Jonte-Pace, Professor of Religious Studies at Santa Clara University presented the talk “Returning to What Freud Repressed: A Methodological Inquiry into ‘Threats to Throne and Altar’.” This was followed by Rice University’s Jean-Joseph Goux, the Laurence H. Favrot Professor of French Studies, who spoke on “Freudian Unconscious and Secularization of Judaism.” The day was concluded with the talk “Loving the Neighbor-Thing: Freud with Rosenzweig,” presented by Eric Santner, the Philip and Ida Romberg Professor in Modern Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago.

On Sunday December 7th, the conference concluded with three presentations. The first was given by Loriliai Biernacki, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Colorado, whose paper was titled “To Speak Like a Woman: Feminine Language and the Gendered Implications of Mantra.” Lynne Huffer, a Professor of French Studies at Rice University, presented “What if Hagar and Sarah Were Lovers?” Lastly, Donald Capps, the William Harte Felmeth Professor of Pastoral Theology at the Princeton Theological Seminary spoke on the topic of “Male Melancholia and the Mona Lisa.” The respondents for the conference were Thomas Cole, Director of the Institute for the Medical Humanities at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, and also James W. Lomax of the Baylor College of Medicine and the Houston-Galveston Psychoanalytic Society.
Travelers in the Middle East Archive

The Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA) is an initiative being developed by Michael Decker, a CSC Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, and Paula Sanders of the History department in conjunction with Lisa Spiro, the director of the Electronic Resources Center and Lisa Sweeney, the former GIS Data Center director.

Their project, which is funded by a major Computer Information and Technology Institute innovation grant, is to develop a digital archive of Middle Eastern travel narratives published between the 18th and early 20th centuries, along with images and interactive maps.

The objectives of the archive’s creation are to enrich teaching and scholarship in two ways. The first is to provide rare resources to researchers and enable richer discovery, analysis, and commentary. The archive holds scholarly promise for such disparate areas of specialization as English literature, Women’s Studies, and Classical, Middle Eastern and Medieval archaeology, religion, and history. European women travellers created both vivid works of literature and were pioneers in the field of archaeology. They and others like them preserve a record of material culture that has largely vanished. Anthropologists will find the material, particularly that related to Bedouin culture, to be useful primary source data. Accounts of contemporary spiritual practice contained in the archive offer a resource for religious studies scholars exploring Islam, Judaism and eastern Christianity. Historians engaged in the study of European society and colonialism will find rich material on European attitudes and interaction with the native population of the early modern Middle East. The electronic archive will provide coherent access to hard-to-find materials, facilitate refined searching within and across texts, and integrate images, maps, and text, thus enabling new means of conducting scholarly inquiry. For instance, a researcher investigating Byzantine necropoli could analyze accounts in travel narratives from different periods, examine images, and map necropoli in relation to each other and to land elevations, population patterns, and water.

Secondly, the archive is intended to be a unique teaching tool. Texts and accompanying maps/illustrations will be catalogued and cross-referenced, enabling instructors and students to tailor access to the specific objectives of their individual courses. To make it easier and more effective to use the archive in teaching and learning, we will employ the tools and architecture provided by Connexions (http://cnx.rice.edu), a collaborative, community-driven approach to authoring, teaching, and learning that seeks to provide a cohesive body of high-quality educational content to anyone in the world, for free.

To facilitate enriched scholarly access to rare materials, textual material will be scanned, keyboarded, marked up in TEI Lite, and made available online in full-text. In addition, those involved with the TIMEA project are digitizing and making available images associated with the narratives and the cultural milieu that they describe, adhering to current archival standards. To take advantage of the geographical focus of the subject matter, they will explore different ways of visualizing and providing an interface to the content and concepts discussed in the texts. Historical and present day information will be prepared as layers in a Geographic Information System and hosted on the internet as dynamic maps where layers can be turned on or off by the viewer. Points of interest will have a database of information linked to them and will be hyperlinked to appropriate Web pages with additional text information. Overall, it appears that the result will be a useful tool for researchers, teachers, and students of Middle Eastern civilizations.

GIS maps enable TIMEA users to interact with and analyze spatial information dynamically, studying features such as typography and water.
Ethics and Politics of Information Technology

The three core members of the Workshop for the Cultural Study of Science and Technology—Sherri Roush (Philosophy), Hannah Landecker (Anthropology), and Christopher Kelty (Anthropology)—have used this CSC funded forum as the starting point for a larger research project, which is entitled “Ethics and Politics in Information Technology: An Ethical Division of Labor?”

This project, funded by a Computer Information and Technology Institute innovation grant, seeks to investigate the social, ethical and political dimensions of contemporary science and technology.

The project explores how new configurations of technology, science, money and labor in information technology are accompanied by shifts in the practice and meaning of authorship, ownership, accountability, informed consent, progress and profit. These in turn have a wide, complex, and poorly understood social impact. The project seeks to highlight the challenge these changes pose to decision-making, in particular the problem of expertise posed by decisions that are necessarily simultaneously social and technical. This is a challenge not just to scientists and engineers but to the social scientists and humanists who claim the social, the cultural and the ethical as their proper fields of study—fields which have themselves been defined in part by their difference from the natural sciences and engineering. What is social and ethical expertise in the context of scientific or technical decisions? They hope to explore this question via the concrete detail of case studies, which can also be used by others in teaching.

The project is being conducted by the three Rice faculty members in conjunction with four anthropology graduate students, Tish Stringer, Anthony Potoczniak, Ebru Kayaalp, and Valerie Olson, who are active participants in the research. This research group is conducting a series of interviews of scientists at Rice University, which will lead to the development of a workshop involving scientists and outside scholars from humanities and social sciences, and in the generation of case studies for use in teaching these issues. First, the group studies relevant materials published by the scientist or about his or her field of study, and they develop together a set of interview questions. The first interview is fully transcribed and circulated both to the interviewee and to the research group. A second interview is done in relation to the first. These transcripts and exchanges will form the basis of a workshop in which three outside scholars in the social sciences and humanities will be invited to enter into conversation both with our research group and with the scientists interviewed. Therefore the structure of the project is aimed at breaking down some of the incommensurability that can occur when simply sticking scientists, social scientists, and humanists in a room together. The intended result is a collaborative, iterative conversation, which will hopefully navigate around the difficulty of talking across disciplinary divides. All of this material will be worked up as teaching case studies, to be made available through Connexions (http://cnx.rice.edu), a collaborative, community-driven approach to authoring, teaching, and learning that seeks to provide a cohesive body of high-quality educational content to anyone in the world, for free. It is also available for any of the participants to use as the basis for published work. It is their hope that collaborative authorship will be one result of this model of research.
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.

2003-04 Workshop Coordinators
Top Row, from left to right: Christopher Kelty (Cultural Study of Science and Technology), Steven Crowell (History of Philosophy), Gregory Kaplan (Judaic Studies), Lynne Huffer (Feminist Reading Group), Beatriz González-Stephan (Global Hispanism), Richard E. Grandy (Concepts and Categories).
Bottom Row, from left to right: Deborah Harter (Nineteenth Century Enquiry), Kirsten Ostherr (Feminist Reading Group), Michael Maas (Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations), Werner Kelber (CSC director), Honey Meconi (Medieval Studies)
Not Pictured: Jeffrey J. Kripal (Asian Studies), E. S. Atieno Odhiambo (African Studies)
History, Hampton University. This was followed by a lecture delivered by Dr. Norma Kriger, a Visiting Professor of International Studies at Princeton University entitled “The Drama of Zimbabwe’s Veterans in Three Acts.” She discussed how the demand for pensions by Zimbabwean liberation army veterans brings to the fore issues of the relationship between citizens and the state in post-colonial Africa. A third presentation was planned for April 2003, by Dr. Nehemiah Levtzion, a professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, but it was cancelled due to ill-health.

ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATIONS (AMC)
Coordinator: Michael Maas (History)

During the 2002-03 academic year the Ancient and Medieval Studies workshop, with the assistance of the CSC, was able to sponsor or co-sponsor six interesting and engaging public lectures. It was a lively year that provided much food for thought and subsequent discussion. The fall semester opened with a presentation in September 2002 by Dr. Jerome Bons of Utrecht University, who spoke on “Do Not Let Isocrates Speak: ‘Reputable Opinion’ in Isocrates and Aristotle’s Rhetoric.” In October, Dr. Gregory Nagy of Harvard University spoke on the “Lives of Homer.” The semester concluded with a talk by Dr. Scott McGill of Rice University in December, entitled “Other Aeneids: Rewriting Passages of Virgilian Epic in Antiquity.”

The first lecture of the Spring semester took place in January 2003. Dr. David Cook, of Rice University, spoke on the topic “Apocalyptic in Medina in the 7th Century.” This talk was especially important for AMC because it drew the Islamic world into the AMC discussion. In February Dr. Ellen Oliensis, of the Department of Classics at the University of California, Berkeley, spoke on “What Scylla Wants: Freudian Questions in Ovid’s Metamorphoses.” Also in February Dr. Jean Clottes, an eminent French prehistorian, gave the second annual luncheon talk for AMC faculty and students. Clottes discussed his work at Chauvet Cave, in France, a critically important site for prehistoric art and religious thought. His presentation raised analytical and interpretive issues that he connected to the present day. Discussion following the presentation was extremely wide-ranging and insightful. That evening, Clottes gave a lecture at the Houston Science Museum, that was attended by several Rice faculty and students. The opportunity to meet Dr. Clottes was quite important for AMC faculty as we attempt to trace links beyond the conventional presentation of the classical world.

ASIAN STUDIES WORKSHOP
Coordinator: Jeffrey J. Kripal (Religious Studies)

The activities that were directly sponsored or funded by the Asian Studies Workshop during the 2002-03 period were primarily of two types: (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 planning but no actual funds); and (2) the hosting of a series of visiting speakers.

Asian Studies Reading Group met for a total of six times. In September 2002, it met for a discussion of Dr. Suchan Chae’s “Interim Development Assistance for North Korea.” In October, Dr. Rina Williams’ “The Reform of Muslim Personal Law: fragmentation, interference, and conflict, 1985-1986” was discussed. In December, the group convened for a discussion of Dr. Steve Lewis’ “Entrepreneurial Networks as State Builders in China’s Transition” attended by 6 people. In January 2003, Dr. David Gray’s “Disclosing the Empty Secret: Textuality and Embodiment in the Cakrasamvara Tantra” was considered by the group. This was followed in March by Dr. Sarah Thal’s “Of Gods and Politics (ca. 1234-1675).” Last but certainly not least, the group took up Dr. Anne Klein’s paper, “Unbounded Wholeness: Bon Dzogchen and the Logic of the Nonconceptual.”

The Asian Studies Workshop sponsored four lectures, beginning in February 2003, when Dr. John Stratton Hawley of Barnard College, Columbia University, spoke to a crowd of approximately 20 faculty and students on “Sur is the Sun: Why Surdas is North India’s Most Celebrated Krishna Poet.” In March, Kerry Ross, a Ph.D. candidate in Japanese history at Columbia University who is finishing her dissertation on Japanese photography in the 1920s and 1930s visited Rice. In conjunction with the Museum of Fine Arts Houston’s groundbreaking exhibition on the history of Japanese
to the visit. In course evaluations, many students reported this as one of the best features of the course because they had the opportunity to interact with one of the authors they had read.

Because of other commitments by Workshop members, there was no feasible date for a spring talk before April, but the worship did schedule a visit in April 2003 by Professor Claudia Uller from the Institute for Cognitive Science at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette for Friday April 18. Her title is “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, non-human primates and non-primate 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 Workshop had a moderately active year in 2002-03. Its main activity for the fall was a visit by Susan Gelman of the Psychology Department at the University of Michigan. Her public lecture concerned “What’s essential in children’s concepts?” and was attended by approximately 50 people. She presented evidence from various experimental approaches that children have an innate tendency to organize their understanding of concepts around “essences”—hidden explanatory mechanisms. In addition to discussing the evidence for this tendency in children (and adults) across cultures, she analyzed the advantages of this process in facilitating learning, and the disadvantage of the process in that it underlies social stereotyping. On the prior day, her met with the workshop group to discuss her forthcoming book on essentialism in the study of cognitive systems for number in infants, non-human primates and non-primate 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 Feminist Reading Group’s main event for the 2002-03 academic year was its Spring Colloquium on “Gender and Visual Culture,” which took place on April 10th and 11th, 2003. Paul Morrison, Professor of English at Brandeis University, led off the Colloquium with a talk entitled “We Had Faces: The Close-up and Norma Desmond in Sunset Boulevard.” The next day, Kirsten Ostherr, Assistant Professor of English at Rice, presented a talk entitled “Representing Contamination.” These talks on the cinematic representation of faces as the object of the gaze and the representation of contamination in both Hollywood films and World Health films, respectively, spoke to each other in provocative ways. Issues of how gender and sexuality inflect the visual representation of threats to and/or the power of the body at historically specific moments were at the heart of these talks, both of which generated long and lively discussion periods. The Colloquium was attended by over forty people, total, including faculty and graduate students from such departments as English, History, French Studies, Anthropology.

During the Fall semester, the FRG met to discuss two essays on gender and visual culture, this year’s topic. We read excerpts from Laura Wexler’s Pregnancy Icons and “Film and the Digital in Visual Studies: Film Studies in the Era of Convergence,” by Lisa Cartwright. We also co-sponsored presentations by Professor Tessa Lu and Professor Sharon Hays. The FRG also made a contribution to the Islamic Women’s series, coordinated by Elora Shehabuddin.
we co-sponsored with Classics. Discussions were devoted to “Écriture, prose, et les débuts de la philosophie grecque” (Andre Laks), “Writing Philosophy: Prose and Poetry from Thales to Plato” (Charles Kahn), and “Plato, Isocrates, and the Property of Philosophy” (Andrea Nitengale). Next, picking up our theme from last year (the historiography of the history of philosophy) and tying in to the International Herder Conference held at Rice in the Fall, we read texts on the philosophy of history by Johann Gottfried von Herder. After the break we turned our attention to Heidegger in preparation for the conference on “Heidegger and Transcendental Philosophy,” of which we were co-sponsors. These texts, having mainly to do with Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant, were drawn from two sources: Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics (1929) and Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason (1927). Finally, as co-sponsors of the International Conference on the Young Leibniz we examined texts surrounding the issue of the relation of the young Leibniz to the philosophy of Spinoza. These reading projects were completed by the middle of March, when, in the face of heavy involvement by our members in the two Spring conferences, we ran out of time to schedule meetings. The Workshop remains committed to working carefully through important texts – ancient, modern, and contemporary – having to do with problems arising at the interface of philosophy and history: problems of culture, representation, language, and politics. Our agenda is flexible and is largely determined by the research interests of those who participate. The group is open to all who are interested in contributing to the discussion.

The highlight of Inquiries’ activities during the 2002-03 year was a lecture in April 2003 by Dr. Carolyn Dean of the History Department of Brown University, who spoke on the controversy surrounding allegations that Adolf Hitler was gay. Entitled “A Gay Hitler? Why Does Anyone Care?”, Dean’s lecture reviewed the history of these allegations, which initially arose during the Second World War as part of a US military psychological assessment of Hitler, and which—despite the paucity of evidence to support them—have continued to the present day, as witnessed by Macht’s recent book, The Hidden Hitler. Most historians who advance such claims assert that Hitler’s pathology and fascism in general are the consequence of “repressed homosexuality.” Paradoxically, such purported explanations of fascism are all the more powerful insofar as they are vacuous, Dean argued, relying for their efficacy upon the implied connection between (homo)sexual and political “perversion.” Dean’s lecture was attended by a record audience of about 40 people (standing room only).

The coordinators of Inquiries have decided not to continue the workshop next year. The reason for this decision is the fact that queer theory has become increasingly mainstream in many disciplines. Inquires has played a part in the success of queer theory within the fields of literary and cultural studies at Rice. Since its inception in 1997, Inquiries has sponsored two conferences (“Queering the Past and Present” and “Queer Tourism”), brought numerous speakers to campus, and held many discussions on issues related to the study of sexuality and queer theory. It has supported research in queer theory by faculty members and graduate students. In all, the group has deepened the intellectual exploration of this topic on the Rice campus.

Over the 2003-03 academic year the Judaic Studies Workshop of the Center for the Study of Cultures sponsored four events on the Rice campus: three public lectures and a fourth planned public lecture, one faculty-graduate student colloquium and a web-site. The first lecture enti-
Without a Clear Beat,” was given by Dr. Edwin Seroussi, Emmanuel Alexandre Professor Musicology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The 2002-03 Bunny and Leo Horvitz Scholar-in-residence at the Jewish Community Center of Houston. Professor Seroussi opened his talk with a recorded performance of a liturgical setting from mid-twentieth century Morocco. Professor Seroussi used this remarkable example to explain how identities are formed through the very form of music. In the alternation of fixed melodic phrases and fluid spontaneous ‘mumblings’ this musical citation integrates multiple sources of identity. This specific case shows instances of cultural translation from the popular to the liturgical and from the European to the North African. Fifteen people were in attendance.

The JS workshop concluded its activities by launching two new initiatives whose aim is to coordinate more effectively the resources in Judaic Studies at Rice University. The first of these initiatives is a web-site for Rice Judaic Studies. This tool will serve numerous functions. It will archive past activities and events sponsored by the Workshop. It will announce forthcoming activities and events. And it will list various resources for Judaic Studies including affiliated faculty pages, course offerings, and additional links to related sites both on and off campus. This project costs little money and promises to have a great impact. The second of these initiatives is a regular faculty-graduate student colloquium. We expect that this colloquium shall convene at least once a month. Faculty member or graduate student presentations will be arranged with the aim of stimulating discussion about issues of common interest. Dr. Eva Haverkamp of Rice University, entitled “The Relationship among the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles a Historical Source,” presented a paper at this colloquium. Dr. Haverkamp identified the 12th century as a time of collective memory. This research, undertaken together with Charles T. Abbot, will be published in Medieval Christian and Jewish Literatures: A Symposium in Honor of Richard Wadsworth.

In the Spring 2003 semester, the MSW sponsored and co-sponsored five lectures, all of which took place in April. Nanxiu Qian, an associate professor of Chinese Literature and Linguistics at Rice University, lectured on recent work with “Imitation as Interpretation: The Shishuo Tradition and the Theophrastan Character-Writing.” She sought to articulate the differences between the eastern and western traditions of character writing literature. David Zachariah Flanagan, a Ph.D. candidate in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, presented an aspect of his dissertation research in his “Gathering Around the Word: The Biblical Roots of Conciliarism in Jean Gerson.” In a paper co-sponsored by the Program for the Study of Women and Gender, David Gray, the CSC Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow, spoke on “I Vow Not to Disparage Women: Reflections on discourse about women in early medieval Buddhism.” The Department of History co-sponsored a paper with the MSW by Mark Gregory Pegg, assistant professor of History from Washington University, on “Heresy, Holiness, and the Early Inquisition.” The MSW also co-sponsored, with the Judaic Studies Workshop, a presentation by Eva Haverkamp, assistant professor of History at Rice University, entitled “The Relationship among the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles a Historical Event.”

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The final event of the Fall semester was a lecture by Scott McGill, an assistant professor Classical Studies at Rice University in December titled “Other Aeneids: Rewriting Passages of Virgilian Epic in Antiquity.” Dr. McGill showed how Virgil’s Aeneid invited other authors in antiquity to engage in numerous types of revision. Rather than viewing Virgil’s epic as static, ancient audiences literally rewrote passages of the Aeneid recasting that material in gestures of secondary authorship. After situating this activity in its cultural con-
Rice boasts an unusually strong set of scholars across several disciplines whose major interests lie in the 19th century and who enjoy immensely sharing in discussions that bring their work together. NICE has continued to provide for these scholars a rich cross-disciplinary forum unavailable within individual departments for the exchange of ideas, and an active community within which to present work in progress.

The group enjoyed an incredibly rich Fall 2002 semester of meetings and exchanges. In August it met in the evening for a discussion of Carolyn Springer’s “The Marble Wilderness: Ruins and Representations in Italian Romanticism, 1775-1850.” In October a meeting was again convened for a discussion of Andrew Miller’s “Reading Thoughts: Casuistry, the Display of Thinking, and Victorian Perfectionism.” In December the group organized a workshop with Eileen Cleere, hosting her for lunch and hearing her speak on “Dirty Pictures: John Ruskin, Modern Painters, and the Victorian Sanitation of Fine Art.”

During the Spring 2003 semester NICE joined with the English and History departments in welcoming several outstanding speakers. In February NICE members participated in discussions with Ginger Frost on her essay “The Black Lamb of the Black Sheep: Illegitimacy in the English Working Class, 1850-1939.” And in April, NICE participated in a workshop with Mary Ann O’Farell, discussing with her her work on “Jane Austen’s Mafia.”

This year, the Workshop for the Cultural Study of Science and Technology focused on two tasks: first, bringing a speaker in to generate conversation and raise the profile of science and technology studies on campus, and second, seeking further funding to conduct research in this area. The three core members of the Workshop, Sherri Roush (Philosophy), Hannah Landecker (Anthropology), and Christopher Kelty (Anthropology), decided to invite economist and historian of science and technology, Dr. Philip Mirowski, to come to Rice University on March 20th and 21st. The CSC’s support for this visit was supplemented with contributions from the departments of Anthropology and Philosophy. They had prepared for his visit by holding two reading group meetings to discuss Dr. Mirowski’s work, on March 5th and March 19th; both meetings were attended by 12-15 people, a mix of faculty and students. Given the wide range of Dr. Mirowski’s work, the group focused on his recent book, Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science, and a volume he recently co-edited with Esther-Mirjam Sent, Science Bought and Sold: Essays in the Economics of Science. Their aim in inviting Dr. Mirowski, who is the Carl E. Koch Professor of Economics and the History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Notre Dame, was to use his work to explore questions of the relationship between economic forces and the shape of scientific knowledge. Their aim in choosing a person so well versed in physics, history, economics, and philosophy was to reach out to all sides of campus.

Dr. Mirowski met with the members of the reading group and the Department of Anthropology for a lively question-and-answer session, which was attended by about 25 people. That evening he went to dinner with a group of Anthropology graduate students. The following day, he gave a public lecture entitled “The Commercialization of the University and the Economics of Science in the 21st Century,” to an audience of about 100, predominately undergraduate and graduate students. This was followed by dinner with faculty members from the departments of Anthropology, Philosophy, and German and Slavic Studies. The level of participation on the part of students in all of these activities was very high, and hopefully this trend will continue in the future activities of this workshop.

The three members of this workshop have also used the CSC funding and forum as a jumping-off point to seek research funding for inquiries into the social, ethical and political dimensions of contemporary science and technology. They successfully applied to the Computer Information and Technology Institute (CITI) for an innovation grant, entitled “Ethics and Politics in Information Technology: An Ethical Division of Labor?” and this research is underway. This project is described in a separate article in this issue of the newsletter. They are just beginning the second stage of the project, Ethics and Politics of Nanotechnology, which will be funded through the Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology (CBEN).
Martha Nussbaum Visits the CSC as a NEH Distinguished Visiting Scholar

Martha Nussbaum, the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago Law School, visited Rice University from September 22-25, 2003, as the fourth NEH Distinguished Visiting Scholar. 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.

Martha Nussbaum is a philosopher who has made major contributions in the areas of feminism and critical theory, as well as ancient Greek philosophy, contemporary moral and political philosophy, and the connections between philosophy and literature. According to CSC director Werner Kelber, “Professor Nussbaum is a model of what the oft-invoked cross-disciplinarity might look like when enacted knowledgeably, imaginatively, and elegantly. In her ability to interrelate ancient Greek philosophy with contemporary moral issues, literature, education, human rights, gender and the liberal tradition, Nussbaum stands in a class all by herself.”

During her visit, Nussbaum delivered a public lecture, jointly sponsored by the CSC’s Distinguished Visiting Scholar Lecture Series and the President’s Lecture Series, titled “Shame, Stigma, and Punishment.” It was a major event on the Rice University campus, attended by approximately 300 people. Nussbaum began by noting views regarding this. Advocates argue that our society is adrift, without a moral compass, precisely because we have lost a collective sense of shame. One the other hand, many feel that shaming is a pernicious social custom which should not be sanctioned by instituting it within our legal practice. Rather the law should protect all citizens, and not seek to shame those who are often already stigmatized.

Nussbaum advocated the latter point of view. She held that shame and disgust are pervasive yet problematic emotions in social life, rooted in a sense of deficiency. A common reaction to this painful feeling is the construction of a group identity that is defined as “normal.” Nussbaum noted that “normalcy” is a fictional construct, as there is virtually no one who has all “normal” qualities and lacks any “abnormal” ones. Nonetheless, it is a common social phenomenon that provides an infantile sense of security to those who embrace themselves in it. It is often linked to aggression and violence; those who are labeled as “abnormal” are typically stigmatized. She then went on to argue that shame penalties are problematic for several reasons. Namely, they constitute an offence against human dignity, and often degenerate into mob justice. Lastly, they
are unreliable as they are difficult to accurately calibrate, and have been often misapplied. Minority groups have often been targeted as a means of defining and protecting majority group identity.

This lecture was followed by a series of three afternoon seminars, “Inscribing the Face: Shame and Stigma,” “Beyond the Social Contract: Justice and Mental Disabilities,” and “Capabilities, Fundamental Entitlements, and Women’s Equality.” All well attended, these seminars delved more deeply into several of the themes advanced in her lecture.


WOMEN AND GENDER IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES LECTURE SERIES
March 26-April 21, 2003

Although the events of September 11 and subsequent developments have focused media and scholarly attention on Islam and Muslim societies, this attention has not consistently enhanced understanding. To foster understanding, especially with regard to the status of women, three prominent Muslim women activists shared their views at the Baker Institute as part of a Women and Gender in Islamic Societies Lecture Series co-sponsored by the Baker Institute and Rice’s Center for the Study of Cultures.

The series debuted March 26 with a close-up look at women refugees by Zainab Salbi, founder and president of Women for Women International. Salbi’s presentation, “Understanding a Refugee Woman’s Reality,” was based on her work with women survivors of war in Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Nigeria, Colombia, and Afghanistan.

Salbi spoke at length about the politics of media coverage and the reality of women refugees. Noting that the images of women refugees conveyed on TV and in news photos are often shaped by Western standards of selectivity, she stressed the pluralistic identities of Muslim refugee women, ranging from successful business women to those living in utter poverty, and from students who aspire to professional careers to women who live according to strict tradition.

War and civil strife invariably victimize women, Salbi explained, who has been present at the major crisis centers over the last decade. Rape as a weapon of reprisal and warfare was widespread in the different conflict situations. Those women who end up in refugee camps are the lucky ones, yet life in most refugee camps is a deeply humiliating experience for most of them.

A native of Iraq, Salbi founded Women for Women International, formerly known as Women for Women in Bosnia, in 1993. This nonprofit organization provides women survivors of war, civil strife and other conflicts with the tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty into a civil society that promotes and protects peace, stability and self-sufficiency. Salbi was honored for her humanitarian efforts as founder and president of this organization by President Bill Clinton and Mrs. Hillary Clinton during a White House ceremony in 1995.

On March 31, Amina Wadud, associate professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, spoke on the topic “Text, Gender and Reform in Islam.” Wadud discussed various aspects of gender activism in Islam. There exist multiple Muslim women’s networks in different countries, she explained, some government-spon-
consciousness raising, works toward increased levels of education, rights of girls and women, policy reforms, and seeks to redefine the role of religious authority.

In particular, Wadud described how women Islamic scholars’ increasing appropriation of Islamic primary sources such as Quran, sunnah, and shariah, has made possible a more gender-sensitive and inclusive interpretation of these texts. She discussed the growing legitimacy of such interpretations within Islamic religious and intellectual traditions, and the implications of these trends for the lives of Muslim men and women. A large part of Wadud’s presentation was devoted to the interpretation of key verses from the Quran.

The third lecture was delivered on April 21 by Azizah Al-Hibri, professor of law at the University of Richmond’s T.C. Williams School of Law, on “The Qur’anic Worldview: A Womanist Perspective.” The bulk of Al-Hibri’s lecture focused on the history of Quranic exegesis. For the most part, she explained, the teaching and exposition of the Quran has been in the hands of male scholars. Their perspective has deeply shaped the hermeneutical tradition and public consciousness of the Quran. Historically, however, she pointed out that women played key roles in the foundational and subsequent periods of Islam. Unfortunately, these women’s voices have not been as well heard or preserved in the historical record.

Careful not to criticize the Quran itself, but aspects of the interpretations, Al-Hibri engaged in a detailed exposition of various Quranic textual samples. At times offering quite technical, philological reasoning, she demonstrated in case after case that the conventional readings had been constructed, contrary to the literal reading, from a distinctly male viewpoint. She also cited a series of Quranic passages which placed women into unambiguously central positions.

Al-Hibri pleaded for a gender-inclusive reappropriation of the Quran, arguing that the participation of women in the exposition of the Quran will enhance the general applicability of the sacred text, and thereby promote the authority of the Quran, quite apart from raising the status of Muslim women in Islamic societies.

The Lecture Series enjoyed considerable popularity, with approximately 110 people in attendance at each event. Co-sponsorship of the three lectures was provided by the President’s Office, the Provost’s Office, the Dean of Humanities, the Program of the Study of Women and Gender, the Department of History, the Department of Religious Studies, the Feminist Reading Group and the Arab-American Educational Foundation.

Musica at the Rothko Chapel

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the Musiqa presented its second annual concert at the Rothko chapel. A non-profit organization founded by faculty members of the Shepherd School of Music, Musiqa features music by contemporary composers, highlighting those working in the Houston area. In order to further Musiqa’s goal of educating the audience concerning the significance of contemporary music, Anthony Brandt gave a pre-concert talk on the subject of trends in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century music.

Four Shepherd school faculty and founding members of Musiqa presented works this year. These include Karim Al-Zand’s Sonata for Piano (1993), Pierre Jalbert’s Dual Velocity (1998), and the world premiers of Shih-hui Chen’s SHUI (2003) and Anthony Brandt’s The House Surrounded (2002-2003). Concert-goers were also able to enjoy the world-premier presentation of Spike for solo piano (2003) composed by Rob Smith, an Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Houston. There was also a performance of Kurt Stallman’s Lumina II for solo flute (2002, rev. 2003); Stallman recently joined the Houston community as an Assistant Professor of Music at the Shepherd School. The concert was completed with a presentation of Oliver Messiaen’s Regard de l’Esprit de joie (1944).

Musiqa continued its tradition of presenting a work of spoken performance art during the intermission. This year, playwright Edward Albee recited his short, one-act play Box (1968). This year’s concert was supported by contributions from a number of organizations and individuals, including the CSC, the Shepherd School of Music, the Rothko Chapel, the Houston Endowment, and the Warwick Hotel.

International Young Leibniz Conference

April 18-20, 2003

In April 2003, Rice University was the host of a major CSC-sponsored event, the International Young Leibniz Conference. While the focus was on the philosophy of the young Leibniz, there was a distinct emphasis also on the interdisciplinary brilliance of this 17<sup>th</sup> and early
CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA, AND SPEAKERS, 2002–03

Dialogue on these just completed riches was certainly mature. A conference drawing on this continent under the auspices of both the world-wide Leibniz organization and the North American Leibniz society.

There are two reasons why the spring of 2003 was an especially auspicious moment to host such a conference. First, in a major publishing event, the critical edition of the works of Leibniz had recently been extended to complete the publication of the entire philosophical corpus of the young Leibniz. Specifically, the fourth volume (actually four massive sub-volumes, totaling well over 3000 pages) of the philosophical series of the Academy Edition’s *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Sämtliche Schriften and Briefe*, had been published, covering Leibniz’s philosophical works from 1677 to June of 1690. This includes the writings of the critical eight-year period just prior to Leibniz’s composition of the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, the work taken by many to mark the beginning of Leibniz’s philosophical maturity. A conference drawing on these just completed riches was timely indeed.

Secondly, the Leibniz Society of North America, although in existence for about a quarter of a century already, had just launched a new initiative in the matter of Leibniz conferences, something it had not promoted previously. The Rice University International Young Leibniz Conference would mark the first foray of the Society into this area. It was a major beginning, one that would not have been possible without the support of the Center for the Study of Cultures. As already noted, and as an indication of the reach of this event, the conference was organized under the auspices of both the Leibniz Society of North America and the world-wide Leibniz organization, the G.-W.-Leibniz-Gesellschaft, with central offices in Hanover, Germany, the location of the vast majority of the Leibniz Nachlass.

In many ways Leibniz is an outstanding interdisciplinary symbol for Rice University. He was called an “Academy in one person,” the co-inventor of the calculus (with Newton), the author of the *Theodicy* and the *Monadology*, a physicist, theologian, geologist, historian, linguis, architect, poet, engineer, China expert, and diplomat—not to mention a practical thinker whose calculating machine and binary number system earned him a place in the long history of events leading to the development of the electronic computer. As far as brilliance, interdisciplinarity, seriousness of purpose and world vision are concerned, he is an excellent thinker for Rice University to be linked with at the present juncture.

Werner Kelber, director of the CSC, who was strongly supportive of the international emphasis of the Young Leibniz conference, delivered a substantial introductory address in three languages, French, German and English. Gale Stokes, Dean of the Humanities Division, began the conference by welcoming the Leibniz specialists from around the world and pointing out, among other things, similarities between the interdisciplinary projects of Leibniz and those of Rice University.

In addition to the CSC, co-sponsors of the conference include the Dean of Humanities, the Provost and President of Rice University, the Goethe Center for Central European Studies, the History of Philosophy Workshop, and the Departments of Philosophy, History, Religious Studies, French Studies, German Studies and Hispanic Studies.

**HEIDEGGER AND TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY**

April 3–5, 2003

In April 2003, the Rice Center for the Study of Cultures sponsored a conference on “Heidegger and Transcendental Philosophy,” organized by Steven Crowell (Rice, Philosophy) and Jeff Malpas (Philosophy, University of Tasmania). The conference brought together fourteen scholars from the United States and other countries to present work on one of the most influential philosophers of recent times, Martin Heidegger.

Heidegger’s thought has had tremendous impact on philosophy and other disciplines such as history, literary studies, anthropology, religious studies, and architecture since it first achieved public prominence with the publication of Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* in 1927. His work has twice been at the forefront of major changes in intellectual “climate.” In the 1920s and 1930s his writings were central to the development of...
hermeneutic (interpretive) models of cultural research and prepared the way for the boom of postwar “existentialism” developed by Sartre and others. In the 1960s and 1970s, Heidegger’s later writings influenced developments that would radically challenge the entire philosophical tradition and would coalesce under the term “postmodernism.” As we enter the early years of a new century, Heidegger’s thought remains relevant and is poised to have an impact on yet another major intellectual movement – that of Anglo-American (so-called “analytic”) philosophy. The purpose of the conference on “Heidegger and Transcendental Philosophy” was to bring together leading scholars of this last trend – individuals working on Heidegger who are also conversant with the analytic tradition – to take stock of current problems and to trace out lines for future research. To examine Heidegger’s thought in light of the tradition of “transcendental” philosophy – a term stemming from the work of Immanuel Kant and developed, in various ways, in German Idealism and Husserl’s phenomenology – provides an ideal angle for bringing the two traditions together, since both Heidegger and analytic philosophy trace their heritage, in various ways, back to Kant. This focus allowed conference participants to measure Heidegger’s potential contribution to current problems in epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of culture, as well as explore Heidegger’s novel, and as yet largely unassimilated, proposals for a “topological” reorientation of philosophical thinking.

Herman Philipse (University of Leiden) opened the conference with an acute challenge to Heidegger’s phenomenological claim to have an impact on yet another major intellectual movement – that of Anglo-American (so-called “analytic”) philosophy. The purpose of the conference on “Heidegger and Transcendental Philosophy” was to bring together leading scholars of this last trend – individuals working on Heidegger who are also conversant with the analytic tradition – to take stock of current problems and to trace out lines for future research. To examine Heidegger’s thought in light of the tradition of “transcendental” philosophy – a term stemming from the work of Immanuel Kant and developed, in various ways, in German Idealism and Husserl’s phenomenology – provides an ideal angle for bringing the two traditions together, since both Heidegger and analytic philosophy trace their heritage, in various ways, back to Kant. This focus allowed conference participants to measure Heidegger’s potential contribution to current problems in epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of culture, as well as explore Heidegger’s novel, and as yet largely unassimilated, proposals for a “topological” reorientation of philosophical thinking.

Sandra Gilbert, the associate director of Women and Gender Studies, and invaluable assistance from Ms. Gee Family Funds for Asian Studies, Offi ce, Dean of Humanities, the Chair of Women Studies at McGill University, and co-organized by Nanxiu of Cultures (CSC) and Asian Studies, Symposium/Workshop was hosted December 2004. Dismantling the Binary between Tradition and Modernity
The Symposium/Workshop “Tradition and the Challenge of Modernity: Politics, Poetics, and Gender in Late Qing China, 1840-1911” March 7-9, 2003

Held in March 2003, this symposium/workshop was hosted by the Rice Center for the Studies of Cultures (CSC) and Asian Studies, and co-organized by Nanxiu Qian, Associate Professor of Chinese Literature, and Professor Grace Fong, Chair of Women Studies at McGill University. It received generous funding from the CSC, the President’s Office, Dean of Humanities, the Gee Family Funds for Asian Studies, and Women and Gender Studies, and invaluable assistance from Ms. Sandra Gilbert, the associate director of the CSC, and Ms. Dee Garza, the
Late Qing China went through rapid socio-political changes while facing military, economic and cultural challenges from the West and Japan. Under the circumstances, Chinese artists and writers sought to adapt traditional forms to contemporary needs. From the 1898 Reform Movement to the 1911 Republican Revolution, Chinese tradition played an indispensable role in the transmission of new knowledge and ideas to the Chinese, and in the process, the tradition became transformed. The emergence of new-style Chinese news media helped accelerate this process of transmission and transformation. Yet the ensuing New Culture Movement (c. 1915-1925) starkly dichotomized “tradition” and “modernity.” Stigmatizing the former as simply “Old” and valorizing the latter as vitally “New,” New Culture activists marginalized the Chinese tradition, deeming it an impediment to change. Modern historiography, Chinese and Western alike, has emphasized the polarization between the “Old” and the “New,” and hence has largely neglected the function of Chinese tradition in China’s modern transformation. In short, the vital forms of Chinese literature and art at the turn of the twentieth century have been woefully ignored, and their contributions to the process of modernization in China have been seriously underestimated. This symposium/workshop attempted to provide a more balanced picture of the interplay between tradition and modernity in late nineteenth and early twentieth century China, examining the function of classical Chinese literature and art in the evolution of Chinese political, social and intellectual life.

We took gender as an analytical category because modern historiography, Chinese and Western, has portrayed China’s 1898 reform as a male-led campaign; it attempted to transform a highly refined imperial system into a modern, constitutional nation-state amidst Western military, economic invasions and cultural impact. This symposium showed that Chinese women in fact participated in these reforms as active organizers and sophisticated thinkers and with very different attitudes toward “tradition” than most male reformers. Women reformers conceptualized their own version of modernity by sorting through all kinds of values available, past and present, Chinese and Western. Their reform efforts, though obscured by modern historiography, had played crucial roles in sustaining China’s culture facing a very violent twentieth century.

The symposium, held on March 8, began with a thoughtful speech of welcome by Professor Werner Kelber, Director of the CSC. Kelber commended the symposium’s focus on gender, saying, “As far as the West is concerned, I would claim that in addition to the rise of the sciences, and the deliberate acquisition of knowledge about cultures outside the Western orbit, the change in the status of women has been the third defining feature of what constitutes modernity.” Professor Richard J. Smith, Director of Asian Studies and a leading historian of the Qing China, chaired the symposium. He pointed out in his introductory speech that the standard narrative of 1898 was one of failure—a movement led by dynamic, open-minded western-oriented men, whose noble efforts were undermined by the evil, self-interested empress dowager and her conservative advisers. Recent research by the scholars represented in this symposium provide a very different picture of the period: a period of extraordinary intellectual vitality and diversity in which art and literature were not in “decline,” but served as both an expression of change and an agent of change; and in which women, talented, articulate and outspoken, played active and influential roles in the politics of the time.

Six panelists then presented papers at the symposium, including, in addition to Fong and Qian, Professor Joan Judge from UC Saint Barbara, Professor Richard John Lynn from University of Toronto, Professor Haun Saussy from Stanford, and Professor Ellen Widmer from Wesleyan University. The presentations focused on the Chinese cainü (women of talent) tradition in the reform era. This theme is of special significance because late Qing reformist polemics often used the figure of the cainü as a metonym for all that was “disgraceful” and “obsolete” in the Chinese cultural tradition. The symposium papers demonstrated that it was precisely women of this type who became most active in women’s education and print media. In fact, this period witnessed the emergence of some extraordinarily accomplished women—individuals who thought creatively and eclectically about issues of both gender and genre. Their broad political, social, and intellectual concerns, unprecedented for women writers in previous periods of Chinese history, were inspired not only by a heightened awareness of ideas transmitted to China via Japan and the West, but also by a robust cainü tradition dating back many centuries. In addition to this focus on gender, the symposium also pointed out that Chinese poetics, one of the most exalted spheres of Chinese intellectual life, retained its vitality throughout the reform era. Paper presenters analyzed how old genres—biographies, poetry, novels, and so forth—were radically transformed by reform-minded authors, men and women, to express fresh ideas and sentiments arising from the dramatic changes in late Qing political, social, and cultural life. Professor Susan Mann (University of California at Davis) served as the respondent to all six presentations. Her summary of the symposium and her comments on each paper offered insightful guidelines for their future revision.

The papers presented at the symposium were considered to be of sufficient interest to senior scholars in the field that they will appear in a special issue of the journal, Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in Early and Imperial China, now in press for spring 2004. Brill will also publish the essays in book form, also scheduled for 2004. Moreover, the participants enthusiastically agreed that it would be both important and timely to hold a follow-up conference, which would sharpen the focus of issues discussed at the symposium while broadening the parameters of investigation of these crucial but still surprisingly understudied decades in late Qing China.
The International Herder Society held its biennial conference at Rice University from September 26 through September 29, 2002. The International Herder Society is composed of scholars from around the world devoted to the study of the life and work of Johann Gottfried Herder and of his times. Every two years the society organizes a conference at which scholarly work is presented and a general business meeting of the society carries on its organizational affairs. As the current President (2000–2002) of the society, Professor John Zammito, of the Departments of History and German Studies at Rice, organized and hosted the conference. It received generously funding from the Center for the Study of Cultures, the President, the Provost, the Dean of Humanities, the Goethe Center for Central European Studies, and the Departments of History and German Studies. Twenty-two scholars from a number of different countries presented papers at the conference. Of these, thirteen were scholars at U.S. universities, six came from Germany, and one each from France, Brazil and the U.K. One of the U.S. participants was Professor Rachel Zuckert of the Rice Department of Philosophy.

One of the highlights of the conference was the larger number of younger scholars who gave papers, all of them well-crafted and well-received. The themes of the various conference sessions ranged over topics in aesthetic, sensibility and historicism, and -- in token of the organizer’s primary research interest -- there were two sessions on the relation between Herder and Kant. Sandra Gilbert of the Center for the Study of Cultures managed the arrangements and the logistics of the conference impeccably, and she received accolades from the participants. Indeed, both for scholarly quality and for the accommodations throughout the conference, participants expressed the highest satisfaction.

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

In March 2003, the fourth lecture in the Technology, Cognition, and Culture series was delivered by Edward Ayers, the Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the Hugh P. Kelly Professor of History at the University of Virginia, and who was appointed in 2000 by President Clinton to the National Council on the Humanities. Ayer’s talk was titled “Processing the Past: The American Civil War as Information.”

Ayers introduced a project which he has been developing over the past decade, a large digital archive called “the Valley of the Shadow Project,” which has won a number of prizes and which has appeared in several different forms: a continually evolving website, a CD-ROM, a native-digital scholarly article sponsored by a leading print journal, and a trade book to be published by W. W. Norton this spring: In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859–1863.

Ayers argued that digital history such as that which his web site provides is different from text-based historical studies. Essentially a digital archive focusing on two communities impacted by the Civil War in the North and South, it is open-ended, and not as closely dependent upon the narrative structure of traditional histories. Rather than a book, it more closely approximates a library, one which, in this case, brings together in one place a wide range of documents such as newspapers, maps, letters, diaries—all in digital form, of course. As these would ordinarily be scattered throughout numerous archives and collections, and thus be available only to the most intrepid researchers, this archive is an invaluable resource for students of nineteenth century American history.

Ayers also introduced an article that he co-wrote with William G. Thomas III, entitled “The Differences Slavery Made: A Close Analysis of Two American Communities.” Ayers argued that the digital medium seems especially well-suited for history. Hypertext provides the ability to link pieces of evidence in...
large bodies of information, enabling the development of a language of exposition that works by branching, layers and connections rather than operating on a single plane of exposition. Adopting Robert Darnton’s pyramid structure, the article begins with a summary of arguments, which rests on a foundation of multiple “points of analysis,” that is, specific claims based upon numerous sources of evidence. While this does not provide “objectivity,” as the choices the authors made regarding the selection of evidence are not insignificant, there is little doubt that Ayers presented a powerful case regarding the need for new models of scholarship in the humanities that take full advantage of the possibilities current technology provides. He is no doubt correct that as this occurs, the form of historical research will be transformed.

**MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE AND THE NEW MEDIA**

In November 2003, Stephen Murray, a professor of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University and director of the Media Center for Art History there, presented the fifth lecture in the Technology, Cognition, and Culture series. His multi-media presentation was entitled “Medieval architecture and the new media: Representing and creating knowledge in cyberspace.”

Like Edward Ayers, Murray also challenged the text-based paradigm for scholarship in his field, which in his case is art and architectural history. While acknowledging the usefulness of books on architecture, which typically link a narrative text to illustrations of both major and minor architectural features, he was also critical of the shortcomings of this approach. He argued that medieval architecture, equipped with its painted sculpture and colorful stained glass, provided the three-dimensional virtual reality of the Middle Ages. Yet art historians have remained content with traditional two dimensional means of representation: the printed page, the photograph, the slide shown in the classroom, all of which fail to capture the lived experience that these architectural wonders seek to create for the embodied viewer.

It was in the interest of trying to recreate this experience using digital technology that Murray undertook his current project, which is the creation of an interactive database of hundreds of Bourbonnais Romanesque churches. Murray argued that students gain a richer understanding of the Middle Ages through interactive digital media, which are more engaging than ordinary text or video resources. Murray has overseen a project involving the intensive study and documentation of Bourbonnais architectural monuments, including parish churches, abbeys, cathedrals, castles, manor houses, mills, granges, cities, and towns. This research has resulted in a continually growing Web resource that presents this research through comprehensive digital photography and three-dimensional QuickTime nodes. This resource currently provides simulations of the construction of actual cathedrals, and detailed video and digital imaging of these sites. Most impressive was the QuickTime application, which provides the viewer with a multi-dimensional view of the inside of cathedrals, which (s)he can navigate, viewing whatever features (s)he desires, either from a distance or close-up. Murray, with the help of QuickTime technology, has succeeded in simulating the experience of being within a medieval cathedral. Overall, it was a very engaging presentation, and the technology Murray highlighted shows excellent promise as a teaching aid, even if it does not yet constitute a suitable replacement for the older medium of the book.
FROM THE DIRECTOR

continued from inside front cover

in enhancing the research activities of the workshops. Congratulations as well to the core members of the workshop on the Cultural Study of Science and Technology (Christopher Kelty, Hannah Landecker, Sherri Roush) on using their modest CSC funding to plan and secure additional funding for a research project on The Ethics and Politics of Information Technology and for a second initiative on The Politics of Nanotechnology. Many thanks to Moshe Vardi and Jan Odegard of CITI (Computer Information and Technology Institute) and to Kristen Kulinowski of CBEN (Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology) for their willingness to assist this highly innovative workshop in starting a conversation between the humanities, social sciences and emerging sciences and technologies with marked social and cultural impact. Last but not least, I applaud Nanxiu Qian for having seen to it that the March 2003 symposium has been published as a special theme issue under the title Beyond Tradition and Modernity: Gender, Genre, and Cosmopolitanism in Late Qing China in the journal Nan Nü – Men, Women and Gender in China and as a separate volume, both by Brill, Leiden.

I have asked our colleague Edith Wyschogrod, the J. Newton Rayzor Professor Emerita of Philosophy and Religious Thought, to offer for the readers of this newsletter some reflections on her philosophical work. President of the American Academy of Religion (1993) and a Guggenheim Fellow (1995-96), she was in 1999 elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the first (and to date only) faculty member in the Rice humanities who was recognized in this way. Founded during the American Revolution by John Adams and other luminaries, the Academy serves as an international forum for the world’s leading scientists, scholars, artists, business people, and public leaders.

Edith’s philosophical thought is driven and haunted by the cataclysmic events of the twentieth century “whose sheer magnitude . . . resists emergence in word or image.” In the vein of parabolists and poets, she has committed herself to speaking about the unspeakable, and to give presence to the unrepresentable. Keenly aware of the impossibility of her undertaking, she has nonetheless found her philosophical voice, a voice distinctively her own. Thinking with pain from the nadir point of the mass exterminations of peoples, she has written, profoundly and with trembling, about the imperative and the commanding presence of the Other. Hers is a modernist driven by the ethos for the dead and the urgency of an ethics of alterity. On behalf of the CSC, I thank Edith wholeheartedly for her immeasurable contributions to the humanizing of philosophical and religious thought.

Manifestations of the Negative within the Ethical Mode

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of the body. Yet, might not the ascetic innovations of medieval religiosity be viewed as prefigurations of a contemporary erotics as depicted in the works of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze or Julia Kristeva and even in the aesthetic erotics of Nietzsche himself? How might contemporary rhetorics of desire as desire for the impossible enter into the question of the older descriptions of the ascetic’s relation to transcendence? To answer such questions the conception of what is to count as body must be reconfigured, a problem with which I continue to wrestle.

In the third moment of negation, I focus upon the meaning of desire as it figures in both medieval and postmodern theological contexts. Anselm’s ontological argument, the effort to prove that God necessarily exists, can be construed as a coming to consciousness of the desire for a God who is named but whose name resists explication. I try to show how the formal elements of the proof -- Anselm’s refutation of the argument of the fool who says in his heart that there is no God and of Gaunilon who compares divine perfection to that of a lesser entity, a most perfect island -- gives way to the pathos of a denial, the refusal of direct access to the transcendent other, to the source of joy.

In An Ethics of Remembering, I consider the fourth moment of negation by returning to the massacres of history with a new set of questions. How does the historian do justice to the dead others whose narrative she now controls? I argue that in recent analyses of time, the forward movement of time has been stressed and the primacy of the past as negation has been covered over. The past can never be brought back as it was in all of its lived reality. It remains the no that challenges the historian to heed its imperative to recount what has transpired, the demand that what has happened not be forgotten. Another order of negation can be seen as infiltrating the effort at retrieval: a negation of the real in a culture of simulation. How can the historian speak truthfully in light of these challenges to the claims of truth as representation? If description does not match the object described, how is the historian to treat the rift between the now and an irrecoverable past? How is she to respond to the felt need for archiving memory in light of attacks upon the effects of memory, what Nietzsche saw as the ball and chain of Nachtraglichkeit? I maintain that a notion of counterfactuality, the envisaging of what could not have been, might help to circumvent some of the difficulties inherent in efforts to represent that which was. The historian must remain circumspect, resisting the lie warily by affirming, “It could not have been thus.”
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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Front cover:
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