Michel Serres to be the CSC’s Next Distinguished Visiting Scholar

Philosopher Michel Serres will visit Rice April 6–20, 2002, as the CSC’s second Distinguished Visiting Professor. Serres, a member of the prestigious Académie Française, has integrated scientific thought, especially mathematics, thermodynamics, and chaos theory, into his philosophy. His interdisciplinary works draw on the discoveries of the sciences as well as aesthetics, the arts, poetry, and literature.

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

Michel Serres is very much representative of the type of researcher the program was designed to bring to Rice. According to CSC director Werner Kelber, “Professor Serres has been a profoundly innovative thinker in plotting interrelations between different modes of knowledge, including the sciences, the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences. We habitually lament the great divides in knowledge, which, we increasingly sense, are untrue to the globalizing human condition. Few, very few, academicians have been able to think globally in as profoundly philosophical a mode as Professor Serres. I am extremely pleased that he has agreed to serve as Distinguished Visiting Professor at Rice University.”

During his visit to Rice, Serres will deliver a public lecture and conduct four two-hour seminars open to faculty and students. Serres’s public lecture will be “Sciences and Humanities: the Case of Turner.” His seminar topics include “Euclidian First Definitions,” “Space in Plato’s Timeus,” “Clinamen in Lucretius’ De Rerum Natura” and “Pascal’s Geometry.”

Born in Agen, France, Serres attended naval college and served on a variety of ships as a marine officer for the French national maritime service. In 1968, Serres earned his doctorate with a thesis on Leibnitz’s philosophy. A prolific writer on culture, science, and philosophy, he has published more than 30 books in the last 30 years. From 1969–96, he served as a professor in the history of science at the University of Paris.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The departure of associate director Colleen Morimoto deeply affected the CSC this past year. In the two years she served at the CSC, Colleen left her mark, both administratively and intellectually, on the structure and life of the center. She has taken a new position at Rice as assistant to the provost. On behalf of the numerous colleagues who have greatly benefited from her tenure at the CSC and in recognition of the invaluable assistance she has provided me during my first year as director, I gratefully acknowledge her service and wish her well in the new position. I am very pleased to extend a warm welcome to Sandra Gilbert, the new associate director. One of many applicants, the former director of faculty administration in the provost’s office brings to the CSC a strong background in journalism and administration and a lengthy and diverse Rice experience. I know from working with her since June that she will put her experience, energy, and dedication to excellent use for the benefit of the CSC and the growing number of colleagues associated with it.

I also welcome David Gray, the center’s second Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities. David comes to us with spectacular recommendations from Columbia University. It is rare for a Buddhologist of his generation to have thorough familiarity with the major religious traditions of East Asia (Confucianism, Tao-
I feel compelled to say a word of gratitude to Gale Stokes, acting dean during AY 2000-01 and now the new dean of humanities. Early on in his acting deanship, Gale recognized the present significance and future potential of the CSC for the humanities and for Rice, and his enthusiasm for the CSC has never wavered since. In fact, his support has been unprecedented, and the center is much the better for it.

David Nirenyberg, my predecessor in the center’s directorship, has left me with the arduous legacy of substantial fundraising to meet the NEH and Mellon matching challenge grants. Those of us among staff and faculty who are involved in the fundraising process will not forget the tense days and weeks this past summer when it seemed increasingly doubtful that we would be able to meet the deadline—until, literally at the last minute, a most generous donor came to our rescue. My thanks to Eric Johnson, vice president for resource development, for his ingenuity and remarkable dedication to the cause, again to Gale Stokes for the time and skill he has devoted to fundraising, and, importantly, to the staff of the development office who, recognizing the importance and urgency of the project, substantially contributed to this year’s success. Among the staff, I need to single out Jeanette Zey, the new director of development for the School of Humanities, and for Rice, and his enthusiasm for the CSC has never wavered since. It is my hope as well that many readers of this newsletter will find the work conducted under the auspices of center sufficiently impressive to consider it an entity worth supporting.

In reflecting on my first year as director of the CSC, I am struck by four developments that seem to me especially noteworthy. First, while the CSC is primarily designed to advance faculty research, some of its numerous projects translate directly into curricular innovations. Above all, I am thinking of the vigorous Asian Studies Workshop and of the appointment of our new Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow. But curricular innovation and enrichment will also emanate from the ambitious Global Studies Initiative undertaken by the Department of History and heavily subsidized by the CSC.

Second, in the last few years a number of academic societies have selected to convene their annual meeting on the Rice campus. I mention the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature, the Southern Historical Association, the Modernist Studies Association, and the International Herder Society. This is a development that testifies to the growing stature of the humanities at Rice and to its faculty who manage to attract academic societies.

Third, a number of conferences, workshops, and symposia undertaken by the CSC are now resulting in the publication of academic books. This is a development I shall strongly encourage in the future.
The publication of the following items is pending: *The Grammar of Causation and Interpersonal Manipulation* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamin), *The Enigma of Gift and Sacrifice* (Fordham University Press), *Written Text and the Rise of Literate Culture in Classical Greece* (Cambridge, UK), and *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (Eerdmans). A publication is also forthcoming in connection with the Southern Historical Association’s Woodward Symposium.

Fourth, this past summer Moshe Vardi, director of the Computer and Information Technology Institute; Charles Henry, vice president and chief information officer; and the director of the CSC joined forces in founding a new University Lecture Series titled Technology, Cognition and Culture. Itself the product of a broadly interdisciplinary cooperation, the series examines transitions in communication technologies and their impact on culture, with particular attention to the digital revolution and its potential for altering the condition in which the humanities have historically existed. This initiative marks a first step in expanding the scope of the CSC toward a collaboration with science and technology. In December, donor gifts fulfilled the Mellon Challenge.

Many donors see these challenge grants as an opportunity to leverage their gifts to the university during its *Rice: The Next Century Campaign*. The Mellon Foundation offered a dollar-for-dollar match for gifts supporting the postdoctoral fellowships. NEH gives a one-to-four match for contributions to the CSC’s Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program.

Gale Stokes, dean of humanities, and CSC director Werner Kelber are thankful to alumni and others who have a passion for cultural studies and want to strengthen the university’s faculty and graduate programs through financial contributions to the CSC.

Another $345,000 in gifts will put the NEH’s multiyear challenge grant over the top. Kelber says gifts designated to the CSC for this program and paid by July 2002 will meet the NEH grant requirements.

With its mission of promoting the study of cultures through numerous comparative and interdisciplinary programs, the CSC plans to begin exciting new projects in 2003 and, ultimately, hopes to add graduate fellowships to its offerings.

We welcome your participation and encourage you to consider a contribution to the Center for the Study of Cultures. Your gift can take several forms and, in addition to benefiting Rice University, may provide powerful tax or estate planning benefits to you. For assistance please contact Jeanette Zey at jzey@rice.edu or call her at 713-348-4675.

—Werner Kelber

**NEH and Mellon Challenges: 93 Percent Down, 7 to Go**

With more than $4.6 million in gifts and pledges from philanthropic individuals and foundations, the Center for the Study of Cultures is well on its way toward completing two challenge grants and closer than ever to implementing its two related programs.

In 1998 and 1999, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded challenge grants to the center that, when completed in July 2002, will add $4.95 million in endowment. These funds will be used to bring visiting scholars and postdoctoral fellows to Rice. In December, donor gifts fulfilled the Mellon Challenge.

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The Sorbonne. He also taught at Johns Hopkins University (1969–79) and at the State University of New York at Buffalo (1980–85). Since 1984, he has been a professor in the romance languages department at Stanford. He was elected to the Académie Française in 1990.

In a recent work, *The Troubadour of Knowledge* (University of Michigan Press, 1997), Serres explores numerous pathways in philosophy, science, and literature to argue that the best contemporary education requires knowledge of both science’s general truths and literature’s singular stories. He heralds a new pedagogy that claims that the crossbreeding of the humanities and the sciences may yield a new educational ideal. Other recent work has emphasized the importance of poetry as well as the effect of new technologies, such as information technology, on everyday life.

Established in 2000, the Distinguished Visiting Scholars program was inaugurated with the visits of Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann in October of that year.

CSC Fellows 2001–02

The Center for the Study of Cultures annually awards three teaching-release fellowships to Rice faculty in the humanities, social sciences, architecture, and music each academic year and to date has awarded a total of 43. Selection is made on the basis of faculty research proposals, which are submitted to the center director and advisory panel, then evaluated by two external reviewers, one solicited by the applicant and one solicited by the center. Fellows are released from teaching for one semester to pursue their research projects. At the conclusion of their leave, fellows present their research to the broader university community in the form of a public lecture.

**MICHEL ACHARD, French Studies**  
Project: “Impersonal Constructions: Grammar, Culture and Cognition”

Most languages in the world have a specific set of constructions to indicate “the way the world is.” These are usually called “impersonal constructions.” The subject is often an impersonal expression (neutral pronoun or demonstrative) as in English (it is raining), French (il pleut), or German (es regnet). Other languages such as Latin (pluit) or Italian (piove) simply omit the subject.

This project provides a cross-linguistic analysis of the meaning of impersonal constructions. It makes use of concepts developed by the theoretical model of cognitive linguistics (CL). In CL, meaning is equated with conceptualization, and each expression designates a particular subsection of a conceptual base. For impersonal constructions, the base is composed of specific folk models that pertain to different conceptions of reality.

The analysis defines an impersonal conceptual space common to several languages by investigating the range of situations covered by impersonals in those languages. The specific way in which each language makes use of that space is also evaluated.

Because important aspects of the folk models are culturally specific, this project outlines a common area of study among linguistics, anthropology, and cultural studies.

**ALLEN MATUSOW, History**  
Project: “Ronald Reagan and American Culture”

This project will continue Matusow’s study of American politics in the Reagan years by examining contested issues in society and culture during this time. Matusow intends to write a one-volume history of the Reagan presidency attempting to show the intersection of politics with social and cultural tensions. Using a historical approach to research on culture, this project seeks to explore the changes that have transformed the United States during the past generation—changes that impinged on the political process. Specifically, Matusow is interested in Reagan’s rhetorical strategy relating to race, his appeasement of the religious right, the legacy of his economic program, the impact of his commitment to the global economy on the working class, the great debate on race that divided the intellectual community during the decade, and the role that the new conservatives played in the administration. Finally, Matusow hopes to answer how, for so many Americans, Reagan came to embody the cultural values they held most dear.

**SHERILYN ROUSH, Philosophy**  
Project: “Knowing in the World”

If we reflect on the fact that scientists do experiments in which they manipulate the world, we realize that gaining scientific knowledge is not much like watching TV. The scientist is not pas-
sive and does not merely behold what presents itself to her. Though this is clear on reflection, what has been called the ‘spectator’ view of knowledge retains a grip on our imagination as the default view of how we come to know the world. Some participants in the Science Wars accuse defenders of the objectivity of science of gaining reassurance from this ‘naïve’ view that scientists simply receive the world as it is, by inspection. Too often, though, the accusation comes without an alternative epistemological picture, leaving us with the suggestion that scientists make it all up as they go along. On the other hand, pragmatists like John Dewey and Richard Rorty, who claim that the philosophical project of epistemology (theory of knowledge) is essentially defined by the spectator view, have recommended that both the view and the project be abandoned on the quite different grounds that it can lead us only to fussing over radical skepticism. The spectator view can lead to both naïve, global confidence and naïve, global skepticism—and little in between—suggesting that it is not complex enough to be accurate.

Roush doesn’t think the spectator view is wrong so much as limited, a special case of a more general view of the activity of knowing that we might call ‘participatory’. Roush’s project will take steps to articulate this more general view and show how it is different from the special spectator situation. The spectator-knower is considered a spectator insofar as she is independent of the object she wishes to know in a variety of ways. Her skeptical questions always take the form “Am I sufficiently or appropriately connected to the object I wish to know?” In the background is the dark worry that she is not connected at all. The participant-knower has an excess of connections and dependences on the object she wishes to know, and in skeptical moments, she must ask whether she has sorted through them in a way that eliminates bias. We are familiar with the latter kind of problem in the social sciences, but physics faces similar challenges, especially because at times its instruments fall within the scope of its highly general theories. Roush studies how an inquiry’s dependence on the object it studies, or views about that object, affects questions of justification, and she discusses the particular ways scientists overcome the skepticism created by dependence on the object.
CSC THANKS DONORS

The CSC thanks these generous donors, whose contributions in recent years have helped reach a full 93 percent of the fundraising goals set in the matching grants awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation:

- Estate of Graham Jackson
- Rockwell Fund, Inc.
- Arthur and Karen Rogers
- Mr. and Mrs. Bill Barnett
- Harry and Macey Reasoner
- Teveia Rose Barnes and Alan Sankin
- Robert J. Easton and Joan Schwartz Easton
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- Rob Quartel and Michela English
- Terry and Jenny Cloudman
- Neil O’Brien
- Malcolm and Elizabeth Gillis
- Mr. and Mrs. Kingsland Arnold
- James and Sandra Robbins
- Bridgeway Charitable Foundation
- Gale and Roberta Stokes
- Bolton Foundation
- Richard and Jeanette Zey

A timely endowment for the Distinguished Visiting Scholars and Postdoctoral Fellows programs will enable Rice scholars to remain at the forefront of interdisciplinary and comparative studies. Rice University is in the process of raising an additional $345,000 to complete the NEH challenge grant by July 2002, making expansion in these initiatives possible.

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

Rice University and the Center for the Study of Cultures announce the establishment of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship Program designed to encourage interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching.

Beginning in academic year 2002–03, two postdoctoral fellows will be selected for a two-year appointment. Fellows will teach two courses per academic year and will be expected to make significant progress in their research. They will also participate in the intellectual life of relevant departments, programs, and CSC research groups. We anticipate making appointments in one or two of the following areas of specialization:

- Latin American visual culture. Covering a chronological period ranging from pre-Columbian and colonial to contemporary, disciplinary fields may include archaeology, art history, anthropology, photography or film and media studies.
- Technologies of cultural memory. The comparative study of the means by which cultures organize and transmit their collective memories and construct identities. Areas could include historical studies of the evolution and development of regional traditions over time or of contemporary oral, literate, and hyper-literate systems.
- World history in the pre-modern period. Geographic specialization is open. Areas could include, but are not limited to, environmental history, trade routes/capital flows, contact zones, cultural transactions, imperial conquests and cultures, technology transfers, epidemiology, the spread of visual arts, and the history of media.

Scholars with research interests in any of these areas are encouraged to visit the site at http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~culture/MellonFellowshipProg.html.
Second Woodrow Wilson Postdoc Arrives

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation sponsors a program in the humanities designed to encourage the creation of postdoctoral opportunities. These fellowships enable promising young teachers and scholars to remain in academia and to move smoothly into a tenure track position at a college or university. Fellows conduct research, publish, and broaden their teaching experience. Rice is one of 15 host institutions awarded a WWNF fellow.

The Center for the Study of Cultures welcomes David Gray to Rice. Gray earned his Ph.D. in history of religion with a specialty in Asian religions in February 2001 from Columbia University. There, he studied under Robert Thurman and Ryuichi Abé, two well-known scholars whose research focuses on the Indo-Tibetan and East Asian traditions of esoteric Buddhism, respectively. His dissertation, “On Supreme Bliss: A Study of the History and Interpretation of the Cakrasamvara Tantra,” involved an edition and translation of one of the most important Tibetan Tantras, a survey of extant texts in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese that relate to this and other similar Tantric Buddhist traditions, and a historical study of the transmission of the tradition from India to Tibet and China.

In fall 2000, Gray was an adjunct instructor at Columbia University, teaching a seminar on ancient and classical traditions. Subsequently, in spring 2001, Gray taught Introduction to Indian Religions at Princeton University.

Gray hopes that his special interest in religious discourse will result in a book that demonstrates that religious discourse is in no way fixed but is often deployed for different ideological purposes in different cultural or historical circumstances. Highlighting the dialogic process whereby religious identity is constructed and continually renegotiated, Gray hopes to show that religious discourse is often far more political than has sometimes been assumed and that Tantric Buddhist discourse in particular had a very significant impact on Tibetan and East Asian political histories.

As a scholar of comparative Asian religious history, Gray’s goal is to expose students to alternate modes of religious discourse and to show how this discourse relates strongly to important issues in life. Gray’s courses for the 2001–02 school year are Introduction to Indian Religions (fall 2001) and Introduction to Chinese Religions (spring 2002). The fall course surveyed the four major religions that originated in India, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Emphasis was placed on the scriptures of these religions and, in particular, inspired poetic texts. The spring course will survey the major Chinese religious traditions of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Readings will include philosophical texts, historical and anthropological studies, as well as popular literature.

NEW FACES AT THE CSC

Sandra Gilbert joined the CSC as associate director in June. Gilbert has been at Rice for 15 years, most recently as director of faculty administration in the Office of the Provost. Before her appointment in the provost’s office, Gilbert held staff positions in the linguistics department and the president’s office. Except for a short stint as director and teacher at a Houston preschool, Gilbert has worked exclusively in higher education, including the University of Wisconsin, Madison. With a degree and background in journalism and enthusiasm for the humanities programs at Rice, Gilbert joins the CSC with hopes to continue to increase the visibility of the CSC in the Houston community and to serve as an advocate for its programs. “I am especially pleased to have the opportunity to work closely with faculty while communicating the scope and value of the center’s work outside Rice,” Gilbert says. Gilbert replaces Colleen Morimoto who moved to a position in the provost’s office.

Graduate Assistant, 2001–02

The center announces the appointment of Jaya Hariprasad as graduate student assistant for this academic year. Jaya, a graduate student in English, received her B.A. from College of Saint Elizabeth in 1995 and her M.A. in English literature from West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Last year, Hariprasad was a Diana P. Hobby Fellow at the Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900. Jaya is teaching a class and taking Sanskrit this fall. Her duties at the CSC will include publicizing events and maintaining the CSC website.
My two courses for the year were, by design, two entirely different types of classes. In the fall, I conducted a small seminar for classics majors on the Roman novel, a topic receiving renewed interest in the field of classical studies for its important contributions to the study of ancient folklore, sexuality, and religion. In the spring, I taught a larger lecture course on the hero in Greek culture, which traced the archetype of this important religious figure from the Homeric texts through to the Platonic dialogues. I was especially excited to employ my expertise in Web design for this course and was able to illuminate the ancient works by making myriad references to modern parallels—the website accompanying the course eventually featured some four hours of video and audio, from modern Hungarian funeral keening and South Slavic epic to Elvis and the '80s glam rock group Twisted Sister (perfect for Euripides’ Bacchae, the Twisted Sisters of the ancient world).

When not teaching, I devoted myself to a revision of my dissertation (on the intersections of myth, writing, and poetry in both Latin and Greek literature) and to various smaller projects. In total, I gave eight different talks this year, including two at conferences in California and one in Naples, Italy. I also gave three talks at Rice, two under the aegis of the CSC. The first was on the reception of Lucian in illustrated classics of the American 1920s, and the second concerned various problems in current research on Roman sexuality. I completed one article on the strange, fractured myth of Palamedes as well as two book reviews. I am also organizing a panel at next January’s classics convention on the topic “Classics and Opera,” an exploration of classical myth as refracted through European musical theatre.

The spring term turned out to hold an embarrassment of riches when I received two tenure-track offers, including one from Trinity University in San Antonio. It was an offer too enticing to pass up! Though I regret leaving my post at Rice a year early, I was thrilled to return to Rice in October for one final bow. In cooperation with Karim Al-Zand of the Shepherd School of Music, I organized the lecture-recital titled Moonlight on the Ganges: Exploring the Exotic in Early American Sheet Music, a topic that has nothing to do with classics—and therefore everything to do with the CSC’s mission of turning out scholars who can communicate across boundaries both academic and cultural.

—Thomas Jenkins
Technology, Cognition and Culture
A Lecture Series

The Center for the Study of Cultures, the Computer and Information Technology Institute, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer have joined to inaugurate a lecture series open to the public titled “Technology, Cognition, and Culture.” Two lectures are scheduled for academic year 2001–02.

The inaugural lecture, “Minding Bodies,” was delivered on October 22 by Mark C. Taylor, professor of religious studies and Cluett Professor of Humanities at Williams College, where he also directs the Center for Technology in the Arts and Humanities. Drawing on insights from complexity studies, theoretical biology, and cognitive psychology, as well as theology and philosophy, Taylor has developed a theory of culture in terms of distributed information processing. As the lines separating the biological, mental, and technological dimensions of experience become increasingly obscure, it is necessary to rethink the multiple functions of cultural systems. Taylor is the author of many books in which he attempts to bring together the discourses of sciences, the arts, and humanities. “Minding Bodies” probed issues discussed at length in his forthcoming book *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture*.

Taylor received a Doktorgrad (Philosophy) from the University of Copenhagen in 1981, a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1973, and a B.A. from Wesleyan University in 1968. Taylor is co-founder of the Global Education Network, a Web-based company that strives to develop the highest quality college-level courses in the humanities, liberal arts, social sciences, and sciences. He is a member of the American Academy of Religion, was elected to the Soren Kierkegaard Academy, and holds memberships in many other professional organizations. Taylor has received many awards including the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching National College Professor of the Year award and the American Academy of Religion Award for Excellence.

A second lecture in the series is planned for April 2, 2002, with speaker Neal Lane, University Professor, physics and astronomy, and Senior Fellow, Baker Institute for Public Policy.

“New Modernisms III”
October 12–15, 2001
Conference of the Modernist Studies Association

The Modernist Studies Association (MSA) was founded two years ago to provide a forum for the massive revival of interest in modernist literature and arts. Through its annual conference, the MSA has created the opportunity for scholars, poets, musicians, and artists to participate in this ongoing revitalization. Modernist studies is reemerging as a dynamic and complex field, hospitable to interdisciplinary, international, and multicultural approaches and energized by recent work in race, class, gender, and sexuality. Organized by Colleen Lamos (English, Rice), this year’s conference explored literature and the arts in the full range of their social, political, cultural, and intellectual contexts from the later 19th through the mid-20th century. Plenary speakers included Homi Bhabha, Martin Jay, Ramon Saldivar, Vera Kutzinski, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, and Andreas Huyssen.

Co-sponsoring the conference were the Center for the Study of Cultures, the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the Dean of Humanities, the Department of English, the Inquiries Study Group, and the Johns Hopkins University Press, publisher of the journal *Modernism/Modernity*. 
SHOTGUNS, 2001: A SYMPOSIUM AND EXHIBITION STUDYING AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE, CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE, AND COMMUNITY
October 11–13, 2001

This symposium and exhibition, organized by Rice School of Architecture faculty David P. Brown and William Williams, offered reflections on the shotgun house, an American vernacular house type with African origins, in contemporary design and theory. The presented work responded to two contemporary appropriations of the form—the houses presented in paintings by John Biggers and the cluster of 22 houses within which Project Row Houses hosts art exhibitions, education, and a residential program for young mothers. Presentations and panel discussions, as well as a set of installations in Project Row Houses’ eight houses dedicated to art, explored the shotgun house’s cultural, material, and physical presence, as well as its significance in memory.

Cultural critic bell hooks was the keynote speaker of this event, which was co-sponsored by the CSC, Rice School of Architecture, Project Row Houses, and Prairie View A&M University School of Architecture. The address given by bell hooks was followed the next day by presentations and panel discussions at Prairie View. Presentations and a panel discussion at Project Row Houses on October 13 preceded the festival that opened the installations.

“MOONLIGHT ON THE GANGES”: INTERPRETING THE EXOTIC IN EARLY AMERICAN POPULAR SONG
October 24, 2001

This lecture-recital was organized and conducted by Karim Al-Zand, visiting assistant professor in the Shepherd School of Music, and Thomas E. Jenkins, former CSC Woodrow Wilson Fellow in the Humanities and currently assistant professor of classical studies at Trinity University. The presentation explored the construction of non-American cultures by Tin Pan Alley songwriters between 1900 and 1930. In this era of American expansion into global affairs, the frequent evocation of foreign lands in American popular music demonstrates an increasing awareness of—and anxiety about—the cultures that differ so dramatically from America’s own. Further, as immigrants flocked to the United States in unprecedented numbers, a sleepy America awoke to discover, in effect, ‘exotic’ lands and communities within its own borders.

An immediate byproduct of this shock is the often xenophobic attitude...
toward the world at large in the popular music of the day: these pieces are artifacts of a nation trying to come to terms with its global role even as it grapples with its own rapidly shifting domestic identity. American songs of this period feature stock evocations of alien lands that transform the simply foreign into the positively exotic. Because of this exaggeration, these songs provide a means by which we can examine American constructions of both ‘foreignness’ and (paradoxically) America itself.

One goal of the lecture-recital was to introduce these little-known pieces to a wider, interested public. Beyond this introduction, however, the presentation analyzed two related media for the expression of ‘exoticism’: musical tropes and textual imagery. The format for the lecture-recital included explanation and musical examples of representative sheet music from the period, as well as some performances of pieces by past and present students at the Shepherd School of Music: Andy Einhorn, Ben Westbrook, Amy Krivohlavek, Dennis Arrowsmith, and Jonathan Morales.

“WITTEN TEXT AND THE RISE OF LITERATE CULTURE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD”
November 1–3, 2001

Sponsored in part by the Delmas Foundation and organized by Harvey Yunis (Hispanic and classical studies), this conference constituted the second stage of work after the conference on “Written Text and Transformations of Thought and Expression in Classical Greece” in April 2000. After the first meeting, participants rewrote their papers in light of extensive criticism. The revised papers were circulated in advance of this meeting, and at the conference, the papers were subjected to one final round of extensive criticism and discussion in anticipation of submission to Cambridge University Press for publication. The volume of collected essays will present a common understanding regarding the emer-

“Memoria: Memory and Commemoration in Medieval Christianity and Judaism”

April 7–9, 2002
The Neil J. O’Brien Conference for Medieval Studies

Memoria, in general terms, embraces the intentions, attitudes, actions, and media of individuals and communities determined to prevent themselves and others from falling into oblivion beyond death. Memoria shapes thought, emotions, and actions in fundamental ways. It possesses universal dimensions that go back to antiquity and are influential up to the present.

Today, memoria is often driven out into the atomistic sphere of individual remembrance, into the institutional realm of politics, or into the secluded world of museums. However, memoria still plays an important role, and one could argue that its suppression and confinement to specific spaces even enhances its importance for our lives—either through its overwhelming and concentrated power or through its absence in other fields of life. In retrospective and comparison, medieval memoria was present in broader fields and incorporated in almost all aspects of individual, public, and religious life.

The purpose of the conference this academic year, “Memoria: Memory and Commemoration in Medieval Christianity and Judaism,” is to show the broad range of aspects of memoria, its complexity, and how these aspects are connected to each other. It promises to bring together scholars from the fields of medieval and ancient history, religious studies, literature, philosophy, and arts.

The following topical fields will be covered: memoria in historical consciousness and conceptions of historiography (use of history, fiction, forging, use of history in polemics); ways of memoria as ways of knowledge (Augustine’s concept, memory of God, mnemonic resources, apocalypse); socialization of memoria (in community, brotherhoods, and their realization in space); and the formation of memoria in material and pictures (monuments, cemeteries, painting).

Distinguished scholars such as Mary Carruthers (English, New York University), Janet Coleman (ancient and medieval political thought, London School of Economics), Israel Yuval (Jewish medieval history, Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Herbert Kessler (history of art, Johns Hopkins University), and Richard Landes (medieval history, Boston University) have agreed to give lectures at this conference. To sharpen the direction of the discussion and in view of the current state of research, each of the above mentioned aspects of memoria will be discussed from the point of view of both Christianity and Judaism.

The goal of this triennial symposium, endowed by a generous gift from Mr. Neil J. O’Brien, is to create an interdisciplinary forum in which to address broad themes in medieval culture. In past years, the symposium has focused on “Constructing Hildegard of Bingen: Reception and Identity 1098–1998” and “The Body of Christ in the Late Middle Ages.”

In addition to creating a forum for leading scholars in the field, this symposium also seeks to introduce Rice students, alumni, and faculty, as well as the broader Houston community, to scholars whose research seems particularly innovative. The conference is free and open to the public.
Concert of New Music at the Rothko Chapel, April 2002

Shepherd School of Music composition faculty Anthony Brandt, Karim Al-Zand, Shih-Hui Chen, and Pierre Jalbert are organizing a concert of new music at the Rothko Chapel in April 2002. Co-sponsored by the Cultural Arts Council of the City of Houston, the CSC, and the Shepherd School, this event will be an inaugural concert of a group called Musiqa, dedicated to the performance of new music. With the Rothko Chapel serving as inspiration, the new works will receive their world premieres at the concert. In addition, the program will feature works by master American composers Morton Feldman and Earl Kim. Performers will include a mixture of Shepherd School faculty musicians and distinguished guests. The concert is free and open to the public. The concert will be preceded by a lecture, in which Brandt will discuss how to listen to unfamiliar music, and the four Rice composers will introduce their works.

Literate culture refers not just to literacy, the technology of writing, or the use of writing for particular practices. Rather, it refers to the culture that consists in the written texts themselves and the uses to which the texts were put. Ultimately, literate culture exists in the minds of those who create and use the texts as a self-sustaining vehicle to carry on intellectual and artistic creativity and dialogue.

Africa and the African Diaspora: Past, Present, Future
November 15–18, 2001
African Studies Association 44th Annual Meeting

The African Studies Association (ASA) sponsors an annual national meeting, which provides an occasion for panels, plenary sessions, and discussion groups, exhibits, and films. This year, approximately 1,100 participants from America, Africa, Asia, and Europe gathered in Houston for this meeting, one of the largest annual gatherings of Africanists in the world.

Renewed popular and scholarly interest in the African Diaspora made this an opportune moment for members of the African Studies Association to reexamine its place in the study of Africa. At the same time, the conference emphasized the issue of Africa’s significance for the study of the African Diaspora.

Local and state co-sponsors of the meeting included the Dean of Humanities and the Provost’s Office at Rice University; Texas Southern University; Texas A&M University; Southwestern University; the University of Houston; Southern Methodist University; Prairie View A&M University; and the University of Texas at Austin, Arlington, El Paso, and San Antonio; as well as the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the City of Houston; and University of Texas Health Science Center–Houston.

Speech Perception in Context
Ninth Biennial Symposium, Department of Linguistics
April 4–6, 2002

Under the direction of Nancy Niedzielski (linguistics, Rice), this symposium proposes to bring together researchers who investigate the knowledge systems involved in the perception process and explore how these systems interact. Although the conference participants are from such different fields as linguistics, psychology, neurology, and electrical engineering, they share an interest in examining speech perception as a phenomenon that moves beyond mere phonetic pattern matching (used by computerized speech recognition systems) and instead appeals to the entire range of cognitive systems involved in more natural contexts.
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.

**African Studies Workshop (AfSW)**
Coordinator: E.S. Atieno Odhiambo (history)

Continuing the collaborative efforts of faculty and graduate students from Rice, Texas Southern University, the University of Houston, Southwestern University, Texas A&M University, and the University of Texas at Austin, the African Studies Workshop sponsored seminars throughout the year. During the fall semester, Janice Harper (anthropology, UH) gave a seminar, “The Social Construction of Ethnicity and Land Use in Madagascar.” Highlights of the spring semester included: David Killick (anthropology, University of Arizona) on “Technology Transfer in the Islamic World System: A View from the Swahili Coast,” James Gilbin (history, University of Iowa) lecturing on “Memories of Maji Maji: Village Accounts,” and Larry Yarak (history, Texas A&M) presenting “A Disguised Slave Trade? Dutch Military Recruitment on the Gold Coast in the Nineteenth Century.”

**Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations (AMC)**
Coordinator: Michael Maas (history)
Acting Coordinator: Hilary Mackie (Hispanic and classical studies)

In February 2001, AMC sponsored a symposium on “Wisdom and Wisdom Literature in the Ancient Mediterranean.” The aim of the symposium was twofold. First, its purpose was to examine the character and social function of wisdom as reflected in the various wisdom literature traditions of the ancient Mediterranean. Furthermore, the parallels and areas of divergence between the different “wisdom” traditions were explored in an attempt to better understand the character of “wisdom” and its social function in these ancient cultures. The second goal of the symposium was to consider where in contemporary Western culture we might find counterparts to the ancient wisdom traditions.

William Hansen, professor of classics at Indiana University, and Richard Martin, professor of classics at Stanford University, were symposium speakers. William Hansen’s paper was titled “The Wise Judge: Greek and Roman Versions of the ‘Judgment of Solomon’ Story.” He spoke about the figure of Solomon as a performer of wisdom and the similarities and differences between the ways in which wisdom is implicitly defined in the various parallels that are to be found for this story from around the world. Richard Martin presented “Ambushes at the Altar: Greek Wisdom in Hiding,” which focused on the ancient Greek practice of bómolochia—the theft of food from altars. Investigation of this practice led to a comparison of the ways sophia, or wisdom, and other forms of intellectual activity were evaluated in ancient Greece. Thought-provoking responses and discussions from a diverse audience of faculty and students from Rice, the University of Houston, the Houston community, the University of Arizona, and the University of Hamburg followed the presentations.

The other main activity this year was a reading group that focused on the fables of Aesop, excerpted from various compilations in Greek and Latin. The nature of the fable as a genre was explored through a selection of both recent and more traditional scholarship. Recurring questions and discussions included: What kind of wisdom...
does the fable purport to transmit? To what areas of life is this kind of wisdom applicable? To what audience is the fable directed? Finally, from what kind of perspective upon life and the world is the wisdom of the fable expressed—pessimistic or optimistic?

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

The Asian Studies Workshop expanded the scope of on-campus activities to include more Japan-related content with the visits of William Tsumi (University of Kansas): “Godzilla and Post-War Japan,” Elizabeth Berry (University of California, Berkeley): “Putting Everything on Sale: The Culture Market in Tokugawa Japan,” and Carol Gluck (Columbia University): “Past Obsessions: War and Memory in the Twentieth Century.” These lectures were arranged and hosted by Sarah Thal (history).

Members of the ASW met a number of times during the year to discuss matters of mutual interest. These discussions were catalyzed by events in September such as the lecture on “Hong Kong’s Economic Recovery” by Jacqueline Willis, Hong Kong commissioner for economic and trade affairs to the United States, and the presentation on “The Serious Problems Facing Mankind” by R. C. T. Lee, a noted writer, scientist, educator, and humanitarian from Taiwan. Also in September, Sayoko Kinoshita and Yashura Imagawa presented a Rice Anime (animated films) workshop.

On October 20, 2000, Professor David Ownby (University of Montreal) lectured about “Falungong as a Cultural Revitalization Movement: A Historian Looks at Recent Events in China,” followed by a discussion with representatives of the People’s Republic of China on October 26, 2000. “Problems in U.S.–China Relations” was the topic of a roundtable discussion by Ambassador Yang Chengxu, president of the China Institute of International Studies in Beijing, and Rice faculty, researchers, and students in December 2000.

The Asian American Film and Literature Festival in January 2001 featured not only films and film clips, but also a keynote address by Councilman Gordon Quan, a roundtable discussion on Asian American film and literature, discussions by Asian American filmmakers, and a book reading by Russell Leong. (See Conferences, Symposia, and Speakers 2000–01 page 23.)

Several Asian studies faculty attended a workshop on “Adverting and Transnational Culture in Asia” in Hong Kong in March, prompting ASW discussions afterward.

In March, Nathaniel D. Garson, project manager of the Samantabhadra Collection (University of Virginia), and Gregory A. Hills, project manager of the Bonpo Textual Collection (Rice Fondren Library and religious studies), presented a lecture on “The Bonpo Textual Collection: Networked Collaboration and the Virtual Laboratory.” On March 30, M. Alejandro Chaoul (religious studies, Rice) and Lorenzo Cohen, M.D. (M.D. Anderson Cancer Center) lectured on “Spirituality and Clinical Medicine East and West.”

In fall 2000, with a grant from the Freeman Foundation, we established the Texas Consortium for Teaching about Asia (TCTA) as part of the Asian and Global Outreach Project of Rice’s Center for Education. In spring 2001, the TCTA offered a 30-hour “Faculty Development Institute on East Asia” for 25 secondary teachers in the Houston area. Four of Rice’s Asian studies faculty were actively involved in teaching this course, and our hope for next year (see below) is to include several non-Rice Asianists as instructors—thus bringing to Rice scholars who can interact with members of the ASW.

We continue to meet in clusters to refine our two team-taught Asian studies courses, as well as to discuss our other Asia-oriented offerings. During the past year we have created two new Asian studies courses, taught by Chi-Mi Lai and Marshall McArthur respectively, and have assisted Jones College in establishing a new Asia-related college course, Indian Society and Politics, taught by Rina Williams of Prairie View A&M.

A number of Asian studies faculty continue their involvement in the Baker Institute’s Transnational China Project, including Steven Lewis, Benjamin Lee, Rich Smith, and Marshall MacArthur. (See our website at http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~tnchina/.)

Anne Klein is in the second year of a two-year grant of $179,000 from the Ford Foundation for a project titled “Buddhism and Western Culture: A Living Dialogue.” This project has brought leading figures from Asia, Europe, and the Americas to present papers that address cross-cultural issues involving women’s roles and female imagery in traditional and present-day Buddhist contexts; political and religious conversations between the Tibetan Bon and Buddhist traditions (which have been deeply intermingled but never fully reconciled after Buddhism’s domination of Tibet in the 8th century); and cross-cultural views of the body and healing practices, as well as the psyche.

The ASW is continuing to lay the groundwork for a collaborative project on pedagogy involving Sarah Thal (history, Rice), Richard Smith (history, Rice), and Tomomi Okazaki and Toshiyuki Kono (both Kyushu University).

As part of a larger program of internationalization at Rice, various Asian studies faculty have become involved over the past year in designing or teaching various residential college courses, university courses, continuing studies courses, and outreach workshops, in addition to their regular teaching load. Often these efforts entail productive joint discussions, which have had a positive effect on our regular Rice curriculum.

ASW views all the above-mentioned activities as part of a larger program of “internationalization” at Rice. The aim is an integrated approach to the study of foreign cultures—one that is able to connect the scholarly and pedagogical interests of a wide variety of individuals associated not only with specific departments within the social sciences and humanities, but also with preexisting interdisciplinary programs. ASW envisions a full-scale program of international studies based on joint research projects; innovative undergraduate teaching (including new technologies, media studies, etc.); and close collaboration with like-minded colleagues, both at home and abroad. ASW is also very interested in bolstering graduate and postdoctorate programs at Rice in areas related to the study of languages and cultures in order to amplify and maximize resources.
CESG continued to feature the scholarship of Central Europe and Russia in its seven lectures in 2000–01.

With 13 Jagiellonian alumni from the Houston area in attendance, Paul W. Knoll’s (University of Southern California) lecture, “The Jagiellonian University in the Life of Fifteenth-Century Poland,” on April 6, 2001, outlined the founding of the Jagiellonian University of Cracow in 1364 and its subsequent development in the 15th century. Knoll, a noted specialist on Central Europe in the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, spoke of the university’s medieval architecture, the accomplishments of some of its alumni, and the influence the university exerted on European affairs in the 15th century. Knoll pointed out that the typical late-medieval students were not sons of the highest nobility but rather offspring of lesser nobles who sought social advancement through education. In addition to educating the Polish elite, the Jagiellonian welcomed students from neighboring Bohemia, Hungary, and Germany. Among its distinguished professors were Stanislaw from Skalbmierz and Pawel Wlodkowic who argued in favor of religious tolerance and for the rights of individual nations at the Council of Konstanz in 1414. Among its famous alumni were Nicholas Copernicus, class of 1495, Pope John Paul II, and 1998 Nobel Prize winner for literature Wislawa Szymborska. Several thousand Jewish students, graduates, and professors of JU who perished in the Holocaust were remembered.

Donald Fangar (Harvard) spoke on “Russian Writers and the Slippages of History” on February 1, 2001. His lecture dealt with changing evaluations of Soviet Russian writers, the majority of whom lost status and readership when the Soviet Union fell apart. Fangar suggested that the precipitous decline of interest in Soviet writings should not make us abandon the reading of Soviet literature altogether. The texture of experience generated during the Soviet period is best achieved by reading memoirs and nonfictional prose.

Based on his book Images of the Jew in Polish Literature, Harold Segel (Columbia) spoke on “Images of the Jew in Polish and Russian Literatures” on October 5, 2000. Beginning with Polish legal documents in the Middle Ages, Segel concluded that nearly every major writer incorporated Jewish issues, largely positive, into his or her works. Among the negatives, Segel mentioned a patronizing tone of such ostensibly philo-Semitic writers as 19th-century novelist Eliza Orzeszkowa, as well as the genuinely anti-Semitic portrayals created between the two world wars. In contrast, Russian literature is almost invariably anti-Semitic, Segel contended, and all of its Jewish figures are invariably presented as antisocial or morally deficient.

Jelena Milojkovic-Djuric (Texas A&M) spoke on “Bosnia-Hercegovina Under Habsburg Rule at the End of the Nineteenth Century” at the Novem-
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ber 30, 2000, meeting. While it is difficult to determine the effect of various intellectual movements and political figures in Bosnia at that time, it is even more difficult to assign blame for future wars and disturbances in that area. If there was a culprit, it was the empire rather than the various ethnic groups, said Milojkovic-Djuric.

Jan Rybicki (Rice) spoke on “Henryk Sienkiewicz, or How to Become a Polish Writer in America” at a luncheon meeting on February 27, 2001. Rybicki focused on the romance between Henryk Sienkiewicz, a 19th-century Polish novelist, and Helena Modjeska, a Polish-born American actress. The two lived in a California commune with other Polish exiles. After the romance fell apart, Sienkiewicz returned to Poland to write the novels that earned him the Nobel Prize. His youthful Letters from America are reminiscent of de Tocqueville and Frances Trollope.

Maria Rubins (Rice) spoke on “Moscow and St. Petersburg in Nineteenth-Century French Travelogues” at a luncheon meeting on November 30, 2000. She outlined opinions about the two major Russian cities held by some lesser French writers.

Kristina Küntzel of the University of Bremen and the University of Halle spoke on “The Transformations of a Provincial Russian Town in the Nineteenth Century” on April 9, 2001. Her topic was Nizhni Novgorod, renamed Gorky in Soviet times and then restored to its original name in the 1990s. She contrasted the development of cities in Russia with those in Western and Central Europe. In Russia, the city walls protected only the military, whereas in Europe, the walls encompassed the core of the city population. Russian city dwellers were equal in status to serfs, possessing neither personal freedom nor inviolable property. Küntzel also stressed that the scarcity of population in the enormous Russian territories delayed the development of cities and trade.

**CONCEPTS AND CATEGORIZATION WORKSHOP (CC)**
Coordinator: Richard E. Grandy (philosophy)

During fall 2000, the group’s focus was a visit by Susan Carey (Harvard, formerly NYU). Before her visit, the workshop participants met three times to discuss her published and unpublished work and to prepare for discussions on object permanence in infants and visual tracking in adults. Contrary to Elizabeth Spelke’s views, which posit the use of language as an essential bridge between different cognitive domains, Carey sees language as less central in this connection. Part of her justification for downplaying the role of language is her work with other, nonlinguistic primates who show many of the same abilities as infants in object identification and elementary counting.

The role, or lack thereof, of language in reasoning and concept formation is one of the central research interests of many members of the Rice group: Eric Margolis and Richard Grandy (philosophy), Dan Osherson and David Schneider (psychology), and Janice Bordeaux (associate director of undergraduate research and assessment, engineering).

In addition to meeting with our core group, Carey met with the philosophy metaphysics class to answer questions about her work, visited with various faculty and grad students individually, and gave a well-attended public lecture, “Where Do Concepts Come From?”

**CONTINENTAL THEORY WORKSHOP (CTW)**
Coordinator: Steven Crowell (philosophy)

The Continental Theory Workshop devoted itself to the question of what looks to be a paradigm shift in the way traditional disciplines in the humanities—for instance, history, philosophy, and literary studies—conceive their intellectual practice. The idea of intellectual inquiry has been guided (if only as a foil) by the idea of “science,” and this, in turn, has been understood largely in terms of the model of mathematical physics. Not only positivism but postpositivist positions in philosophy of science and cultural studies have been more or less influenced by the idea that mathematical physics is a particularly clear example—and perhaps the only clear one—of what “scientific explanation” is. This appears to be changing in interesting ways, as, for instance, biological and evolutionary models become more influential in epistemology and in historiography. CTW proposed to look at how sciences other than physics have become increasingly important in the methodological self-conception of certain areas of humanistic inquiry.

The forum for this exploration consisted of a series of three lectures by invited speakers. In the first, J. E. Malpas, head of the School of Philosophy at the University of Tasmania, Australia, delivered a lecture on “Returning to Place: From Ontology to Topography.” This talk focused on how the concepts associated with topographical inquiry have been brought to bear recently on attempts to reconceive the human being in a post-Cartesian (postsubjectivistic) way. The lecture outlined an alternative model for ontology that avoided the problems associated both with the ancient concept of “substance” and the modern concept of “subject” and demonstrated how such an approach could recover a “sense of place” that is often assumed to have been lost or effaced in the modern world. The talk, co-sponsored by the department of philosophy, was well attended by faculty and students from many departments.

The second lecture was given by distinguished Herder specialist Hans Adler of the Department of German at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Speaking on “Trends in Eighteenth-Century German Literary History,” Adler explored how changes in the conception of history itself—and the relation between history and theory (i.e., theoretical, methodological practices)—have influenced the shape of German studies in Europe and the United States. Co-sponsored by the departments of history and Ger-
man and Slavic studies, this talk provided a forum for discussing strategies for shaping the German studies department at Rice and thinking about the potential changes in German studies in the coming decades.

The final lecture of the year was delivered by Mark Okrent, professor of philosophy at Bates College, Maine. Okrent, author of a noted book on Heidegger, presented work from his recently completed manuscript on intentionality. Part of that work attempts to construct a new account of teleological explanation—that is, to recover, on the basis of reflections on biology, a new sense for the rationality of evolutionary explanation in the face of challenges from those who question the “causal mechanism” supposedly involved. His talk, “Types and Goals: Goal-Directed Action and Evolutionary Explanations,” was co-sponsored by the departments of philosophy and history and by the dean of humanities. This lecture completed our attempt to understand how the “rationality” of humanistic inquiry is being rethought in light of new scientific practices.

Effective fall 2001, this workshop will be renamed History of Philosophy Workshop to more clearly reflect the group’s interests.

Choosing a broad theme, “Forms of Culture and Institutional Critic,” the CST group next year will expand to include two presenters from outside Rice. Additionally, the group will organize five or six presentations of works-in-progress from within Rice University. Nana Last, assistant professor of architecture, and Odila Triebel, lecturer in German, will organize the series in 2001–02.

The Environmental Studies Workshop continued to hold weekly reading group meetings hosted by Baker College. The reading group met to discuss selections from environmental lit-
erature, environmental history, environmental policy, and environmental science with attention to interdisciplinary links inevitable in the study of topics such as pollution, population growth, water policy, grazing, and environmental education from childhood to college and beyond. The workshop included participants from the departments of ecology and evolutionary biology, earth science, chemistry, civil and environmental engineering, religious studies, sociology, policy studies, and English.

Our readings are often keyed to guest speakers such as David Crossley of the Gulf Coast Institute who discussed “smart growth” and issues related to urban/suburban sprawl. Rice president Malcolm Gillis spoke on sustainable development and his involvement in resource development around the world. Finally, Neal Lane addressed issues related to global climate change, in particular global warming. Lane’s talk provided the scientific background for understanding climate change issues, and he then discussed various policy issues and possibilities he dealt with in his role as science advisor to President Clinton.

The environmental initiatives on campus and the activities of the workshop were fortuitously bolstered by two speakers in the President’s Lecture Series: Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and Jared Diamond, the author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. Kennedy spoke about his efforts in developing the Hudson Riverkeepers organization and on dealing, nationally, with pollution issues in particular and environmental concerns in general. Diamond emphasized the significant role of the environment in human history—in the movement of peoples from one continent to another and in the successes of certain forms of human social organization.

Various environmental initiatives on campus have led to the formation of a new Center for the Study of Environment and Society. The Environmental Studies Workshop will become a part of the new center.

Although the fall conference constituted the major FRG event for the 2000–01 academic year (see Conferences, Symposia, and Speakers 2000–01 page 21), FRG also hosted two works-in-progress presentations during the spring semester. In January, FRG hosted a talk by Lamia Karim, a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology, titled “Naked Women’s Fair: NGOs and the Wrath of Mullahs in Bangladesh.” This talk explored the tensions engendered in Bangladeshi culture by the work of NGOs that target women as subjects of economic development and raised important issues about the lives of women in the context of globalization. In March, FRG sponsored a presentation by Jennifer Hamilton, another doctoral student in the anthropology department. Her presentation, “Bridging the Cultural Divide: Gender Violence, Colonialism, and the Problem of Culture,” explored tensions surrounding the use of restorative justice measures in Aboriginal communities in Canada and looked specifically at the implications of “culturally specific” justice initiatives for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Future FRG activities will revolve around the theme “Feminism and the Law in Cross-Cultural Perspective,” a topic that will embrace not only specifically legal debates but also questions of global human and women’s rights initiatives, international labor patterns and practices, reproductive issues, and gender and public policy—both in the U.S. and abroad. The Feminist Reading Group plans to sponsor three or four outside speakers and to continue the tradition of offering a forum both for reading and discussion of important new research and for works-in-progress papers by Rice faculty and graduate students whose research relates to our theme.
In 2000–01, Inquiries expanded the interdisciplinary pursuit of its goals by sponsoring two lectures, one work-in-progress talk, two workshops, and a series of in-depth discussions of selected texts.

Focusing on the concept “Queer Spaces,” Inquiries co-sponsored with the English department a lecture by Marilyn Reizbaum of Bowdoin College. As she proposed in her lecture, “(De)Generation: Max Nordau’s Muscle Jews,” many scholars have pointed out that Nordau’s theories about manliness helped produce, for better or worse, the “new Jew,” but few have considered the interface between these theories and those proclaimed in the earlier and much more widely renowned Degeneration (1892). In a sense, Nordau’s idea of degeneration underwent the very anti-Semitism that in his view made necessary the new Jewish state. In-depth discussions of selected texts relating to Reizbaum’s work preceded her lecture. The group read selections from Max Nordau’s Degeneration, an essay by Reizbaum titled “Fit to Be Tried: Boers, Blooms and Muncularity,” and “Respect Your Elders, Know Your Past: History and the Queer Theorists” by Steve Maynard. The latter raises important questions about the past, present, and future of queer studies, particularly concerning the relation of queer theory to gay and lesbian studies, Marxism, and issues of class, gender, and race.

In April, Lisa Moore of the University of Texas at Austin examined “Sapphic Designs: Mary Delaney’s Queer Gardens.” A well-known member of the 18th-century British aristocracy and an intimate friend of Jonathan Swift, Mary Delaney’s work as a botanist and garden designer offered the possibility to examine sapphism in early-modern visual culture and a new perspective on the history of lesbian genealogy.

Related to this lecture and the central topic of our activities, we read Aaron Betsky’s Queer Space, in which he addresses the question of how same-sex desire has created an entirely new architecture. Betsky asserts that gay men and women have always been at the forefront of architectural innovation, reclaiming abandoned neighborhoods, redefining urban spaces, and creating liberating interiors out of hostile environments.

Inquiries continued the series of work-in-progress talks with a lecture by Deborah Needleman Armitorn titled “Properer for a Play-Thing than a Husband: The Pornographic Origins of Fielding’s Thumb Plays.” Deborah argued that Henry Fielding’s characterization of the sexual life of Tom Thumb draws from an 18th-century pornographic genre of poetry about anthropomorphic sexual props subjected to the abuses of enormous consuming women.

The first workshop of the year, “Recent Scholarship on Roman Sexuality,” was organized in February by Thomas E. Jenkins, Woodrow Wilson Post-doctoral Fellow in the Humanities. The Inquiries Group read poems by Catullus, Ovid, and Martial, as well as some studies related to the role played by eroticism and homoeroticism in Roman culture, among them Amy Richlin’s The Garden of Priapus, Holt Parker’s “The Teratogenic Grid,” and Ellen Greene’s The Erotics of Domination.

The second workshop in April was “Advocacy and Academia: Who Uses Queer?” by Brian Riedel, a doctoral student in anthropology. His workshop investigated appropriations of the terms “queer” and “queer theory” in activism, journalistic discourse, and academic projects and explored the kinds of effects these terms produce. Riedel addressed cultural and theoretical oppositions, such as assimilationist politics versus unapologetics tactics and identity politics versus poststructuralist critiques of identity.

Lectures and workshops were well attended and attracted audiences not only from Rice but also from the University of Houston and the Gay and Lesbian Community Center. Some of the faculty members in attendance were James Faubion (anthropology), Hilary Mackie (classics), Kristine Wallace (classics), Thomas Jenkins (classics/CSC), Beatriz González (Hispanic studies), Rafael M. Mérida-Jiménez (Hispanic studies), Lynne Huffer (French studies), Sarah Ellenzwieg (English), Betty Joseph (English), Colleen Lamos (English), and Gale Stokes (history, dean of humanities). Graduate students in attendance included Chuck Jackson, Marshall Needlenman Armintorn, Deborah Needleman Armintorn (English), Rubén Builes (Hispanic studies), Brian Riedel (anthropology), and Michael Kuch (architecture).

Next year, our theme for Inquiries will be “(Inter)National Queer.” Continuing with our interdisciplinary interests, the group will focus on issues related to the future of queer theory and how to build queer studies into 21st-century academia. The globalization of culture will offer us the opportunity to address questions on mapping disciplinary formations, institutional politics versus state politics, the creation of a queer canon in the curriculum, or the adaptation/ transformation of gay and lesbian studies in other cultures, for example in Latin American and European countries.

The Judaic Studies Workshop sponsored three events: a conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls (see Conferences, Symposia, and Speakers 2000–01 page 21); a public lecture on the holy city of Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic art; and a workshop on the poetry of the recently deceased Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai.

The lecture, titled “Visions of Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Art,” was given by Shalom Sabar, lecturer at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, on February 12, 2001. The event was co-sponsored by the Jewish Community Center where Sabar was Scholar-in-Residence. Sabar began his slide presentation with symbols of Jerusalem on coins and other early artifacts from the first century of the common era. Already at this early stage, the Menorah, a seven-branched golden candlestick used in the Temple in Jerusalem, served as a symbol of the
holy city, as one can still see on the famous arch in Rome, which shows the Romans carrying off the Temple implements. When the State of Israel was reestablished in 1948, the Menorah once again became the official symbol of the new state. Throughout his presentation, Sabar pointed to cross-fertilizations in the pictorial representations of Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic art. The crusaders’ map of Jerusalem, for example, shows not only the Holy Sepulcher but also the Tower of David and the Dome of the Rock. Jews of Europe in the late Middle Ages continued this tradition established by the crusaders and, curiously, used the image of the Dome of the Rock as a representation of the Jewish Temple.

In response to the death of one of Israel’s foremost poets, Yehuda Amichai, the Judaic Studies Workshop organized a memorial and invited Brandeis University professor Alan Mintz to speak. Beginning with Amichai’s early work from the 1950s in which he reflects on his service in the Israeli army, Mintz read several of Amichai’s poems in modern Hebrew and in English. Continuing with some of Amichai’s well-known love poems and a piece from Jerusalem in which Amichai compares Jerusalem to Venice, we observed Amichai’s technique of defamiliarization that is spelled out systematically in his late work. The same technique is used in the poem “An Arab Shepherd is Searching for His Goat on Mount Zion,” written in the 1970s, in which a Jew and an Arab meet searching for a lost kid.

The main event sponsored by the Judaic Studies Workshop was a conference titled The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Bible and Biblical Interpretation at Qumran on February 10, 2001. (See Conferences, Symposia, and Speakers 2000–01 page 21.)

The Medieval Studies Workshop sponsored or co-sponsored four events during the 2000–2001 academic year. Rice associate professor of art history Linda Neagley opened the year on October 2 with a talk titled “Measured Time and Metered Space: Quantification and the End of Gothic Architecture,” drawing on her book-in-progress of the same title. Neagley, who just returned to Rice after a year’s leave as a Samuel H. Kress Senior Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., examined the relationship between the rationalization of time that occurred in the 15th century and the last phase of Gothic building style referred to as French Flamboyant. She considered how the quantification of time, evinced by such things as the appearance of clocks in mason’s lodges, contributed to an irreconcilable dilemma between artisanal forces driven by an extravagant display of craftsmanship and economic forces increasingly concerned with efficiency of labor productivity.

On February 15, the Medieval Studies Workshop joined with the Department of Hispanic and Classical Studies, the Program for the Study of Women and Gender, the School of Humanities, and the CSC, with further support from a Brown Foundation grant, to sponsor a colloquium on “Medieval Iberian Women.” The colloquium dovetailed perfectly with the undergraduate course Hispanic Women Writers, taught by workshop member and assistant professor of Hispanic and classical studies Rafael Mérida-Jiménez, who steered the overall organization for the three-speaker event. (See Conferences, Symposia, and Speakers 2000–01 page 22.)

Paul W. Knoll, professor of history at UCLA, presented “The Jagiellonian University of Cracow in the Life of Fifteenth-Century Poland” on April 6 at a workshop co-sponsored by the Central Europe Study Group (see CESG). Knoll traced the history of the venerable institution and outlined the reasons for its contemporary prominence. Before the extremely well-attended presentation began, graduates of the Jagiellonian University currently living in Houston were introduced and honored.

The final Medieval Studies Workshop of the year was on April 20, when Barbara Abou-el-Haj, professor of art history at SUNY–Binghamton, spoke on “Santiago Suspended: Medieval History, Modern Mythology.” Abou-el-Haj discussed the intended and actual audiences for the spectacles connected with the cult of Saint James, showing both how the current historical model acquired its authority and what the consequences of this authority have been.

In keeping with our tradition of having at least one presentation a year from a local medievalist, the Medieval Studies Workshop invited Michael Moore, Carolyn Grant Fay Post-doctoral Teaching Fellow at the University of Houston, to present a paper in fall 2001; he spoke on “Itineraries of the Demon in the Early Middle Ages.”

The Medieval Studies Workshop has been chosen by the International Center of Medieval Art (ICMA) to propose a speaker to present the Inaugural Lecture of the ICMA Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series. This honor is largely due to the work of workshop member Linda Neagley, who has been acting as liaison with the ICMA.

By far our largest future event for 2001–02 is the third Neil J. O’Brien Triennial Symposium in Medieval Studies, being organized by workshop member and assistant professor of history Eva Haverkamp. The interdisciplinary subject “Memoria in the Middle Ages” offers a unique opportunity to continue the intellectual discussions generated this year by the extended presence on campus of Distinguished Visiting Scholars Jan and Aleida Assmann.
The Future of Feminist Critique: Ethics, Agency, Politics

In November 2000, innovative scholars from a range of fields in the humanities and social sciences met to explore how specifically feminist analyses can speak to fundamental questions about the nature of subjectivity, the ethical claims of difference, the meaning of social justice, and the efficacy of political action in the wake of political and theoretical challenges posed by liberal, poststructuralist, and postcolonial work. The conference was organized by Lynne Huffer (French studies), Carol Quillen (history), and Susan Lurie (English). Speakers at the conference included: keynote speaker Angela Davis, Wahneema Lubiano, Rosalind Petchesky, Sonia Saldivar-Hull, Elora Shehabuddin, Robyn Wiegman, Tina Campt, Serene Jones, Drucilla Cornell, Ann Cvetkovich, Inderpal Grewal, Saidiya Hartman, Geraldine Heng, Lynne Huffer, Carol Quillen, and Susan Lurie.

This conference was a major event, with more than 500 people in attendance at Angela Davis’s keynote lecture, “Race, Gender, and the Punishment Industry,” including a large proportion of audience members from outside of Rice. The panels at the conference were also well attended with about 75 people at each session and included the following topics: “Feminism and the Public Sphere,” “Feminist Subjectivities,” “Feminisms Across Difference,” and “Feminism and Globalization.” The conference was a huge success, affording participation to scholars and students with similar concerns from different fields at Rice, other Houston colleges and universities, and feminist activists from the Houston community. Finally, because of the success of the conference, the three organizers have embarked on the project of editing a volume based on the proceedings of the conference.

The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Bible and Biblical Interpretation at Qumran

Organized by Matthias Henze, assistant professor of religious studies at Rice, this one-day conference in February attracted more than 400 participants. Following a brief slide presentation about the ancient site of Qumran and the discoveries of the Scrolls, a total of four papers were read. In his paper “Interpretations of the Creation of Humankind,” John J. Collins of Yale Divinity compared the creation account found in the apocryphal book of Ben Sira (ca. 160 BCE) with the much discussed sapiential texts discovered at Qumran. Harvard Divinity School professor Gary A. Anderson’s paper, “Israel’s Exile in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” contended that although the Babylonian Exile came to an end with the return of the exiles...
and the dedication of the Second Temple in 515 BCE, the theological significance of the Exile continued well into the period of the Dead Sea Community who thought the Exile would only come to an end at the “end of time.” Peter Flint of Trinity Western University, in his paper “The Prophet David at Qumran,” argued that although David is never explicitly called a “prophet” at Qumran, the community nevertheless shared the notion with other groups of its time, including early Christianity, that David did indeed compose all of the biblical psalms “in prophecy.” The last paper, “The Offering of My Lips: Psalms at Qumran,” given by Matthias Henze, looked at the liturgical employment of the biblical psalms at Qumran as a form of biblical interpretation that falls in line with later Jewish and Christian uses of the same biblical texts in their respective liturgies.

The conference served as an effective link between the university and the greater Houston community. The Houston Chronicle featured an article on the conference two weeks before the event. The conference papers have been accepted for publication by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company under the title Biblical Interpretation at Qumran in Eerdmans’ series Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature. Matthias Henze will serve as editor of the volume.

MEDIEVAL IBERIAN WOMEN: A COLLOQUIUM

This colloquium, the first event of a series titled “Hispanic Women Writers: Legacies of Our Ancestors,” discussed current trends in women and gender scholarship and the significance of those trends for the study of the self-representation of “female voices” and women writing in different literatures of medieval and early-modern Iberia.

Organized by Rafael M. Mérida-Jiménez (Hispanic and classical studies, Rice), this project is funded by a Brown Foundation grant for the purpose of fostering excellence in undergraduate teaching. Its goal is to introduce an overview of the history of Hispanic women writers from the 10th to the 17th centuries and to offer analytical insight into the key development of significance in the emergence of their individual cultures. Given that the approach is cultural, a closer analysis of the interaction of female experiences with male political and cultural dominance in different spheres (socio-logical, anthropological, and linguistic, among others) is possible. At the same time, this focus stresses the plurality of religious traditions that enabled the birth and development of Hispanic identity comprised of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish authors, as well as texts in different languages.

While most research is usually devoted to modern women writers from a single country and a single cultural background, this colloquium proposed an enriching integrative approach to the study of literatures in plural societies. This enables the introduction of a new perspective and allows students to enrich their comprehension and knowledge of medieval and early modern cultures.

The colloquium was divided into three sections. The first speaker,Montserrat Cabré i Pairet (Harvard University), addressed the issue of women’s writing in Catalan as textual inscriptions of the feminine body. Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez (University of Notre Dame) lectured on “The Cloisters of My Ears: Sor Teresa de Cartagena,” and Ronald Surtz’s (Princeton) talk was devoted to Tecla Servent and her strategies for surviving the Spanish Inquisition. A question-and-answer session followed each lecture, and general issues were discussed at the end of the colloquium.

More than 50 faculty and students attended this colloquium, co-sponsored by the CSC, School of Humanities, Program for the Study of Women and Gender, Medieval Studies Workshop, and Department of Hispanic and Classical Studies.

WOODWARD SYMPOSIUM

The Southern Historical Association has begun a biennial lecture series at Rice. On February 23–25, to commemorate the inauguration of this series, the Journal of Southern History decided to transform the initial lecture into a major symposium. The symposium evaluated the continuing significance of, arguably, the most influential book ever published in the field, C. Vann Woodward’s Origins of the New South, 1877–1913, on the 50th anniversary of its publication. Five eminent historians—James C. Cobb (University of Georgia), Barbara J. Fields (Columbia University), Glenda E. Gilmore (Yale University), Robert C. McMath (Georgia Institute of Technology), and Harold D. Woodman (Purdue University)—presented papers on different aspects of Woodward’s book at the event, which was co-sponsored by the CSC, the Department of History, and the School of Humanities. Professor Cobb discussed the evolving self-critical attitude among Southern intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s and showed how Woodward’s masterpiece reflected these concerns, with the result being a far cry from the romantic portraits that had previously characterized Southern history. Professor Fields emphasized the themes of race and racism in the post-Reconstruction South and how Woodward analyzed these controversial topics. Professor Gilmore commented on Woodward’s relative lack of attention to women and what would be today called gender, while nonetheless arguing provocatively that Woodward’s unconcern for women attracted present-day scholars of women and gender to the chronological era he did so much to define. Professor McMath directed our attention to the way in which Woodward reshaped the general topics of Populism and Progressivism by arguing that the radical heart of the Populist movement was in the South, not the Midwest. And Professor Woodman critiqued Woodward’s seminal discussion of sharecropping and the so-called colonial economy of the post-Reconstruction South. Three equally prominent scholars—William F. Holmes (University of Georgia), Anne F. Scott (Duke University), and Bertram Wyatt-Brown (University of Florida)—offered comments on these substantial papers.

Approximately 100 historians and graduate students from universities in Texas; Louisiana; Arkansas; Washington, D.C; and Chicago attended the symposium. The presentation by
James C. Cobb was filmed by C-Span for its program Book TV and was subsequently telecast nationally. The five main papers will be published in a special issue of the Journal of Southern History in November 2001, and the papers, along with the comments, will be published the following year as a book by Louisiana State University Press.

**Asian American Literature and Film Symposium**

Held in conjunction with the student-organized Third Annual Asian American Film Festival, the Asian American Literature and Film Symposium was co-sponsored by the CSC, the Chinese Community Center in West Houston, and the Transnational China Project at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy.

The keynote address of the festival was given by Gordon Quan, Houston city councilman who is the first Asian American to be elected to a council-at-large position in Houston. His speech on identity and establishing roots was drawn from both professional and personal examples. The keynote speech was followed by a panel on personal reflections of identity. Panelists represented a cross-section of Asian Americans: Rogene Gee Calvert, chief of staff for Councilman Quan; Kamal Maheshwari, associate professor of reading at Galveston College; Greg Pak, independent filmmaker from New York; and Chiu-Mi Lai, lecturer in the Center for the Study of Languages and Asian studies at Rice. The keynote address and panel were attended by approximately 150 in the Rice Media Center auditorium.

The symposium roundtable discussion on Asian American film and literature was held at the international conference facility at the Baker Institute, hosted by Steven Lewis, director of the Transnational China Project. Featured panelists were writer and documentary filmmaker Russell Leong (UCLA) and independent filmmaker Greg Pak. The roundtable was organized and moderated by Chiu-Mi Lai.

Lai's opening remarks on writing and filmmaking in the Asian American diaspora were followed by comments, will be published the following year as a book by Louisiana State University Press.

**Narrative Conference Society for the Study of Narrative Literature**

The Society for the Study of Narrative Literature (SSNL) held its annual conference at Rice on the weekend of March 8–11, 2001. Almost 300 scholars from all over the world made up a program featuring four plenary sessions and 91 panels. SSNL—which publishes the scholarly journal Narrative, as well as running the annual conference and sponsoring various prizes, publications, and awards—was founded 20 years ago to initiate a truly interdisciplinary study of narrative. Narrative study has developed from its original structuralist orientation, in which scholars tried to find deep structures that united all forms of narrative, to its more current form. Narrative has expanded to include a variety of storytelling actions from novels and painting to the everyday stories we tell ourselves about our identities as individuals and as members of groups. Historically, narrative conferences have included panels on numerous literary texts and genres, including historiography, narratives of conversion, narrative painting, oral traditions, and narratives of gender construction. The conference has been instrumental in the disciplinary shift from narratological concerns (charting narratives, finding deep structures) to more theoretical approaches.

The four plenary speakers for the 2001 conference were Franco Moretti (English, Center for the Study of the Novel, Stanford University), Barbara Johnson (Comparative Literature, Harvard University), Richard...
Shusterman (Philosophy, Temple University), and José David Saldivar (Ethnic Studies, University of California at Berkeley). Each gave a 50-minute talk and served as a respondent to the talk of another plenary speaker. Franco Moretti’s talk, “Fillers,” moved dazzlingly among European literary traditions to engage the question of narrative middles and how moments that do not seem to forward the action of the novel can complicate theories of plotting and reception. Barbara Johnson’s “Bringing Out D. A. Miller” was an engrossing meditation on the erotics of narrative theory. José David Saldivar’s “Border Thinking and the Relocation of Chicano/a Narrative” issued a necessary challenge to narrative theory by insisting that it be alert to the presence of theories of subjects and cultures forged by the politics and geographies of border studies. Richard Shusterman’s “Art as Dramatization” was a nuanced defense of aesthetic categories as they are embodied in narrative.

Plenary respondents engaged in highly different ways with the talks: Professor Saldivar challenged the Eurocentrism of Moretti’s accounts, stressing the different status of the “filler” in cultures whose relation to political and narrative action might be more acute. Professor Moretti followed the Johnson talk with a counter-mediation, while Professor Johnson called into question the assumptions behind the aesthetic categories deployed by Professor Shusterman. Finally, Professor Shusterman brought material from his own talk to bear on his response to Professor Saldivar’s presentation, thematizing for the audience what he felt to be abiding conflicts between aesthetics and politics.

Conference panels covered a range of topics from stories about the past (“Classical Narratives Meet Modern Theory,” “Narrating Early Modern History,” “Historiographies”) to new technologies of narrative (“Telephone Wires and Matrices,” “Narratives of the Gene Age,” “Cyber-Narrations”). Other panels focused on genre (“Murder Mysteries,” “Narrative Curiosities,” “Structuring Romance,” “Narratives of the Sacred,” “Cinematic Figures and the Politics of Film,” “The Medical Case History and Literary Narrative”) and theme (“Criminal Jews,” “Narrative and Violence,” “Facing Race”). Panels focused on the literatures of a variety of cultures, as well as representations of those cultures in other traditions (“Booming India: Narratives of New South Asia,” “Latino/a Narratives of Space, Home and Migration,” “Ungerman Narratives: Language, Memory, and the Question of the Second World War,” “African Identities”). Emphasis on the intersections of literature and culture were demonstrated as well. In keeping with the conference’s theme of borders, panels also focused on the negotiation of cultural, geographic, disciplinary, and aesthetic barriers (“Vulgarity,” “Narrative and Political Discourse,” “Telling and Healing,” “Queerness and Narrativity,” “The Straight, the Gay, the Lesbian: Chicano/a Literature for the New Millennium”). Three panels focused on the work of a single author—Jane Austen, Ralph Ellison, and Harriet Jacobs—while two addressed themselves to the work of a critical theorist present at the conference (“Lee Edelman’s ‘Kid Stuff’” and “Raising the Dead” in African American Culture” on the work of Sharon Patricia Holland).

A number of panels featured speakers from Rice, including the interdisciplinary “Narrative Ethics,” with faculty from history, classics, French studies, and the study of women and gender, and a panel based in Rice’s anthropology department, “Ethnographic Narratives of Culture: Power in a Global Economy.” Three graduate students in the English department joined a speaker from Harvard University to form the Harriet Jacobs panel. Returning Rice English Ph.D.’s, now assistant professors at universities across the country, presented a panel titled “Victorian Narratives of the Body.” Rice creative writers came together to read and comment on the narrative impulses of their work in “Carving Out a Writerly Life within Academe.”

The conference also featured a series of extremely popular and lively linked panels on contemporary narratology. Focusing on traditional narratological concerns from contemporary perspectives, these panels took up questions of agency, ambiguity, sequencing, genre, length, and reliability in the light of theoretical debates that have emerged since the founding of SSNL.

The conference was—deliberately—a nomadic one. Designed to showcase Rice’s many new buildings and resources, social and intellectual events took place all over campus, with twin centers in the Sewall Hall Gallery foyer and the then almost brand-new Humanities Building. Participants univocally praised what they saw of Rice and Houston, commenting positively on the design of the university, its technical resources, and the food provided by Rice catering—which, according to many, compared favorably to that of every previous SSNL conference (with the possible exception of the one held in Nice).

MEMORY AND VIOLENCE

This workshop brought together junior and senior scholars from North America, Europe, and the Middle East for an intensive three-day discussion of questions relating to memory and violence in the Middle East and North Africa. The workshop marked an excellent collaborative effort between the School of Humanities and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, co-sponsor of the workshop. The first two days of the workshop consisted of discussion of precirculated papers in five separate panels. Rice faculty members from the departments of history, French studies, anthropology, and religious studies served as chair or discussants on each panel. The third and final day of the workshop consisted of a presentation by Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian, director of the Baker Institute, who spoke on the possibilities of peace in the Middle East.

The themes of memory and violence are especially pertinent today, as the Middle East peace process has all but disintegrated and issues of truth and reconciliation struggle in their juxtaposition to questions of redress and revenge. The workshop was structured around three interrelated historical themes: World War I and colonialism, civil wars, and the Arab–Israeli conflict. The aim of the workshop was to ques-
tion the role of memory in the enactment and resolution of conflict by state actors and subaltern groups in the Middle East and North Africa. Among the questions asked were: How have memories of past violence underwritten and how do they continue to underwrite both the enactment and understanding of contemporary conflict. What has been, what should be, and what alternatives are there to the role of the state in containing and combating divisive memories?

While no definitive answers were provided, three key points arose that merit further consideration: (1) To date, state-sponsored attempts at truth and reconciliation in Israel, Lebanon, and Morocco are deeply flawed and clearly coercive attempts to fabricate state-sponsored truths at the expense of their victims—be they Palestinians, Lebanese, or Moroccan citizens. (2) At the same time, it was recognized that in civil wars as opposed to state-sponsored terrorism, the modalities of truth and reconciliation would necessarily have to take into account very different forms of accountability. Dealing with the legacy of state terror by unmaking state officials who have tortured citizens is one thing; dealing with a civil war where the state has collapsed, as in Lebanon, requires a different approach to the question of truth and reconciliation. (3) All the discussion of the construction of memory tended to prefer sectarian and communal memory of violence as more “real”/hegemonic than state-sponsored efforts at fostering “national” memory in societies afflicted by civil war.
Cameroon Transitions and Transformations: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on a Society at the Crossroads

On April 6 and 7, 2001, the Rockwell Fund Incorporated sponsored a two-day conference focusing on the Central African nation of Cameroon. Cameroon Transitions and Transformations: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on a Society at the Crossroads brought together scholars from Africa, Europe, and the United States to reflect on different themes such as constitutionalism, colonial boundaries, religious diversity and the rise of Pentecostalism, gender, political economy, ritual, alcohol, and Cameroon’s favorite sport, soccer. Called “Africa in miniature,” Cameroon, like many African countries, is at a crossroads. Despite recent pro-democracy fever and structural adjustment, the country continues to experience a problematic transformation, or what some have called an entrenchment by the old guard. Cameroon’s multilingual culture—with English and French as official languages—and its numerous ethnic groups, religious diversity, and renowned soccer culture have made it an appropriate country to focus on in the poststructural adjustment phase of Africa.

The participants read 23 papers from different disciplines. In his keynote address, John Mukum Mbaku of Weber State University, an expert on constitutionalism and governance in Africa, offered a critique of the constitutional process used in Cameroon since independence. Mbaku stated that a broad-based approach involving all segments of civil society and nongovernmental organizations is needed to ensure that an open and fair process results in a constitution that reflects the will and voice of the citizens. He argued, “The most important part of a transition to a more effective governance structure is proper constitution making, where ‘proper’ implies ‘bottom-up, participatory, inclusive, and people-driven constitutionalism’—a process that is distinctly different from the top-down, elite-controlled and dominated approach that has informed constitutionalism in most of Africa during the last 50 years.”

Scholars addressed religious issues, noting the rise and impact of Pentecostalism, evangelization, and the role of local chiefs; incitulation of the Cameroon church in the post-Vatican II period; and sorcery, superstition, and ritualism in contemporary politics in Cameroon. A wide range of papers focused on alcohol and political activism as well as soccer as an arena for political legitimization and contestation. There were presentations on gender, exploring diverse topics such as gender in the selection of offspring, slavery and gender division, female empowerment in the changing political climate of Cameroon, and a provocative session on gender given by two young Cameroonian writers and critics, Juliana Abbenyi-Nfah and Freida Ekotto.

On the economic and political front, the presenters reflected on French private investments in Cameroon in late colonialism, the role of international financial institutions in development change in Cameroon, cultural intervention, and the politics of environment. The papers on politics addressed the Anglo French boundaries, symbolic efficiency and Cameroon’s democratic dilemmas, Cameroon’s media and nationalism, and political unity. Two papers addressed the role of law in the democratic transition and women’s rights in Cameroon. Looking to the future of Cameroon, Elias Bongmba (religious studies, Rice) reviewed the ideology on which the modern Cameroon state was constructed and argued that attention should be paid to concrete subjective relations and the day-to-day interactions of people.

Under the direction of Bongmba and Atieno Odhiambo (history, Rice), the two-day conference was co-sponsored by the Dean of Humanities, the Center for the Study of Cultures, and the Departments of Religious Studies, French Studies, and English, as well as the Houston-area African Studies Group.

“Path Dependency and Transition Economics” Workshop Series

In conjunction with the Department of History and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, the CSC co-sponsored a series of workshops organized by Carl Caldwell (history, Rice) and Steve Lewis (political science and Baker Institute, Rice) on the economics of countries in transition from planning to market regimes and the problems of path dependency and institutional “weight” in these transitions. Two seminars were organized: one on issues of transition and politics in Eastern Europe and the other on problems of political economy in the People’s Republic of China.

The first seminar, “German Unification and Its Consequences: Economic and Political Perspectives,” took place on November 17, 2000. We invited two researchers to present their findings: Irwin Collier of the Freie Universität Berlin and Verena Tobisch of the Universität Frankfurt an der Oder. Collier’s paper, titled “The Distribution of the Unification Bonus (Malus) in Post-Wall Eastern Germany,” dealt with the question of who had benefited economically from unification. The paper’s most interesting methodological point, however, was how one could measure purchasing power and standard of living across two such different political systems. He argued convincingly that quantitative comparisons of purchasing power between economies organized by scarcity and rationing and economies marked by a surplus of available goods are of limited value. Tobisch’s paper, “Satisfaction with Democracy and Its Sources: The Cases of East Germany and Hungary,” sought to use voting and polling data to determine to what extent economic conditions and social rights affected people’s attitudes toward democracy. Despite the complexity of the material, the event was very well attended, and an extensive and interesting discussion on...
posttransition prospects for democracy ensued.

The major speaker was unable to attend a planned second seminar to address the theme "Economic Planning in Republican and Early PRC-China: Path-Dependency and Institutions." Instead, Caldwell and Lewis assisted with an important conference in April at the University of Houston on the theme "Initial Conditions and the Transition Economy in Russia: The Weight of the Past in Comparative Perspective." Caldwell gave a comment and previous visitors to the CSC-sponsored series, Irwin Collier and Paul Gregory, played a major role.

This is the final year of the series on transition economics and path dependency, a project that has sought to draw connections between humanities and social sciences and to clarify the importance of the past in our understanding of the present across the globe.

JEAN-MARIE APOSTOLIDES

Co-sponsored by the CSC and the Department of French Studies, Jean-Marie Apostolides (Stanford University) gave a lecture on November 2 titled “Cyrano de Bergerac and the Culture of Heroism.” Apostolides’s visit was planned as a contribution to a seminar on the masterpieces of French theater, among them, Edmond Rostand’s Cyrano de Bergerac. As the author of a book centered around Rostand’s play and because of his involvement in stage performances at Stanford, Apostolides had the perfect credentials to deliver a lively lecture. He addressed the subject by placing the famous play in its social and political context, emphasizing the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, “l’Affaire Dreyfus,” and the notions of “Nation,” regional “patries,” and “Patrie.” The Gascogne’s Cadets fighting against the Spanish army were presented as a symbol of both national diversity and national unity. Apostolides, who has also studied psychoanalysis, gave an uncommon, although convincing and superbly delivered, interpretation of Roxane, not only as a mother figure but also as a “femme fatale,” such as Carmen. The following day, faculty and graduate students met with Apostolides for a session conducted in French and devoted to a close analysis of some key passages of the fifth act of the play.

PONLOP THINLEY NYIMA RINPOCHE

On June 19, 2001, we had the unusual presence on campus of a Tibetan Lama, Ponlop Thinley Nyima Rinpoche, head teacher of Menri monastery, now in India. Organized by graduate student M. Alejandro Chaoul (religious studies, Rice), Rinpoche lectured on “Mind-Body Practices of the Ancient Tibetan Bon Tradition,” the main focus of Chaoul’s dissertation.

Rinpoche discussed the link between mind and body well being and how the practices presented—the “magical wheel of the channels and vital breath” (Tsa lung and Trul khor)—could actually dispel one’s afflictions as it is claimed in the ancient texts. With a sense of humor, Ponlop Rinpoche cited Tibetan texts that described the mind and body relation as a dialogue discussing which was actually more important. “Mind is the boss, but without the body, mind is just a corpse,” he said. Rinpoche described how in ancient times the yogis, who meditated in caves for long periods of time and had no access to hospitals or doctors, used yogic practices such as Tsa lung and Trul khor to heal and reharmonize themselves.

Ponlop Rinpoche asserted that while those were actually some of the benefits of these contemplative practices, the main aim was to stabilize one’s “monkey-mind” and eventually achieve Buddhahood or enlightenment. He stressed that these yogas were done with body, speech, and mind together. This means that by balancing the vital winds (prana, chi, lung) and guiding their flow in the body, the practitioner can achieve a meditative state and mental stability that can then be taken into everyday life.

Rinpoche illustrated his vast knowledge by answering numerous questions from the enthusiastic audience. One of the participants commented after the talk: “Westerners just don’t grasp the concepts that all they need is within themselves—the Western culture is always looking outside of itself for the answers…. I just thought [Rinpoche] was a precious human. I found myself being mesmerized by his accent. What a gentle soul.”

During his visit, Rinpoche also taught on the topic “Tibetan Medicine and Astrology” at Ligmincha Institute of Texas, which aims to preserve the Tibetan religions and culture. For those interested in this topic, please look into the Rice School of Continuing Studies course “The Art of Well Being: Concepts and Practices of the East.”
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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 creativiy 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 connections 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.