Jan and Aleida Assmann, the CSC’s First Distinguished Visiting Professors

Inaugurating the Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program, scholars Jan and Aleida Assman come to the Rice campus October 1–22, 2000. This program is conceived and administered by the CSC and is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant and the various donors.

Jan Assmann is a world-renowned Egyptologist at the University of Heidelberg, and Aleida Assmann is a professor of English and comparative literature of international reputation at the University of Konstanz.

According to Werner Kelber, the CSC’s new director, there are two distinguishing features of the team’s work. “First, they both combine significant technical expertise in their respective fields with wide—very wide—theoretical and comparative interests and competencies. Second, both make notable contributions toward the development of the concept of ‘cultural memory,’ shaping it into a heuristic tool capable of illuminating varied aspects of human culture.” Kelber goes on to clarify, “In the simplest sense, ‘cultural memory’ implies that we possess history as we remember it—selectively, as members of a social group, and impelled by a desire to appropriate the past to solidify present identity.”

During their visit at Rice, each professor will deliver a public lecture, and jointly, they will conduct a seminar meeting four times for two hours each. Jan Assmann’s lecture will be on “Monotheism and Memory.” Aleida Assmann’s lecture will be on “Affect, Symbol, and Trauma: Stabilizers of Memory.”

The joint seminar is titled “Cultural Memory: Representing the Past and Reconstructing Identity.” Describing the seminar, Jan Assmann relays, “Not only within individuals, but also within cultures, memories are used to construct identities, legitimize institutions, and orient action and behavior. An attempt will be made to clarify and elaborate the concept of ‘cultural memory’ as an important research instrument for cultural studies.” The seminar will focus on general topics such as canonization, paradigms of learning, and reinventing tradition, history, and memory.

Throughout the seminar, these topics will be investigated in a bifocal way, taking the liberty to move freely between ancient cultures and modern issues. Thus, seminal problems concerning cultural institutions and practices of memory in ancient Egypt will be discussed, along with the problems of cultural memory in modernity or the status of cultural memory after the Holocaust.

Jan Assmann’s numerous accomplishments include the Forschungspreis of the Max Planck Society (1996), a Dr. theol.h.c. from the University of Muenster (1998), and the Deutscher Historikerpreis (1998), the highest award given by the Society of German Historians (every other year). Among his numerous books are Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen (Munich: Beck, 1992), which explores the interrelation among writing, cultural memory, and political identity in the examples of an-
Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities Arrives

The CSC welcomes Thomas E. Jenkins to Rice. Jenkins earned his Ph.D. in classical philology from Harvard University in 1999. His dissertation, “Intercepted Letters: Epistles and Their Readers in Ancient Literature,” focuses on the intersection of writing, narrative, and myth as refracted through many different authors, including Euripides, Plautus, Ovid, and the authors of the Historia Augusta. It pays particular attention to forgery, blackmail, cryptography, and other underhanded or devious uses of writing.

Before his selection to and acceptance of the postdoctoral fellowship, in 1999-00 Jenkins was visiting assistant professor in the Department of Classics at Washington and Lee University. His special interests include Augustan literature (especially Ovid and Elegy), Homer and theories of oral literature, ancient and modern drama (especially Aristophanes), and the use of information technology in education. As the first CSC Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow at Rice, Jenkins will teach one class a semester, engage in research and writing, and become an integral member of the CSC, the Department of Hispanic and Classical Studies, and the School of Humanities.

His courses for the 2000-01 school year are “The Roman Novel” (fall 2000) and “Greek Civilization” (spring 2001). The fall course will be an investigation of Petronius’ *Satyricon* and Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*, focusing on a close reading of the “Cena” and “Cupid and Psyche” episodes but with additional readings in translation. Topics include the problem of genre, decadence and satire, allegory and the reception of the novel, and the presentation of Roman sexuality. The course also will focus on the reflection and manipulation of Roman oral traditions and folklore.

Jenkins’ spring course will be a survey of the major monuments—literary, historical, and artistic—in the formation of Greece’s ancient cultural identity. Works to be read or studied include Homer, Sappho, the tragedians, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, and the artistic and architectural program of the Acropolis. Special emphasis will be placed on Greece’s self-definition through confrontation and analysis of its mythic (and not so mythic) past.

For more information about the Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Humanities, please consult the CSC website at http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~culture/center.html.

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was matched by more than two to one by the School of Humanities, to support the CSC’s first Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities.

The CSC’s new director, Werner Kelber, stated, “I look forward to working toward meeting the challenges of the NEH and the Mellon Foundation so that our programs can get fully under way.”

“We have wonderful offices in the new Humanities Building, and soon we’ll have a full contingent of visiting scholars and postdoctoral fellows at the CSC,” remarked Colleen Morimoto, CSC’s associate director.

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Ancient Egypt, Israel, and Greece; and more recently, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Harvard U. Press, 1997), which offers new reflections on the history of monotheism (from Akhenaton to Freud) and a new reading of the place of Egypt in modern Western culture. Assmann had two more books published in the first half of 2000: *Weisheit und Mysterium: Das Bild der Griechen von Aegypten* and *Der Tod als Thema der Kulturtheorie*.

Aleida Assmann has received numerous honors, including membership in the Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften and corresponding membership of the Philologisch-Historische Klasse of the Goettinger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Her books include *Die Legitimität der Fiktion: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der literarischen Kommunikation* (Munich, 1980); *Arbeit am nationalen Gedächtnis: Eine kurze Geschichte der deutschen Bildungsidee* (Frankfurt, 1993; French translation—*La construction de la memoire nationale*); and *Zeit und Tradition: Kulturelle Strategien der Dauer* (Cologne, 1999). Her most monumental works are *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich, 1999) and (with Ute Frevert) *Geschichtsvergessenheit—Geschichtsversessenheit: Was kommt nach Scham und Schuld?* (Stuttgart, 1999). In spring 2001, Aleida Assmann will serve as visiting professor in the English department at Princeton. Harvard University will host Jan Assman as visiting professor also this spring.
From the Director

It is fitting to commence this statement with an expression of gratitude to Judith Brown and David Nirenberg. During her tenure as dean of the School of Humanities, Judith gave consistent and prudent support to the CSC and its varied activities. She was keenly aware of the CSC’s potential for enhancing the vitality of research and teaching through a series of programs whose configuration of materials, subject matters, and methodologies transcend conventional disciplinary boundaries. She also anticipated that the CSC’s national and international outreach would contribute to Rice’s growing reputation across the nation and overseas. With her enthusiastic approval, David, my predecessor at the CSC, undertook two major initiatives: The Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program, designed to bring scholars of eminence to Rice for visits from two weeks to a full semester, and the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, created to invite up to three junior colleagues for a period of two years each for the purpose of conducting research and teaching. On behalf of the CSC and its numerous participants and beneficiaries, I thank our two colleagues and wish them well in their respective administrative and academic pursuits.

David’s initiatives have left a major challenge for me as I begin the directorship. The NEH $400,000 four-to-one challenge grant for the Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program commits the CSC to raise $1.6 million over a period of four years. As of July 31, 2000, Rice has raised over $856,900 in cash and commitments. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s award of $1.475 million is a one-to-one matching grant that obligates the CSC to raise that amount in three years. Thus far, we have raised $300,000 in cash and another $200,000 in commitments. I am very pleased to acknowledge the growing number of sponsors who have most generously assisted the CSC in meeting these formidable challenges. Both programs will be secured by permanent endowments. Hence, visiting scholars and Rice faculty and students will benefit from them “in perpetuity.”

Now in its 14th year of existence, the CSC presently supports 12 workshops and study groups, plus a host of annual symposia, roundtable discussions, conferences, film festivals, and during 1999–00, 41 public lectures. The workshops and study groups comprise African studies, ancient Mediterranean civilizations, Asian studies, Central Europe, concepts and categorizations (cognitive sciences), continental theory, cultural and social theory, environmental studies, feminist studies, inquiries (queer theory), Judaic studies, and Medieval studies.

Among the major events cosponsored by the CSC and scheduled for the near future are conferences and symposia listed under 2001–01 Conferences (see page 4) in this newsletter. By any standard, these offerings represent a remarkable record, and one might well agree with David Nirenberg’s assessment that the CSC provides “a marvelous variety of perspectives on nearly every aspect of human activity.”

Our own culture’s fierce dedication to innovation sometimes finds it easier to initiate new programs than to nurture existing ones. I intend to nurture the existing workshops and study groups as best as I can. To that end, I plan to attend as many CSC events as time permits, to learn from my colleagues, to encourage them to listen and to talk to each other, and to discuss means of improvement—all in the spirit of the CSC’s mission to study cultures globally “as unique examples of human behavior and creativity.” At the same time, I want to encourage colleagues in one workshop or study group to show an interest in what is being done in other workshops and study groups—to develop a sense of the mission of the CSC as a whole. For I am inclined to think that we have barely begun to lay the groundwork for what could evolve into notable interdisciplinary, international projects. I will encourage all colleagues to apply their rich knowledge of cultural particularities to the formulation of more broadly integrated views of human culture—all in the spirit of the CSC’s mission to study cultures “as interconnected phenomena that can illuminate one another.”

—Werner Kelber

The Mission of the Center for the Study of Cultures

The Center for the Study of Cultures exists to promote the study of cultures across time and around the world, both as unique examples of human behavior and creativity and as interconnected phenomena that can illuminate one another. The goal of the center is to provide a forum for the comparative and interdisciplinary conversations that make visible the 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.

In the wake of political and theoretical challenges posed by liberal, poststructuralist, and postcolonialist work, this conference and its workshops will bring together innovative scholars in the humanities and social sciences to explore how feminist analyses can speak to fundamental questions concerning the nature of subjectivity, the ethical claims of difference, the meaning of social justice, and the efficacy of political action. Rice faculty conference organizers Lynne Huffer (French studies), Susan Lurie (English), and Carol Quillen (history) have confirmed the participation of a number of speakers, including keynote speaker Angela Davis (UC–Santa Cruz), Drucilla Cornell, Ann Cvetkovich, Saidiya Hartman, Geraldine Heng, Wahneema Lubiano, Rosalind Petchesky, and Robyn Wiegman. Davis’s keynote address, titled “Race, Gender, and the Punishment Industry,” is free and open to the public on Friday, November 3, in the Grand Hall at 8 p.m. For more information, go to www.rice.edu/feministconf.


The Southern Historical Society, Rice’s School of Humanities, the Office of the President of Rice, the Journal of Southern History, the history department, and the CSC will all sponsor a symposium to bring five prominent southern historians to Rice to address the different aspects of Woodward’s seminal work, published in 1951. “The work has been the most influential book ever published in the field of southern history,” proclaims John Boles (history, Rice, and editor, Journal of Southern History). “It has shaped how historians have conceived of the 50 years following Reconstruction.” Additionally, Woodward trained more than 40 of the most influential southern historians. The symposium will bring Barbara Fields (Columbia) to discuss the topic of race and racism, Glenda Gilmore (Yale) to discuss gender, Harold Woodman (Purdue) to discuss economic history and law, James C. Cobb (University of Georgia) to discuss cultural history, and Robert McMath (Georgia Tech) to discuss politics. Each of these scholars has published major works on the topics listed, and these topics will allow for the analysis of the most salient aspects of Woodward’s book. Several other prominent southern historians also will be invited to participate in the symposium as discussants. Boles is optimistic that a book-length publication will result from this symposium.


This symposium will bring several Asian American writers and filmmakers to Rice under the leadership of Asian studies faculty member Chiu-Mi Lai. The activities will coincide with the student-organized Asian American Film Festival. The goal of this symposium is to bring writers and filmmakers together for a discourse on transformative identity politics in the Asian American arena. Lai plans several roundtable discussions led by invited authors and filmmakers and focusing on issues such as assimilation, including the politics of recognition and cultural identity formation. Workshops on fiction and memoir writing as well as on independent filmmaking will address authorial manipulation and artist presentation of Asian American themes by creators of Asian American identity. The symposium will also include a town meeting at the Chinese Cultural Center as well as participation from other arts and community groups such as Imprint and the Asian Pacific American Heritage Association.
Narrative Conference—Society for the Study of Narrative Literature (SSNL), March 8–10, 2001

In cooperation with the SSNL and Rice faculty organizer Helena Michie (English), the CSC will cosponsor the annual narrative conference. Approximately 300 international scholars in English, foreign languages, law, history, and philosophy are expected to attend this three-day conference in March. Michie and an advisory board are shaping the conference’s call for papers for fall 2000. In the past, the narrative conferences have included panels on literary texts of all sorts as well as on narratives of conversion, historiography, narrative painting, oral traditions, and narratives of gender construction, to give a few examples. The annual conference has been instrumental in the shift in the discipline of narrative studies from narratological concerns (i.e., charting narratives and finding deep structures) to a concern with audience, intent, the relation between narrative and temporality, and to theoretical approaches to the study of narrative.


This conference will explore the intersection of memory, violence, and politics and is based on the thesis that historical narratives situate themselves at the intersection of competing collective memories. Ussama Makdisi (Rice, history) and Paul Silverstein (Barnard, anthropology) are co-organizers of this conference, which will investigate the intimate relation between history, domination, and resistance on 19th- and 20th-century politics in the Middle East, North Africa, and their various diasporas. Organized into four panels over two days, conference participants from around the world will examine processes of colonization and decolonization, of sectarianism and secularism, of state-building and communal loss. Whether represented as trauma or as destiny, this historical domain of violence becomes the basis for the constitution of collective narratives of origin, loss, and recovery. The conference will explore the immanently contested and continually reworked and rewritten nature in relation to the political experiences and requirements of each successive generation of these narratives.
Transition Economics Speaker Series 2001

Rice faculty members Steven Lewis (political science and Baker Institute) and Carl Caldwell (history), in conjunction with the new Goethe Center for Central European Studies and the Transnational China Project, continue discussions on the economics and institutional politics of transitional societies in 2000–01. In 1998, a one-day symposium was held on planning initiatives in China and Western Europe from 1935–50, involving five scholars from outside of Rice. In 1999–00, three more speakers who dealt with wide-ranging topics related to the problem of path dependency (i.e., the institutional constraints often ignored by transition economists as they conceptualize the development of market societies) were invited to Rice. In 2000–01, Caldwell and Lewis will organize a one-day conference to address the issues of Chinese transition and will create a speaker series focusing on the nature of East Germany’s incorporation into West Germany over the past 10 years, bringing together scholars from history, political science, and economics.

“Economic Planning in Republican and Early PRC–China: Path-Dependency and Institutions,” which is proposed for February 24, 2001, will investigate the Republican Chinese and early PRC context of the institutional origins of socialist economic planning. Recent research on the path of privatization in the 1990s in the former centralist-planned economies of China, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union has emphasized the role of path-dependency, or the historical constraints on the selection of privatization strategies. Both the privatization and democratization reforms in these societies seem to follow a path constrained by a reverse logic of the way in which the institutions of the planned economies were set up in the 1950s. Such transitional property forms as cooperatives and collectives, which played a key role in the “socialist transformation of capital” in these societies in the 1950s, re-emerged in the late 1980s, before formal privatization plans were adopted in the 1990s. But recent, intriguing research by historians of Republican China suggests that even the great transformation of the 1950s was not such a radical departure; many of the institutions of the PRC’s planned economy existed before the revolution. The presenters on this panel will address the theoretical and empirical issues of understanding such path-dependency.

China historian William Kirby (director of Harvard’s Asia Center) will discuss changes in the macro-level state organizations of China’s planned economy, both in the Republican period and in the beginning of the Socialist period. His paper, “The Natural Resource Commission in Republican China and the State Planning Commission in the PRC: Path-Dependency and Continuity,” discusses how these changes were constrained by norms of state organs and the attitudes of planners that have existed across regimes.

Historian Linsun Cheng (University of Massachusetts–Amherst) will discuss the macro-level, institutional origins of China’s planned economy. His paper, “Economic Planning and China’s Planned Economy, 1937–1942,” will focus on the central-level, state organizations for controlling China’s economy. He makes the counter-intuitive claim that the State Planning Commission and the State Economic Commission of PRC–China had their origins in the Republican government’s National Resources Commission.

A paper on the micro-level institutional origins of political campaigns of the early PRC, by Patricia Thornton (Trinity College, political science) and titled “Capitalists and Comrades: Institutional Isomorphic Change and the Dilemmas of Partial Reform in China,” discusses how anticorruption and anticapitalist campaigns in the early 1950s have created organizational norms and values in the Chinese state that shape marketization reforms in 1990s China.

Steven Lewis plans to discuss how the micro-level, organizational constraints that central planners of the PRC inherited from planners in the Republican government shaped privatization experiments in 1980s and 1990s China. “Long-term Institutional Constraints on Privatization Experimentation: Evaluation Path-Dependency in China and Other Formerly Central-Planned Economies” is a paper that traces the organizational norms and conventions of state economic organs that have shaped both the socialist transformation of capital in the 1950s and the privatization of state enterprises in the 1990s.

Caldwell and Lewis plan to invite three speakers at different times during 2000–01 to discuss aspects of German transition over the last 10 years. The first will be Irwin Collier (Free University Berlin, economics), a noted expert on the economics and politics of German unification. His talks will pull together the complex factors that have reshaped Germany since 1989. These include the collapse of markets to the East with the introduction of the D-Mark, the failed privatization in the eastern provinces of Germany, the effect of European integration, and the reorganization of the German welfare state.

Along with Collier, a graduate student of economics from the innovative Polish-German University of Frankfurt-an-der-Oder will compare transitional processes in East Germany and Russia. Another scholar from the field of political science will be invited to address East Germany’s institutional changes over the past 10 years.
2000–01 Fellows’ Research Projects

Werner Kelber, Religious Studies  
Project: “Figurations of Remembering: Processes of Reconstructing the Past of Jesus”

Werner Kelber, along with Jens Schroeter (University of Hamburg), proposes a collaborative study on the application of the concept of cultural memory to early Christian processes of oral and textual traditioning. In method and philosophy, this project is indebted to the insights of art historian Aby Warburg, to the pioneering work of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, and to recent scholarship by Aleida and Jan Assmann, who have developed the concept of cultural memory into a heuristic device capable of illuminating significant aspects of human culture.

Broadly speaking, three interrelated features characterize cultural memory. First, remembering entails perforce forgetting. It operates selectively, not historically. Second, remembering is group-oriented. It feeds on information, symbols, and conscious and unconscious traits shared by social, ethnic, and political entities. Third, remembering is constitutive in the formation of social, political, ethnic, and religious identities. Interest in the past is motivated by present needs for validation, justification, transformation, etc. Defined in this fashion, cultural memory implies that we possess history as we remember it—selectively, as members of a group, and impelled by the desire to reappropriate the past to meet present ends.

Specifically, Kelber and Schroeter propose to apply cultural memory to Q (the earliest hypothetically reconstructable collection of Jesus’ sayings), to oral performance, to Mark (the earliest canonical narrative gospel), to Thomas (a gnosticizing sayings gospel discovered near Nag Hammadi, Egypt), and to some extent to Matthew and Luke. Cultural memory holds the key to oral performance, to oral–scribal interfaces, and also to chirographic productions, because even the narrative gospels are composed not by a simple juggling of literary sources but ultimately through productive, memorial arbitration. Based on the new model of early Christian figurations of remembering, the study will address longstanding philosophical and hermeneutical questions: What is the difference between a semi-Hegelian model of a transmission of traditions versus processes of rememorization (e.g., between tradition and cultural memory)? Can one reduce historical reappropriation to remembering, as some would reduce it to rhetoric? Is there an alternative to the dichotomy that is constituted by knowledge as representation versus knowledge as rememorization?

Paula Sanders, History  
Project: “Making Cairo Medieval”

Medieval Cairo is a product of modernity. At the turn of the 19th century, the city and its monuments were classified in the Description de l’Egypte as part of “l’etat moderne.” The older sections of Cairo would not become “medieval” for another 75 years. This project seeks to understand the process by which Cairo was transformed from being a modern Oriental city into a medieval city. Paula Sanders will examine first the emergence of medieval Cairo as a historiographic problem. Second, she will discuss medievalism and orientalism in relation to one another by asking questions about the multiple meanings of the “medieval” in general and of “medieval Cairo” in particular, in the broader intellectual culture and popular imagination of Europeans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Suzanne Kemmer, Linguistics  
Project: “The Typology of Causative Constructions”

In 1993, Suzanne Kemmer noted that recurrent patterns are indicative of significant human conceptual categories and cognitive processes and, realizing the importance of discovering such patterns empirically, is seeking principled explanations for them. Her study investigates regularities in linguistic patterns across languages.

The current project investigates the linguistic categories involved in the conceptualization of causation. Most languages have one or more special constructions designed to express causation in a single clause (e.g., the English HAVE and MAKE causatives, as in I HAD HIM TYPE THE LETTER; SHE MADE ME DO IT, etc.). Kemmer has investigated causative constructions in a number of publications, developing with a colleague a framework based on some fundamental cognitive and cultural models (Kemmer and Verhagen, 1994). She will continue work started on Luo (Kemmer and Chiao, 1998) that has a number of interesting typological peculiarities, which have so far gone unnoticed in the literature. Kemmer will incorporate data on other languages, collected by her students and herself and from materials available through Fondren Library. Kemmer further explains, “The approach I take is lexical, observing the effects of the semantics of lexical items on the overall constructional meaning. The work is a contribution to the general study of the relation of grammatical categories to cognitive and cultural categories.”
African Studies Workshop (AfSW)
Coordinator: Atieno Odhiambo (history)

The AfSW attracted faculty and graduate students from Rice, Texas Southern University, University of Houston, and Southwest Texas State University to attend seminars all year long. The rotational pattern of meetings at the three campuses and regular postings of program information on H-Net brought activities to the wider Houston academic and professional conversations. The group has had inquiries about papers from as far as Dakar and Cape Town.

The year’s presentations focused on “World Histories.” In fall 1999, Atieno Odhiambo (history, Rice) began the year’s activities with a paper and discussion on African archaeology and its epistemological future based on Fekru Hassan’s article, which calls for a departure from the burden of colonial boundaries that have bedeviled African archaeology in favor of stressing Africa’s common past and the shared future bonds. Dismas Masolo (University of Louisville) discussed a paper titled “Nationalism and Philosophy in Africa,” a special tribute to Tanzania’s late president Julius Nyerere. Sheryl McCurdy (UT–Houston School of Public Health) shared a paper, “Manyema Women’s Sexuality,” examining the strategies that encouraged low fertility and divorce in colonial Tanganyika. The paper presented analyses of British attempts to reform and reeducate Manyama women whom they believed were infertile because they harbored venereal diseases. Edward Steinhart (Texas Tech) presented “Spirit Possession in Western Uganda,” an examination of the persistence of the Cwezi cult across the centuries and its reemergence as a class-conditioned phenomenon in the recent past.

“Global Capital, Local Power,” a discussion on the risks of knowledge in postcolonial Africa, was led by David William Cohen (Johns Hopkins). The seminar series continued with Pier Larson’s presentation, titled “Of Conversation and Conversion,” a discussion of the meeting of missionary and African minds in early 19th-century Madagascar, extending the debates on vernacular Christianity to the grassroots of African villages. Abiola Irele (University of Ohio) spoke on “Philosophy and Literature in Francophone Africa” via the problematic of Negritude. Susan McIntosh (anthropology, Rice) gave a penchant critique of Jan Vansina’s archaeological episteme in “Historians and Archaeologists at Odds.” Edward Alpers (UCLA) contributed to the series with some Atlantic comparisons in a talk titled “The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean World.” Gregory Maddox (Texas State University) spoke on “Degradation Narratives” and “Population Time Bombs: Myths and Realities of the African Environments.”

Wide-ranging and engaging, the “World Histories” theme enabled the group to be cognizant of wider discourses in the academy and to treat African themes as part of the wider humanities and social science themes. For 2000–01, it is planned that Rice will continue its leadership role in African studies in the community.
Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations (AMC)
Coordinator: Hilary Mackie (Hispanic and classical studies)

AMC sponsored “Sacred Cargo: How to Ship an Obelisk,” a fascinating slide lecture by Cheryl Ward (nautical archaeology, Texas A&M) on November 8, 1999, which was attended by students and faculty members, including some mechanical engineers. Discussion was lively, and everyone was impressed with the technical expertise of ancient engineers, not to mention Professor Ward’s hands-on knowledge of the subject.

On April 10, 2000, a lively and protracted discussion followed Susan Ashbrook Harvey’s (religious studies, Brown) talk, titled “Sensing the Sacred: Bodily Experience and Bodily Knowing in Late Antique Christianity,” a groundbreaking treatment of a new, explicitly nonrational epistemology that developed in the late antique church.

The AMC series also sponsored “Written Text and Transformations of Thought and Expression in Classical Greece” April 13–16, 2000. (See 2000–01 Conferences)

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

ASW’s May 2000 workshop on “Teaching Chinese Language, Literature, and Culture” involved a number of Rice faculty as well as scholars from several other universities. This workshop was modeled on last year’s highly successful two-day conference, which gathered a dozen enthusiastic participants from the University of Texas, Trinity University, Southwestern University, and Rice. The 1999 workshop not only inspired a panel presentation at the fall 1999 meeting of the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies in San Marcos, but it also inaugurated a productive ongoing dialogue among several of the participants.

The basic goal of the workshop was to discuss innovative pedagogical techniques, electronic resources, and other ways of enhancing teaching effectiveness. Participants gave a brief presentation on a China-related subject: a successful teaching strategy, current research (if it had some sort of pedagogical application), and electronic and other resources. Participants also shared syllabi, bibliographies, visual aids, and other materials. A goal for 2000–01 is to put the papers and other materials on a curriculum-oriented website.

Invited participants and papers that explored the linkages between research and pedagogy included: Jianyue Chen (Prairie View A&M)—“Chinese Nationalism: A Dilemma in Teaching Modern China”; Steve Davidson (Southwestern University)—“Competing Histories of Chinese Thought”; Marshall McArthur (Rice)—Teaching Taiwan’s Literature as Chinese Literature”; Chiu-Mi Lai (Rice)—“Using Creative Writing in Literature (Chinese and Asian American) and Language Classes”; Steve Lewis (Rice)—“Chinese Political Literature as Comparative Social Science Teaching Material: Issues and Obstacles”; Richard Smith (Rice)—“The Yijing (Classic of Changes) as a Teaching Tool”; Meng Yeh (Trinity University)—“Ju Dou: The Power of Filmic Composition”; and Xiaohong Wen (UH)—“Teaching Topic-Prominent Structures.”

As in the past, the members of ASW (almost exclusively faculty members in Asian studies) met a number of times during the year to discuss matters of mutual interest. These discussions were catalyzed by major events cosponsored by the Department of Asian Studies and by the Transnational China Project, whose website is http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~tchina/, listing the calendar of events for the year.

The CSC’s cosponsored lectures and/or visits included Tomomi Okazaki’s (Kyushu University) presentation of “Language Teaching in China and Japan,” which was followed by a roundtable discussion by members of the Rice Asian studies faculty. During his October 1999 visit, Okazaki also observed some classroom teaching and had informal discussions with a number of Rice faculty over a three-day period. On March 24, 2000, Li Zehou, prominent Chinese philosopher and former director of the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, presented a lecture titled “After Bidding Farewell to Revolution.” Sponsors included the Transnational China Project, the Southern Chinese Writers Association, and the CSC. A roundtable discussion on Chinese literature was led by Pai Hsien-Yung (UC-Santa Barbara), the most famous modernist writer in the Chinese language, on May 6, 2000. This event was also cosponsored by the Transnational China Project and the Southern Chinese Writers Association.

For the 2001 academic year, ASW will continue to lay the groundwork for a collaborative project on pedagogy involving Sarah Thal (history, Rice), Rich Smith (history, Rice), and Tomomi Okazaki and Toshiyuki Kono (both Kyushu University). The ASW will also cosponsor a symposium on Asian American literature and film in February 2001, to be organized by Chiu-Mi Lai (Asian studies, Rice). (For spring 2000, Lai developed a popular new course, “Not the Other: Contemporary Themes in Asian American Literature and Films.”)

As a part of a larger objective of internationalization at Rice, various members of the Asian studies faculty have become heavily involved over the past year in designing and/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 regular Rice curriculum. One recent example of fruitful cooperation among members of the Asian studies department and other faculty members is the team-teaching efforts of Marshall McArthur and Hiroko Sato in

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UNIV 322, titled “Cross-Cultural Awareness: Cultures outside the U.S.” A particularly interesting and innovative idea that Thal has been working on lately is a team-taught course, titled “Seminar in the History of Contemporary Japanese Business Culture,” which involves a travel component.

ASW views 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 schools but also with preexisting interdisciplinary programs. In the future, ASW envisions a full-scale program of international studies based on innovative undergraduate teaching (including new technologies, media studies, etc.), close collaboration with like-minded colleagues both at home and abroad, and joint research projects. ASW is also very keen on bolstering graduate and postdoctorate programs at Rice in areas related to the study of languages and cultures in order to amplify and maximize resources.

Central Europe Study Groups (CESG)
Coordinator: Ewa Thompson (German and Slavic studies)

CESG has been successful in attracting attention to scholarship dealing with or originating in Central and Eastern Europe. This year’s speakers emphasized the rapid changes in social, intellectual, and political life in Central Europe after the fall of communism. Among these changes are a renewed interest in history and its interpretations. The suppressed history of the region is now beginning to emerge, and much remains to be done to integrate current research into mainstream American scholarship.

The group’s seven meetings during the year attracted a broad audience, as topics ranged from the Holocaust to the changes brought about by the demise of communism in the 1990s to the challenges of teaching and research in the field of Slavic languages and literatures. These discussions included countries such as postcommunist Russia, Germany, Slovenia, Lithuania, and Central and Eastern Europe, generally.

“The Reflections on the Holocaust,” Marcus Lechter’s lecture on February 3, 2000, detailed his experiences in the Jewish ghetto in Nazi-occupied Krakow. He also described two years of hiding on the “Aryan” side in Nazi-occupied Warsaw and his experiences in the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen and in a labor camp in Wilhelmminenhof near Berlin. Lechter shared with the audience his observations on human nature under conditions of imprisonment, privation, and danger to life.

Valery Lazarev (University of Moscow and UH) lectured on “History Textbooks in Postcommunist Russia” on October 27, 1999. He concluded that while Russian perceptions of various parts of the world changed after 1991, the attitude of Russian historians to Russia’s former “white colonies” has not been revised. He noted that textbooks show few attempts to give voice to the formerly suppressed nations and points of view.

In contrast, Zdzislaw Krasnodebski (Ostmitteleuropa Institut, University of Bremen, Germany) spoke of substantial changes in East Germany, Poland, and other East Central European countries after the departure of the Red Army in his talk, “The Changing Social and Political Realities in Central and Eastern Europe,” on March 17, 2000. Krasnodebski pointed out that in Germany in particular, attitudes toward so-called Eastern Europe are changing rapidly, and countries admitted to NATO in 1999 are increasingly viewed as part of Central Europe. Chester Natulewicz outlined his Internet project of bringing classical research in Central and Eastern European countries to the attention of Western scholars. He pointed out that Western bibliographers largely ignore Central and Eastern European scholarship, in effect suppressing dissemination of research done in postcommunist countries in his lecture, “The Greek and Roman Classics in Central and Eastern Europe Today,” on December 9, 1999. Milan Jazbec, Minister Plenipotentiary of Slovenia in Sweden, detailed challenges in foreign diplomacy that the new small states have to face. He pointed out that one of the ways to cope with these challenges is for several small states to band together and develop close relations, such as those existing between Slovenia and the Baltic states, in his lecture, “The Diplomacies of the Small New States,” on February 21, 2000. In the same vein, John Knasas (University of St. Thomas) spoke about the fear the Baltic republics have of various parts of the world changed after 1991, the attitude of Russian historians to Russia’s former “white colonies” has not been revised. He noted that textbooks show few attempts to give voice to the formerly suppressed nations and points of view.

The final meeting, held April 13, 2000, and titled “Slavic Studies in Postcommunist: Educational Challenges,” was a roundtable discussion involving Slavic scholars from Rice, the University of Houston, and Texas A&M. The roundtable dealt with the declining Russian enrollments and ways to strengthen Slavic studies. Olga Cooke (Texas A&M), Harry Walsh (UH), and Ewa Thompson (Rice) were participants.

Some CESG lectures will be or already have been published in the online Sarmatian Review (www.ruf.rice.edu/~sarmatiai). Central Europe Online and other internet directories cite Sarmatian Review as one of the best sites on Central European subjects.
Elizabeth Spelke (brain and cognitive sciences, MIT) was CC’s main guest last year. She presented “Core Concepts and New Combinations: Space and Number” to an audience of approximately 60 at noon on November 18, 1999. The lecture was followed by an extended (one and one-half hour) question-and-answer period. Spelke is one of the foremost investigators in the world on the subject of infant knowledge of various domains, including number, space, causation, and objects. She was admitted to the National Academy of Sciences a year ago on the basis of that work. She moves to Harvard in 2000–01.

In preparation for Spelke’s visit, CC held three reading and discussion meetings in October and November 1999, on her published work. These meetings were attended by Dan Osherson and David Schneider (both psychology, Rice), Richard Grandy and Eric Margolis (both philosophy, Rice), Janice Bordeaux (ecology and evolutionary biology, Rice), and Anne Jacobson and Jim Garson (both philosophy, UH). Wide-ranging and critical discussions were held concerning the precise evidence for the claims of infant knowledge and of the claims of appropriate formulation of the content of the knowledge.

After her lecture and the discussion that followed, Spelke met with the members of the group for two more hours of discussion, followed by several more hours of informal discussion over dinner. These discussions provided very significant clarification of Spelke’s claims and the nature of her experiments and evidence. The group also explored a newer suggestion she had proposed in her lecture—that what distinguishes human cognition is not an additional module or modules of specific knowledge like those mentioned above but is instead the ability to integrate knowledge from various modules. Her suggestion is that this ability is primarily language-based, but several members of the CC group argued for an alternative view—that there is a more fundamental, prelinguistic reasoning ability.

During her visit, Spelke also met for two hours with a group of approximately 15 students, both graduate and undergraduate, and discussed her unpublished work on the development of ethical judgment in children. In the interstices of these talks, she met with individual faculty members for additional discussions.

Spelke’s visit was deemed the most successful visit CC has had thus far. Each of her three presentations covered distinct material, and most of the content concerned research she has not yet published. To invite researchers to discuss their work that is at the current edge of their investigations is the aim of CC. Eric Margolis will recommend that Spelke be brought back to Rice as a Presidential Lecturer.

CC plans to invite Susan Carey for fall 2000. Carey, a colleague of Spelke, also is moving to Harvard in fall 2000. For spring 2001, CC is considering a list of possible speakers, including one who studies the knowledge system of other primates, a social cognitive anthropologist known for his study of concepts across cultures, and a philosopher of cognitive science with an interest in concepts and concept acquisition.

Environmental Studies Workshop (ES)
Coordinator: Walter Isle (English)

The ESW’s activities centered around its reading group meetings, hosted by Will Rice College, and concerned developing an understanding of what shape teaching and research on environmental studies should take, especially on the interrelationships among the disciplines of science, policy, and values. In other words, how much does one, with a background in a specific, traditional discipline, need to know about other areas that are crucial to the broad field of environmental studies? The workshop included participants from the ecology, geology, biochemistry, religious studies, sociology, English, and policy studies departments, as well as staff members and several students.

The group’s readings ranged widely in nature writing from Alaskan poet John Haines to Sue Ellen Campbell, a Rice graduate and president of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, to scientific subjects in preparation for meeting with visitors from off campus. The group also focused on two books: Sandra Steingraber’s Living Downstream: A Scientist’s Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment (Vintage Books, 1998) in fall 1999, and State of the World 2000 (World Watch Institute) in spring 2000. Steingraber visited the campus, met with the workshop at lunch, and spoke to a large audience of students, faculty, and members of the community and the Texas Medical Center in the evening on the topic of cancer and the environment. In reading selections from State of the World 2000, the group discussed topics such as anticipating environmental surprise, the challenges of the new century, nourishing the underfed and overfed, recovering the paper landscape, and redesigning agricultural irrigation. Indicative of the nature of environmental studies, the readings covered a broad range of topics.

Visitors who met with the group included Alan Marcus (Iowa State), who discussed “DES: Synthetic Hormones and Cancer,” and Roger Guzowski (Amherst), a recycling coordinator for a four-college consortium, who talked with us about Paul Hawken’s “Natural Capitalism.” The workshop also joined with the Environmental Programs Committee in a lunch colloquium presented by Rives Taylor (UT Health Sciences Center), who discussed the architecture of a new “green” building under construction at the center. Two other
colloquia were presented: Matt Fraser (environmental science and engineering, Rice) discussed pollution studies in the Houston area, and Robin Sickles (economics, Rice) discussed environmental factors in relation to growth.

For 2000–01, ESW will continue to encourage further interdisciplinary conversation on the subject of the environment. The group plans to schedule a colloquium with Rice’s president, Malcolm Gillis, in the fall. In coordination with the Texas Medical Center and the Houston Citizens’ Environment Coalition, ESW will begin to plan a conference on environmental justice for 2001–02.

**Feminist Reading Group Workshop (FRG)**

Coordinator: Lynne Huffer (French studies)

The FRG sponsored three events during the fall semester and four events during the spring semester. All events explored “Feminism and Public Culture” through a variety of approaches, including reading and discussion, films, and speakers. At its first meeting on October 7, 1999, an audience from Rice and the community at large gathered to explore the year’s theme by discussing mainstream representations of feminism in the 1990s. Discussion materials included a June 1998 *Time* magazine article on feminism titled “Is Feminism Dead?,” a chapter from Elizabeth Wurtzel’s book, *Bitch* (Anchor Books, 1999), and a clip from the TV show *Ally McBeal*.

On October 12, 1999, FRG, along with the anthropology department, presented K. Lalita, a social activist and scholar from the Anveshi Research Center for Women’s Studies in Hyderabad, India, and coauthor (with Vasantha Kannabiran and Rama Melkote) of *We Were Making History* (Zed Books, 1990), an anthology that recounts the life stories of Hyderabadi women in the Telangana people’s struggle. K. Lalita addressed questions of political activism, oral history, and international feminism in a talk titled “Writing Oral History and Living Political Experience: An Account of Feminist Praxis in Hyderabad, India.” This event attracted a large audience outside of the Rice community, and a lively discussion followed her lecture.

At the final meeting of the fall semester on November 12, 1999, Patricia Lorcin (history, Rice) presented her work on gender and race in the context of French colonialism in Algeria during the interwar period and offered a more historical perspective on the theme of feminism and public culture.

Events for the spring semester included two films, two lectures, and a meeting for discussion of readings. On February 2, 2000, FRG hosted feminist theorist and filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha for the showing of her film, *A Tale of Love* (1995), followed by a lecture and discussion led by Trinh. Trinh wrote, directed, and produced the film, which portrays the Vietnamese immigrant experience by following the quest of a woman in love. The film is loosely inspired by *Tale of Kieu*, the famous Vietnamese poem that the Vietnamese themselves often describe as a mythical biography of their motherland. This event involved the participation and cosponsorship of Ancestral Films, Inc., a community-based organization that brings filmmakers to Houston and to the Rice Media Center.

A small group from Rice and the Houston community met on March 23, 2000, to discuss Sandy Stone’s *The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto* (1991) and Judith Halberstam’s *Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum* (1998). The issues discussed included transgender identity, its relation to feminism, and its representation to public culture. Continuing to explore these issues and in preparation for the visit of Judith Halberstam, the third event sponsored by FRG was the screening of the documentary film about the life and death of Brandon Teena on April 14, 2000, titled *The Brandon Teena Story*.

Judith Halberstam (English, UC–San Diego), author of *Female Masculinity* (1998) and coauthor (with Della Grace Volcano) of *The Drag King Book* (1999), was FRG’s final guest speaker of the year. In her engaging lecture, “Male Fraud: Counterfeit Masculinities and the Brandon Teena Archive,” Halberstam traced the development of an archive of the materials of the life and death of Brandon Teena, the rural transgender individual. Because this archive is still under construction, Halberstam indicated this was a unique opportunity to look at the methods used to collect, rationalize, and memorize individual subjects and the hidden histories they represent. Most importantly, with particular regard to the theme of feminism and public culture, Halberstam explored the myriad ways in which representations of Brandon Teena—on film, in true crime stories, in novels, on the Web, and on
video—differ or concur in their version of Brandon’s story and its meaning. Halberstam’s lecture drew a large audience, including Rice faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, faculty and students from the University of Houston, and local artists and filmmakers from the Houston community.

FRG’s plans for 2001 are to support the feminist conference scheduled for November 3–5, 2000 (See 2000–01 Conferences) by sponsoring smaller reading/discussion sessions around the general theme of the conference.

Inquiries Study Group (Inquiries)

Coordinators: Colleen Lamos (English), fall; Rafael Mérida-Jiménez (Hispanic and classical studies), spring

Inquiries focuses on the interdisciplinary effects of queer theory. On February 26, 2000, the group sponsored its first symposium, “Queering Past and Present,” involving 10 faculty members from Rice as well as invited speakers and many students. The School of Humanities; the Departments of English, Anthropology, History, French Studies, Hispanic and Classical Studies, the Medieval Studies Program, and the Program for the Study of Women and Gender; and the FRG contributed financially and personally to the success of the symposium.

Judith C. Brown (former dean, School of Humanities) made opening remarks, addressing the challenge the investigation of same-sex desire poses for historians as well as the historical implications of queer theory. “Queering Past and Present” was designed as an opportunity for dialogue between scholars at opposite ends of the historical spectrum—on the one hand, scholars of same-sexuality in Medieval literature and culture and, on the other hand, queer theorists who work in the 20th century. Although queer theory first developed within the fields of 19th- and 20th-century literature and history, recent studies by Medieval and Renaissance scholars have demonstrated its usefulness far beyond its period of origin. The symposium offered a unique chance to engage in a conversation across disciplinary, historical, and cultural contexts.

Two lectures by medievalists and two by modernists were featured, succeeded by a roundtable discussion. Josiah Blackmore (University of Toronto) began with “The Cross-Texters,” which focused on the questions that literary texts from medieval Iberia raise about the nature of sexual identity. The construction of the Sodomite in medieval Galician-Portuguese poetry and in early modern Portuguese Inquisition records present an awareness of sexual identity that anticipates modern understandings and that complicate the hetero-/homosexual divide.

Karma Lochrie (Indiana University) followed Blackmore with a lecture titled “Queer Pastimes,” which examined the Lollard Eleventh Conclusion, criticizing nuns and chaste women for certain confusing perversions. Arguing that the text highlights the inadequacy of our current categories of homosexuality and heteronormativity, Lochrie’s lecture prompted an animated discussion of the normativity of the concept of nature and the supposed unnaturalness of female sexuality in the Middle Ages.

The modern period was represented by Tim Dean (University of Illinois–Champaign-Urbana), who spoke on “Daddy’s Boys.” Drawing on psychoanalytic accounts of male homosexuality, Dean discussed cross-generational relationships between men. Kath Weston (anthropology, Brandeis University) argued for the significance of “liminal moments” in which one is violently “called out of gender” in her lecture, “Unsexed: A Zero Concept for Gender Theory.”

The roundtable that followed the lectures brought together the speakers with professors and students from the Departments of Anthropology, French Studies, English, Hispanic and Classical Studies, and History at Rice into a general discussion of the issues raised by the lectures. The symposium provided a rare opportunity for radically cross-disciplinary dialogue in queer theory, generating provocative debate about its methods and aims.

The group also cosponsored a lecture in November 1999 (with MS and FRG) by Sahar Amer (University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill). Titled “On the Borders of Gender and Cultures: The Literary Genealogy of the French Medieval Lesbian,” Amer’s lecture addressed the question of whether expressions of lesbian love in medieval French literature can claim an Arabic origin. In October 1999, José Mérida-Jiménez (Hispanic and classical studies, Rice) gave a talk called “Exporting the Queer Canon?” discussing the reception of queer theory outside the United States—specifically, in Spain. It was based on his current book project, an anthology of queer studies for Spanish-speaking scholars.

In April 2000, Colleen Lamos (English, Rice) gave a lecture based upon her work in progress, “I’m Not a Lesbian, I Just Loved Thelma: Lesbian Disavowals in Modern Literature.” Examining texts by Djuna Barnes and Virginia Woolf, her lecture explored the refusal of these writers to answer to a lesbian interpellation. Also in April, Paul Morrison (English, Rice) spoke on the ways in which homosexuality and fascism have become homophobically intertwined in the popular imagination. Titled “Lavender Fascists,” his lecture analyzed the role of psychoanalysis in promoting the link between fascism and homosexuality.

As a workshop, the heart of Inquiries lies in our series of in-depth discussions of selected texts, chosen by members for their relevance to current debates in queer theory. Next year, our theme for Inquiries will be “Queer Space.” The group plans to focus on the geography of queerness, from the local to the national and international levels, including urban versus rural and public versus private spaces that are designated or available as queer. We plan to sponsor lectures and a symposium encompassed by this overarching topic and to involve members from various departments. Some of the questions we will ask are the following: Is queer theory por-
table across cultures? Is it a specifically U.S. export, or is it, via Foucault, a French deconstructive import? Is queer theory a manifestation of intellectual globalization? Is queer space global?

In fall 2000, Stephen Barber (University of Rhode Island) will present a lecture on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Gilles Deleuze, and Virginia Woolf and will address the work of Sedgwick, the most influential queer theorist of the 1990s, in terms of Deleuze’s “nomad” philosophy and Woolf’s later writings.

Judaic Studies Workshop (JS)
Coordinator: Matthias Henze (religious studies)

The JSW brought three distinguished scholars who lectured on a variety of topics in 1999–00. The first lecture, “Angels at Sinai: Revelation and Exegesis in Second Temple and Rabbinic Literature,” was given by Hindy Najman (religious studies, Notre Dame) on March 27, 2000. Although working primarily on the literature of the Second Temple period (also known as the intertestamental or apocryphal and pseudoepigraphical literature), Najman has been trying to overcome the barriers among the biblical, intertestamental, and early rabbinic worlds in her recent work. She has researched a number of themes that figure prominently in all of these literatures and that allow her to do innovative comparative work. Her talk at Rice on the presence of angels at Mt. Sinai was a fine sample of her most recent research. Beginning in the late biblical period and reaching all the way to the Babylonian Talmud, Najman guided her audience through a large corpus of texts. She demonstrated how the presence, or absence, of angels during the pivotal moment in the history of ancient Israel, when Moses received the Torah from God, became a crucial tool for early interpreters to establish their own (mostly interpretive) authority. Some early Christians, like St. Paul and philosopher Origen, wanted to emphasize the longing of the Jews for the coming of Christ and to diminish the singular importance of the Sinai event to show that only the angels ordained the Torah. Other interpreters insist that Moses spoke directly with God and not by means of a messenger. Thus, the Torah continues to have unique authority.

On April 10, 2000, Susan Ashbrook Harvey (religious studies, Brown) delivered a lecture titled “Sensing the Sacred: Bodily Experience and Bodily Knowing in Late Antique Christianity.” Harvey argued that for Christians of the first three centuries of the common era, the body was an object of evil leading Christians to sin: Christians are citizens of heaven, not of earth, and hence bodily renunciation was the highest virtue. In the fourth century, however, the perception of the human body changed dramatically, both in the West and in the East. For the two most outspoken representatives of these traditions, Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Ephrem the Syrian, knowledge of God was no longer attained through cognitive skills only. Instead, they proposed a theology that deliberately drew on the senses and underscored bodily experience of the Divine. The body became an instrument to gain knowledge of God. For Augustine, sight was the principle sense to perceive the Holy; Ephrem had a much broader view and celebrated all senses of the body. It was in his Syrian tradition, after all, in which the burning of incense has its origin.

Mark Sneed (Hebrew Bible, Lubbock Christian University) delivered a paper titled “Ecclesiastes: Frightening Guest in the Canon” on April 13, 2000. His talk addressed the old problem of how to interpret the highly critical, if not cynical, statements that suffuse the book of Qohelet, or Ecclesiastes, in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. Unlike other sapien voices in the Bible, Qohelet argues throughout his book that human beings do not understand the actions of God and cannot know the divine plans, a painful recognition in the face of evil and injustice as observed by the sages. Modern biblical scholars have, therefore, called Qohelet a skeptic and a dissident who marks a crisis of wisdom in ancient Israel. In a series of articles published over the last few years, Sneed has taken position against this negative evaluation of the biblical book and has proposed a more positive reading. In his lecture, he suggested two ways of understanding Qohelet’s theology. First, and similar to the Psalms of Lamentation in the Hebrew Bible, Qohelet’s book is cathartic. He encourages his readers to vent their skepticism with respect to God. Second, the book is best called an apology; it is cast in the form of theodicy. The author tries to explain the existence of moral and natural evil by questioning God’s omnibenevolence. Qohelet concedes that God allows bad things to happen, but in the end he has to admit that God’s actions are beyond our understanding.

JS will sponsor a conference titled “The Bible and Biblical Interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls” to be held on the Rice campus February 10, 2001. Four noted scholars, Gary Anderson (Harvard Divinity School), John Collins (Yale Divinity School), James Van der Kam (Notre Dame), and Peter Flint (Trinity Western University) have been invited to present papers. A total of five papers will be presented during the day-long conference that will be open to the general public.
Medieval Studies Workshop (MS)
Coordinator: Honey Meconi (musicology and music history)

The MS workshop presented six events during the 1999–00 academic year. Jane Chance (English, Rice), 1998–99 CSC Fellow, opened the year on September 14, 1999, with her CSC Fellow’s Lecture “Fabulizing Subjectivity: Individuation and the Incorporated Soul in Late Medieval Mythography.” Chance spoke about her ongoing work tracing the moralization and allegorization of classical mythology during the Middle Ages.

Michael Gerli (Spanish and Portuguese, Georgetown) spoke on November 12, 1999. His talk, titled “The Ideologies of Philology: Gender, Text, and Nation in the Construction of the Romance Kharjas,” demonstrated how the kharjas, which belonged to both Arabic and Hebrew literary traditions of al-Andalus, were both consciously and unconsciously appropriated by the nationalist and ideological agendas of post-Civil War Spain. He further showed how medievalism was covertly implicated in the forging of essentialist notions about national and cultural identities.

Gerli was followed by Sahar Amer (French, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill), on November 15, 1999. Her talk was cosponsored by the Departments of French Studies and the Study of Women and Gender. Her presentation, titled “On the Borders of Gender and Cultures: The Literary Genealogy of the French Medieval Lesbian” and delivered to a standing-room only crowd, focused on Etienne de Fougère’s explicit description of lesbian lovemaking in his Le Livre de Manières. She demonstrated its reliance on Ahmad al-Tifachi’s contemporaneous Arabic treatise on homosexuality, The Delight of Hearts, and testified to the magnitude of cross-cultural relations between East and West in the Middle Ages.

On January 25, 2000, the CSC’s postdoctoral fellow, Debra Blumenthal, presented “Implements of Labor, Instruments of Honor: Muslim, Eastern, and Black African Slaves in 15th-Century Valencia,” and on February 26, 2000, MS joined with several other departments and research groups to sponsor a symposium titled “Queering Past and Present,” organized by Inquiries. Two of the four speakers at this event were medievalists: Josiah Blackmore (Portuguese, University of Toronto), who spoke on “The Cross-Texters”; and Karma Lochrie (English, University of Indiana), who discussed “Queer Pastimes.”

Susan Ashbrook Harvey (religious studies, Brown) presented “Sensing the Sacred: Bodily Experience and Bodily Knowing in Late Antique Christianity” on April 10, 2000. The talk had several cosponsors, including AMC and JS.

Plans are already under way for the third Triennial Neil J. O’Brien Symposium in Medieval Studies, a multiday event to be held in fall 2001. The symposium will have an interdisciplinary theme, “Memoria in the Middle Ages,” and is to be organized by Eva Haverkamp (history, Rice) and Rafael Mérida-Jiménez (Hispanic and classical studies, Rice).

New Studies in Transnational Circulations and Cultures (NSTCC)
Coordinator: José Aranda (English)

NSTCC sponsored two lecturers in 1999–00. On March 14, 2000, the group cohosted a visit by Dr. Annelise Riles (anthropology and law, Northwestern University). She presented a public lecture on her recent work on the ideological shift in the law community since the critiques of the 1980s. Although trained as a lawyer, Riles treats the corpus of norms and procedures as ethnographic objects.

A more informal talk, “Networks Inside and Out,” explored some of the issues brought up in her work. During this session, the group was able to connect its interest in the issues of circulation of ideas that move beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. Her work on the Fijian members who attended the Beijing Conference was an interesting example of the flexibility of scale when it comes to international meetings.
Susan Ossman, an anthropologist who has been working in Paris recently, was the group’s second guest speaker. Ossman’s visit also consisted of a public lecture and informal meetings with Rice faculty and students. The lecture addressed several questions that the study group had been considering regarding the changing conditions of cultural production. Specifically, Ossman has been looking at beauty shops in Cairo, Paris, and Casablanca. Implicitly, her work is written against the recent literature regarding globalization that emphasizes the scale of the global as the locus of cultural production. Her work suggests that from the lives of the women she studied, the more complex, regional, and historical concepts of beauty attenuate the power of global.

At the informal talk, Ossman was able to more fully expound upon her idea of scale. She also suggested that the work of Roland Barthes and Marcel Mauss was still suggestive in thinking through the dissemination of the notions of the self-mediated through the idea of beauty and body.

The anthropology department sponsored dinners in honor of Riles’ and Ossman’s visits.

Continental Theory Workshop (CTW)
Coordinator: Jack Zammito (history)

The CTW, made up of members from philosophy, history, Hispanic and classical studies, and religious studies, gave support to “Written Text and Transformations of Thought and Expression in Classical Greece,” developed by one of its members, Harvey Yunis, and held April 15–16, 2000. Drawing in part from themes developed in the CTW, this conference represented the culmination of planning that had been under way for two years.

In addition, the workshop participated in hosting two visiting lecturers. On November 11, 1999, Johannes Fritsche of the New School spoke on Hegel’s Philosophy of Right. The lecture was attended by a number of faculty members from the history and philosophy departments, as well as graduate students from both departments. On March 17, 2000, the CTW hosted a luncheon discussion with Peter Euben (politics, UC–Santa Cruz), which was attended not only by members of the workshop but also by other members of the philosophy department and their prospective graduate students.

In 2000–01, the workshop plans to focus on reading and discussing recent work in pragmatic, historicist, and transcendental approaches to science. Preliminary contact has been made to invite J. E. Malpas (University of Tasmania), Joseph Rouse (Wesleyan University), and Mark Okrent (Bates College), with the hope of organizing a small symposium on this topic.

Cultural and Social Theory Study Group (CST)
Coordinator: Carol Quillen (history)

This year, the CST workshop proceeded as a works in progress seminar. The participants read each other’s scholarship in conjunction with brief works by major theorists whose work has influenced their own. This format offered a new forum and new opportunities for building intellectual community across departmental lines among faculty with shared approaches to research. In order to provide continuity among the meetings, they were organized under two themes—theorizing space (fall 1999) and gender and ethics (spring 2000).

Faculty and graduate students from history, English, French studies, architecture, art and art history, religious studies, and anthropology attended two seminars in the fall: Nana Last presented her work on how architectural practice shaped the philosophy of Wittgenstein, and Ussama Makdisi presented his work on Ottoman orientalism.

Both participants found the comments made and questions raised by seminar participants to be incredibly helpful as they revised their works for publication. Furthermore, through the conversations generated in the seminars, new areas of shared interests and even potential areas of collaboration emerged among all participants. Even those who knew little either about Wittgenstein or about Ottoman historiography found the challenge of seeing possible connections and building bridges very rewarding.

For the spring and summer, works in progress seminars were held in May and June. CST also helped sponsored a lecture given by Gauri Viswanathan on April 21, 2000. In 2000–01, CST will continue the format of a works in progress seminar in which Rice faculty and graduate students can present current research in a forum that encourages both serious, rigorous engagement and constructive comments and questions. By providing such a forum to an increasing number of Rice scholars from a range of departments, CST can complement and enrich the work of the CSC reading groups that are explicitly organized around shared fields of interest. The only criterion for proposals is that works address or employ in some way contemporary social, political, critical, or cultural theory. The goal is to have three works in progress seminars, organized thematically, in fall 2000 and three in the spring.
“Written Text and Transformations of Thought and Expression in Classical Greece”

Organized by Harvey Yunis (Hispanic and classical studies, Rice), this four-day conference, held at the Baker Institute, was the culmination of two years of planning. The purpose of the conference was to consider in what ways the extraordinary rise in the creation and use of written texts in classical Greece affected human expression, thought, and behavior. How did writing texts, reading texts, and disseminating texts lead to new thoughts, new ways of thinking, and new forms of expression and behavior? How did written texts and the traditional oral forms of communication overlap and interact? How did new artistic genres arise and old ones change? To what extent were aesthetic, intellectual, and political criteria decisive in the creation of written culture?

Alphabetic writing has been used in Greece since the eighth century B.C.E., but only gradually did literacy and written texts come to play a prominent role in social, political, intellectual, and artistic practices. During the course of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., the landmark developments in Greek life and the critical works of Greek thought and literature were accompanied by an explosive growth in the use of written texts. By the close of the classical period, a new culture of literacy and textuality had come into existence alongside the traditional practices of live oral discourse. New avenues for human activity and creativity arose. The literate, cosmopolitan culture of the Hellenistic world canonized the textual innovations of the classical period and passed them on to posterity.

Twelve papers, each written especially for this conference, were presented and discussed among an international panel of distinguished scholars. On the first day, two papers were presented and discussed. Andrew Ford (Princeton) discussed the use of texts in the production and reception of Greek song (i.e., the body of performed poetry that constitutes the primary educational and cultural stock) that led to the development of literary theory (in Aristotle) and the recognition and treatment of literary texts as works of art. Greek religion was fundamentally atextual, but writing was used to enforce the religious authority of the polis and to enlarge the religious expression of individual worshippers, according to Albert Henrichs (Harvard).

The second day of the conference began with Michael Gagarin (UT–Austin), who brought forth the idea that though written texts played a very small role in the adjudication of disputes, writing made it possible for laws to exist as law and to acquire legal authority. According to David Cohen (UC–Berkeley), writing was introduced extensively as a means of keeping public records; however, in the still largely oral society of classical Athens, written texts did not acquire sufficient authority to count as decisive evidence in legal disputes. Sir Geoffrey Lloyd (Cambridge) produced

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a comparison of the use of texts in the development of medicine and mathematics in Greece and China. The social circumstances in which the scientific communities pursued their work were fundamental for the particular advances that were made. Written texts were crucial in the early development of Greek medical theory, but they are anonymous, often rhetorical, and of uncertain usefulness in the practice of medicine as shown by the work of Lesley Dean-Jones (UT–Austin).

As the third day of the conference began, Dirk Obbink (Oxford) gave an account of the development of literary scholarship in Greece out of the habits of reading written texts aloud. An account of the extraordinary variety of epideictic texts in classical Greece and a discussion of the interdependence of performance and writing were presented by Rosalind Thomas (University of London). Hilary Mackie (classics, Rice) presented a paper on the different mechanisms of praise in Homeric epic and in Pindaric epinician song. Richard Hunter (Cambridge) gave an account of the literary presentation of literary progress and cultural development in Theocritus, one of the major Hellenistic poets.

On the final day, Harvey Yunis discussed, using his paper, how reading written texts became a mechanism for critical thinking by means of innovations by critics of Homer, Thucydides, and Plato. Charles Kahn (University of Pennsylvania) discussed the development of prose books as the vehicle for philosophy. In the concluding discussion, the participants expressed the strong desire to create a volume of essays based on the conference but extending into other fields and disciplines.

In addition to the presenters, three invited discussants, Christian Brockmann (Free University, Germany, and Rice), John Marincola (New York University), and Johan Schloemann (Humboldt University), participated in the proceedings.

The papers and summaries distributed to participants in advance with each speaker allotted 45 minutes for presentations. Each presentation was followed by 45 minutes of discussion. These wide-ranging, lively discussions proved so compelling that it was difficult to stick to the schedule. The papers and discussions were recorded in order for points raised in discussion to be considered in revising.

The conference succeeded in its aim to bring together specialists in various fields having to do with ancient Greece and to enable them to consult each other in the attempt to understand the growth of written texts that affected all these fields. The papers and discussions took place in an intimate, relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere, as in a seminar of experts and equals. Yunis has secured funding from the Delmas Foundation and the CSC to bring the scholars back to Rice in fall 2001 in final discussions for a book-length publication.

“In Path-Dependency and Transition Economics” Workshop Series

In conjunction with the Department of History and the Baker Institute, the CSC cosponsored a series of workshops organized by Carl Caldwell (history, Rice) and Steve Lewis (political science, Rice, and Baker Institute) on issues of economic transitions and cultures of production and consumption. The organizing theme was “Path-Dependency and Transition Economics,” and three scholars were invited to Rice to discuss works in progress papers.

Path-dependency, a term created in political science and economics, refers to the way existing institutions help determine the ways a society or an economy develops. These institutions are conceptualized as a set of relatively formalized and repeated actions that serve objectively to organize systems of exchange and communication and, subjectively, to provide criteria of recognition for participants in such systems. In other words, the idea of path-dependency is the idea that historical origins and cultural systems matter and help

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determine whether attempts at innovation succeed. Transition economics refers to the economic study of those moments of change (whether consciously engineered or merely observed). The workshop’s purpose was to bring in scholars who put these two moments together, who addressed the effects of institutions on economic development, and who traced the development of transition economics itself as an institutionally situated enterprise.

Paul Gregory (economics, UH) was the series’ first speaker. On October 22, 1999, Gregory presented a recent paper, titled “Preconditions and General Results of Transition in Eastern Europe: One Decade Later.” Gregory gave a rather depressing account of 10 years of transition. Against the hopeful predictions of a decade ago, the possibility now exists that large countries like the Ukraine and Russia might actually fail economically. In such countries, a new kind of virtual economy seems to be arising, characterized by “stagnant output, barter transactions, corruption, crony capitalism, and rising poverty.” There are few or no policy responses to these crises that carry conviction, according to Gregory. But one dominant approach—the “Washington consensus,” (as termed by Gregory) in which stable money, privatization, and stable exchange rates would lead the way to a smooth transformation—seems to be discredited. In particular, its model of privatization neglected what may be the more important underlying issue—legal-institutional forms, which took decades to develop in the industrialized West.

On February 22, 2000, Timur Kuran (economics, USC), the second workshop speaker, presented arguments from his forthcoming book, *The Muslim Commercial Retreat: Causes, Consequences, Responses*. Similar to Needham’s “China Puzzle,” Kuran’s work takes up the controversial yet important intellectual task of examining the role of microlevel social institutions in the long-term development of regional, international market relationships. Here, he presented arguments on the role of religion in hindering the development of modern market institutions in Islamic societies of the Middle East. Kuran identified specific beliefs about the role of interest, corporate property, inheritance, and contracts. Although not formally precluding the many forms of economic organization and activity under way in Europe at equivalent times, these beliefs created uncertainty and higher transaction costs such that individuals found it difficult to sustain economic relations across the diverse, informal legal environments in Islamic societies. Paradoxically, whereas similar microlevel obstacles in Europe led to competition and the development of innovative, international market institutions, in the Middle East they helped isolate the Islamic societies from each other economically. Kuran’s discussion with audience members revealed that assessing the role of such microlevel institutions is especially problematic when considering the many political factors—wars with Europeans and interstate conflicts—that isolated and divided Islamic societies.

Also in February, David Good (history, University of Minnesota) discussed his latest research with the presentation of a paper titled “Rethinking Economic Performance in Central and Eastern Europe, 1870–1989: Old Narratives and New Evidence.” Part of a major project seeking to measure gross domestic product per capita in East-Central Europe (the old Hapsburg Empire) from 1848–1990, Good’s research, as it
became clear in the discussion, had many important implications. First, it cast into doubt many of the standard narratives about economic underdevelopment in East-Central Europe. Viewed in international perspective, for example, those countries under state socialism did not necessarily do worse than capitalist countries, such as Latin America. Nor does dependency-theory, with its account of a core-periphery relationship that systematically underdevelops the periphery, offer an explanation in accord with the facts: Decoupling from the capitalist world system certainly did not bring positive results in Eastern Europe. Good came to the conclusion that the weaknesses of the Eastern European economies were related to the costs of institutional instability. “The sheer task of reinventing new institutional arrangements every few decades,” he argued, “would have made it difficult for [Eastern Europe] to grow at its potential and begin catching up with the rest of Europe.”

**Colloquium: “Waco—Seven Years Later”**

On April 19, 1993, 75 members of the religious community of the Branch Davidians met a fiery death at Mt. Carmel near Waco, Texas. Questions concerning the tragedy have been mounting ever since. Not only are attorneys for the survivors investigating the event, but a Congressional Commission headed by former U.S. Senator John Danforth also has launched an official inquiry.

On April 18, 2000, almost seven years to the day after the tragic event, a Rice colloquium was held to discuss the following questions: How did the perception of the Branch Davidians as a cult by national law enforcement and the media impact both the tactics used in the siege and the eventual outcome? What does the event at Waco tell us about national attitudes and policies regarding millennialists or other kind of unconventional religious groups and movements? How does Waco challenge us to rethink ways in which we identify and view religious beliefs and practices? Organized and moderated by Werner Kelber (religious studies, Rice) and featuring Phillip Arnold (Houston Reunion Institute), with Jim Faubion (anthropology, Rice), Carl Raschke (University of Denver), and William Pitts (Baylor) as panelists, the colloquium attracted approximately 90 people from Rice and the community in general. Among the panelists, there was a virtual consensus that the inability of federal authorities and the media to take seriously the Davidian faith and the Davidians’ scriptural mode of argumentation, however unconventional, crippled any chance for a peaceful resolution from the outset.

**Rice Linguistics Symposium**

On April 6–9, 2000, James Copeland (linguistics and German, Rice) and the linguistics department hosted the Eighth Biennial Rice University Symposium on Linguistics, titled “Causation and Interpersonal Manipulation in the Languages of Central and South America.” The grammar of causative constructions is a traditional theme in the study of grammars that has attracted a body of strictly linguistic scholarship in the past three decades. The intent of convening the symposium was to expand the disciplinary agenda to include the related fields of social psychology, cultural anthropology, and cognitive science, within which the semantic features that underlie the grammar of causative constructions find their natural connectivity. Another reason for the symposium was to enlarge the linguistic-typological database for the study of causative constructions to a large area that has been almost entirely excluded from past discussion—the indigenous languages of Central and South America. Nineteen participants, from as far away as Japan and Peru, spent the weekend discussing causation and stimulating cross-disciplinary interaction among linguists, psychologists, and anthropologists engaged in the study of interpersonal manipulation.

The symposium was organized around three thematic sessions—one on each day. The first was a theoretical look at causation. Presenters included Michel Achard (French studies, Rice) and Steve Tyler (anthropology and linguistics, Rice), as well as the respected causation researcher Masayoshi Shibatani (Kobe University). The second session was dedi-
cated to causation in Central American languages, and the third focused on South American languages. Participants declared the symposium a success, having contributed valuable data and insight to the study of causation. A volume of selected papers from the symposium is being compiled.

“Collaborative Urbanisms”

Over four Saturdays in February, March, and April 2000, the CSC, the Department of Anthropology, and Rice University hosted “Collaborative Urbanisms,” a series of workshops endeavoring to link contemporary scholarship on urban change with practitioners active in the ongoing transformation of Houston’s downtown revitalization and economic development. Organized by Nityanand “Nitin” Deckha (anthropology, Rice), the workshops brought together a wide range of people to listen to and discuss four principal themes. The workshops stimulated the potential of collaboration between theoreticians and practitioners of the city in dealing with community development, global markets, multicultural citizenship, and the downtown cultural sector.

Local residents, students, Rice faculty, urban anthropologists and sociologists, architects, artists, and executives from leading and prominent nonprofit and public organizations came together to hear about and debate issues on several issues. These included the obstacles of community development and mobilization in undeserved and inner-city neighborhoods; whether Houston’s prominence in energy and shipping trade activities conferred it “global city” status; the relationship between the increasing internationalization of Houston’s population and, on the one hand, issues of equity in the workplace and on the other, questions of planning for a multicultural, yet race- and class-divided city; and the role of artists and cultural activities in revitalizing urban districts.

A variety of speakers presented papers, slides, and thoughts from their own respective works and experiences, each dealing directly with the issues of collaboration by and among individuals and institutions in confronting contemporary, urban problems. These issues include affordable housing, job creation for less-skilled workers, inequities in the location of retail and commercial facilities, the changing structure of the Houston economy, the role of the Port of Houston to the economic well-being of the city, and the beleaguered position of working artists in the rush to redevelop downtown Houston and its adjacent fringe for loft living.

In conversations at the receptions following each workshop, participants voiced concerns over and discussed how to better realize collaborative urbanisms—that is, a cooperative and partnership approach across diverse constituencies that share an interest in how specific urban spaces are preserved, enriched, revitalized, and managed.

Participants of the project included Robin German-Curtis, executive director, Greater Houston Urban Redevelopment Corporation; Bill Gilmer, assistant vice president, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas at Houston; James Holston (anthropology, UC–San Diego); Stephen Klineberg (sociology, Rice); Rainer Lilienthal, general manager, Trade Development, Port of Houston Authority; Mardie Oakes, Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation; Laurence Payne, regional director, National Conference for Community and Justice; John Runnels and Charlie Sartwelle, Mother Dog Studios; and Sharon Zukin (sociology, Brooklyn College and Graduate Center, City University of New York). Moderators who helped shape the debates were Troy Gooden, Rafael Longoria, Mary Ann O’Donnell, and Susan Rogers.

“Landscapes Through Asian Pacific/American Media”

This conference, also publicized as “Second Asian American Film Festival at Rice University,” was held at the Rice Media Center February 18–20, 2000. Rice undergraduate and graduate students Elizabeth Tsai (computational and applied mathematics), Anderson Lee (economics and applied mathematics), Anderson Lee (economics and political Science), Shannon Leonard (English), Jae Chung (anthropology), Vivek Mittal (chemistry and anthropology), and Patricia Tsai (biology and biochemistry), all organizers for the festival, attracted many sponsors, including many Rice residential colleges as well as film, ethnic, and community organizations.
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This year’s festival was publicized with help from the Indo-
European News, the Southern Journal of Houston, the Southern
Chinese Daily News, the World Journal, and the Houston Chronicle,
along with several radio stations. To encourage attendance,
admission was free.

The film festival opened with a reception. Greg Pak of
New York and Chris Chan Lee from Los Angeles were the
first filmmakers to discuss their films. Pak’s short documentary
Fighting Grandpa (1998) was a search into his
grandfather’s past and a longing to discover the existence of
love in his grandparents’ marriage. Lee’s feature-length film
Yellow (1996) was also viewed and discussed. Both films depicted
Korean male reticence, which was briefly addressed
during the discussion. When asked if they would change anything
about their respective films in retrospect, neither Pak
nor Lee cited changing the message of their pieces, but both
mentioned wanting technical improvements. Pak’s remarks
concentrated on sound, and Lee’s critiques were mostly about
the filming schedule.

Saturday’s theme, “Looking Back and Pressing Forward,”
brought the issues of politics, race, and tolerance into the
foreground. The session opened with a screening of Letters to
Thien (Trac Minh Vu, 1997), a moving documentary filled
with anecdotes and a tribute to Thien Minh Ly, a young, Viet-
namese American leader who was brutally murdered in 1996.
The next film, The Shot Heard ’Round the World (Christine Choy
and Spiro Lampros, 1997), followed the Baton Rouge shooting
death of teenage Japanese exchange student Yoshi Hattori
and the subsequent trial of homeowner Rodney Pears.

After the two films, Houston city council member Gordon
Quan delivered the keynote address of the festival. Rogene Calvert (president, Organization of Chinese Americans–Houston and chief of staff for city council member
Quan), Dr. Steven Pei (Houston 80–20 Initiative), Diana
Ruhtenberg (Houston Sports Authority), Hoc Nguyen
(former Houston city council candidate), and Glen Gondo
(former officer, Japanese American Citizens League–Houston)
joined Quan on a panel discussion. The main questions
addressed by the panel and through the audience’s questions were:
How can Asian American leaders encourage community
response and building coalitions with other minority/
multicultural groups? How should Asian Americans respond to hate crimes like the ones documented in the two previously shown films? The audience was also interested in the
overall goals of Asian American political organizations and
asked why Asian Americans were not more involved in these organizations.

“Media,” Saturday’s second session, explored the artistic
direction of Asian Americans. Visas and Virtue (Chris Tashima,
1997), which won an Academy Award, introduced viewers to
the compassion of Japanese Consul General Chiune Sugihara
during World War II. Sugihara struggled with whether or not
he should defy his government’s orders and issue visas to
Jewish refugees. Strawberry Fields (Rea Tajiri, 1996) gave a portrait of the continuing impact of the war left upon
generations of Japanese Americans.

The focus of the festival then shifted to a panel exclusively comprising filmmakers. Chris Chan Lee, Greg Pak, Bing
Yao, and Flora Moon shared their insights on the films and
filmmaking before taking questions from the audience. The animated discussion soon focused on a recurring and dominating topic at the conference—that of being perceived as a
filmmaker versus an Asian American filmmaker.

Greg Pak unexpectedly brought another of his works,
Asian Pride Porn (1999). The short, an instant favorite, features Tony award-winning playwright David Henry Hwang in
an amusing spoof on infomercials that poke fun at the stereotypes of Asian men and women.

The evening concluded with a feature film showing of
Freshmen (Tom Huang, 1999), a humorous piece in which
four incoming college freshmen from different backgrounds
and on different paths deal straightforwardly with stereotypes
and the trials of their first year.

Sunday’s session, “Storytellers: Reaching Out and Creat-
ing a Legacy,” consisted of a mainly narrative collection of
both lighthearted and introspective films, including Search
for Peking Dog (John Choi, 1995) and Karma Local (Darshan
Bhagat, 1999). A trilogy of original works by Austin filmmaker
Shiraz Jafri was also shown: The Adventures of the F.O.B. Factor
(1997), a comedy about stereotypes; Indian Buffet #52 (1997);
and Jungli Fever (with Ather Ali, 1998).

Audience attendance was so high for Jafri/Ali films that
a question-and-answer period was held immediately afterward. Jafri and Ali discussed what motivated them to make
these films and their concerns about older generation In-
dian Americans not liking them. An older audience member quickly reassured them that the films were both well received and appreciated. Jafri and Ali then fielded questions from the audience and offered encouragement to aspiring filmmakers.

Dreaming Filipinos (Manny Reyes, 1990), the comic satire
that investigates cultural imperialism and identity by exam-
ining Filipinos through the colonial lens, followed the discus-
sion. The festival concluded with My America... Or Honk If
You Love Buddha (Renee Tajima-Peña, 1997), one of the more
widely recognized works showing at the festival. The document-
ary, which won a 1997 Sundance Award, traces the ac-
culturation of the director’s family into American society by
trailing through her memories as a child growing up in the
‘60s and ‘70s.
CSC Cosponsors European Intellectual History Lectures

Four lecturers were featured in the 1999–00 European Intellectual History Lectures, organized by Rice faculty host Richard Wolin (history). The first, Elliot Neaman (history, University of San Francisco), discussed the contested legacy of the German fascist writer Ernst Jünger. The second speaker, Johannes Fritsche (philosophy, Penn State) spoke on the political implications of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*. The third, Elisabeth Gamard (architecture, Tulane) discussed the continued relevance of the modernist approaches to building initiated at the Weimar-Dessau Bauhaus. Lastly, Richard Golsan (French language and literature, Texas A&M) described the construction of memory in postwar France, with special attention to the trial of Maurice Papon and the controversial publication of *The Black Book of Communism*.

Paul Bertagnolli

In conjunction with the Moores School of Music performance of Johannes Brahms’ *Ein Deutsches Requiem* March 4–5, 2000, Paul Bertagnolli (Moores School of Music, UH) presented a lecture titled “Ein Deutsches Requiem: How a German Formalist Mourned.” This lecture was cosponsored by the Goethe Center for Central European Studies.

Detailing Brahms’ career, Bertagnolli presented several musical samples of Brahms’ work to demonstrate the composer’s genteel aesthetic of “absolute” music. Bertagnolli presented biographical material on the composer by exploring Brahms’ relationship with his mentor, Robert Schumann, whose death provided the impetus for this massive memorial. A short video of a performance by Sir Colin Davis and the Bavarian State Orchestra and Chorus of this piece illustrated how Brahms selected consoling passages from the Lutheran Bible to commemorate his devastating personal losses.

Bruce Masters and Gauri Viswanathan Visit Rice

Bruce Masters (Wesleyan University) spoke last year on “Rethinking Tolerance: Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab Lands,” which was extremely well attended. Masters’ wide-ranging lecture covered both the theoretical/textual attitudes and legal perspectives of Christians and Jews living in the Ottoman empire as well as everyday forms of coexistence that defined the lives of Christians, Jews, and Muslims in various Ottoman cities in the Arab provinces of the empire. While Masters insisted that we should not romanticize the period of Ottoman rule as a golden age of tolerance, it was important, in his view, to stress the ways discrimination and tolerance existed side by side.

On April 21, 2000, Gauri Viswanathan (Columbia) spoke on “Literacy in the Eye of the Conversion Storm” before a large audience of both students and faculty. Viswanathan drew on her recent award-winning book, titled *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Belief, and Modernity* (Princeton U. Press, 1998), to elaborate on recent debates within India about secularism and religious tolerance in India. Whereas secularism in the West is understood as the separation of church and state, in India, she stressed, secularism is often understood to mean the equal treatment of all religious communities by a secular state. The question of conversion is a contentious one in India precisely because the boundaries of private faith, public order, and the equal treatment of different religious communities become blurred. Viswanathan focused on the attacks against converts to Christianity in India by Hindu nationalists and suggested that conversion should be seen not as a total separation or rejection of a past life but as a bridge between different religious communities.
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