

HUMANITAS

T H E M E A N I N G O F B E I N G H U M A N



RICE

The Magazine of the School of Humanities at Rice University • SPRING 2011

A Message From the Dean

The budget crisis in the humanities, particularly in public institutions, has reached proportions that as recently as 10 years ago would have been unthinkable. Particularly



hard hit are foreign language and literature programs. While not unaffected by the economic downturn, the Rice School of Humanities remains very strong. Our humanities faculty is widely known for excellence in scholarship, and we take great pride in excellent teaching and creating ways to make study

abroad and foreign-language competence more central to our curriculum. In short, Rice is an institution that supports the humanities.

Still, we need to make our voice heard in the national debate about the humanities. Well-intentioned people often ask me, “Just what are the humanities?” while others, perhaps less well-intentioned, ask, “What are the humanities good for?”

An easy but incomplete answer to the first question is to list the disciplines identified by the humanities departments at a place like Rice, for example, art history, English, foreign languages, philosophy and religious studies. Humanistic study most certainly takes place in these departments. What makes them “humanistic” is not their subject, but the way they consider the world and everything that is human. Humanistic methods are best rendered as an unending conversation with everything humans do, a conversation that emphasizes, analyzes, criticizes and interprets.

One of the best definitions I know of humanistic inquiry comes from the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. In a short essay about what makes a book a classic, Borges writes: “The text that wants to endure is capable of an infinite and plastic ambiguity. For some it is the Apostle. For others it is a map of the world. For still others, it is a mirror that reflects the features of the reader’s face.” The phrase “infinite and plastic ambiguity” cautions us against definitive

interpretation. Although they are long dead, we continue to read Cervantes, Shakespeare and Flannery O’Connor because they both delight and puzzle us. No one can tell us exactly what they say. Yet that ambiguity does not keep us from wanting to hear in their works the voice of an Apostle, the bearer of a message. We earnestly want Don Quixote to distinguish dreams from reality, Macbeth to show us the corrosive power of ambition, and Flannery O’Connor to tell us about the scandal of grace and forgiveness. Yet the message these texts bear, if it is there at all, ultimately eludes us, making for an “infinite” conversation.

Borges’ reference to “a map of the world” suggests another dimension of humanistic study: its ability to help us glimpse distant places and peoples. Consider for example the heartbreaking saga of contemporary Afghanistan that emerges in Nadeem Aslam’s “The Wasted Vigil” or the astonishing world of an autistic teenager that we glimpse through Mark Haddon’s “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time.”

Borges’ reference to the text as a mirror suggests another dimension of humanistic study: its capacity to tell us more about ourselves and other humans by inviting us to introspection, comparison and questioning. An essential dimension of humanistic education is increasing one’s points of comparison, be these from the factual evidence of history, the visual representations of paintings, or the narratives of legend and literature. These are the mirrors and narratives where we discover startling truths about ourselves and the marvelous world we inhabit.

As you peruse this issue of *Humanitas*, I hope you’ll appreciate some of the ways that the Rice School of Humanities participates in this marvelous dialogue with the “infinite and plastic ambiguity” of our world and what it means to be human.

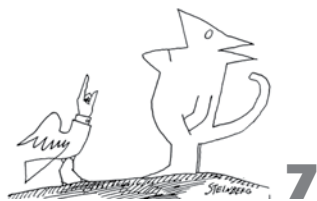
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Shumway', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicolas Shumway
Dean of Humanities



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Studying Rio: From Colonial Outpost to Olympic City

Rio de Janeiro is an iconic city. From the statue of Christ the Redeemer atop Corcovado mountain to its famous carnival, the “marvelous city” has long occupied a place in the world’s imagination. This spring, Rice students had the opportunity to learn more about Rio in an interdisciplinary course designed to demonstrate how the city’s appearance has changed over time according to its historical circumstances.

The course, *Rio de Janeiro: A Social and Architectural History*, was a collaboration between the Department of History and School of Architecture. History’s Alida Metcalf and architecture’s Fares el-Dahdah, who co-taught the class, hope to use it as a starting point to produce a lecture series, a symposium, an exhibition and a book.

Rio’s star is certainly rising. With a booming economy, Brazil will host the next World Cup in 2014, and Rio will be the site of the 2016 Summer Olympics. But Rio has seen its share of ups and downs since Portuguese ships first sailed into Guanabara Bay in 1502 — a process characterized by “grandeur and decadence,” said el-Dahdah, associate professor of architecture.

“Rio has radically changed its

identity over time,” said Metcalf, the Harris Masterson Jr. Professor of History. “And each shift has resulted in new architectural planning.” Rio began as a colonial settlement on a distant periphery and for hundreds of years was a port of entry for thousands of African slaves.

At the beginning of the 19th century, it was transformed into an extension of Lisbon in Portuguese America when the Portuguese king moved his court there. Later it became the seat of an empire, the capital of a republic, the showcase of a dictatorship, and the national cultural capital that has in modern memory undergone economic decadence and renewal.

Metcalf and el-Dahdah were particularly interested in the visual documentation that accompanied these changes, recording how social relations shaped the urban landscape and conversely how the city’s built domain affected the lives of its inhabitants. This process is still visible today, as Rio is remade to accommodate the 2016 Olympics.

From early maps to oil paintings to architectural drawings to photographs and video, these changes were recorded

and were the subject of study in the Rice course. And Rio’s natural beauty doesn’t hurt; the city has “photogeneity in its DNA,” el-Dahdah said. Even the city’s notorious mountainside slums, known as favelas, are the subject of an almost romantic curiosity, Metcalf noted, with street vendors today hawking facsimiles to tourists.

The study of the architecture of Brazilian cities like Rio and São Paulo is not a new academic pursuit; el-Dahdah pointed to similar courses at Harvard, Yale and the University of Miami. What distinguishes the Rice offering is the effort to meld art history, history, geography, architecture, landscape architecture and urbanism into a single conceptual framework.

Metcalf and el-Dahdah plan to take some of their students to Rio at the end of the semester to develop individual research projects by conducting research in libraries, museums, and archives; this research will contribute to the final project, *Portraits of Rio: An Iconography of Social Change and Urban Reform*, through students’ honors theses and independent study. ▶

— FRANZ BROTZEN

The face of Rio through time: Debret, Jean Baptiste. “Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil, ou, Séjour d’un artiste français au Brésil.” Paris: 1834–1839. Facsimile edition. Rio de Janeiro & New York: 1965.



Center for the Study of Languages: One-on-One International Videoconferencing for Language Classes

Over the last four years, the Center for the Study of Languages (CSL) has offered students taking Chinese, French and Spanish language courses the opportunity to engage with their peers in other countries through videoconferencing. In the past, these videoconferences have been available to students enrolled in second-, third- and fourth-year language courses, but in 2010 instructors opened this opportunity to first-year students as well. So far, this experience has surpassed the expectations of instructors and students alike.

Classes meet three to four times each semester in the CSL, and instructors assign topics for discussion. The students speak the language they are learning half of the time and English the other half of the time, and conversations are recorded so that students and instructors can review the exchange. The CSL survey results indicate that the student feedback is overwhelmingly positive. There has been tremendous enthusiasm and motivation among students, who are often reluctant to end the exchange at the end of class. Students become so engaged that they forget about their surroundings.

This program not only provides students with one of the most authentic communication experiences with a native speaker within a class context, it also opens a live window into the culture of the language they are studying. Research in the use of such exchanges for language learning has shown that because students have to “negotiate” communication during their conversation, higher levels of



A live window to the world:

Language students chat with their international peers through videoconferencing.

learning and retention take place than in a traditional classroom setting.

For students, the goal is to forge more international relationships and thereby better understand global cultures. The expansion of the videoconferencing program at the CSL furthers the university’s goals to establish more partnerships with universities abroad.

Current partnering universities are Xianning University in the Hubei province of China, the Institut national des sciences appliqués de Lyon in France and Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico. The CSL is adopting successful



strategies to overcome the challenges that arise from working with universities in countries with distant time zones and continues to seek new opportunities for students. ▶

There has been tremendous enthusiasm and motivation among students, who are often reluctant to end the exchange at the end of class. Students become so engaged that they forget about their surroundings.

Houston Rapper Bun-B Co-teaches Religion and Hip-Hop Culture Course

“Religion,” said Anthony Pinn, the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities and professor of religious studies, “is the quest for complex subjectivity. It involves the effort to make meaning, to wrestle with the huge questions of life — who, what, when, where, why we are.”

With that expansive definition, Pinn suggested that students of religion should be open to “a wealth of resource materials.” While some aspects of the search for life’s meaning may be captured in familiar institutions like churches, mosques and synagogues — and their

a guest lecturer, but Pinn wanted more. “It was clear to me that an hour and 20 minutes was insufficient to capture it,” he said. “We had to come up with a way to get him in the classroom and allow our students a greater opportunity to learn from him.”

The class quickly maxed out, with some 250 students signing up to participate in the course designed to explore hip-hop culture’s religious dimensions through the musical language of rap. “Being a part of this course allowed me to show the public,

natural sciences, engineering, social sciences, the business school and humanities.

Pinn also teaches a course on the African-American church, and often brings in ministers whose firsthand accounts are integral to the subject. He expects the same level of expertise from Bun. “If I’m talking about hip-hop culture — and rap music in particular — why wouldn’t I turn to an artist who has

“Students are looking for ways to critically engage their world, to critically engage the cultural production they’ve claimed: hip-hop culture.”



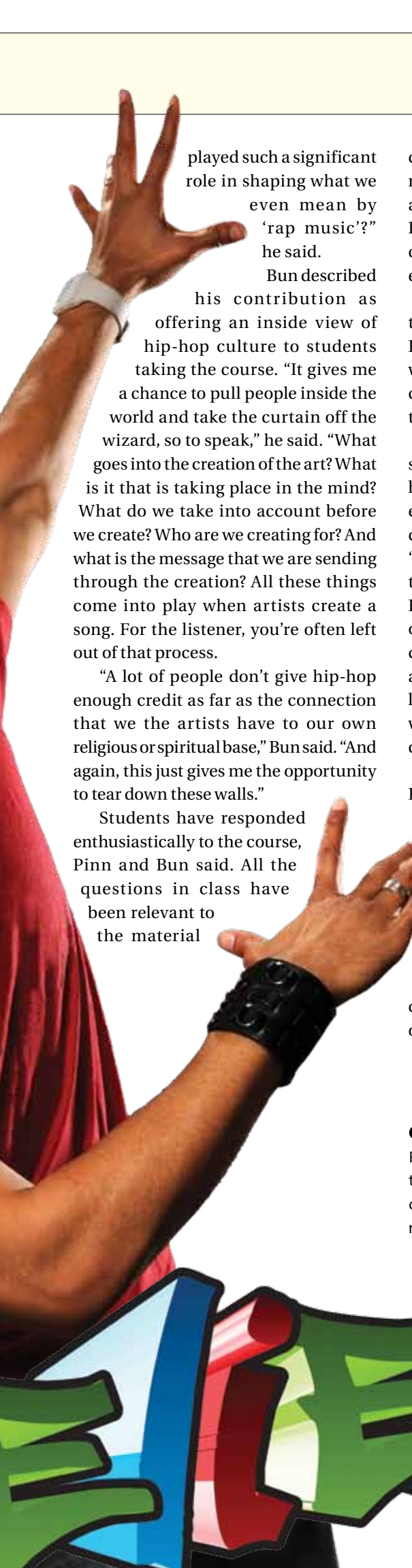
respective doctrines and creeds — Pinn said, “there may be ways in which the popular culture we produce also serves as a way to wrestle with these sorts of questions.

“Mindful of that,” he said, “why not religion and hip-hop culture? It’s one of the most significant cultural developments of the past 40 years.”

Pinn’s decision to co-teach Religious Studies 331, Religion and Hip-Hop Culture, this spring with Houston-based rapper Bun B quickly sparked interest across the university and beyond. Bun had spoken to Pinn’s class in the past as

starting with Rice students and Rice University people and then spreading out hopefully to a larger audience, that everything that has been portrayed about hip-hop in the public eye is not all that hip-hop is,” Bun said. “This gives me an opportunity to let people into the hip-hop world, let them become a part of the hip-hop community and show them that hip-hop is bigger than just the music that is created by the artist.” Students enrolled in this course came from a variety of majors and disciplines, with every division of education represented. The class had students enrolled from





played such a significant role in shaping what we even mean by 'rap music'?" he said.

Bun described his contribution as offering an inside view of hip-hop culture to students taking the course. "It gives me a chance to pull people inside the world and take the curtain off the wizard, so to speak," he said. "What goes into the creation of the art? What is it that is taking place in the mind? What do we take into account before we create? Who are we creating for? And what is the message that we are sending through the creation? All these things come into play when artists create a song. For the listener, you're often left out of that process.

"A lot of people don't give hip-hop enough credit as far as the connection that we the artists have to our own religious or spiritual base," Bun said. "And again, this just gives me the opportunity to tear down these walls."

Students have responded enthusiastically to the course, Pinn and Bun said. All the questions in class have been relevant to the material

discussed and evenly divided between religion and music. Only one student asked Bun if he would accept a demo tape; Bun said he told the student the demo could be turned in along with the final exam at the end of the semester.

"It's clear to me that the students see the value of this sort of investigation," Pinn said. "Students are looking for ways to critically engage their world, to critically engage the cultural production they've claimed: hip-hop culture."

The course also seeks to broaden Rice students' awareness of life beyond the hedges. "We encourage our students to engage the way in which this music has developed within its context," Pinn said. "And we offer our students an opportunity to be in the conversation with the larger Houston community — and offer an opportunity to the larger Houston community to engage us." The class met at two off-campus locations for public lectures during the semester to interact with other members of Houston's hip-hop community.

Pinn founded and directs the Houston Enriches Rice Education (H.E.R.E.) Project, aimed at promoting such interaction. "We started H.E.R.E. because we wanted to give legs to President Leebron's call for greater community engagement," he said. "And we wanted to do that in a way that extended Rice beyond its comfort zone — to take it into communities that were not really a topic of conversation on campus."

"This class offers (students) a chance

not only to experience the culture here on campus," Bun added, "but also to go out into the community and take it in as well."

Bun was keen to let his many fans know that teaching Religion and Hip-Hop Culture won't mean he's forced to abandon his music. "I still have another career that I'm obligated to," he laughed. "Even though I'm teaching at 10 a.m. here at Rice, it's still not my 'day job.'" He also pointed out that the fact the classes are on Tuesdays and Thursdays didn't impinge on his work, since "the reality is there's not a lot of rap concerts happening on those days."

Pinn said he's not surprised at the students' positive reaction to having a rapper co-teach the course. "We don't indoctrinate them. We provide them with the skills and the tools necessary to unpack, interrogate, explore and explain this significant development," he said. "Why wouldn't that appeal?"

Bun shared with the Houston Chronicle that the course was beneficial to him, as well. "I think that there's a lot that I can take from this course that I'll be able to incorporate into the music — not to say that my next album will be called 'Religion and Hip-Hop' or that it is going to be that kind of a balance. But there are going to be life lessons that I will learn during the course of this class that I will be able to attribute to music — and again, to show the connection between religion and hip-hop through execution and reason." ▶

— FRANZ BROTZEN

Cultural co-teachers:

Rapper Bun B and Anthony Pinn, the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities and professor of religious studies



Latin American Émigré Writers Speak on the Poetics of Displacement

In spring 2011, the Global Hispanism Workshop brought together renowned Latin American writers to address creativity from the perspective of the émigré.

“Poetics of Displacement: Latin American Émigré Writers and the Creative Imagination,” offered lectures to the Rice and Houston community by hosting six renowned Latin American writers who addressed topics of creativity through the angle of the émigré, specifically how the experience of leaving one’s native country affects the writing process.

Gisela Heffes, assistant professor of Hispanic studies at Rice and organizer of the event, said the series “explored the condition of Latin American émigrés in the U.S. in conjunction with the emergence of a narrative anchored in a twofold perspective: while the émigré experiences a sense of longing and nostalgia for his or her homeland, he or she also develops a new relationship within the hosting country and the possibility of returning home becomes a recurrent and dominant object of anxiety.

“The possibility of return conditions the perception of self and of the homeland, placing personal projections on different axes. This new experience also raises questions related to both the language and the culture to which the writer inserts himself. Because the writer has to translate his experience for a foreign audience, the problem of hybridization and transculturation emerges in his writings. One question that informed all of these workshops was thus whether or not there is a specific poetic of displacement.”

Cristina Rivera Garza, a writer and professor of writing at the University



Photographs courtesy of Enrique Vázquez

Creativity in the eyes of the émigré: (Left) Cristina Rivera Garza signs copies of her book. (Right) Sergio Chejfec speaks to the audience about the Music of the Anomalies.

of California at San Diego, was the inaugural speaker of the series. A native of the Mexican border city Matamoros, she has lived and taught in Mexico and the United States. Garza spoke on “The Adventures of the Errant Writer and the Strange Case of the Accented Life and the Post-Mother Language Open-Ended Dilemma.”

Other speakers in the series included Argentine writer Sergio Chejfec, who spoke about “La música de las anomalías” (The Music of the Anomalies). Guatemalan-born Arturo Arias spoke on “EpiCentro and Other Central Americans Within the Center: The Emergence of a New Central American-American Literature.”

In March, former Nicaraguan vice president Sergio Ramírez conducted a workshop titled “Lengua mojada” (Wet Tongue). Ramírez is a writer and intellectual who served in the

leftist government Junta of National Reconstruction and as vice president of Nicaragua from 1985 to 1990 under the presidency of Daniel Ortega.

April’s talk featured Argentine novelist and celebrated critic Sylvia Molloy, who spoke on “Dislocated Memory and the Urge to Return.” Molloy is the Albert Schweitzer Chair in the Humanities at New York University.

The final speaker of the series was Argentine fiction writer and poet Alicia Borinsky, who presented “She Came From Afar: Tango Women and the Poetics of Exile.” Borinsky is a professor at Boston University whose work has helped frame the discussion about the writers of the “boom” movement in Latin America.

Heffes said, “Because most of these writers are also renowned scholars from outstanding universities, their focus on these topics came from more of a theoretical standpoint, analyzing the narrative of the émigré from both an aesthetic and political standpoint. The aim of this first, and unique, workshop was to generate another series of workshops, which will be connected to the Spanish creative writing course I

“Because the writer has to translate his experience for a foreign audience, the problem of hybridization and transculturation emerges in his writings.”

— GISELA HEFFES

will be offering every spring at Rice. The combination between the workshops and the Spanish creative writing courses can eventually merge and develop into a Spanish creative writing program.”

In addition, “Students were able to deepen their creative interests and skills by exploring new channels and insights that have never been offered before at Rice,” she said. “By opening these lectures to the public, Rice has created a bridge with the broader Hispanic

community, which can turn into a permanent collaborative endeavor.”

The presentations will be published in a book collection along with eight other essays by Spanish-American writers living in the U.S. and have also been videotaped with the aim to create a visual archive posted on the Hispanic studies website that will be available to all audiences.

Rice’s Humanities Research Center, Department of Hispanic Studies and

School of Humanities sponsored the Global Hispanism Workshop. Other sponsors include the Institute of Hispanic Culture; Poets & Writers; Literal: Latin American Voices; the Houston Arts Alliance; the city of Houston; and the Consulado General de la República Argentina en Houston. For more information about future Global Hispanism workshops, please visit <http://hrc.rice.edu/hispanism/>. ▸

— FRANZ BROTZEN

Rice/Menil Biennial Lecture Series

“The Risible Visual: Humor & Art” was the theme of this year’s Rice/Menil Biennial Lecture Series, a collaborative program of The Menil Collection and Rice University’s Department of Art History. Established in 2005, the series is held every other year and features a roster of distinguished speakers who lecture on a single art-related topic. This year’s program presented two talks in the fall and two in the spring.

Exploring artists’ provocative use of humor throughout history, this series began in October with a lecture, “The Places of Humor in Roman Visual Culture: Context and Theories,” from art historian John Clarke. Clarke is the Annie Laurie Howard Regents Professor in Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin. He specializes in Greek and Roman art and architecture and is the author of seven books, including “Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250” and “Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250.”

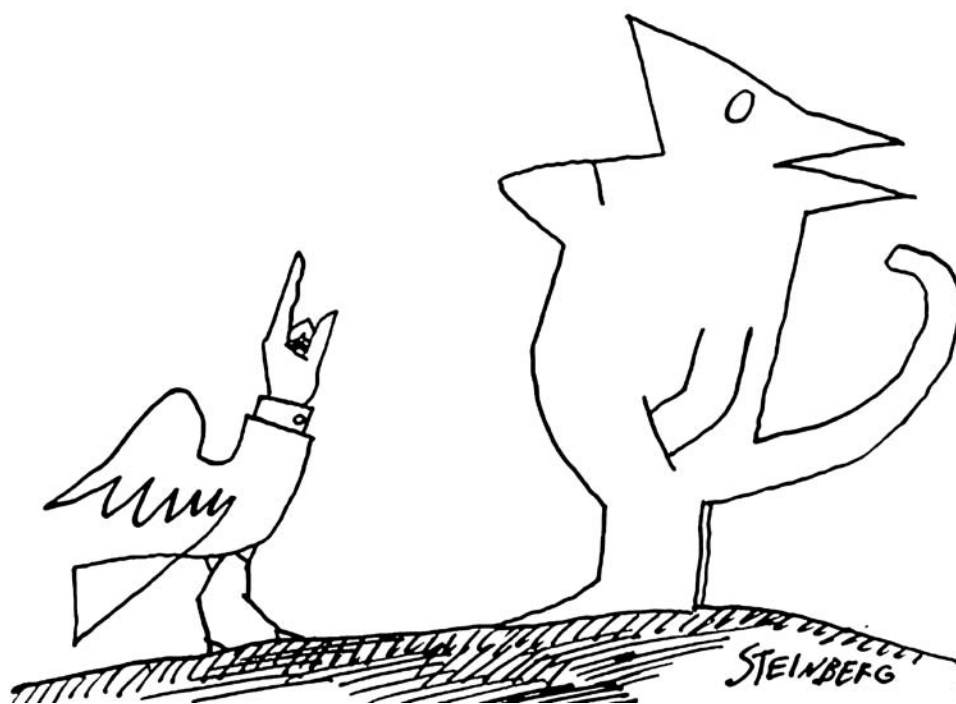
Art historian Michael Leja spoke in December on “Comic Modernism.” Leja primarily studies 19th- and 20th-century visual arts in various media in the United States. The author of “Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s” and “Looking Askance: Skepticism and American Art from Eakins to Duchamp”, Leja has taught American art at the University of Pennsylvania in

Philadelphia since 2005.

The third installment of the Rice/Menil Lecture Series featured English-born Simon Critchley, whose work deals with continental philosophy, the history of philosophy, literature, contemporary art, ethics and politics, discussed “The Really Funny Thing About Tragedy.” Critchley is the author of “The Dead Philosophers” and “On Humor”. Since 2008, he has been chair of philosophy at New York’s New School for Social Research. Critchley is the series moderator of The New York Times’ Opinionator philosophy blog, The Stone.

The final lecture of the series brought renowned artist Kara Walker to talk about her work. Walker received an MFA in painting and printmaking from the Rhode Island School of Design. Winner of a MacArthur Award, she represented the U.S. in the 2002 São Paulo Biennial. The Walker Art Center’s 2007 exhibition “Kara Walker: My Complement, My Oppressor, My Enemy, My Love” was her first full-scale U.S. museum survey. She is a professor of visual arts in the MFA program at Columbia University.

The series is underwritten by Rice alumna Suzanne Deal Booth ’77. ▸



“Crazy Gifted.”

SPOTLIGHT ON THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT AT RICE UNIVERSITY

BY STUART NELSON '11

For many, Rice University has been synonymous with excellence in physics, computer science, nanotechnology and other technical fields. However, Rice also has a history of excellence in the humanities, especially within the recently transformed Department of Religious Studies — a department within the School of Humanities that addresses questions that are academically rigorous, intellectually stimulating and highly pertinent to 21st-century issues.

Jeffrey J. Kripal is the J. Newton Rayzor Professor of Religious Studies, and for the last seven years he has served as department chair. He summed up the department for me this way: “This is an exceptionally gifted department. Crazy gifted. It is easily one of the finest and most productive midrange departments in the country in terms of research output and national, even international, visibility.” Kripal went on to say, “There are many challenges to teaching the critical study of religion in a research university, foremost among them the fact that almost no one has studied religion in a professional context and so assumes that the department is about promoting or professing a particular religious view. What we are really about is studying religion rigorously with all the tools of the humanities and the social sciences, much as one would study politics in the Department of Political Science, literature in the Department of English or culture in the Department of Anthropology.”

Though the department has its origins as far back as 1968, it underwent a rather profound transition in 2004, around the time that two senior members of the department, Edith Wyschogrod and Werner Kelber, retired. It had to re-invent itself and its national identity around its younger faculty, and this is precisely what was accomplished over the last seven years under Kripal’s leadership. A valuable constant in this shifting history has been the presence of department coordinator, Sylvia Louie. According to Kripal, Louie has worked in, and more or less ran, the department for some 35 years. She “is our departmental memory, our trusted colleague, and our social and

Students are encouraged to ask any question and to be unfettered in their quest for knowledge. This unique environment can be transformative for those who choose to make use of the powerful and diverse resources that are available to them.

administrative ‘glue.’ She’s what makes the department run like a fine Swiss watch from day to day.”

The results of continued efforts to expand and reorganize the department have been fruitful. There are 11 tenure-track positions here, and the faculty is engaged with a wide range of historical periods and cultural areas. From David Cook’s focus on Islamic history and Muslim apocalyptic literature and movements to Gregory Kaplan’s investigation of similarities and differences between religious and secular conceptions of life and death, it is easy to see that this department is an eclectic one that is both sympathetic to and critical of religious traditions.

Here questions range from, “What motivates religious activity in human culture?” to “What are the similarities and differences between the major world religions?” The studies within this department are motivated by a desire to ask questions that have been taken for granted throughout religious history in an attempt to gain critical insights into the nature and character of religious thought and, more fundamentally, human nature. Students are encouraged to ask any question and to be unfettered in their quest for knowledge. This unique environment can be transformative for those who choose to make use of the powerful and diverse resources that are available to them.

The department’s population is not only academically diverse, but also demographically diverse. A key feature of this department that allows it to stand out from other bodies at Rice is the fact that it is constituted by some of the most ethnically, internationally and racially diverse individuals on campus. Since 2005, Ph.D. students from England, Nigeria, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey and Iran have all been trained within

the department, and diversity continues to be emphasized at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. As different areas of the nation and the world become increasingly interconnected, it is important to maintain an emphasis on diversity in its many aspects, and the Department of Religious Studies embraces this philosophy in a large way.

The model for graduate studies emphasizing studies in specific “niche” areas through a student-mentor relationship has been quite successful. The high productivity of this department can be understood by noting that it averages four to five books per year and that it was ranked fifth in the entire country in terms of research output and productivity by the National Research Council Review Doctoral Programs (2007). Furthermore, the department hosts and edits two journals: *Religious Studies Review* and the *Journal of Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft*. Two of the strongest areas within the department are gnosticism, esotericism and mysticism and African-American studies. Efforts to develop the latter have been made under the careful leadership of professor Anthony Pinn. Notably, Pinn also is the founding director of the Houston Enriches Rice Education (H.E.R.E.) project, which reaches into the community to bring pedagogical tools to students in the department. The most recent result of this effort has been the introduction of a hip-hop and religion class, taught by Grammy award-winning rap artist Bun B.

The success of those completing studies in the graduate department is undeniable, as over the last five years 100 percent of those students have been placed in academic positions of one sort or another upon graduation. Nathan Carlin ’10 (Ph.D.), for example, was awarded an assistant professorship in



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– JEFFREY KRIPAL

the John P. McGovern M.D. Center for Humanities and Ethics at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Carlin’s work in the area of the psychology of religion is prolific, including more than 50 essays and several book reviews, and one book, “Living in Limbo: Life in the Midst of Uncertainty” (Cascade Books, 2010). Carlin has applied his advanced education in a significant way to solve pressing problems within the health industry from the unique angle of a scholar of religion. This is just a single example of the human impact that graduates of this program are making across the country.

The Ph.D. program at Rice is world-class and indeed contributes in significant ways to Rice’s outstanding reputation as a research institution, but at the same time there is a sustained emphasis on undergraduate education. The introductory course, RELI 101, is one

of the largest and most popular courses universitywide, enrolling upwards of 200 students every fall semester. Created by William Parsons and Jill Carroll, this course was recently taught by Kripal, who used parts of his new textbook on the comparative study of religion to teach students the foundations of the field. The curriculum allowed students to evaluate their religious worldview, learn about the comparative study of religion and then engage their worldview based on the material they had learned. The result was powerful in that it gave students the chance to think critically about their own beliefs in a nondogmatic and tolerant environment. Undergraduate students are further engaged through willingness of faculty members to participate in programs such as the Humanities Research Center’s Undergraduate Fellowship. This unique program offers a stipend to students who are interested

in humanities research, pairing them with faculty fellows to assist them with current projects. It is clear that while the graduate department excels in numerous ways, this does not hamper the presence of undergraduates in the department or their abilities to engage in the issues that it deals with.

The Department of Religious Studies at Rice University contributes to a thriving student and faculty population, and, from a personal perspective, it has been a pleasure to study here. Myself, and many others have gotten a taste of unconventional wisdom by engaging with the unique resources that the department has to offer. ▀

STUART NELSON '11 IS A SENIOR AT WILL RICE COLLEGE, MAJORING IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND COGNITIVE SCIENCES.

German Studies Attracts Major Gift for Undergraduates

“Our students are often curious and independent thinkers, who continue their studies at some of the best graduate and professional schools in the U.S. and Europe.”

— CHRISTIAN EMDEN

The Houston Sängerbund presented the Department of German Studies with a major gift to support Rice undergraduates who wish to study or carry out extensive research in Germany. Uwe Steiner, chair of German studies, noted, “The gift is a wonderful contribution that will substantially enrich students’ cultural and intellectual experience by directly supporting study-abroad projects. We are very indebted to Ruth Milburn, Rodney Koenig and the Sängerbund for making this possible.”

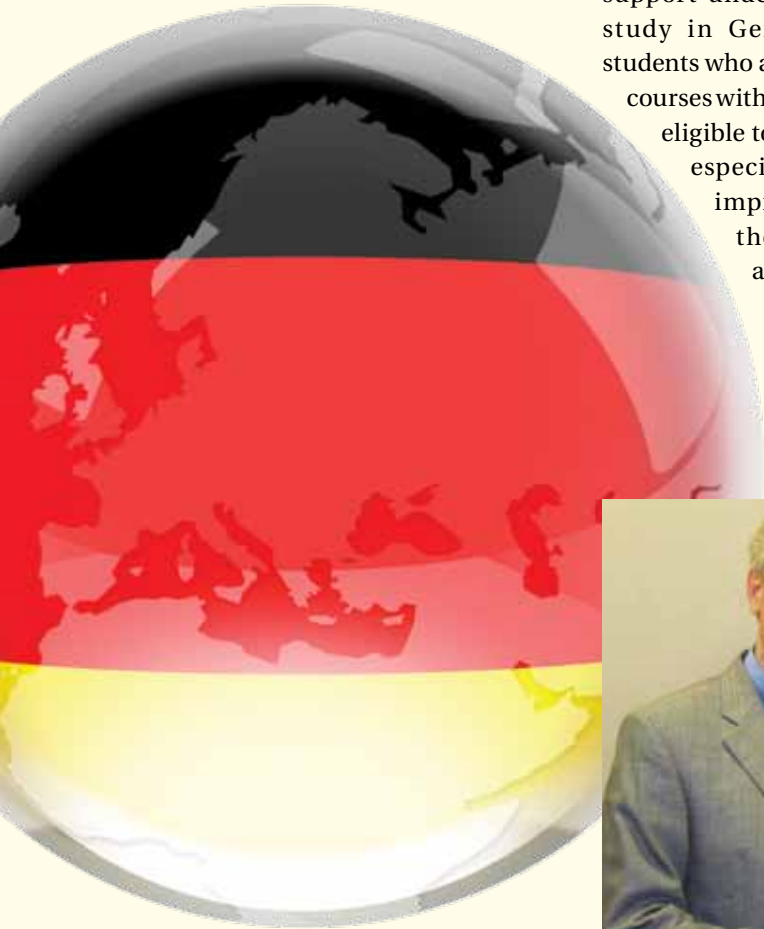
The purpose of these funds is to support undergraduate research and study in Germany. Undergraduate students who are enrolled in humanities courses with a strong German focus are eligible to apply for the fellowship, especially students wishing to improve their knowledge of the language through an advanced research project. The intent is to support students who would like to extensively pursue a topic based on research and study carried out in

Germany. Funds can be used for student travel, subsistence, stipend, and research and study related costs.

Steiner said, “Enhancing the study abroad experience of Rice undergraduates is one of the central goals of the department’s current fundraising efforts, which have already attracted a number of smaller gifts. As a small but very research-oriented department, German studies provides students with unique opportunities to work across a wide range of fields from literature and intellectual history to political thought and film studies.”

“Our students are often curious and independent thinkers, who continue their studies at some of the best graduate and professional schools in the U.S. and Europe,” said Christian J. Emden, associate professor and the department’s undergraduate adviser. “A gift such as the Houston Sängerbund Fellowships directly contributes to their future.”

The Houston Sängerbund is a German musical society founded in Houston in 1883, but traces its roots back to the German Quartette Society of 1847. It now meets at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Midtown, the oldest German Protestant congregation in Houston, founded in 1851. ▶



Enhancing the undergraduate research experience: Ruth Milburn (center) from the Houston Sängerbund and Uwe Steiner (left), with student Helen Li '11, who was a participant in the program in 2009.

BUILDING A COLLECTIVE HISTORY

BY AVERY K. TWITCHELL-HEYNE '13

AND

BRIAN S. RIEDEL, LECTURER AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CSWGS



In 2010, the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality (CSWGS) inaugurated a summer research opportunity for undergraduates: the Houston ARCH Summer Internship. The internship builds upon the center's participation in the Houston Area Rainbow Collective History (ARCH), a consortium of universities, libraries, museums and archives that promotes the preservation and dissemination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) history in the Houston area.

Houston ARCH includes representatives from Rice University; the University of Houston; the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender History, Inc.; the Charles Botts Memorial Library and Archives; the Transgender Foundation of America Archive; and many individual community members. Members of this diverse consortium find a common space in Houston ARCH to combine their skills and resources in order to collect and preserve local LGBT history.

The internship contributes directly to that work. Under the supervision of CSWGS faculty, students have the opportunity to study, collect and preserve history in the making by conducting oral histories with Houstonians who have contributed to Houston's LGBT communities. Interns get hands-on

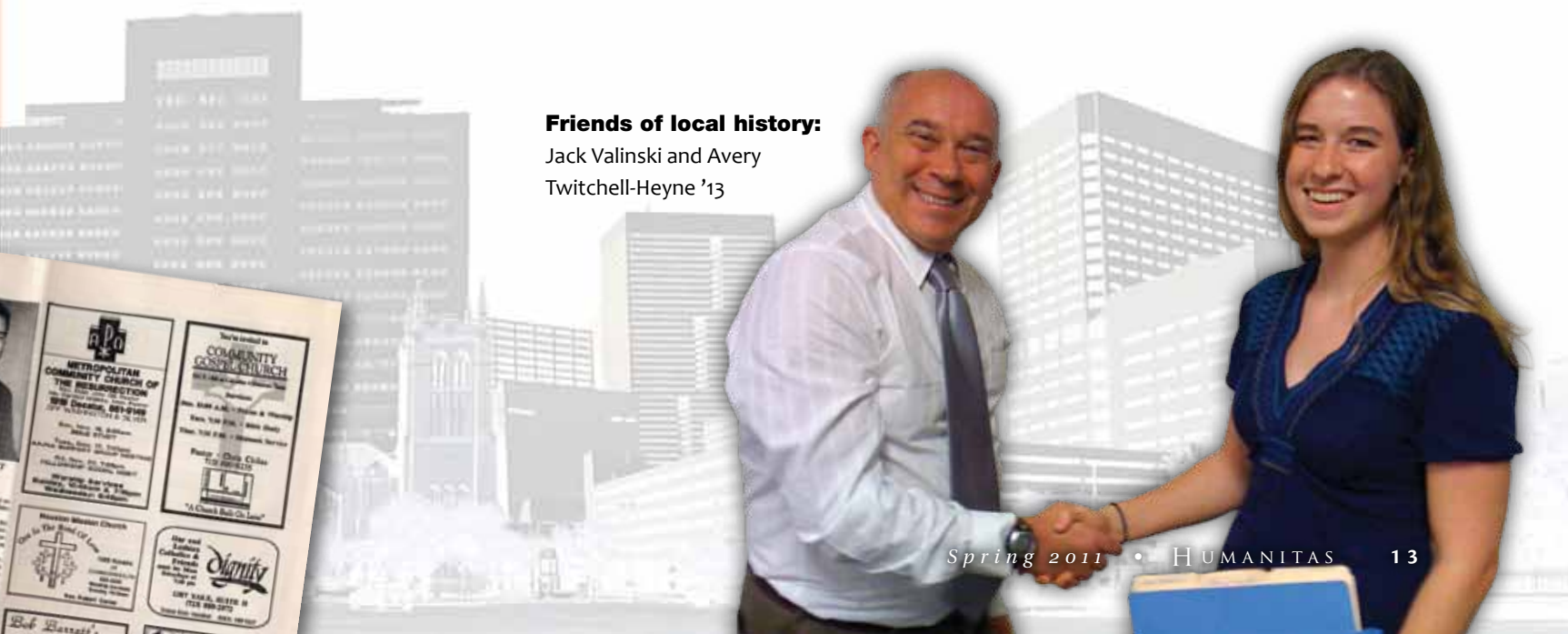
experience while thinking through research problems and methods and learn about Houston's history, politics and thriving LGBT community. The internship is paid and competitive, with the sole prerequisite that applicants have previously completed the Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies course, as the class provides the necessary skills to participate in social science research and familiarity with LGBT topics.

The core work of the internship is constructing a documented oral history. After choosing a person to interview from a short list of candidates, the student does extensive preliminary research in order to learn about that person, the context of that individual's life, and the effects of her or his work in both LGBT communities and Greater Houston. With

this background, the student is able to intelligently and sensitively interview the subject, fill in gaps in the public record or tease out additional details of crucial events. Though the intern does conduct some preliminary informal interviews, the formal interviews are captured on audiotape or video camera and later transcribed. The final product is a 10-minute minidocumentary describing the interviewee and his or her work in the community in a format that combines photographs and newspaper clippings with edited segments from the interviews. That video, along with all the written and recorded research leading up to it, is incorporated into a dossier and submitted to Fondren Library's Woodson Research Center, where it remains for future students, researchers, academics and community members to reference

Friends of local history:

Jack Valinski and Avery Twitchell-Heyne '13



and use for their own work. Since Rice University is a collaborator in Houston ARCH, the intern's work feeds into the consortium's work as well.

I was honored to be selected for the first year of the internship and chose to do my work with Jack Valinski, an active player in Houston's LGBT culture and politics since the early 1980s. Valinski was one of the original founders of the Pride Committee of Houston (now Pride Houston), the organization that manages the Pride Parade and Festival at the end of each June, marking the anniversary of the Stonewall riots in 1969. Through our interviews, I learned about how Valinski came to Houston and found his way to the radio station KPFT. From his early days volunteering in what is now the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, Valinski has been on the forefront of Houston's political scene and directly experienced many of the turning points in local LGBT history, particularly the bruising four-to-one defeat the community suffered in the 1985 voter referendum that reversed a city ordinance protecting city employees from discrimination because of their sexual orientation. He continues to be active in politics, now through his work in the office of Houston City Council Member Jolanda Jones.

After several interview sessions with Valinski and completing the background research, I had a large file of images, newspaper clippings and other ephemera, not to mention

hours of videotape. With the extensive help and resources of the Charles Botts Memorial Library and Archives and Fondren Library's Digital Media Center, I was able to put together a final video that gives a glimpse of all Valinski has done for the Pride Parade and Festival and the Houston political scene. In the few short months since I finished the internship, I've already seen that video make an impact in the community, with screenings in several venues in Houston, including the History Tent at the 2010 Pride Festival; the August 2010 meeting of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays; and the October 2010 meeting of Houston ARCH, when a copy of the dossier was also formally presented to Valinski. Altogether, the Houston ARCH Summer Internship was an unforgettable experience.

Editor's Note: The Houston ARCH Summer Internship is a significant addition to an already strong profile in engaged undergraduate research and experiential learning within the humanities at Rice. Beyond the internships available through the CSWGS minor in poverty, justice and human capabilities, there are also research opportunities available to Rice undergraduates through the Humanities Research Center, the Center for Civic Engagement Fellows program, the Loewenstern Fellowship, the Century Scholars program and Beyond Traditional Borders. ▶

Brown Teaching Grant

Together with the Institute for Urban Research, the Chao Center and the H.E.R.E. Project, CSWGS was awarded the Brown Teaching Grant in 2010 for a project to incorporate oral histories across the curriculum of the humanities and social sciences. Funds from the grant were used to purchase equipment to be housed at the Digital Media Center and to fund workshops led by Louis Marchiafava, a Houston-based expert in oral histories who served for many years as a grant reviewer for the National Endowment for the Humanities. CSWGS sees the work of the Brown Teaching Grant as supporting the ongoing community research project in SWGS 201, the Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies, and as complementing the center's involvement in the Houston Area Rainbow Collective History (ARCH).

Gray-Wawro Lectures in Gender, Health and Well-being

Through the generous support of Melanie Gray and Mark Wawro, this three-year lecture series recognizes health as a matter of physical and social well-being and highlights gender as a key factor for determining opportunity and quality of life. Each lecture brings to Houston a leading scholar whose work inspires deeper understanding of the gender features underlying urgent health concerns and fosters public conversation that can prompt informed action toward a more just world.

Partnership Launch

On Sept. 30, 2010, CSWGS began a new phase of its work, formalizing its connections to the broader communities it serves by launching the Partners of the Center, a membership organization supporting the center's work. The launch featured a keynote lecture from Lisa Dodson, research professor of sociology at Boston College, whose research details a wide-spread set of practices in the United States through which managers of low-wage laborers routinely break or bend the rules of their employers and the laws of the state in order to provide low-wage laborers with basic resources that help them survive. Dodson's lecture was followed by a dinner for the author and select guests.



Dietz Prize Awarded for “Hamlet” Without Hamlet’



The Elizabeth Dietz Memorial Award, established in 2005 by Rice University in memory of Professor Dietz, is awarded annually for the best book published in early modern studies. Out of an exceptional field of some 200 qualifying publications, the judges for 2010 chose “Hamlet’ without Hamlet,” written by Margreta de Grazia, the Sheli Z. and Burton X. Rosenberg Professor of Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania, and published by Cambridge University Press.

The judges reported that de Grazia’s book was the “stand-out book” of the year. Taking on possibly the most iconic text of the most iconic English author, de Grazia stripped the play of 200 years of misleading and self-gratifying commentary by famous people such as Goethe, Coleridge and Freud, and replaces it with a reading of Hamlet that is firmly grounded in a very “early modern” issue — the inheritance of land.

Whereas the modern Hamlet has been turned into a psychological conundrum, the Hamlet that Shakespeare actually wrote is at every level a drama about the wrongful dispossession of Denmark’s heir to the throne. To look upon the play through de Grazia’s eyes is to see a pervasive preoccupation with the land, with issues of possession and dispossession, generation and inheritance, entitlement, and other matters of state and estate.

Under this lens all aspects of “The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark” that had for years been more or less

ignored, if not actually cut in production, spring back to life and make a coherent, vibrant whole. Deftly reset within the historical era it specifies for itself, sometime between Denmark’s invasion of England in 1017 and the Norman Conquest in 1066, the plot of the play becomes a larger and more resonant commentary on the inevitability with which nations — plots of land — do not so much rise and fall as change their owners. Refreshing, painstaking and persuasive, this book will have to be on the secondary reading list of every course in which Hamlet is taught for many decades.

De Grazia has written or co-edited a number of important books about Shakespeare and Renaissance culture. She has taught a variety of courses in early modern English literature for undergraduates and graduate students at Penn, where in 2003 she was given the Ira Abrams Award for Distinguished Teaching.

She received her doctoral degree in English from Princeton University. Her scholarship has been supported by fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Humanities Center and the Guggenheim Foundation.

The judges for this year’s contest were

Emily C. Bartels, professor of English at Rutgers University and associate director of the Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury College; Annabel Patterson, the Sterling Professor Emeritus at Yale University; Emma Smith, fellow in English at Hertford College, Oxford; and Gordon Teskey, professor of English at Harvard University.

The Dietz Award was presented to the author and the publisher in early January 2011 at a breakfast ceremony hosted by SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900 held in Los Angeles during the annual Modern Language Association Convention. The prize is administered by SEL, a quarterly journal publishing scholarly articles on English literature at Rice University.

Previous winners were Zachary Lesser, associate professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania; Robert N. Watson, professor of English and associate vice provost at UCLA; Charles C. Whitney, professor of English at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas; and Alison Shell, professor of English at Durham University, England. Cambridge University Press has published four of the five winners, and the University of Pennsylvania Press published the second. ■

Whereas the “modern” Hamlet has been turned into a psychological conundrum, the Hamlet that Shakespeare actually wrote is at every level a drama about the wrongful dispossession of Denmark’s heir to the throne.



Celebrating Black History Month With The Black List Project

As part of its commemoration of Black History Month, Rice University hosted Volumes 2 and 3 of The Black List Project, a photographic exhibit and documentary featuring portraits of prominent African-Americans of various professions, disciplines and backgrounds by photographer and director Timothy Greenfield-Sanders. The photographs were on display throughout February 2011 in the Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts Main Gallery at the Rice Media Center.

Historically, “blacklist” denotes a group of people marginalized and denied work or social approval. The title derives its name from the 1950s communist witch hunt led by Senator Joseph McCarthy. In an effort to redefine the word, Greenfield-Sanders and his collaborator, Elvis Mitchell, the National Public Radio correspondent and former New York Times film critic, interviewed 25 notable African-Americans about the struggles, triumphs and joys of black life in the United States. These “portraits” are both pictorial and verbal, and they represent some of the most dynamic and inspiring personalities in the fields of politics, music, business, civil activism,

literature, the arts and athletics.

This exhibit was the first time that Volume 3 had been publicly shown, although it was not Houston’s first exposure to The Black List Project. Volume 1 was exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 2008, where it was met with critical acclaim by the Houston community. Other volumes of the exhibit have been hosted at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Conn.; the Brooklyn Museum in Brooklyn, N.Y.; and The Paley Center for Media in New York City.

Featured photographs include those of political activist and university professor Angela Davis; musician John

Legend; president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund Michael Lomax; artist Kara Walker; and actor, director, screenwriter, playwright, novelist and composer Melvin Van Peebles. Each photographed subject is also featured in the corresponding documentary, sharing an aspect of his or her personal experience of being black in America.

Greenfield-Sanders was in attendance at the launch of the project, where a compilation of the three volumes was screened at Rice’s BioScience Research Collaborative. Students, community members and Rice staff were in attendance to view the documentary, which included a Q&A session with Greenfield-Sanders and producer Tommy Walker. “[The Project] was an experiment at first,” Greenfield-Sanders told the audience. “Once we got a few major people, we reached out to others.”

In addition to the artistic components of the exhibit, Rice’s Humanities Research Center incorporated K–12 initiatives into the project by organizing field trips for Houston-area middle- and high-school students. These field



Experiencing art: (Opposite page and right) High school students took a guided tour of the photographic exhibit with alum Bradley Houston '10 and Jason Jeffries, a current graduate student in religious studies. (Left) Students participated in their own interactive art project, in which they made statements about their own identity and beliefs and posted them on a blank wall in the gallery space.

trips included a viewing of part of the documentary, an exhibit tour with art history alum Bradley Houston '10, and an educational lesson with outstanding humanities graduate students, focusing on themes of identity, opinions and sociocultural beliefs. This educational component is central to the mission of The Black List Project, which strives to create rich and empowering media

vehicles that ignite meaningful discourse and change. The objective of these lessons was to inspire discussions related to writing, the individual voice, history, identity, mentoring, education, race and achievement.

The Black List Project was brought to Rice by HumanArt, a collaboration between Rice's Humanities Research Center and the Rice Public Art program.

HumanArt is designed to integrate artistic endeavor into every layer of Rice's learning community.

The exhibition was also sponsored by the Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts and the School of Humanities. For a complete list of sponsors and more information on HumanArt, please visit www.humanart.org.

BY FRANZ BROTZEN



John Legend



Melvin Van Peebles



Majora Carter

Excerpts from



R2: Rice Review is a student-run literary journal at Rice University committed to publishing the best prose, poetry, creative nonfiction and occasionalists written by Rice's undergraduate students, as well as interviews with renowned authors. The journal was founded in 2004 by creative writing professor and author Justin Cronin. The efforts of R2 are supported and advised by Marcia Carter of the English department, and by Hannah Gamble, this year's Parks Fellow in Creative Writing.

Bradley V. '86 and Gail Clayton Husick '86 have endowed R2. The journal will be made possible for the next five years with the current use funds from Sandy '86 and David Epstein and family. Many thanks go out to the generous donors who support Rice's undergraduate creative writing.

Berliners seeing me alone in the dark early morning

by Vanessa Johnson '10

My first mistake was responding
to his English with mine.
He saw me on the U-Bahn, with my red
suitcase, and spoke well, despite
his blurry eyes... I told him
I was going to Petersburg
and he said I looked like
a Russian doll. (They are a doll [inside a doll {inside a doll}],
up to an infinity of eyes.)

—and I thought:

[Twist,

and there's more
within me,
twist,

{and another
red pair of lips...}]

Holding onto his hangover, he went
away as I pulled my own suitcase
up stairs to Alexanderplatz.

My second mistake was walking
into the street's middle
without noticing.
I turned, and there was a car
meagerly forward, gently headlighting me
with its bright pair —
plenty of time to realize the white stripe.

All still intact,
the suitcase huddled close to my legs
through the bumpy roll on cobblestone.

There'd been a gaggle of elderly watching
my mistake with the street: they looked like
quiet children hushed in the night, not trusting
their eyes;

my jacket-zipper mumbled as I loosened
a layer off of myself: I pulled my lips to a smile.

Rice Review

Air Hunger (excerpt)

by Cathy Yang '10

You are fourteen. Your father is hitting you on the cheek, not hard enough to draw blood, but hard enough to leave a bright, shameful mark on your skin. Your hands are stained from the ink stick you just threw against the wall, and if you brought your fingers to your nose, you could pinpoint the smell of evergreen and bone and ash. But your hand is tired and cramped from holding the bamboo stem of a brush, and your father's face is polished with the sheen of anger. Your father is saying, "Ah Qian, a man's worth is only the measure of his endurance." He is saying, "It is fire that burns away the impurity of soot, so that we can make beauty with ink." He is saying, "The only true perfection is that which you produce yourself, and it can only come with hard work." Yet at fourteen you know he is only ashamed to find out that his son is exactly like him—rough, inelegant, a country bumpkin, not a scholar. He is finally realizing that you were both harvested from the dirt to return to the dirt, that it is not in you to be anything more. You were built to be a man of hands, not heart, and the hands you have will never be enough for your heart.

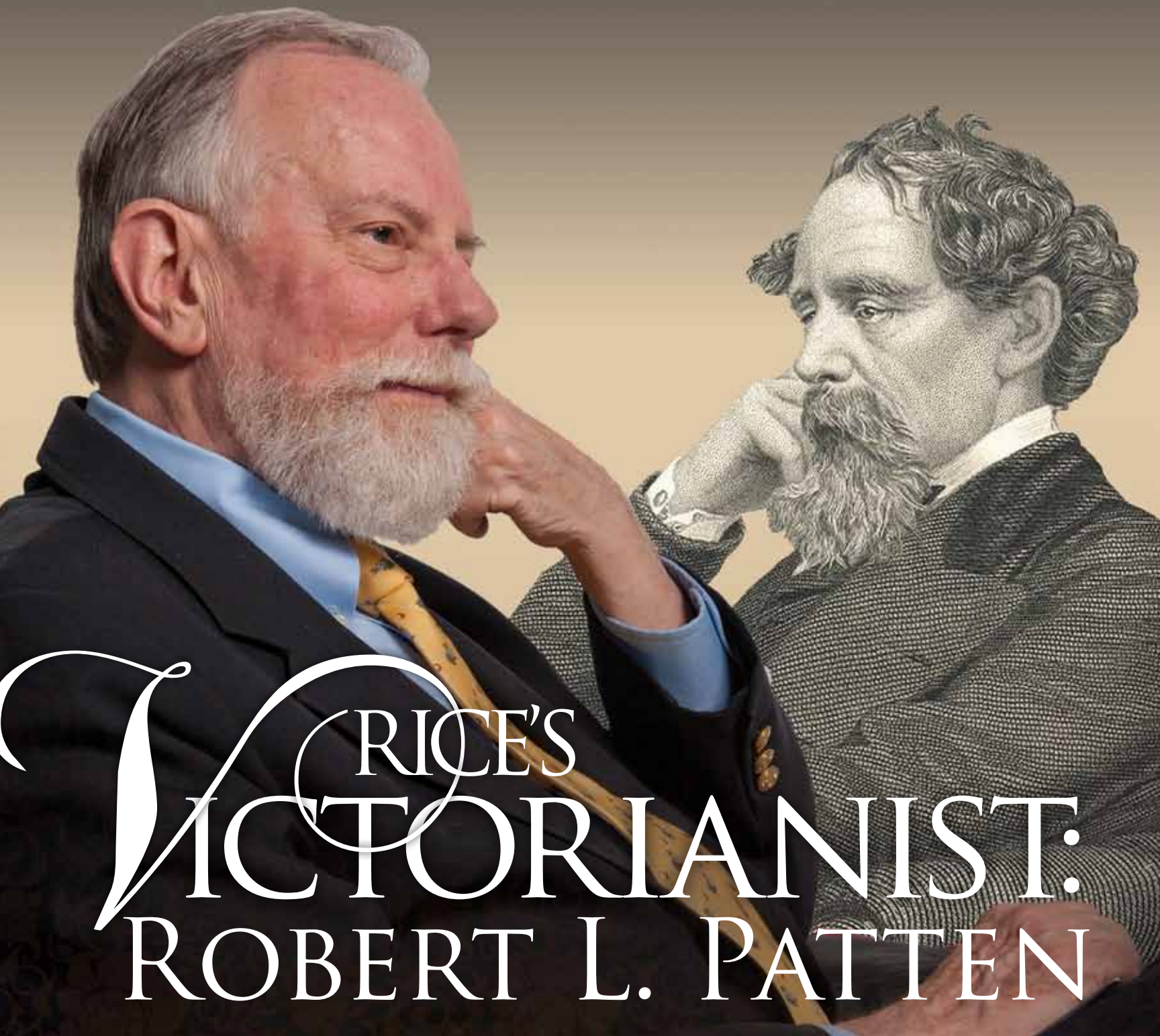
You are eighteen. A boy is being pulled out of the swimming pool. You are standing with the rest of the class, watching him emerge — wet hair, shoulders, then elbows, like a baby being birthed by the water. The teacher is yelling at all of you to make way. After heaving all the water out of his lungs, the boy slumps against the side of the pool. He is just barely breathing. His hair is matted against the side of his face, and he looks like a man who has slept his way to death. Your teacher tells you to

accompany him to the hospital bay, and you do. In two hours, lying on a starched cot, he is going to blink, and you are going to be sitting on a chair next to him, reading your grammar textbook, waiting for him to wake up. You are going to ask him how he feels. He is going to tell you that he's never felt as alive as he did at the bottom of the pool. He's going to tell you that when he gave into the struggle, he saw perfect fields of rice shoots in the spring, miles of them, stretched out before him like the sky turned green. He's going to tell you, with a voice croaking like old leather and heartbreak, "I will never know peace like that again."

You are twenty-five. You're lying on the floor of another man's apartment, propped up by your elbows. Wrapped up in one of his blankets, you are watching him as he watches his rain-sodden laundry drip onto his balcony. It is early morning, and outside Shanghai is laid out for both of you like a woman stretching, sweaty, on a bed of concrete and sidewalk. It will be monsoon season soon. You can smell the summer rain, like warm iron and car exhaust and oil being fried for a second time. His big toe slides against the cheaply varnished floor through the hole in his socks as he moves to open the balcony door, and you are holding your breath.

You are twenty-five. You're just a stupid, uneducated boy with hands that will never be enough for your heart, but you know what perfection is.

You know you would achieve it if you could just hold your breath forever.



RICE'S VICTORIANIST: ROBERT L. PATTEN

BY KEVIN MORRISON '09 (PH.D.)

BOB PATTEN IS NOT THE FIRST
PROFESSOR TO MAKE ME CRY.

❧ BUT THIS TIME, THEY WEREN'T
TEARS OF FRUSTRATION. ❧

Toward the end of a graduate seminar, Bob, as he is affectionately known by many, was reading a passage aloud from a novel by Anthony Trollope. Suddenly, the characters came alive. Their moral dilemmas moved me. Their foibles, so recognizable, hit close to home. After years of reading with

intention (to produce a paper, to formulate an argument, etc.), and armed with a highlighter, I had forgotten — or was, perhaps, too embarrassed to acknowledge in the heady intellectual university environment — that reading literature can be a profoundly emotional experience. While he was often attuned to the ideological work of literature and alert to current critical debates about a given text, Bob also repeatedly reminded his students why many of us chose to study fiction and poetry in the first place.

A graduate of Swarthmore (B.A., 1960) and Princeton University (M.A., 1962; Ph.D., 1965), Robert Lowry Patten joined Rice's Department of English in 1969, after four years of teaching at Bryn Mawr College. He quickly rose through the

faculty ranks, becoming full professor in 1976. Twenty years later, he was named the Lynette S. Autrey Professor in Humanities, an endowed chair that he continues to hold. During his 42-year career at Rice, Bob served the English department with distinction both as chair and as director of graduate studies. His many contributions to the shared governance of the university include serving as secretary of the faculty, speaker of the Faculty Council and university marshal. His strong sense of service and responsibility has extended well beyond Rice to include, most recently, stints as president of the international Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (2005–09) and member of the Modern Language Association’s Executive Committee, Division on the Victorian Period (2005–09).

Beloved among undergraduates, Bob also forged a particularly close relationship with the graduate student body while serving as master of the Graduate House, faculty adviser to the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and graduate ombudsman. For his indefatigable efforts on its behalf, the GSA first established a graduate student prize in his name in 1996 before giving him their Outstanding Mentor Award in 2000.

Although he is the recipient of many such honors for service and teaching, perhaps his crowning achievement came in 2009 with the Presidential Mentoring Award, given to faculty members who demonstrate a strong commitment to mentoring graduate or undergraduate students. A pattern quickly emerges from the letters by the graduate students, faculty and staff who nominated him for this award: Bob makes each student feel as if he or she is his only concern. Whether it is forwarding an e-mail to a student about an upcoming conference; or leaving a copy of an article in a student’s mailbox with a cover note suggesting that it might be useful for one’s research; or writing pages of exacting commentary on seminar papers, draft journal articles, and, especially, dissertation chapters, Bob demonstrates in ways large and small that his principal concern is the success

of each student with whom he works. “Bob is the ideal dissertation adviser,” noted Helena Michie, his Victorianist colleague and holder of the Agnes Cullen Arnold Chair in Humanities. “Intelligent, well-read in the field, and above all generous with his time and intellectual attention.”

Bob’s singular success in working with students is complemented by his remarkable achievements as an interdisciplinary scholar, long before that term became fashionable in academia. One of the world’s most-esteemed Victorianists, Bob has edited four major collections on different aspects of 19th-century British literature and culture and written two books. His two-volume “George Cruikshank’s Life, Times, and Art” (1992, 1996) garnered numerous accolades: the British newspaper the *Guardian* lauded it as the best biography of the decade while the first volume was selected as an outstanding book in art history by *Choice* (1992). But it is with Charles Dickens that Bob’s name will forever be entwined. The meticulously researched and masterfully argued “Charles Dickens and His Publishers” (1978) continues to be a foundation for studies of this preeminent 19th-century writer. Two other books are set to appear during the Dickens bicentennial celebrations of 2012. Bob has received numerous research fellowships, including awards from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He was most recently appointed as the first scholar-in-residence at the Dickens House Museum in London, a position he will take up in the 2011–12 academic year, and a visiting fellow at the School of Advanced Study at the University of London.

In addition to his own scholarship, Bob has profoundly influenced the shape of English studies through his leadership of *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, a prestigious international journal based at Rice. Serving as its editor from 1978 to 1984 and again from 1990 until 2006 before assuming the responsibilities of executive editor and publisher, Bob established values and principles that have been serving and

will continue to serve as the basis for the journal’s future development. According to Logan Browning, the journal’s current editor, Bob’s “scrupulous standards and scholarly integrity combined with an indefatigable attention to detail have clearly become the defining characteristics of *SEL*, and he leaves a wonderful legacy of quality that we will always strive to emulate.” Bob was also instrumental in expanding the journal’s reach and impact. He initiated critical conversations with Johns Hopkins University Press, which resulted in a “special relationship”: since the winter 1999 issue, *SEL* has been published by Johns Hopkins University Press for Rice University, and digitized issues have been included in the press’s Project Muse database. “A brilliant move at just the right time,” said Browning.

During Bob’s tenure as editor of *SEL*, the Diana Hobby Fellowships were established, which provide for graduate student editorial trainees. These fellowships have drawn graduate students to Rice with the hope of gaining invaluable experience in and knowledge of scholarly publishing. Having myself been a Hobby Fellow, I found my work at *SEL* frequently subjected to Bob’s keen, scrutinizing editorial eye. My own research is better for it.

But it is, perhaps, the interaction between professor and student that he modeled which I particularly strive to emulate. He once summed up his approach by saying to me that, in working with students, he likes to play the idealist to the skeptic and the skeptic to the idealist. It is an approach that I now use in mentoring students. Although Bob may be retiring from full-time teaching, the many lessons that he has taught generations of students live on in their classrooms and other academic venues around the country and, indeed, around the world. ❁

KEVIN MORRISON '09 RECEIVED HIS PH.D. FROM RICE AND IS NOW AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY.

2010 Campbell Lecture Series

The best education for one who aspires to be a creative writer is to read voraciously, across genres and generations, award-winning author Zadie Smith told the audience at the 2010 Campbell Lecture presented last fall at Rice University.

The lauded young author of “White Teeth,” a vibrant coming-of-age tale set in today’s multicultural London and winner of the 2000 Whitbread Award, read from her latest book, “Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays,” a collection of essays written for *The New Yorker*, the *Guardian* and similar publications.

“Zadie Smith is such a speaker,” said Nicolas Shumway, dean of humanities. “She is a phenomenal and original talent, a gift to all of us who love books and reading. Her fiction addresses a dizzying array of cultures in beautifully crafted prose. Her writing also is very funny; I read her first book on an airplane, and I laughed out loud several times,” he said.

Smith read from her essay on the craft of writing. In a passage describing when the writer is halfway through writing the novel, “a sort of magical thinking takes place,” she said. This is when “nothing in the world matters except the writing”; the writer pays no attention to normal daily activities.

“It’s a state of mind when time collapses. Everything flows freely into the novel, and the writer cannot believe how in touch with the world it is.”

Writing the first 20 pages flows smoothly for her, but it goes downhill later, Smith said. Among other useless measures, she indulges in elaborate sentence-making. “That’s the point at which you can’t let a character walk across the room without writing a backstory.”

Next the writer must “dismantle the ‘scaffolding’ — information not needed, but written to make you feel assured; it gives you confidence when you have none,” she said. “Later, when the book is old and dog-eared, you realize it is not necessary.”

Then it’s time to “step away from the vehicle,” Smith advised. Let the work sit. “If money is not a priority, put the manuscript in a drawer for a year ... or at least for three months.” Then, she said, “become a reader, not a writer. Put yourself in the head of a smart stranger who picks it off the shelf.”

Later, when the work is published for all to read, Smith distances herself from the words she wrote. “I have never read ‘White Teeth,’” she said. “It fills me with nausea, and I suspect that it and I may never be reconciled.” She acknowledged, however, “in isolated pockets, this is exactly what I meant to write.”

These essays reveal a writer who keeps an open mind as she refines her view of life, literature, family and fame. Smith readily admitted that they

show how her tastes have evolved. Her attitudes have changed, just as what she likes to read and to write have changed. “And that’s good,” she said.

Published in 2000, “White Teeth” won multiple awards, including the *Guardian* First Book Award. Smith also wrote “The Autograph Man” and “On Beauty,” an acclaimed novel about a mixed-raced English family living in the United States that was shortlisted for the 2005 Man Booker Prize.

The following day she conducted a craft talk in Sewall Hall, discussing creative writing programs and the paradox of being a professor while her only credentials come from being a famous author.

The Campbell Lectures Series in literary studies was made possible by a \$1 million gift from alumnus T.C. Campbell ’34, whose family members attended this year’s program. The late Campbell’s dream was to draw attention to the study of literature and for Rice to be known as a place on the literary map. “Mr. Campbell was passionate about literature and the arts,” said Shumway. “The goal of the Campbell Lectures is to bring to Rice renowned speakers and give them a platform to represent the best literature of our time.” ▶

— LIN FISH

“It’s a state of mind when time collapses. Everything flows freely into the novel, and the writer cannot believe how in touch with the world it is.”

ZADIE SMITH



NEH Chairman Touts Humanities' Role in Promoting Civil Discourse

Drawing on 30 years as a U.S. congressman from the state of Iowa, James Leach told the Rice and Houston community in November that the humanities have a vital role to play in formulating government policy.

Leach, the current chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), invoked philosophical, historical and literary references to support his call for civil discourse — a concept he said “applies way beyond politics.”

Part of a 50-state university tour, the lecture, “Civility in a Fractured Society,” was designed to promote the idea of “putting ourselves in someone else’s shoes,” he said.

Coming two days after the midterm elections, Leach’s comments inevitably focused on the current state of politics in the United States. Calling 2010 a “contrarian” election, he said, “There’s reason for hard feelings.”

But he expressed strong reservations about the way the campaign played out.

“Argumentation has to be considered a social good,” Leach said, and government without argumentation almost always leads to tyranny. The separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution functions best when we “listen to someone else and give that person their due.”

“The aspect of the election that to me was most inappropriate had nothing to do with results, but had a lot to do with some of the rhetoric,” he said. “I think rhetoric is very significant.” He went on to highlight three words used during recent political discourse that he found objectionable: fascism, communism and secession. While some hyperbole is to be expected in the heat of a political campaign, Leach said, those three words represent concepts “that have summoned people to war.”

Words can clarify thoughts, Leach argued, and sometimes they can cloud

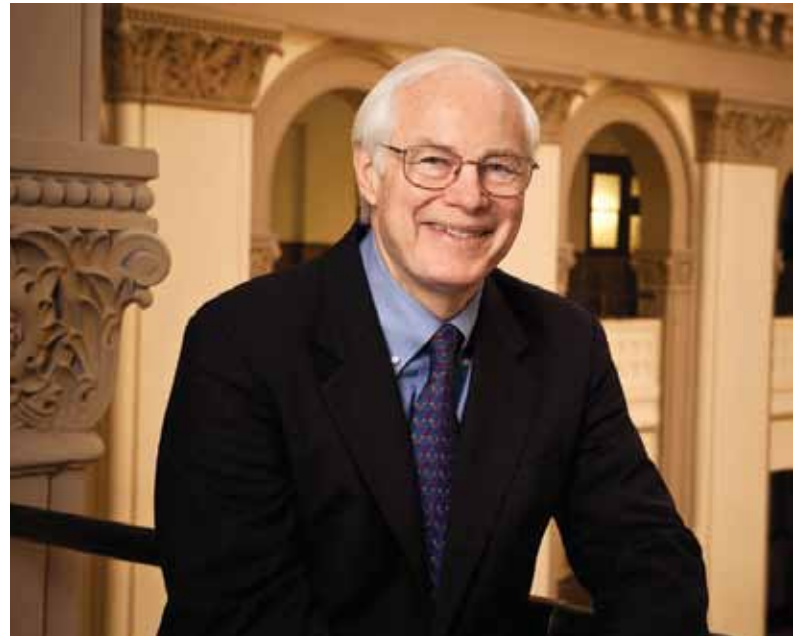
thoughts. Pointing to a positive example, he cited research on the use of the word “reconciliation” by all parties in postapartheid South Africa. He said “reconciliation” seemed to take on a life of its own — despite widespread fears that the end of government-sanctioned racial separation would result in a bloody maelstrom — and former adversaries accepted the concept and truly reconciled.

Such an outcome seems remote in the United States right now, Leach admitted. Fringe groups play an outsized role in determining primary elections, and the old rule that candidates head for the center once they win nomination no longer holds true. The result, Leach said, is that the most

underrepresented group in U.S. politics today is the center. He called for respect for conservative and liberal perspectives, but also for “oddball” perspectives — because if all men are created equal, “then all people are worthy of being listened to.”

“Argumentation has to be considered a social good,” Leach said, and government without argumentation almost always leads to tyranny. The separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution functions best when we “listen to someone else and give that person their due.”

Moreover, a basic awareness of



history, religion, philosophy and languages can help avoid some of the mistakes seen in recent policy decisions, Leach maintained. He pointed to the lack of knowledge about Sunnis and Shias on the part of elected U.S. officials before the invasion of Iraq as an example.

In closing, Leach came back to the notion of “putting ourselves in someone else’s shoes” as one of greatest contributions the humanities offer. “I happen to think that literature does it better than any other discipline — but the same can be said about history, the same can be said about philosophy,” he said. “Is that not an important thing as we think through our own lives at a mundane level and also as we think through our countries’ lives at a very significant level?”

The talk was organized by Rice’s Humanities Research Center, and an archived webcast of Leach’s talk can be found at <http://hrc.rice.edu/Media.aspx>. ▶

— FRANZ BROTZEN

Judith Roof

William Shakespeare Chair in English and professor of English

She received a B.A., J.D., M.A. and Ph.D. from Ohio State University and an M.A. from the University of Toronto. Her work ranges through many areas of 20th century and contemporary studies, including comparative modernisms; drama and performance studies; film studies; theories of sexuality; science, literature, and culture; contemporary British and American fiction; and Lacanian psychoanalysis.

She has authored books on feminist theory and criticism, narrative theory, theories of sexuality and film, including "A Lure of Knowledge: Lesbian Sexuality and Theory" (Columbia, 1991), "Come

As You Are: Narrative and Sexuality" (Columbia, 1996) and "All About Thelma and Eve: Sidekicks and Third Wheels" (Illinois, 2002), as well as books about concepts and trends in contemporary culture, "Reproductions of Reproduction" (Routledge, 1996) and "The Poetics of DNA" (Minnesota, 2007). She has edited collections of essays on feminist theory, psychoanalysis and drama and has published essays on topics ranging from the work of Samuel Beckett, Virginia Woolf, Harold Pinter, Marguerite Duras, Alfred Hitchcock, Richard Powers and Percival Everett; to fame, Viagra, genetics and cultural legal studies; to the movies "Little Britain" and "The Big Lebowski."

Roof is a licensed attorney and a

member of SteinSemble Performance Group, which performs avant-garde pieces typically not performed for general audiences, including plays by Beckett, Pinter, Stein and Tzara, as well as mixed media productions and voice performances. She has performed in Edinburgh, England, and Tours, France, and Minneapolis, Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, Louisville and Columbus. In addition, she has had films screened at the Austin GLBT Film Festival and at the University of Michigan.

This year at Rice, Roof taught courses in literary criticism, comedy, and modernism and the avant-garde. Her current projects include books on comedy, ontologies of drama and the problem of gay/lesbian subjectivity.



Charles Siewert

Robert Alan and Kathryn Dunlevie Hayes Professor of Humanities and professor of philosophy

Siewert grew up in West Texas, and received his undergraduate degree in Philosophy from Reed College and his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. Before coming to Rice, he taught at Reed College, the University of Miami, and the University of California at Riverside.

His work mainly concerns consciousness, perception and introspective self-knowledge, and in his teaching and research on these topics he has sought to integrate (largely

Anglophone) analytic philosophy with writing in the German and French phenomenological tradition. He also has a strong interest in ancient philosophy and has written on the theory of human motivation implicit in Plato's argument for dividing the soul. His work generally strives to combine a strong role for philosophical modes of thought with respect for contemporary empirical research.

In his book, "The Significance of Consciousness" (Princeton, 1998), he defends a critical use of first-person reflection in clarifying concepts of "consciousness." He focuses on consciousness in the "phenomenal" sense that has seemed particularly challenging to explain scientifically and argued that while are liable to

misconceive it in our zeal to meet this challenge, it figures importantly in both perception and thought, and has a deep intrinsic value that makes the need to do it theoretical justice especially compelling.

Since his book appeared, he has continued to work on issues in this area, writing on: the nature of our warrant for making introspective first-person judgments about experience; their use in psychology; the notion of inner perception as a source of self-knowledge; the relation between self-knowledge and rationality; the richness (and alleged poverty) of conscious experience; the sensorimotor approach to perception; the dangers of over-intellectualizing perception; and the connection between consciousness and conceptual thought.



Gwendolyn Bradford

Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Ph.D., Yale University, 2010
M.A., Yale University, 2006
B.A., University of Toronto, Trinity College, 2003

The central focus of Bradford's research investigates the nature of achievements and what makes them valuable. Achievements are typically acknowledged as significant on "objective list" theories of value, but in spite of such widespread acknowledgement of the importance of achievements, there is virtually no philosophical literature devoted to the rigorous investigation of just what achievements are, or why they are valuable. Bradford's research is focused on these questions: developing an account of the nature of achievements and accounting for their value and pursuing related issues, such as the nature of difficulty and effort, and also certain issues in epistemology.



More generally, Bradford's interests are in value theory, particularly in the following issues: the nature of intrinsic value, happiness and well-being and perfectionism, as well as normative ethics, the history of moral philosophy, and epistemology. Other favorite topics to puzzle about are the meaning of life, and the nature and value of games.

Manuel Gutiérrez

Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies
Ph.D., University of California at Los Angeles, 2009
M.A., University of California at Los Angeles, 2007
M.A., University of California at Santa Cruz, 2003
B.A., University of California at Santa Cruz, 2001

Gutiérrez specializes in 20th-century Mexican literature and art. His cross-disciplinary research examines the interconnectedness of poetic and artistic discourses, revealing the critical contributions of Mexican poets to the field of art history. He has written on canonical authors, including José Juan Tablada, Xavier Villaurrutia, Jorge Cuesta and Octavio Paz. He also has written on the Central American poet Luis Cardoza y Aragón. His research also delves into the late 19th- and early 20th-century Mexican novel and literary essay in a comparative context, incorporating these genres into broader cultural discourses and debates. Gutiérrez's studies go beyond strictly nationalist interpretations of literature and the arts in Mexico and engage current scholarship on migration and cultural dissemination in the Americas.



Currently he is working on a book-length study of Mexican literature and culture in the 1920s and 1930s and is also compiling an anthology of critical essays on the arts written by Mexican poets.

Maya Soifer Irish

Assistant Professor of History
Ph.D., Princeton University, 2007
M.A., University of Colorado, 2000
B.A., University of Colorado, 1995

Irish works on the history of interfaith relations in medieval Spain and the Mediterranean. Medieval Spain is famous for its *convivencia* (living-togetherness) of Jews, Christians and Muslims and for the way this coexistence was torn asunder first by the anti-Jewish violence of 1391 and then by the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. However, it remains unclear how coexistence morphed into violence. Did it happen because the church intensified its anti-Jewish rhetoric? Or had violence always been an integral part of *convivencia* until it somehow spiraled out of control? Irish's research suggests new ways to approach these questions.



Irish teaches undergraduate surveys of medieval European and Mediterranean history and courses on medieval Spain and Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations. Her book manuscript, tentatively titled "Jews, Christians and Royal Power in Medieval Castile," is the first half of a two-book project that will examine the evolution of Jewish-Christian relations in the kingdom of Castile during the High Middle Ages (11th to 15th century).



Appointments, Awards and Prizes

Art History

Marcia Brennan, associate professor, won the George R. Brown Award for Superior Teaching in 2010.

Linda Neagley, associate professor, was appointed to the board of directors of the International Center of Medieval Art (2010–2013).

Diane Wolfthal, the David and Caroline Minter Professor of Art History and department chair, was elected council member of the Sixteenth Century Studies Council in 2010. She also continues to serve as discipline representative of history of art and architecture for the Renaissance Society.

English

Justin Cronin, professor of English, “The Passage” was chosen as one of Salon.com’s Best Books of 2010.

Hispanic Studies

Luis Duno-Gottberg, associate professor, was awarded the Latin American Studies Association’s prize for the Venezuelan studies section in humanities.

J. Bernardo Pérez, associate professor, received the 2010 Nicolas Salgo Outstanding Teacher Award.

History

Lisa Balabanlilar, assistant professor, was the 2010 recipient of Rice’s Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Prize.

Tani Barlow, professor and director of the Chao Center for Asian Studies, was appointed a visiting professor in the Institute for Global Issue Studies at Hitotsubashi University, Japan, from April to October 2010; served as editor of the journal *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*. The special issue from that publication, *Beyond the Strai(gh)ts: Transnationalism and Queer Chinese Politics*, was selected for the Best Special Issue Prize from the Modern Language Association’s Council of Editors of Learned Journals.

Alexander Byrd, associate professor, received the 2010 Rice Presidential Mentoring Award. He was also awarded the 2010 Douglass Adair Memorial Award for “Eboe, Country, Nation and Gustavus Vassa’s Interesting Narrative” (January 2006 issue), which is given biennially to the best article to have appeared in the *William and Mary Quarterly* during the past six years.

Peter C. Caldwell was appointed the Samuel G. McCann Professor of History.

Michael Maas, professor, is currently on leave (2010–11) with a NEH Fellowship. He was also appointed a Peden Senior Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge University in 2010.

Ussama Makdisi, professor of history, Arab-American Educational Foundation Chair of Arab Studies and chair of the graduate program in history was a directeur d’études invite at École Pratique des Haute Études, Science Religieuses (Sorbonne) in May 2010. Makdisi’s book, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations, 1820–2001*, was selected as a Best Books of 2010 on Salon.com.

Allen J. Matusow, the William Gaines Twyman Professor and director of academic affairs at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, received the 2010 Association of Rice Alumni’s Gold Medal for extraordinary service to the university.

Cyrus Mody, assistant professor, was awarded an ACLS Collaborative Research Fellowship and three NSF grants.

ACLS COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

“Micro-Histories and Nano-Futures: The Co-Production of Miniaturization and Futurism”

Mody’s group will study the relationship between high-tech intellectuals who emerged in the ’70s and ’80s and the microelectronics industry. High-tech intellectuals are geographically centered in the same area as that industry (Silicon Valley), associated with many of the same institutions (Stanford, SRI, the Global Business Network), and use the progress of microelectronics to legitimize their own visions for similarly futuristic technologies such as molecular engineering and space colonization. They will focus on Moore’s Law, the prediction of constant microelectronics miniaturization — its long history, its social construction and its use by high-tech intellectuals for projects across many domains.

Martin J. Wiener, the Mary Gibbs Jones Professor of History, was named a National Humanities Center Fellow for 2011–2012.

Kinesiology

Jimmy Disch, associate professor, was awarded outstanding faculty associate for Sid Richardson College and appointed chair of the Sport Management Council.

Nick Iammarino, professor and department chair, was appointed to the board of associate editors for the American Journal of Health Education.

Heidi Perkins, lecturer, was appointed as a visiting instructor at UT M.D. Anderson Cancer Treatment Center.

Philosophy

Melinda Fagan, assistant professor, was awarded a Rice Humanities Research Center Faculty Innovation Fund Research Fellowship for 2010–2012 and a Mosle Research Award for 2010–2011.

Nicoletta Orlandi, assistant professor, was invited to be a visiting researcher in May 2010 to Riken Laboratory for Perceptual Dynamics in Tokyo, Japan. She also was awarded a 2010–2011 Rice Humanities Research Center Faculty Fellowship and the 2010 Mosle Research Award.

Religious Studies

Matthias Henze, the Watt J. & Lilly G. Jackson Associate Professor in Biblical Studies, was awarded the 2010 George R. Brown Award for Superior Teaching.

Jeffrey J. Kripal, the J. Newton Rayzor Professor and department chair, won a CHOICE Award for Academic Excellence in 2010 for his book “Authors of the Impossible.” XL Films of Richmond, Texas, also optioned the book for a feature documentary.

VADA

Karin Broker, professor, had a solo exhibition, *Oddities and Other Opinions*, at McClain Gallery (May 2010) and a group exhibition, *20 on Paper*, at Williams Tower (December 2010), both in Houston.

Christina Keefe, director of theater and lecturer, will present a workshop at the International University Global Theatre Experience conference at Retzhof Castle, Austria (May 2011).

John Sparagana, professor, had solo exhibitions, *Between the Eyes* at Corbett v. Dempsey Gallery, Chicago, Ill. (2011); *Ah Wilderness* at Ebersmoore, Chicago, Ill. (2010–2011); *Entre chien et loup* at Galerie Vidal Saint Phalle, Paris, France (2010–2011); *Eraserhead* at Fruehsorge Contemporary Drawings, Berlin, Germany (2010); *Hide and Seek* at Aratia Beer, Berlin, Germany (2010); and *Art Chicago International Art Fair*, Corbett v. Dempsey booth, Chicago, Ill. (2010).

Geoff Winningham, professor, was awarded the Ron Tyler Prize for the Best Illustrated Book on Texas History for 2010 by the Texas State Historical Association for his book “Traveling the Shore of the Spanish Sea: The Gulf Coast of Texas and Mexico” (Texas A&M University Press, 2010).



Publications

Art History



Marcia Brennan
Associate Professor
"Curating
Consciousness:
Mysticism and the
Modern Museum"



Diane Wolfthal
David and Caroline Minter
Professor and Department
Chair
"In and Out of the Marital
Bed: Seeing Sex in
Renaissance Art"

English



Krista Comer
Associate Professor
"Surfer Girls in the New
World Order"



Alexander Regier
Assistant Professor
"Fracture and
Fragmentation in British
Romanticism"



Cary Wolfe
Bruce and Elizabeth
Dunlevie Professor and
Department Chair
"What Is Posthumanism?"

German Studies

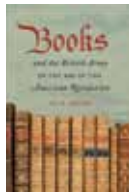


Christian Emden
Associate Professor
"ImageScapes:
Studies in
Intermediality":
Christian J. Emden
and Gabriele Rippl
(eds.)

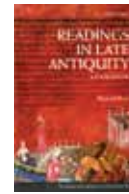


Uwe Steiner
Professor and
Department Chair
"Walter Benjamin: An
Introduction to His
Work and Thought":
translated by
Michael Winkler

History



Ira Gruber
Harris Masterson Jr.
Professor Emeritus
"Books and the British
Army in the Age of the
American Revolution"



Michael Maas
Professor
"Readings in
Late Antiquity: A
Sourcebook"



Ussama Makdisi
Professor, Arab-American
Educational Foundation
Chair of Arab Studies and
Chair of the Graduate
Program in History
"Faith Misplaced: The
Broken Promise of
U.S.-Arab Relations,
1820-2001"

Kinesiology



Patrick Thornton
Lecturer
"Sports Ethics for
Sports Management
Professionals"

Religious Studies



Jeffrey J. Kripal
J. Newton Rayzor
Professor and
Department Chair
"Authors of the
Impossible: The
Paranormal and the
Sacred"



Anthony B. Pinn
Agnes Cullen Arnold
Professor of Humanities
and Director of the
H.E.R.E. Project
"Embodiment and the
New Shape of Black
Theological Thought"
and
"Understanding and
Transforming the
Black Church"



John Sparagana
Professor
Stewart, Garrett,
"Bookwork: Medium to
Object to Concept to
Art" by Garrett Stewart
with artwork by John
Sparagana

Visual and Dramatic Arts



John Sparagana
Professor
"Between the Eyes," a
44-page solo exhibition
catalogue, with essays
by Graham Bader
(Rice University), John
Corbett and David
Schutter

It would be difficult to find a more meaningless term than “self-made man.” However limited one’s circumstances, everyone, in some way, benefits from the care and gifts of others. Nowhere is this truer than at Rice University.

The generous bequest left by William Marsh Rice more than a century ago, along with the gifts of thousands of others since then, have enabled Rice students to receive an outstanding education and have provided resources for Rice faculty to do exceptional research.

While we stand in awe of the accomplishments of our students and faculty, we must not forget that those accomplishments do not occur in a vacuum; they occur at Rice and in community with Rice people. As grateful recipients of this legacy, we must continue to build Rice for future generations, to give to others as we have most generously received. Let us therefore not forget the real goal of the Rice Centennial Campaign — to preserve and maintain the Rice legacy and to pass it on to others.

The School of Humanities has identified two main goals on which to focus for the remainder of the campaign. We believe that these initiatives will give tremendous value to both students and faculty, while raising the university’s national and international profile.

Goal 1: Building and Expanding Promising Academic Programs

- Improve graduate student support to make Rice more competitive with other leading graduate programs.
- Increase the number of faculty lines in Jewish studies, Latin American studies and Asian studies.

Goal 2: Internationalizing the Undergraduate Curriculum

- Provide greater opportunities and financial support for undergraduates to study abroad in the summer and semester abroad programs. While open to all students, study abroad will be a requirement for students majoring in African and Middle-Eastern studies, Asian studies, European studies and Latin American studies, new majors being created at Rice.
- Establish the Rice Seminars to bring outstanding, international scholars to Rice to participate in a yearlong research seminar devoted to a multidisciplinary topic such as Immigration and the Modern Nation, Energy Production and Human Communities or The Future of Europe. Led by Rice faculty, the seminar participants will publish a book based on their research and teach one undergraduate course while at Rice. The seminars will allow Rice to become an international leader in humanistic research and a catalyst for creating international research communities of scholars.



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Denise Rosse, school finance and budget manager
Ryan Bell, assistant to the dean and program coordinator
JoAnna Hill, development coordinator

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Harvey Yunis, classical studies
Cary Wolfe, English
Uwe Steiner, German studies
José Aranda, Hispanic studies and French studies
Lora Wildenthal, history
Nick Iammarino, kinesiology
Nancy Niedzielski, linguistics
Steve Crowell, philosophy
Jeffrey Kripal, religious studies
Brian Huberman, visual and dramatic arts

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Rosemary Hennessy, Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality
Caroline Levander, Humanities Research Center
Kim Davenport, Rice University Art Gallery

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