Future Traditions
THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF RUTGERS ENGLISH

STEALING BEAUTY
by Richard E. Miller

GIVING INSPIRATION
by Carolyn Williams

TRANSFORMING UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION
by Barry V. Qualls
about
RUTGERS ENGLISH

The Department of English is the largest humanities department in the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Our faculty strives to instill students with a deep and lasting understanding of literature and literary traditions. Each year, more than 11,000 undergraduates receive instruction in humanistic reading and writing through our writing program. Our comprehensive undergraduate program reaches more than 900 majors and enrolls more than 8,000 students annually. Our top-ranking graduate program prepares the next generation of literary scholars and teachers for professional success.

The Department of English is proud to be home to the Mangere Writing Center, the Center for Cultural Analysis, and Writers House, which represent the department’s commitment to excellence in written expression, to the interdisciplinary study of culture, and to the promotion of creative writing and multimedia composition. In addition to its curricular programs, the department sponsors lectures, conferences, and readings for the university community and the general public.

about
FRIENDS OF RUTGERS ENGLISH

Members of Friends of Rutgers English (FoRE) include alumni of our undergraduate and graduate programs, faculty, current students, staff, and other supporters of the Department of English. Cheryl A. Wall established FoRE in 1998 during her tenure as departmental chair. Richard E. Miller, the chair of the English department, also serves as the executive director of the organization. FoRE raises public awareness about the value of studying literature and the literary arts, broadly construed. The organization also raises funds to support the scholarly and pedagogical endeavors of Rutgers English faculty and students.

about
FUTURE TRADITIONS MAGAZINE

Future Traditions Magazine is published by the Department of English at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Views expressed in these pages do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor or official policies of the university. © 2008 by Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.
T he summer after I completed sixth grade, I traveled overseas for the first time. I went with my sister, my mother, her band of teachers, and some sixty undergraduates on their way to six weeks of intensive language training in Tours.

I’d like to say I was the perfect companion, but the mind of a twelve-year-old boy is not home to particularly nuanced thoughts. Everything about the experience annoyed me—the tours of the museums, the unfamiliar language, the undergraduates, the food. What really drove me crazy, though, was the role cameras played at every event: ubiquitous, they were always at the ready, not only shaping the experience for the camera holders, but actually standing in for the experience of seeing. On the precipice of adolescence, I floated on a sea of superiority and took no pictures.

My relationship to photography remained unchanged until the arrival of affordable digital cameras. During my past two sub-
bstantial, I walked the streets of European towns, wandered down country paths, and scrambled up hillsides in search of a view—let-
ting the camera serve as both a teacher and a prosthesis, allowing it to literalize the act of focusing, letting it open me to the possibility of being in the moment. For brief periods of time, I could slow down and feel my endlessly nattering inner monologue subside. Writing has always met my need for calm reflection. But, when the English department received a gift to establish an undergraduate learning community committed to writing, the question of what “writing” is at this moment in history took on a fresh urgency. Could we create a learning community for students who are “born digital”—who experience reading and writing, first and foremost, with computers, cell phones, instant messaging, and Facebook? Is calm reflection a part of the digital world?

Fortunately, in designing the learning community that has since become Writers House, we never had to choose between a space for digital students and a space for students more comfortable in a world of paper and print. At Writers House, we decided, writing would be “broadly construed”—a phrase that imagined members of this learning community producing poetry, plays, and fiction, but also documentary films, visual essays, spoken word performances, podcasts, and graphic narratives. So, we built three seminar rooms to engage students with the written word, an instructional space to promote collaborative writing with new media, and a lounge where students could meet and talk about their work. Then we stepped back to see what would happen.

These snapshots of co-curricular programming during the first year at Writers House stand out in my mind: the establish-
ment of the Bookmark Series, where recently-published Rutgers faculty from various disciplines discussed the inspiration for their scholarly projects with an audience of undergraduates; the first Writers House Student Film Festival, where student projects from our documentary filmmaking and digital storytelling courses were screened to a standing room only crowd, and Alison Bechdel, author of the bestselling graphic memoir, *Fun Home*, describing how digital photography has transformed her composing process.

There was also this: Mark Doty, who read in the Writers at Rutgers Reading Series and returned on another occasion to give a lecture on mourning in *Lazeez of Grass*. He later accepted our offer to join the English department as a Distinguished Writer and to assist in further developing the programming for Writers House.

There’s more, of course, but finally there is this: when we designed the student lounge, we installed a set of track lights that cast these words on the wall: beauty, connection, inspiration, expres-
sion, imagination, creativity, horizon, now. They were meant to incite conversation and reflection, but, at some point in the spring semester, someone made off with the light and the lens that had the word “beauty” etched into it.

In a world where beauty is often lost among the clutter, the as-
pirations, the disappointments, the anxieties of everyday life, I saw, in an odd way, charmed by this theft. It literalized our hopes that our students would strive to make a place for beauty in their lives. Stealing beauty, one moment at a time, I thought. Leaving room for beauty. The blank wall as an open invitation to compose.

Because we’re a university and not a museum, we expect wear and tear, even some low level of vandalism, as students move through our hallways, as they settle in, as they test out and try on new ideas. Learning is, of necessity, a messy business; it involves stumbles and falls, the pushing of boundaries, and the encounter with what is yet unknown.

Do we need to replace the missing light? I’m of two minds. The arguments for replacing it are self-evident. But, I am drawn to the idea that Writers House is a place where beauty is in abundance—as a topic of conversation, an ideal, an enigma, the vibrant result of a thriving learning community in action. There’s the word on the wall and there’s the ineffable, evanescent activity. One is easily replaced. The other can only be realized moment by moment and thus can never be stolen. At Writers House beauty isn’t something that hangs on a wall or gets projected on a screen; it’s something we’re trying to do.

We thank you for your continued support. It’s been an extraor-
dinary year, as the following pages attest. We’ve added several new sections in this issue of *Future Traditions Magazine* to capture the multifaceted life of the department, our faculty, our students, our alumni, and our friends. It’s our biggest issue yet. We value your input and, as always, invite your feedback. Keep on giving.
While having an espresso the other day, I was struck by the word. Espresso comes from the same Latin root that gives us “expression.” The coffee is denser and more intense because hot water is forced at high pressure through finely-ground beans. Like expression, espresso is literally pressed out, generated under pressure.

The meaning of this little analogy is that pressure is important to the creative process. (So too, perhaps, are heat and a finely-ground texture; but I won’t take the metaphor too far.) Pressure can be a good thing, an inspirational force.

We were certainly under pressure during the exciting process of creating Writers House on the ground floor of Murray Hall. In February 2007, Rutgers alumnus Thomas J. Russel—who holds a BA in biological science (1957) and a PhD in physiology (1961)—made a generous gift that enabled us to begin a process that unfolded at a breakneck pace. As a result of the efforts of an overwhelming number of people who worked through the summer to make this dream a reality, Writers House was opened to students by the fall semester of 2007.

The inspiration for Writers House was also a team effort. Inspiration literally means “in-breathing,” with the implication that in-breathing is given from without. In classical antiquity, the idea was that the Godhead comes down, comes in, and fills the poet with divine breath. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a secularized version of the idea gained prominence. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for example, used the image of the Aeolian harp as a figure for poetic inspiration. Also called a wind harp, an Aeolian harp was a stringed instrument that could be placed in a window, hung in a tree, or placed on a hill so that when the wind blew across its strings, the harp produced music. According to this model, the poet still receives inspiration from outside, but the wind is no longer imagined as divine breath.

More and more, since then, imagination, genius, and inspiration have been theorized as internal qualities. Unlike skill, these qualities were characterized by irrationality, since no one could explain how one could depend on getting access to them. Dreams, visions, even madness can contribute to a refreshed sense of perception, helping one to “think outside the box.” But we shouldn’t forget that there are still plenty of sources of inspiration outside the self. To think of inspiration as a solitary matter is a myth we must debunk.

The Muses have their modern counterparts in colleagues and friends who add to, shape, and expand a project together, in time. Writers House is a great example of the communal, cumulative growth of such a vision. But there is another sense in which inspiration still comes from without, for a feeling of being inspired comes periodically when you are totally immersed in the process of creation. It feels as if inspiration comes as a gift—in a sudden eureka moment, for example—but these bursts of inspiration tend to occur when one is devoting time, day after day, to the process.

I’m reminded of a related myth about creativity, also worth debunking: that expression means self-expression. It can be disabling to think that we must express our “selves,” when there’s so much more out there to express than that. Think about the terrible command: “Express yourself!” I’m sure most students are more intimidated than enabled by this command. How frustrating the demand for self-expression can seem, until we realize that it’s something like writing, a process that must be done again and again and again.

All writing is really revision, and inspiration comes during the process—not before the process begins.

And this is where pressure comes in. What forces can press the thoughts, feelings, ideas, images, and voices out of us? A course, an assignment, a waiting audience, a writing group, a self-generated plan of so many words per day, or so many minutes spent writing—all these can produce the necessary pressure toward expression. So too can the hope that we might lend inspiration to others.

When engaged in writing as a process, we are submitting to a regular discipline of pressure—not too much, not too little—under which expression will emerge. Unclear and inchoate at first, it will take shape in time. Then, too, the pressure must be periodically alleviated. During those times of relaxation—times of play, sleep, dreams, listening, watching—ideas will come, as long as you’re involved in the process enough so that you know them when you sense them. This is how a “voice”—and even a sense of self—is created, through successive experiences of concentration and relaxation, pressure and its release.

True for all forms of traditional writing, this model of inspiration and expression is also true for the expanded sense of creative writing we are developing in Writers House. There, writing, “broadly construed,” includes digital and web-based forms of writing as well as essays, poems, plays, and fiction.

If we want to help our students “come into voice,” what we really must do is give them enough confidence in the writing process so they will believe and know that a voice will come into being. Learning how to go through the process is what’s important. Voice is not an essence; it is a practice.

In this sense, inspiration can’t be given. It must be taken.
In my teaching, I try to give students a sense of what makes the eighteenth century exciting and relevant to our historical moment, but I also want them to see how deeply alien it was. This was a period whose technologies, belief systems, and social structures were completely unlike those that construct the modern world. Part of why I love teaching eighteenth-century texts is because of that electric contact with a way of thinking that is so emphatically not our own.

— Lynn Festa

The most recent addition to the Department of English faculty is Associate Professor Lynn Festa, who arrived in January 2008 from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Previous to that appointment, Festa had taught for a number of years at Harvard University. Professor Festa, a specialist in eighteenth-century British and French literature, best known for her book, Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France. In this widely-praised study, she traces two developments central to modern life, which appear to have little to do with each other: colonialism and imperialism, and the culture of humanitarian sensibility. The relationship between them, Festa shows, is complex and profound. As the autonomy of the individual gained increasing credence during this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more this period, people’s heightened sense of self also heightened their sense of others’ identities. The more distant the others, the more

Fiesta arrives at Rutgers University having won numerous awards, among them the James L. Clifford Prize for the best article of the year awarded by the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies; fellowships from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Humanities Center; two teaching prizes at Harvard University; and numerous fellowships from Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania, where she completed her undergraduate and graduate studies in comparative literature. We are extremely pleased that Professor Festa has joined our department.

At the 2005 annual conference of the North American Victorian Studies Association, I ran into a colleague from another university, who was in a state of rapture. She had just heard, she said, an extraordinarily brilliant presentation from a graduate student about William Makepeace Thack- eray’s novel, Vanity Fair, and its relationship to the theater. She was a judge for the best graduate paper delivered at that year’s conference, and although it was early in the proceedings, she said she thought that there could be no doubt for whom she would be voting. David Kurnick was, indeed, that year’s winner of the presti- gious award. Even then, he was already making a name for him- self in Victorian studies circles before we were fortunate enough to hire him at Rutgers in 2006—to the envy, it must be said, of the other departments who made him offers the same year that we did. Kurnick took up a postdoctoral fellowship in the Columbia Society of Fellows in 2006–2007, and we were delighted to wel- come him to the department in the fall of 2007.

A Harvard University graduate with degrees in American history and literature, Professor Kurnick obtained his PhD from Columbia University for a dissertation entitled “The Vocation of Failure: Frustrated Dramatists and the Novel,” which he is now revising for publication in book form. In this outstanding and original study, Kurnick explores the writing of several novelists whose careers were marked by unrealized theatrical projects, Thackeray, George Eliot, Henry James, and—reaching into the twentieth century—James Joyce. They were the authors of plays, whose projects never saw the light of day because they were censored, unperformed, or, quite simply, unperformable. Yet, although these plays might be considered by some as showing dramatic ineptitude, Professor Kurnick argues that they should not be seen as write-offs, but quite the reverse: their failure can profitably be understood as being intimately linked to novel- istic innovation.

Kurnick demonstrates that the lingering pres- ence of the theatrical in the work of these novel- ists allows them to voice dissatisfaction with the privacy and inwardness that was encouraged by the form of the nineteenth century novel. He contends that evidence of the the- atrical permits the expression of a historical malaise in ways that fit only awkwardly with the direction that fiction was taking at the time. For even if the narrative voices within Victorian fic- tion often perceive the theatrical as being distinct from the genre of the novel, this was not always true. Nor should the novels in question be thought of as having in some sense vanquished the theatrical: they fed off it, and they reflect both their authors’ desires to partake in theatrical culture, and their understanding that their readers share many of the same desires.

The concept of the reader is of continuing importance to Professor Kurnick’s scholarship. His recent essay in ELH, “English Literary History,” entitled “An Erotics of Detachment: Middlebrow and Novel-Reading as Critical Practice,” points to a hypothesis about reading that he intends to explore further. This is the idea that promiscuous desire—whether within the novel, or indeed for the novel as a genre—is, in fact, a wish to achieve a social under- standing that is both detached and critical. His interest in reading as a practice is also reflected in a collection of essays that he is co-editing with Rachel Abbott, of the State University of New York at Buffalo, entitled Feeling Victorian Reading, and which is currently under contract with the University of Michigan Press.

From joining the department, Professor Kurnick has made his presence felt in many important ways. In addition to teaching courses on “Promiscuity and Fidelity in the Novel,” “Victorian Literature and Culture,” and “The Social Imagination of the Nine- teenth Century Novel,” he has taught “Quirky Theories and Histories.” He has been very much engaged with our co-curricular programming of speakers and events in nineteen century stud- ies and in gender and sexuality studies. Last year, he was a fellow at the Center for Cultural Analysis as part of the yearlong work- ing group on “New Media Literacies. Gutenberg to Google,” and he served on the program committee for the Northeast Victorian Studies Association. Professor Kurnick’s many interests complement our existing strengths in Victorian and modernist literary studies, in gender and sexuality studies, and in theater and performance studies. His intellectual energy and the originality of his insights make him a wonderful addition to our already distinguished Victorian studies faculty at Rutgers English.

Teaching is the most important, exciting, and difficult thing I do, and I think learning should be exciting and difficult as well. I try to make my classroom a place where the stakes feel high, and where no one knows exactly what might happen next. I really appreciate students’ capacity to surprise me and each other, to address issues from unexpected angles, and not to believe everything I tell them simply because I’m standing in front of them with a piece of chalk in my hand.

— David Kurnick

By Kate Flint
Henry S. Turner
by Emily C. Barrels

I really enjoy being in the company of students, both undergraduates and graduates. I learn a lot about my teaching by putting myself in my students’ positions and by thinking about what they understand or don’t understand, or how they might view a problem. Observing the teaching of my colleagues also makes a very strong impression on me and gives me very good ideas for things I can do more effectively in my teaching.

Professor Turner

Henry S. Turner joined the Rutgers English faculty in the fall semester of 2008 as part of an initiative, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to increase the department’s strengths in "traditional" literary fields. A specialist in Renaissance drama, Professor Turner received his PhD in 2000 from the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. He also earned an MA and an APhil from Columbia, a BA from Wesleyan University, a Diplôme Supérieur d’Études Françaises from the University of Bourgogne, and another MA from the University of Sussex. Before attending Columbia, he taught for a year in the Department of English at the University of Nice. Turner came to Rutgers from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he had been teaching since 2000 and where he received the English department’s Graduate Teaching Award.

Intellectually imaginative and energetic, Professor Turner is one of the few—and the finest—scholars now writing on the historical intersection of literature and science. His first book, "Shakespeare’s Double Helix: Science, Reading, and Technology in the Early Modern Period and Our Own," was awarded honorable mention from the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, in competitions for being the best book in interdisciplinary science studies in 2007. The book innovatively links the origins of "plot" in Renaissance drama to mathematics, arguing that the structure of dramatic action took its shape not simply from the literary precedents of Aristotleian theory, classical and medieval drama, and Italian romances, but at least as much from scientific inscriptions of space—in the fields of geometry, surveying, cartography, engineering, and navigation. Turner’s theatrical world is one deeply invested in the “productive arts” that propelled an increasing urbanization of early modern England. Demanding that we think outside the literary box to understand the materials within it, Professor Turner’s book is an engaging tour de force, which brings theatrical and material culture into a dynamic dialogue and exposes the conceptual developments that were revolutionizing literature, science, and English life in the early modern period.

Turner is gifted not only at describing provocative interdisciplinary intersections but also at making them happen. In The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England, Turner gathered together essays by historians and literary critics on the complex question of “capital,” creating a space where literary texts and cultural institutions, politics and poetry, have equal and interrelated play for a new series on “Shakespeare Now!”, he brought A Midsummer Night’s Dream into the “now” by connecting Shakespearean visions of “life” and our own, structuring the book, entitled Shakespeare’s Double Helix, around the architecture of DNA by positioning its two extended essays on facing pages.

In Professor Turner’s classes at Rutgers, literature stands beside science. Literature stands beside history, philosophy, psychoanalysis, politics, studies of technology, phenomenology, and French linguistic theory. He brings these disciplines to the level of the “human,” to their impact on “everyday life,” and he challenges both his graduate and his undergraduate students to engage seriously in the rich complexities that defy institutional and intellectual boundaries. In his hands, the work of William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Middleton, among others, become fascinating vehicles for exploring a broadly based social and scientific self-fashioning, both in the early modern period and our own. In his teaching and his scholarship, Professor Turner takes us on a lively intellectual adventure of the highest order. To borrow words from his Shakespeare’s Double Helix, his goal is to “engage with that kind of thinking, in any field, that begins by asking questions to which one does not yet know the answers and that releases itself into the unknown.” We are very happy to have him pursue that goal at Rutgers.

One of the advantages of teaching large undergraduate lecture courses is what I call ‘the recruitment effect.’ Each semester, I find that a handful of the juniors and seniors who enroll in my advanced courses were in previous iterations of my freshman course. They see that I’m not simply teaching about the classics, but that I’m also teaching about the classics as a way to introduce new students to the peculiarities of my classroom. The recruitment effect lends intensity and continuity to a program that, because of its size, can lack the personal contact that students and faculty often experience at smaller schools. The recruitment effect reminds me that teaching is not just about what happens inside the classroom, but about the intellectual exchange, the sociability, and the mentoring that happens outside as well.

— Rebecca L. Walkowitz

We are very fortunate that Professor Rebecca L. Walkowitz has joined our faculty. She received her PhD in English and American literature from Harvard University in 2000, and was tenured and promoted to associate professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 2006. She has received a number of prestigious fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin, the Mrs. Gels Whiting Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The recipient of several teaching awards at the University of Wisconsin, Professor Walkowitz was recognized by the university as the most distinguished faculty member to receive tenure in 2006. She has edited Immigrant Fictions: Contemporary Literature in an Age of Globalization, and co-edited, with Douglas Mao, the influential collection, Bad Modernism. Her other publications have appeared in collections and journals such as ELH, English Literary History, Contemporary Literature, MLA Modern Language Quarterly, and Modern Drama.

Professor Walkowitz’s book, Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation, is a signal contribution to the new work on modernist cosmopolitanism and transnational modernism. There have been important recent studies on this topic, including Fredric Wertham’s Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England and “Making the Heart of the World: Internationalism and Anglo-American Modernism, 1919-1941,” the dissertation written by our own Alex Bain (PhD 2004). But the modernism that Professor Walkowitz writes about is very much her own. She is engaged in deep conversation with a wide range of contemporary theorists of cosmopolitanism, most of whom propose a reconfigured, redefined cosmopolitanism as an alternative to virulent contemporary localisms and globalism. Walkowitz is in their camp, but she uses modernist style both to unsettle and to remake cosmopolitanism, and uses cosmopolitanism to reclaim modernism from the denigration of many contemporary political and culturally oriented literary theorists and critics.

Building on the legacy of Oscar Wilde, Walkowitz designates a “perverse cosmopolitanism,” which is congruent with, but not identical to, critical cosmopolitanism. In treating cosmopolitanism “not simply as a model of community but as a model of perspectivity, in the sense of obstinacy, indirection, immorality, and at-titude,” she seeks to “consider the relationship between gestures of disavowal, extension, and distance and those of sympathetic association.” This critical cosmopolitanism encompasses both unlikely gestures of extra- or transnational affiliation and disturbing gestures of international redefinition or reconstitution.

The first half of the book, “Cosmopolitan Modernism,” analyzes three canonical figures of British modernism: Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. Each of these writers develops a unique, characteristic tactic within and through modernist formal practice. For Conrad, the tactic is what Walkowitz calls “naturalness.” Through the paradox of the Polish Conrad, for whom English was a fifth language, she develops the idea of Conrad’s naturalness as a deep challenge to notions of British racial sameness and centrality. For Joyce, the tactic, “triviality,” deploys the ordinary, banal, and everyday in the service of a denaturing project. For Woolf, Walkowitz employs the tactic of “evanescence”—a brilliant insight which clarifies a great deal of what had heretofore seemed elusive and insufficiently motivated in Woolf’s work.

In the second half of the book, “Modernist Cosmopolitan-ism,” the argument for critical cosmopolitanism is easier to make, because the intention to produce some kind of original, inventive relation to cosmopolitanism is apparent in the authors and texts Walkowitz discusses: Kazuo Ishiguro’s The Remains of the Day, Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses, and W. G. Sebald’s Vertigo. Walkowitz argues that the late twentieth century has produced a reemergence of modernism in these three writers who, through their use of formal techniques associated with modernism, displace and destabilize fixed understandings of the local and the global in order to forge a critical cosmopolitanism. Professor Walkowitz’s new project, entitled After the National: Language, Translation, and Theory, 1880-1930, considers the effects of globalization on national paradigms of literary culture and argues for the emergence of new forms of “comparative writing” in contemporary transnational literature. This book promises to extend the work of Cosmopolitan Style in ways that will speak directly to the contemporary interest in cultures of circulation, while remaining faithful to Professor Walkowitz’s overriding interest in the forms of literary texts.

— Rebecca L. Walkowitz
Jersey Roots, Global Reach
by Rick H. Lee

This year, the university launched a publicity campaign—Jersey Roots, Global Reach—to celebrate contributions to knowledge and service made by our faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Just as Rutgers is everywhere, so too is Rutgers English. The influence and accomplishments of our faculty, students, and alumni play a vital role in Murray Hall, across the campus, and, indeed, worldwide. Here are some recent and forthcoming highlights:

- Junot Díaz (BA 1992) published The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, which was awarded the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award for best novel.
- Richard E. Miller and Kurt Spellmeyer co-edited the third edition of The New Hispanic Reader to teach a new generation of students about the migration of Latinos to the United States and write critically about the enduring challenges and opportunities of our time.
- Elin Diamond had one of her poems reproduced and featured in the Bike 50/50 Art Exhibit, which was shown in major cities in South Africa to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the death of anti-apartheid activist Stephen Bantu Biko.
- Michael McKeon taught a seminar at the Institut du Monde Arabe in France at the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle to French graduate students specializing in English literary studies.
- Rutgers senior Matt Cortina and Virginia Tech senior Grant Gardner co-founders of a nonprofit organization, PlantoAmerica, Inc.—cycled across the country planting one million trees to promote social and environmental responsibility.
- Brad Evans worked on the restoration of photographer Edward Curtis’s 1914 silent film, In the Land of the Head Hunters, which will be screened this year at the Getty Research Institute, the Meyer Theatre, the Field Museum, the National Gallery of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and Rutgers University.

Beginning in fall 2010, Cheryl A. Wall will annually mentor two postdoctoral fellows conducting research in African American and African Diaspora literary studies and prepare them for professional success.

Learn more about Jersey Roots, Global Reach at: rutgers.edu/jerseyroots

Here and There and Everywhere...
Rutgers English Faculty Professional Activities

- Abena P. A. Busia: invited speaker at the Social Trends Institute Experts Meeting in Barcelona, Spain
- Ann Baynes Coiro: paper presenter at the Shakespeare Association of America Annual Meeting in Dallas, TX
- Elin Diamond: organizer of the Translation and Everyw Conference at Rutgers University
- Jonathan Brody Kramnick: invited speaker at the University of Cambridge, Oxford University, York University, and the University of Rome, John Cabot University, Oxford University, York University, and the University of Cambridge
- John Kucich: keynote speaker for two conferences at the University of Alabama; roundtable panelist for a conference at the University of Michigan; organizer of the Making History: Rethinking Master Narratives Conference at Rutgers University
- David Nunzio: invited speaker at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of California, Los Angeles, the State University of New York at Buffalo, and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York
- Meredith L. McGill: organizer for the Global Poets Symposium at Rutgers University
- Michael McKeen: invited visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Oregon, and the University of Miami; invited speaker at the University of Michigan; organizer of the Humanities at the University of California, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and Rutgers University
- Larry Scanlon: organizer of the Formations New and Old Conference at Rutgers University
- Junot Díaz: invited speaker at the University of California, Los Angeles, the California Institute of the Arts, the University of Oxford, and the University of Cambridge
- Laura Semenza: invited speaker at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago, the University of Cambridge, and the University of Oxford
- Henry S. Turner: invited speaker for a conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, organizer of the Humanities at the University of California, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and Rutgers University
- Rebecca Walker: invited speaker at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Columbia University, Texas A&M University, Drew University, and Penn State University; organizer of the Modernist Transnational Conference at the University of California, Los Angeles
- Lisa L. Wong: invited speaker at Temple University and Williams University

2007 - 2008
Since April 2004, we have been debating undergraduate education at Rutgers–New Brunswick, sometimes even shouting about it. At that time, President Richard L. McCormick and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Philip Furmanski convened the Task Force on Undergraduate Education to ensure that "undergraduate education is, and will be, a priority of discussion every year at Rutgers, not just when a committee has produced a report."

They directed the committee to find the answers to two essential questions: "What is a Rutgers education?" and "What does it mean to be a graduate of Rutgers?" If we have not fully answered those questions yet, we have certainly put in place many changes and much that is new, all designed to provide our students, faculty, and support staff the incentives for answering them. The task force report entitled "Transforming Undergraduate Education," the discussions that followed the report, the president’s recommendations, and the implementation process all led to the arrival, in September 2007, of the first class admitted to a reorganized Rutgers–New Brunswick. Not since Rutgers College became a co-ed college in 1971, and not since the colleges lost their faculties to the new Faculty of Arts and Sciences in the reorganization process of 1980, has the university witnessed such sweeping and revolutionary changes.

We now have SAS advising offices located on every campus, and, for the first time, a consistent set of arts and science requirements that allow faculty to be active advisers of students. We have a Douglass Residential College, succeeding and inheriting the distinguished histories of the New Jersey College for Women and Douglass College, and which annually enrolls a class of 350 students who share curricular and co-curricular experiences focusing on women's leadership. We have more resources for the University College Community, and we have special offices on the Livingston Campus to welcome non-traditional and transfer students needing specific advising. These changes have not been simple; they have been and are stressful—but, ultimately, rewarding.

Our goal is to establish a research culture as the norm for the campus undergraduate environment at Rutgers–New Brunswick. For this reason, we ask our students to rethink their role as students and to engage actively with the resources all around them. We ask our faculty to assume more accountability for undergraduate students and to make connecting to students and their academic interests a priority. We ask our support staff to provide an environment of support, advice, and direction that sustains the undergraduate experience. To do this, all of us need retraining—I know I am doing things of which I was ignorant only two years ago, and I have been at Rutgers for 37 years.

At Rutgers–New Brunswick, we have been rethinking what we do and how we do it so that we can become more effective emissaries of the research mission that defines Rutgers as a great public university. Our work lives have changed. And this change is making a world of difference for our students.
The Byrne Family First-Year Seminar Program
by Amy Meng

The first year at any university or college can be overwhelming for students. This is especially true for students attending a university the size of Rutgers. Recognizing this issue, the Office of the Vice President for Undergraduate Education introduced the Byrne Family First-Year Seminar Program last year in order to provide a unique learning and intellectual experience for first-year students. Limited in size to 20 students, seminars in the program are taught by distinguished and world-famous professors from across the university and from all the professional schools.

Last fall semester, I enrolled in a Byrne seminar taught by Professor Richard E. Miller. The seminar, entitled "Thomas Paine's Common Sense: An Exercise in Reading in Slow Motion," encouraged students to cultivate close reading as a practical skill for college. In addition, our seminar meetings generated innovative ideas about the role of the humanities at Rutgers, in the academy, and in our lives. Intrigued with the vision that Professor Miller presented, I, and two other students in the seminar, approached him at the end of the semester to ask how we could become more involved with the English department. We were each given a different internship, based on our interests in the humanities; because of my interest in publishing, I was assigned to work on this issue of Future Traditions Magazine.

Next year, the Byrne Family First-Year Seminar Program will offer 130 seminars on a range of topics in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Below are four seminars that will be offered by Rutgers English faculty:

Poets of New Jersey
Carolyn Williams

What does it mean to be a poet of place? How does growing up or living in a particular region affect a writer's view of the world? This seminar will focus on a number of poets who have called New Jersey home, including some of America's greatest and most-known: Walt Whitman, William Carlos-Williams, Allen Ginsberg, Amiri Baraka, and Robert Pinsky, a Rutgers University alumnus and the Poet Laureate of the United States from 1997 to 2000. We will also read and discuss poems from the New Jersey Review of English, a literary journal published by Rutgers English faculty members, including Alicia Ozsticker, Eike Shockey, Miguel Aguirre, and Rachel Halper. The seminar will include a day-trip to the Dodge Poetry Festival in Stanhope, New Jersey, where we will get a taste of the current poetry "scene" in New Jersey. Students will also participate in creating a short anthology of New Jersey poets.

Uncle Tom's Cabin: Everybody's Protest Novel
Barry V. Quaals

Huey Breecher Stone's antislavery novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, was an immediate bestseller and became the most widely read English-language novel in the world during the nineteenth century. Yet, more than 130 years after its publication, this famous novel continues to generate debate and anger. It is scored of stereotypical depictions of its black characters, of inappropriate language, and, at the extreme, of undermining black freedom struggles. In this seminar we will read the novel and examine the struggle when it entered popular culture around the world. We will ask the questions: What is a protest novel? What is a stereotyope, and what are the uses of stereotyping? We'll meet the characters who lived on the page and evaluate for ourselves the multilayered literary, cultural, and racial meanings of a book that changed American history.

Deep Reading: Novels and Computers
Martin Gilsenan

How do we make meaning from reading a story? This seminar will directly engage students in textual research, learning to use several straightforward computer programs to open up a new way of seeing a text as a matrix of words, akin to a neural network. We will be reading one novel (possibly two short novels), and opening up its inner semantic connections with the help of software. We will examine the body, the built world, and the raw universe, and we will trace some of the dynamics within and among those zones. This seminar aims to make the process of making meaning more transparent and accessible as well as more precise. Readings may include F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby or Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse.

Edgar Allan Poe and the New Media of the 1840s
Meredith L. McGill

Edgar Allan Poe is widely known for his invention of and innovation in a number of popular literary genres: the locked-room mystery, science fiction, the gothic tale, and the newspaper hoax. This seminar will use digital databases of nineteenth century American periodicals to examine the relationship between Poe's writing and the rapidly expanding print media of the 1840s. Students will explore how Poe's literary experiments with genre reflect his understanding of the opportunities presented by new media, and how the innovative use of popular print might speak to our twenty-first century experience of media shift.

I
What is a Learning Community?
by Marie T. Logue

In the fall semester of 2007, new students who were planning to major in psychology, economics or business, health and medicine, and law and politics were invited to live together in the Discovery House Program on the Livingston Campus, where they would share the same cluster of courses and special out-of-the-classroom activities related to their interest areas. One hundred students participated in the inaugural year of the program. We knew we were on to something big when the students in the Discovery House formed their own Facebook group by the second week and were already sharing information with each other. At the end of the spring semester, they reported that they would wholeheartedly recommend the Discovery House to other first-year students, noting that this new learning community helped them make friends more easily, form study groups, and learn about the resources available to them at Rutgers.

Learning communities are not new to Rutgers, however. Douglass College inaugurated its French House in 1928 and, at Rutgers College, special interest housing has been a popular choice on the College Avenue Campus for many years. Performing arts students and creative writing students have long found a home in Demarest Hall. Students interested in exploring Latin culture founded Latin Images in Frelinghuysen Hall, and many students over the years chose to live in the Paul Robeson section in Metcalf Hall. When they initiated programs like High School Outreach that were inspired by Robeson’s passion for excellence.

But learning communities are no longer exclusively made up of living/learning groups for language development or just organized around special interest topics. Now learning communities share a strong curricular and co-curricular link. For example:

• All students in the Social Justice Learning Community developed a model learning community last year that enabled 20 undergraduate students to work together with an advanced doctoral student to learn about the ongoing scholarship at the institute. The final presentations of the IRW students revealed that they had achieved a fine understanding of the nature of the research taking place around them at Rutgers. The impact of their experience could be seen in their plans for career shifts and internships in the immediate future. And there is a chance for students to learn about the ongoing scholarship at the institute. The final presentations of the IRW students revealed that they had achieved a fine understanding of the nature of the research taking place around them at Rutgers. The impact of their experience could be seen in their plans for career shifts and internships in the immediate future.

• Students in the RU-TV Living-Learning Community at Wrinkler Hall developed video for broadcast on the RU-TV network that reached over 13,000 students in residence, and, on a weekly basis, met with faculty from the Department of Journalism and Media Studies to discuss media literacy and historical perspectives on visual images, among other topics.

Students need not live on campus to experience and benefit from the learning community structure. The Institute for Research on Women developed a model learning community last year that enabled 20 undergraduate students to work together with an advanced doctoral student to learn about the ongoing scholarship at the institute. The Institute for Research on Women developed a model learning community last year that enabled 20 undergraduate students to work together with an advanced doctoral student to learn about the ongoing scholarship at the institute.

The Office of Undergraduate Education believes that learning communities are a powerful means of fostering greater involvement among the Heritage Studies at the university. Many juniors and seniors now work closely with faculty on research projects either through departmental programs or the Aresty Research Center for Undergraduates. But research learning communities located in the centers, bureaus, and institutes all over campus promise to provide that experience on a significantly larger scale to sophomores and those students just beginning to find their particular niche.

Active engagement is the goal. Learning communities are just one way to get there.
How did you come up with the idea for your research?

Sophomore year, I took a class in twentieth-century women’s literature taught by graduate student Elizabeth Breslau. I found myself inspired by the work of modern women writers, but Jeannette Winterson’s Writings on the Body changed the way I read entirely. I was in awe of Winterson’s captivating and stylish poetry and how deeply the themes of the novel were woven into its language. My thesis examined Winterson’s attempts to write a love story that both embraced and rejected the linguistic clichés that preceded it, as well as her experimentation with the physical properties of language.

In conducting your study, what experience have you had with the faculty at Rutgers?

After taking a class in twentieth-century poetry with Professor Harriet Davidson, I knew that her expertise in the field would help me in my very specific analysis of Winterson’s linguistic experimentation. I was very lucky that she was the director of the Honors English Program, and that she agreed to be the reader for my thesis, “Word Made Flesh: The Poetics of Prose in Jeannette Winterson’s Written on the Body,” which won the 2008 Jordan Flyer Honors Award, examined how Winterson uses poetry to transform the cliché and challenge the limits of language. She will teach English at an under-resourced high school with Teach for America starting in the fall, and she plans to pursue graduate studies in English literature in the near future.

What is one of the most memorable experiences you have had through Rutgers?

I studied in Florence, Italy, for a semester through the Rutgers Study Abroad Program. While abroad, I learned to adjust my lifestyle to suit my environment, and I learned to cope with stress and to take care of myself. While I was there, I traveled all over Italy, as well as to Amsterdam and Barcelona, all places where art is an integral part of daily life.

How has tutoring at the Plangere Writing Center helped you as a student-writer?

I have read student work in such an objective way that I now understand what works in academic writing and what doesn’t. Student writing is almost impossible to understand without exposing yourself to it constantly. Writing well is one of the most essential skills to have upon graduation, and I’m grateful that my tutoring experience helped me improve my own writing skills.

Our Undergraduates

JAYA BHARNE, an East Brunswick, New Jersey resident, graduated in May 2007 with degrees in English and art history. While at Rutgers, she served as tutor and desk manager for the Plangere Writing Center. Her thesis, “Word Made Flesh: The Poetics of Prose in Jeannette Winterson’s Written on the Body,” which won the 2008 Jordan Flyer Honors Award, examined how Winterson uses poetry to transform the cliché and challenge the limits of language. She will teach English at an under-resourced high school with Teach for America starting in the fall, and she plans to pursue graduate studies in English literature in the near future.

How did you come up with the idea for your research?

My curiosity for country house literature began when I encountered Robert Frost’s “Mending Wall” in a class I took with Professor Robert Rausch during my freshman year. The poem speaks, among many things, about the desire to build and maintain residential walls between neighbors. What excited me about the poem was the profound and delicate presence of nature against the human practice of maintaining barriers. I mark this reading as the moment I felt a real attachment to exploring the role of the “natural” in modern poets.

In conducting your study, what experience have you had with the faculty at Rutgers?

I first met Professor Michael McKeon as a sophomore in a Rutgers College Honors seminar on the early modern period. There were about six students in the class, and for three hours every week, we discussed some of the most intriguing issues in early modern studies. The following year, I enrolled in a class on travel narratives taught by Professor McKeon. I discovered that I had grown as a critical thinker from taking these classes. So I asked him to serve as advisor for my thesis. I trusted him as a mentor and felt I could really grow with him throughout the project.

What is your current plan after graduation?

I studied in Florence, Italy, for a semester through the Rutgers Study Abroad Program. While abroad, I learned to adjust my lifestyle to suit my environment, and I learned to cope with stress and to take care of myself. While I was there, I traveled all over Italy, as well as to Amsterdam and Barcelona, all places where art is an integral part of daily life.

When you are not studying or tutoring, how do you enjoy your free time?

When you are not studying or tutoring, how do you enjoy your free time?

I love going into New York City. My favorite way to spend a day is to go to museums and talk about art with my friends. I think this fascination with experimental and avant-garde art has informed my literary taste in a fantastic way.

How has Rutgers prepared you for life after college?

Along with the experience of taking a graduate level course during junior year, and acting as a mentor to younger students as a tutor at the Plangere Writing Center, Rutgers, and the English department in particular, has helped me develop a way of thinking about the world I live in. It is a way of seeing that I cultivated over the last four years under the guidance of some exceptional faculty members. In addition to Professor McKeon, I have benefited from the guidance of Professor Ann Baynes Castro and Professor Jacqueline T. Miller during junior year, and Professor Richard DiPietro during senior year. Rutgers helped bring to fruition my ability to think about the choices I make in my life, so as to arrive at the most fulfilling destination. This is, perhaps, the best thing I could have for life after college.

When you are not studying or tutoring, how do you enjoy your free time?

I’ve made wonderful friends in the English department, and we try to get together once every week to share what we have been reading and writing. It has been surprising and pleasurable to watch our academic interests slowly transition into a set of social interests among friends.

What is one of the most memorable experiences you have had through Rutgers?

There was a moment during my senior year when I was walking up the path to Murray Hall late in the evening after a tremendous rainstorm. I stood for some time there and remember feeling overwhelmingly fulfilled, knowing that so much language and thought had existed in that building. It was in this moment of silence that I was able to fully appreciate having been part of a program that believes in growth through active dialogue.
What do you plan to major in?
I hope to double major in English and Chinese, with a minor in art history.

What type of goals do you have, both academically and personally?
Academically, my goals are basic: I want to do the best I can in my classes, while keeping a balance between my schoolwork and personal life. In my personal life, I want to constantly challenge myself and others.

How do you think Rutgers University will help you fulfill these goals?
The areas I want to major in all have very strong departments, making these majors practical—and personally satisfying—options. Additionally, my internship with the English department has allowed me to become better acquainted with various professors and with the structure of the department.

What do you feel is unique or exceptional about Rutgers?
Practically every need or desire, be it academic, social, cultural, or otherwise, can be addressed at a school this size. The fun—and the challenge—comes in the search.

What do you like to do outside of classes?
I have been writing since I was six (and reading for even longer), and these continue to be my two favorite activities, outside of spending time with family and friends.

Do you have any writing awards or recognitions?
I received a Governor’s Award in essay writing and was a semi-finalist in the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts’ Presidential Scholars Program.

Are there any poets or authors you find particularly inspiring?
Marie Howe and William Faulkner are long-time favorites.

What books are on your summer reading list?
A few books I read this summer include: A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith, Life at These Speeds by Jeremy Jackson, and Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury. I am currently reading Haruki Murakami’s Kafka on the Shore and Margaret Atwood’s The Blind Assassin. I am now in the middle of Gabriel García Márquez’s Love in the Time of Cholera.

What stands out most to you about your sophomore year?
My two Shakespeare classes with Professor Ron Levao and my literary theory class with Professor Henry S. Turner.

In hindsight, what would you change about sophomore year?
I would have taken more philosophy classes, I think. It’s so difficult trying to narrow your focus (major/minor) and fill requirements while also taking classes “for yourself.”

What are your plans for next year?
Continuing with my English major, taking French and Latin classes, working on my independent project, and preparing for my senior thesis.

Amy Meng
Class of 2011

What made you decide to be an English major?
A major in English literature never felt limiting to me in the same way that other majors did.

What type of goals do you have, both academically and personally?
I want to be as prepared as possible for graduate school, which means becoming a better reader, a better writer, and a better worker.

How do you think Rutgers University will help you fulfill these goals?
I’m taking classes that I’m interested in, classes I know I’m going to really enjoy: I’m also working with some really wonderful professors. I’m very happy to be part of a place that allows me do that.

What about literature appeals to you?
Even your reading of a single text, a novel or a play, is so much about your reading of other material: writings in philosophy, psychoanalysis, history.

What do you feel is unique or exceptional about Rutgers English?
Rutgers English understands and responds to the student demand for creative writing courses, and provides the professors the technology for creative classes in new media.

What do you like to do outside of classes?
I play a lot of basketball, and I read political news online.

What books are on your summer reading list?

Chris McGowan
Class of 2010
by Rebecca L. Walkowitz

A Critical Conversation Begins

The Rutgers British Studies (RBSP) provides a common forum for faculty from various area universities: Jessica Berman, an associate professor of English and comparative literature at Pennsylvania State University; and Pericles Lewis, a professor of comparative literature at Columbia University. My colleagues from the English department—Marianne DeKoven, Elise Diamond, and John A. MacArthur—opened the subsequent discussion, which led to an intensive conversation among all the panelists about transnational methodologies. Faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates joined in a lively debate about the history of modernity and the locations of literary modernism.

Modemism & Globalization hosted its second event in February 2008 with a visit by Rosa Prosnick, a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University, whose recent work focuses on the intersection between American literature and world literature. Over lunch, Professor Prosnick led a discussion at the Center for Cultural Analysis on the civic and the contemporary writer, and then met with graduate students for informal conversations. Later in the afternoon, he delivered a lecture on the idea of "cosmopolitan poverty." His lecture brought the work of modernist philosophers Ludwig Wittenstein and William James to the novels of the late-English-german writer, W. G. Sebald. The lecture was attended not only by faculty and graduate students, but also by undergraduate students, who benefited from the opportunity to see what emerging scholarship looks like before it hits the page.

by Michael McKennon

The Rutgers British Studies Project (RBSP), an interdisciplinary group whose aim is to foster the study of British history and culture across the centuries, was launched during the past academic year. The RBSP provides a common forum for faculty from various disciplines whose scholarship makes Rutgers one of the most important centers for British studies in the United States. Members of the RBSP organizing committee include Anantai Bellamy and Seth Koven from the history department, and Ann Baynes Coxon, John Kucich, and myself from the English department.

The RBSP was inaugurated with a lecture delivered by Professor John Brewer of the California Institute of Technology. Brewer’s lecture, entitled "Taste and Modernity: Sensibility and Spectacle in late Georgian Britain," focused on eighteenth century developments in thought that have had a central and lasting influence on modern literature and visual culture in Britain and beyond. The inaugural lecture for this coming academic year will be given by Professor Nicholas B. Dirks, who is the Fannie Boaz Professor of Anthropology, as well as a professor of history and the vice president for arts and sciences at Columbia University. Professor Dirks will deliver his lecture, entitled "Empire on Trial: Edmund Burke, Postcolonial History, and the Problem of Sovereignty," on October 7. Over the course of the year, the Rutgers British Studies Project will also sponsor three additional lectures by celebrated scholars from other universities, as well as workshops featuring Rutgers faculty and graduate students.

by John Kucich

The Department of English inaugurate the school year each September with an opening lecture delivered by a member of the faculty. Last year, Professor Kate Flint presented a paper entitled "Modernity and the Native American in Victorian Britain." Over the course of her exceptionally prolific career, Professor Flint has produced a body of scholarship that makes her one of the world’s most distinguished authorities on Victorian literature and culture. The range of her work, which includes studies of fiction, poetry, art, popular science, psychoanalysis, visual culture, the periodical press, and, most recently, transatlantic representations of Native American culture, is unparalleled. Her book, The Victorians and the Visual Imagination, which won the British Academy’s 2002 Rose Mary Crawshay Prize for the best work of literary scholarship by a woman writer of the year, is a comprehensive study of the relationship between Victorian art and literature. Her landmark book, The Woman Reader, 1837-1914, is a groundbreaking analysis of Victorian controversies surrounding issues of women’s reading and has since become standard reading for students of nineteenth century women’s studies.

In her lecture, Professor Flint outlined some of the discoveries and conclusions from her forthcoming book, The Transatlantic Indian, 1726-1916 which promises to be a definitive study of representations of Native Americans in British and American culture. She contended that the figure of the Indian is inseparable not just from the culture and politics of American expansionism, but also from Britain’s interpretation of its imperial rule. The Indian was a touchstone for British perceptions of its lost American colony; but the frequent visits of many Native Americans to Britain demonstrated that they were not the declining or degenerate race that popular culture had made them out to be. Many Britons saw mistreatment of the Indian as a symbol of what they perceived had gone wrong with the United States. These perceptions played a charming role in British attitudes toward native peoples in their own colonies. Although traditionalism has long been a hallmark of Native American literature, Professor Flint demonstrated that the concept of tradition in Indian society existed in dialogue with western modernity; rather than simply in opposition to it.

by Rick H. Lee

The Department of English has long been committed to the study of gender and sexuality in literature and culture, and our graduate program has been ranked fourth in the gender and literature category on the U.S. News and World Report’s survey of the best graduate schools for the last several years. In October, the Sexuality Speakers Series, now in its second year, held a symposium to help launch the publication of a special issue of the journal South Atlantic Quarterly entitled After Sex? On Writing since Queer Theory. The symposium featured editions Janet Halley (Harvard Law School) and Andrew Parker (Amherst Col- lege), as well as several contributing writers: Michael Cobb (Uni- versity of Toronto), Lee Edelman (Tufts University), Joseph Ullrich (Tufts University), Jeff Nunokawa (Princeton University), and Kate Thomas (Bryn Mawr College). In February, Martha Vicinus, the Eliza E. Mosher Distinguished Professor of English, Women’s Studies, and History at the University of Michigan, lectured in the series on “the history of lesbian history.” The Sexuality Speakers Series also cosponsored the lectures by Madhuri Menon and Kath- ryn Schwartz, two speakers at the Historicism and Its Discontents Conference held in October.

In addition to these events, we were fortunate to welcome Mari- lee Lindemann (PhD 1991) back to Rutgers to deliver the second annual Graduate Alumni Lecture in November. Lindemann, who is an associate professor of English and the director of the LGBT Stud- ies Program at the University of Maryland, College Park, presented a lecture entitled “On the Internet, Everybody Thinks I’m a Dog.” The Queer Adventures of an English Prof in the Blogosphere.” In the lecture, Professor Lindemann shared her experiences of blogging about popular culture, politics, and queer feminist studies, among other topics, on Roxie’s World, her personal blog in which she writes in the persona of her wire-haired fox terrier, Roxie.

by John A. MacArthur

The Modernism & Globalization Seminar begins its fourth season this fall, offering a series of public lectures, informal roundtables, and discussion groups, the series hopes to generate critical conversations that bring together scholars and students working in the fields of modernism, transna- tional and comparative literary studies, and globalization.

The series began last November 2007 with the Modernism’s Transnational Futures Symposium, which featured short presenta- tions by English and comparative literature scholars from several area universities: Jessica Berman, an associate professor of English and women’s studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Eric Hayot, an associate professor of comparative literature at Pennsylvania State University; and Pericles Lewis, a professor of comparative literature at Columbia University, whose recent work focuses on modern literate and visual culture in Britain and beyond. The inaugural lecture for this coming academic year will be given by Professor Nicholas B. Dirks, who is the Fannie Boaz Professor of Anthropology, as well as a professor of history and the vice president for arts and sciences at Columbia University. Professor Dirks will deliver his lecture, entitled “Empire on Trial: Edmund Burke, Postcolonial History, and the Problem of Sovereignty,” on October 7. Over the course of the year, the Rutgers British Studies Project will also sponsor three additional lectures by celebrated scholars from other universities, as well as workshops featuring Rutgers faculty and graduate students.

by Michael McKennon

The Rutgers British Studies Project (RBSP), an interdisciplinary group whose aim is to foster the study of British history and culture across the centuries, was launched during the past academic year. The RBSP provides a common forum for faculty from various disciplines whose scholarship makes Rutgers one of the most important centers for British studies in the United States. Members of the RBSP organizing committee include Anantai Bellamy and Seth Koven from the history department, and Ann Baynes Coxon, John Kucich, and myself from the English department.

The RBSP was inaugurated with a lecture delivered by Professor of History John Brewer of the California Institute of Techno-
WHAT DOES HISTORICISM MAKE POSSIBLE?
A Conference on Historicism and Its Discontents
by Henry S. Turner

The Historicism and Its Discontents Conference, held on October 12, 2007, was the inaugural event for the new Program in Early Modern Studies (PEMS) at Rutgers. The purpose of the PEMS is to draw together Rutgers faculty working on the historical period between 1400 and 1800 in order to examine some of the large continuities that extend from the late medieval period into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and even up to the eighteenth, while also taking account of what was genuinely novel about this broad historical period.

To recall Freud, from whom the title of the conference was taken, we may say that “historicism” has become the source of the greatest accomplishments of early modern studies, but also the source of its greatest travails, its finest sublimation, but also the root of its most persistent neuroses.
Jayne Anne Phillips is known both for her short story collections and her novels. The stories in Black Tickets were received in 1979 with admiration amounting to astonishment. Praised for its symmetrical of developments in national and world history, yet they are vividly imagined as particular and concrete. A New York Times bestseller, Machine Dreams was featured by the Times Book Review as one of twelve best books of the year.

Shelter: Phillips's second novel, was named one of the best books of the year by Publishers Weekly. The novel records a strange and frightening intersection of characters at a summer camp for girls in the summer of 1963. It is a story both about loss of innocence and rites of passage, as well as a story of primordial violence, communal relations, and the inexorable effects of childhood experience.

The mysteries of family life continue to inform Phillips’s most recent novel, WomanHood, which explores the largest questions of birth and death in one character’s experience. A parent dies and a child is born, while the central character struggles to maintain her balance and creativity.

Jayne Anne Phillips has been recognized for her work with a Pushcart Prize, an Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Guggenheim Fellowship, two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, and a Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe College.

I heard Mark Doty’s language for the first time in 1996 when poet Alicia Ostriker introduced him to a Rutgers audience. She read a poem called “Countze” from his just published volume, Atlantic. The gift

Maybe the costume’s — the whole show — all of revelation

we’ll be offered

So! Show me what’s not a world of appearances.

I know, with certainty, that the evening I first heard Doty read was one of the moments, one of the gifts, I must treasure from my three decades at Rutgers. I heard music and discovered images that recalled the work of John Keats—but, unlike Keats, Doty’s nightingale is alive in the age of AIDS and wars and denotations, and the possibilities of love.

Doty came to public attention with Firebird, which received the T. S. Eliot Prize. He has won numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, and, with eight volumes of poetry, including My Alexandria, which received the T. S. Eliot Prize and was one of the moments, one of the gifts, I most treasure from my three decades at Rutgers. I heard music and discovered images that recalled the work of John Keats—but, unlike Keats, Doty’s nightingale is alive in the age of AIDS and wars and denotations, and the possibilities of love.

Doty came to public attention with Firebird, which received the T. S. Eliot Prize. He has won numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, and, with eight volumes of poetry, including My Alexandria, which received the T. S. Eliot Prize and was one of the moments, one of the gifts, I most treasure from my three decades at Rutgers. I heard music and discovered images that recalled the work of John Keats—but, unlike Keats, Doty’s nightingale is alive in the age of AIDS and wars and denotations, and the possibilities of love.

Doty came to public attention with Firebird, which received the T. S. Eliot Prize. He has won numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, and, with eight volumes of poetry, including My Alexandria, which received the T. S. Eliot Prize and was one of the moments, one of the gifts, I most treasure from my three decades at Rutgers. I heard music and discovered images that recalled the work of John Keats—but, unlike Keats, Doty’s nightingale is alive in the age of AIDS and wars and denotations, and the possibilities of love.

I heard Mark Doty’s language for the first time in 1996 when poet Alicia Ostriker introduced him to a Rutgers audience. She read a poem called “Countze” from his just published volume, Atlantic.
JOYCE CAROL OATES

by Ron Levao

It is with great pleasure that I introduce Joyce Carol Oates, the Roger S. Berlind Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University.

Experience has taught me that the best way to preface a much-anticipated reading is to be as brief as possible and then get out of the way. Consciousness is made easier by the fact that many of you probably already know a great deal about the author, not only from her astonishing array of novels, novellas, short stories, dramas, screenplays, poems, essays, and other forms, but also from the numerous studies published about her, from her television interviews, and from the unofficial but splendid website called Celestial Timepiece with its many images, links, and excerpts.

Oates’ working-class background has a powerful and heartfelt presence in her work, an unflinching strength of purpose enriched by American myth, beginning in the countryside outside Lockport, New York, and including her early education in a one-room schoolhouse. Her work has become both an important part of and a key to understanding that myth, as is clear through the admiration it has earned. As Henry Louis Gates has remarked, “A future archaeologist equipped with only Joyce Carol Oates’ owen could easily piece together the whole of postwar America.”

Every introduction to her readings that I have attended, and most interviews, sooner or later come to rely on the word “prodigal,” which has become a kind of Homeric epithet for her. It is certainly apt, but what the term fails to capture is the human aliveness and focused ingenuity that have earned her the reputation of being one of America’s most consistently powerful and important writers over the last forty years.

Oates’ novel, A Garden of Earthly Delights, was the winner of the 1968 Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her novel, them, was the winner of the 1970 National Book Award. Oates has since been nominated for, and has won, a staggering number of prizes. You already know a great deal about the author, not only her reputation of being one of America’s most consistently powerful and important writers over the last forty years. Oates’ novel, A Garden of Earthly Delights, was the winner of the 1968 Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her novel, them, was the winner of the 1970 National Book Award. Oates has since been nominated for, and has won, a staggering number of prizes. You already know a great deal about the author, not only her reputation of being one of America’s most consistently powerful and important writers over the last forty years.

Yet there is also a fineness in her work, an attention to the subtlest physical and psychological detail, as well as a mastery of larger literary forms. She is one of the leading and most flexible of modern formalists—capable of playful whimsy in her children’s stories, generous yet penetrating analysis of fellow artists and writers in her remarkable essays and reviews, as well as uncanny and disturbing violence in her famous novels and horror stories.

Oates remains the most fascinating of writers because she, herself, is always fascinated by the cruel and beautiful worlds American culture ceaselessly builds for itself.

That is the force of will one thinks of when looking over Joyce Carol Oates’ career. Yet there is also a fineness in her work, an attention to the subtlest physical and psychological detail, as well as a mastery of larger literary forms. She is one of the leading and most flexible of modern formalists—capable of playful whimsy in her children’s stories, generous yet penetrating analysis of fellow artists and writers in her remarkable essays and reviews, as well as uncanny and disturbing violence in her famous novels and horror stories. Oates remains the most fascinating of writers because she, herself, is always fascinated by the cruel and beautiful worlds American culture ceaselessly builds for itself.

SHERMAN ALEXIE

by Richard E. Miller

I first met Sherman Alexie, poet, screenwriter, and bestselling author, at an awards banquet in Nashville, Tennessee, a few years ago. Alexie was the featured writer at the annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English and the room was packed with the walls of secondary school teachers, sporting their NCTE bags and bustling with the energy of teachers playing hooky. Alexie approached the podium, turned to the hushed audience, and then mused on the mystery that he had “come off the rez” and traveled across the country to read to “blue-haired ladies from the Midwest.” There was a pregnant pause while those assembled processed this description and then Alexie spread his arms wide, cracked a smile, and said, “My people!”

For those who know Alexie as the author of the terrifying thriller, Indian Killer, such an opening was unexpected. But, for those teaching in high schools, this greeting was well earned. As Alexie went on to say, in more colorful language than I can use here, high school teachers across the country have made selections from The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, The Toughest Indian in the World, and Reservation Blues a regular part of the English curriculum. It was the success of his short stories among this age group that led Alexie’s agent to encourage him to write an extended piece specifically addressed to the young adult reader. Alexie chose the occasion of being invited to the annual meeting of the NCTE to share a draft of his efforts: The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.

What followed was one of the most extraordinary public readings I’ve ever attended. Alexie read the opening chapter, “The Black-eye-of-the-Month Club,” which recounts the birth of the protagonist, Junior, and his early experiences on “the rez,” getting beat up and terrorized. The prose is searing and poignant and Alexie’s control of the audience could not have been more in evidence. When he finished the chapter, the roar of applause settled into shouts of “More!” and “Encore!” Alexie complied, and generated the same results after reading the next chapter. When the calls subsided, Alexie said, “I can’t read anymore. If I do, I’ll stop laughing and start crying.” I’ve been to concerts where the performers left the audience begging for more—but never a public reading.

And so, getting Alexie to Rutgers quickly became a priority for me. (By the time Alexie visited Rutgers on November 26, 2007, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, had won the National Book Award for young people’s literature.) With the change in venue and in occasion, Alexie shifted his approach. In the afternoon of his visit to Rutgers, I moderated and participated in a public conversation with Alexie, during which time he reflected on his creative practice and challenged the students in the audience to question their prejudices about America’s past.

Later that evening, rather than give a reading, Alexie gave a performance that was part standup and part soliloquy, ranging widely across race relations, the history of Indian reservations in the United States, his latest work, Flight, and the transformative value of humor. Working in the tradition of Lenny Bruce and Richard Pryor, Alexie rattled and unsettled with his riffs on race and politics, driving his observations home and then generating laughter to release the tension. A sequel to The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian is forthcoming.

Editor’s Note: Over 150 students attended the conversation between Richard E. Miller and Sherman Alexie in the Alexander Library Teleconference Lecture Hall. Telecasts of this conversation are available for viewing at the硅谷技术 section of the Writers House website (wh.rutgers.edu). Over 450 people enjoyed Alexie’s performance in the Rutgers Student Center Multipurpose Room later that evening. Richard E. Miller delivered a version of these remarks at the event.
Surowiecki, in his 2004 book The Wisdom of Crowds, offers a panorama of modern mass hysterias and financial follies that started with the South Sea Bubble and John Law. Of course, that history hasn’t stopped yet.

Likewise, we might say that there are only two schools of thought concerning the world of people ruled by economic interests and passions, the world of markets and the world market. Either the market drives people crazy, stoking greed and fear, making all of us ever more stupid in the effort to follow the pack; or markets serve as an immense catalytic converter, turning a swarm of self-interests into the least bad kind of consensus, or perhaps even the best kind of collective good. The first view was famously expounded by Charles MacKay, whose mid-nineteenth-century book, Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds, offers a panorama of modern mass hysterias and financial follies that started with the South Sea Bubble and John Law. Of course, that history hasn’t stopped yet.

The second view, with some important inflections and course, that history hasn’t stopped yet. For some people, it’s always been obvious that money has a stink about it, whether it’s blood, sweat or feces; nowadays we might talk about the many fragrances of oil, bouquets of greenhouse emissions, or the ever-present whiff of tear gas. But today it is much easier to find people who think that money has no smell at all, in fact, that it’s becoming cleaner and fresher all the time, all those electrons scrubbing off any lingering scents from the dollar bills in your pocket.

Like a lot of people, I’ve been fascinated by the question of what Surowiecki calls “the wisdom of crowds” and what it means to us in 2008. Surowiecki captures major stories in the updraft, writing about important phenomena of the financial world somewhere between Frank Norris and John D. Rockefeller and himself in that eminent New Yorker tradition of speculative journalism.

The Wisdom of Crowds is a book that leaps into the future, treating optimism as a research tool. It grew out of Surowiecki’s regular work as a financial journalist for a number of publications, but especially for The New Yorker. He has carved a special place for himself in that eminent publication, just after The Talk of the Town, where the Financial Page performs the remarkable balancing act of talking about business matters to a readership that might include tycoons and starving poets alike. Surowiecki catches major stories in the updraft, writing about important phenomena like sovereign wealth funds and collateralized debt obligations with generous insight and aphoristic bite. The book offers a view of the financial world somewhere between Frank Norris and Howard Norris. He helps us to see that, for better and for worse, the financial world is more or less the same one where we all live, that sense of perspective helps to make Surowiecki’s writing consistently absorbing and provocative.

Colson Whitehead, born and raised in New York City, has been richly awarded for his novels—imaginative and encyclopedic commentaries on culture, history, legend, and race. He is the architect of kaleidoscopic narratives—portraits of the grandly fascinating landscapes of America and of the minute dimensions of our lives. Described by critics as shrewd, original, and witty, Whitehead’s writing has been acclaimed for its ability to playfully peer “into the American soul.”

Whitehead’s novels include The Intuitionist, which is set in the Department of Elevator Inspectors in a major metropolis. Its originality and brilliance earned the author the 2008 Whiting Writers’ Award, among other prizes.

His 2001 novel, John Henry Days, is an investigation into the legend of this steel driving man—a book that peers into the story and explores the trajectory of the narrative and the lingering appeal of folk heroes over a century of American culture and life. As Whitehead said in one interview, he kept pondering how “each generation creates its own interpretation of the John Henry story,” and how “each interpretation is shaped by the form in which it is received.” This book was a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, and received the Young Lions Fiction Award and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Prize.

In 2006, Whitehead published A Red-Hot Charcoal: The Legend of this Steel Driving Man—a book that peers into the story, John Henry Days. It is an investigation into the legend of this steel driving man—a book that peers into the story and explores the trajectory of the narrative and the lingering appeal of folk heroes over a century of American culture and life.

Like a lot of people, I’ve been fascinated by the question of what Surowiecki calls “the wisdom of crowds” and what it means to us in 2008. Surowiecki catches major stories in the updraft, writing about important phenomena like sovereign wealth funds and collateralized debt obligations with generous insight and aphoristic bite. The book offers a view of the financial world somewhere between Frank Norris and Howard Norris. He helps us to see that, for better and for worse, the financial world is more or less the same one where we all live, that sense of perspective helps to make Surowiecki’s writing consistently absorbing and provocative.

Whitehead’s novels include The Intuitionist, which is set in the Department of Elevator Inspectors in a major metropolis. Its originality and brilliance earned the author the 2008 Whiting Writers’ Award, among other prizes.

His 2001 novel, John Henry Days, is an investigation into the legend of this steel driving man—a book that peers into the story and explores the trajectory of the narrative and the lingering appeal of folk heroes over a century of American culture and life. As Whitehead said in one interview, he kept pondering how “each generation creates its own interpretation of the John Henry story,” and how “each interpretation is shaped by the form in which it is received.” This book was a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, and received the Young Lions Fiction Award and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Prize.

In 2006, Whitehead published A Red-Hot Charcoal: The Legend of this Steel Driving Man—a book that peers into the story, John Henry Days. It is an investigation into the legend of this steel driving man—a book that peers into the story and explores the trajectory of the narrative and the lingering appeal of folk heroes over a century of American culture and life.
In 2006, I read an interview with Alison Bechdel in a magazine titled Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture, about her new book Fun Home. A Family Tragicomic. I immediately emailed my editor, Ed Park, at New York City’s Village Voice, to see if he would run a piece on it. I hadn’t read the book yet, but I was fascinated by the panels and pages from it that ran with the interview.

Fun Home is one of the most important graphic narratives that exists. It is both biography and autobiography. On the one hand, it’s about Bechdel’s father, who was an obsessive restorer of their Victorian Gothic house in rural Pennsylvania, an English teacher, and a funeral home director. But it’s also a story about Bechdel and about how she became an artist—and the ways her father both inhibited and enabled her. Fun Home has an intricate structure based on the books that Bruce Bechdel was obsessed with—each chapter is keyed to a specific literary text or figure, and its narrative structure—is staggering.

I was just blown away when I read Fun Home. And then I met Bechdel, and interviewed her, and was even more blown away after talking with her about her process and her research over the seven years she worked on Fun Home. Scanning her blog, dykestowatchoutfor.com, the evening after meeting her, I came across her paper interview with a woman who did her Master’s at Oberlin College (also my alma mater) in 1981, and started the comic strip Dykes to Watch Out For in 1983, for the feminist paper Womanews. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the strip, and so I heard from her. Scanning her blog, dykestowatchoutfor.com, the evening after meeting her, I came across the following entry:

June 22, 2006: It’s a good thing I’ve been blogging this [book] tour because otherwise I’m not sure I’d remember it. Today I had a podcast, two signings, and a long, intense newspaper interview with a woman who did her doctoral dissertation on autobiographical comics.

That’s me. And while I apologize to her for turning our one hour interview into three, working on that piece about Fun Home for the Village Voice was one of the most gratifying experiences I’ve ever had writing about anything.

When Fun Home came out in 2006—it was the first graphic narrative published by Houghton Mifflin—it was met with immediate, unanimous, and conspicuous critical acclaim. In one of two rave reviews published by the New York Times, for instance, Sean Wilsey wrote: “If the theoretical value of a picture is still holding steady at a thousand words, then Alison Bechdel’s slim yet provocative graphic memoir, Fun Home, must be the most ingeniously compact, hyper-verbose example of autobiography to have been produced.” Fun Home made the New York Times bestseller list—a rarity for graphic narrative—and became an enormous crossover success, meaning it is not only beloved by venues like the Times, but also by venues like People magazine—which selected it as one of the top ten books of 2006—and Entertainment Weekly, which voted it the number-one non-fiction book of the year. Perhaps the most extraordinary barometer of Fun Home’s impact and wide appeal, though, is that it was named Time magazine’s all-around, best book of the year, in any category, in 2006. Bechdel was born in 1960 in Pennsylvania, graduated from Oberlin College (also my alma mater) in 1981, and started the comic strip Dykes to Watch Out For in 1983, for the feminist paper Womanews. Today, Dykes to Watch Out For is nationally syndicated, and has been collected in 11 volumes, with titles such as Here, Thinking Dykes to Watch Out For, Past Dykes to Watch Out For, and Dykes and Sandry Other Carbon-Based Life Forms to Watch Out For. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the strip, and in October Houghton Mifflin is publishing The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For.

Editor’s Note: Alison Bechdel and Richard E. Miller engaged in a public conversation in Writers House on the afternoon of her visit to Rutgers on March 5, 2008. Selections of this conversation are available for viewing at the Writers House website. That evening, 500 people attended Bechdel’s reading in the Rutgers Student Center. Rutgers English alumna Hillary Chute delivered a version of these remarks at the reading.

I was extremely pleased to learn that Li-Young Lee was coming to speak as part of the Writers at Rutgers Reading Series, since I had just put his marvelous poem “Persimmons” on the syllabus for the “Introduction to Poetry” class I taught this past semester. It is always wonderful and awe-inspiring to have a poet you’ve worked to get to know on the page suddenly materialize as an actual person. As I reflected on Lee’s larger body of writing for the purposes of introducing him—taking the audience across the threshold from poet-on-the-page to poet-in-person—I felt compelled to introduce him twice: first in a conventional manner, laying out the arc of his career as a poet, and then in a way that responded to what my students and I were learning by studying his poetry.

Li-Young Lee was born in Indonesia to Chinese parents, who fled Sukarno’s regime in 1959, finally settling in the United States in 1964. Lee discovered poetry at the University of Pittsburgh, then pursued graduate work in creative writing at the University of Arizona and at SUNY–Brookport. His first book of poems, Rose, published in 1986, won the Delmore Schwartz Memorial Poetry Award; his second book of poetry, The City in Which I Love You, was published four years later as a Lamont Poetry Selection of the Academy of American Poets. Lee next published a remarkable prose-memoir, The Winged Seed: A Remembrance, followed by two books of poetry: Book of My Nights, which won the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America, and Behind My Eyes, which includes a CD of the poet reading.

While these details of Lee’s biography and this sequence of titles may serve as a blueprint into the poet’s career and to a set of books lined up on your shelf, this series of facts, presented chronologically, is peculiarly unsatisfying as an introduction to the work of Lee, whose poems characteristically put into question the sequential temporality of memory, the nature of identity, the mutual shaping of familial and cultural history, and the adequacy of language to capture the subtlety and consequence of everyday practices. For instance, that poem on my syllabus, “Persimmons,” begins with a teacher’s slap to the child-speaker’s head, reproving him “for not knowing the difference / between persimmon and pummkin,” a scene of cross-cultural misunderstanding that the poet proceeds to take apart, like a persimmon, with devastating precision. The poem offers a playful lesson in cultural difference—offering us advice, for instance, on “how to choose” a ripe persimmon—but it also provides a series of reflections on what it means to be asked to choose between cultures, expectations, languages, and memories. Forcing its reader to navigate crosscutting, nested, and repeated temporalities, the poem invites us to abandon the assumption that we can understand our lives as a sequence of events, the stuff of introductions. It ushers us, rather, into the hauntings and fateful doublings of dream-time, into constellations of significance—moments in which we know ourselves by recognizing what others fail to know about us—and into the recognition that the most intimate of memories are often held for us by others.

After you’ve studied a poem like “Persimmons,” you know much more about Li-Young Lee, and about the work of poetry, in part because he’s persuaded you that you know far less than you think you do. For instance, where, exactly, is the poet from? When did Lee become a poet, that is, when did he know he was a poet, and how could he, or anyone else for that matter, possibly know such a thing? How does memory shape identity, and whose memories are these? We are indeed lucky to be invited to consider such questions by the remarkable poetry and poetry-in-person of Li-Young Lee.

Editor’s Note: Li-Young Lee read on April 2, 2010, to an audience of 200 people. After the reading and book signing, Lee generously held an impromptu master class with a half dozen undergraduate students in the Writers House student lounge. Meredith L. McGill delivered a version of these remarks at the reading.
Designing the Romantic Era
Colin Jager
The Book of God: Secularization and Design in the Romantic Era
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006
Reviewed by William H. Galperin

Colin Jager’s first book, The Book of God: Secularization and Design in the Romantic Era, makes an important contribution to our understanding of British Romantic literature by revising the prevailing view of Romanticism as a species of modernity defined chiefly by an idea of progress or secularization. Focusing on the argument for design, which extrapolates and analogizes the existence of a divine creator from the evidence of the natural world, Jager widens his frame of reference to include not only William Paley, the principal exponent of design in the late eighteenth century, but other contemporaries or near-contemporaries as well, especially David Hume, Anna Barbauld, and Jane Austen, whom he then reads in Paley’s company, and finally in conjunction with William Wordsworth, the most critically important Romantic writer of the time.

One upshot of Jager’s investigation is that Romantic secularization is contradicted repeatedly in the way design informs texts that are contemporaneous with Romantic writing or representative of the British Romantic movement in its canonical formation. Perhaps the most important achievement of The Book of God lies in its redefinition of Romantic secularization. According to Jager, secularization is less a break with the past than a matter of differentiation, in which modern initiatives coexist with practices and orientations whose historical shape is as much a matter of modernity as it is a residue of tradition. The advantage of this approach is that orientations such as natural theology, in which science and religion seemingly converge, turn out to be a species of modernity not by sustaining that convergence, but more by demonstrating the persistence of belief in practices where it is seemingly absent.

In examining Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Jager demonstrates that even when the argument for design is shown to be inductive rather than deductive, a designing God remains very much at the fore. His basis for this claim is in the Dialogues themselves, where Cleanthes, the proponent of design, is shown to be inductive rather than deductive, a designing God emerges from nature. The emphasis is not necessarily on the strength or climax of Wordsworth’s The Prelude, to show how imaginative agency and divine agency are continuous yet necessarily discrete. In a stroke of considerable ingenuity, The Prelude is able to “keep religious forms at arms length” so as not to compromise the status of literature. The emergence of literature as a privileged category or register of response is an epiphenomenon of belief itself.

Austen proves to be the exception in this study. For as Jager repeatedly shows, many seemingly nonreligious practices and orientations become religious through the logic of differentiation, the sites of belief, or the need to find answers. The Book of God manages not only to extend the field of Romantic studies to include texts and contexts that are contemporaneous rather than romantic (hence the “Romantic era” rather than “Romanticism” in the title); it also extends the field of Romanticism to include aspects of human nature that were of considerable interest to the human or empirical sciences in the eighteenth century...
Recent and Forthcoming Faculty Books

**Richard Koszarski**

*Hollywood on the Hudson: Film and Television in New York from Griffith to Sarnoff*

Rutgers University Press, 2008

**John A. McClure**

*Partial Faiths: Postcular Fiction in the Age of Pynchon and Morrison*

University of Georgia Press, 2007

**Meredith L. McGill**

*The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange*

Rutgers University Press, 2008

**Barry V. Qualls**

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: The Secret Sharer, and Transformation: Three Tales of Doubles*

Longman, 2008

**Jonah Siegel**

*The Emergence of the Modern Museum: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Sources*

Oxford University Press, 2007

**Kurt Spellmeyer**

*Co-Editor (with Richard E. Miller)*

*The New Humanities Reader*, Third edition

Houghton Mifflin, 2008

**Henry S. Turner**

*Shakespeare’s Double Helix*

Continuum, 2009

**Henry S. Turner**

*The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580–1630*

Oxford University Press, 2006

**Rebecca L. Walkowitz**

*Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation*

Columbia University Press, 2006

**Cheryl A. Wall**

*Editor (with Linda Janet Holmes)*

*Savoring the Salt: The Legacy of Toni Cade Bambara*

Temple University Press, 2007
Meet Me in Atlantic City

Rob Kirkpatrick
The Words and Music of Bruce Springsteen
Penguin Publishers, 2006

Reviewed by Richard E. Miller and Martha Nell Smith

"Meet Me in Atlantic City" was the subject heading of Martha's e-mail in November 2005, letting me know she had extra tickets to see Bruce Springsteen's solo concert in Atlantic City. A few hours af- ter receiving this e-mail, I was hustling down the Garden State Park- way for what turned out to be the best live rock performance I had ever heard. My favorite memory of the night was when Springsteen broke into "Thundercrack" and Martha opened her cell, placed a call, and held the phone up high. You had to be there and, well, if you couldn't, telephony was the next best thing.

Anyone who has reveiled in rolling down the windows to let wind blow back their hair, or in the late twentieth century delights of New Jersey boardwalk culture, will enjoy The Words and Music of Bruce Springsteen by Rob Kirkpatrick (BA 1990). Kirkpatrick, a senior editor at Thomas Dunne Books, is the most recent Rutgers English alumni to write on the hometown bard and the only one to devise an entire book to the subject of Asbury Park's favorite son. The Words and Music of Bruce Springsteen is part of a singer-songwriter book series on musicians who have produced commercially successful and historically important music at some point in their careers. Each volume is organized chronologically, which proves most fitting for this overview of Springsteen's evolutions as a song- writer who crooned in bars and at dances on the Jersey shore in the 1960s to the rock star who packs arenas from the Meadowlands to Orlando today—a larger-than-life figure rumored to perform at the Hammersmith Odeon, London 75. Here, Kirkpatrick firmly declares, "The band's rendition [of She's the One] is a revelation: tight and inspired, one of the best per- formances …you're likely to hear. Springsteen and Van Zandt feed off each other's energy as they share the same mic and sing about the desperate liar with the angel in her eyes, and the thunder in her heart that makes you never want to leave her." Reading about the stories in The Words and Music of Bruce Springsteen isn't the same as listening to the man sitting at the piano, intensely singing into a micro- phone, harmonica horizoning around his neck, no guitar in sight. But the memories they stir of the many tunes he has given us and the information they pass along about the cir- cumstances of those song's compositions are the next best thing.

Romping with Springsteen's own wood play—"Madman drum- mers, bummers and Indians in the summer with a teenage diplo- mat/ In the dumps with the mumps as the adolescent pumps his way into his hat"—Kirkpatrick deftly traces Springsteen's develop- ments in songwriting and as a songwriter. And he documents how prolific Springsteen has been. As a young songwriter, Springsteen would churn out "five or ten songs a day," and the band would perform an "entirely different thirty-song set" on Saturday than on Sunday, "all written that week." By Born to Run, he was channeling his energies into epic storytelling songs. If The Wild, the Innocent, and the E Street Shuffle is "the album on which Bruce Springsteen became Bruce Springsteen," Born to Run marks his turn to a more disciplined songwriting and, in Darkness on the Edge of Town, his move from forging a "grand narrative voice" to working as a singer-songwriters "within the standard verse-chorus structure of popular rock song."

Kirkpatrick continues this exploration of the conditions of Springsteen's writing and the reception of his work through all of the rest of the 15 albums (Magic had not yet been released). The Af- terword takes us back to the moment Landau witnessed "rock and roll future" by reflecting on the recently released DVD of Spring-steen's first European performance, Hammersmith (Odeon, London 75). Here, Kirkpatrick fairly declares, "The band's rendition [of She's the One] is a revelation: tight and inspired, one of the best per- formances … you're likely to hear. Springsteen and Van Zandt feed off each other's energy as they share the same mic and sing about the desperate liar with the angel in her eyes, and the thunder in her heart that makes you never want to leave her." Reading about the stories in The Words and Music of Bruce Springsteen isn't the same as listening to the man sitting at the piano, intensely singing into a micro- phone, harmonica horizoning around his neck, no guitar in sight. But the memories they stir of the many tunes he has given us and the information they pass along about the cir- cumstances of those songs' compositions are the next best thing.

Editor's Note: Other Rutgers English alumni who have written on Bruce Springsteen include Alan Rauch (PhD 1989), a former associate professor of Eng- lish at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and Martha Nell Smith.
FACULTY NEWS

Emily C. Batlick—published Speaking of the Past: From “Akiara” to “Yibikuri.”

John Bellon—published work on filmmakers Howard Hawks and John Ford in MLN: American Language Notes and on the digital manipulation of color in Film Quarterly. His 2002 October article on digital cinema was recently translated into Russian and reprinted in Illustriert.

He was awarded the 2010 Academy Film Scholar Fellowship from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Matthew S. Buckle—received a Rutgers University Research Council Grant to support his project on The Racial Focal Point: A Critical Edition. He has an article on the body and meaning in early coronae that’s forthcoming in Theatre Survey.

Abena P. A. Busia—gave an invited lecture at the Social Forum in Pretoria, South Africa on gender and nationalism.

She is a member of the MLA executive committee for seventeenth-century English literature.

Elin Diamond—organized the Translation conference at Rutgers University in April 2007.


Brad Evans—edited a special issue on anthropology and literary studies for Criticism. He has been working on the restoration of photographer Edward Curtis’s 1914 silent film, In the Land of the Head Hunters, which will be screened this year at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, the Moore Theater in Seattle, the Field Museum in Chicago, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and Rutgers University.

Lynn Festa—published Sentinel Figures in Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain. She was awarded a Charles A. Rhyndrup Research Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to work on her next book, The Personality of Things in Eighteenth-Century Britain.

Katie Flint—was awarded an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship at the Huntington Library, where she will work on her book project examining the relationship between writing and photography. She delivered keynote lectures at the conference at Queen’s University in Belfast. Her book, The Transatlantic Iliad, 1785-1930, is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.


Thomas C. Fulton—was awarded a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities to complete the research and writing for his book, Milton’s Revolutionary Reading.


Christopher P. Janoff—was awarded a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to complete the research and writing for his book, Foul Revelations: Caribbean Nature and the Renewal of American Literature.


Collin Jagar—was awarded a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to work on his next book, Romanticism and Secrecy. He gave invited lectures at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Maryland, College Park, and Yale University.


Stacy S. Klein—was appointed executive director of the International Society of Anglo-Saxons. She gave an invited lecture at the University of Pennsylvania and was a roundtable panelist at the Medieval Academy Annual Meeting at the University of Toronto. She has several forthcoming articles on medieval inscriptions in The Oxford Handbook of Medieval English Literature; on the Old English verse Judith in Canew and Anglo-Saxon Hagiology; and on mourning and the production of community in Anglo-Saxon literature in Laments for the Lost: Medieval Mourning and Elleg.

Richard Kassian—published Hollywood on the Hudson: Film and Journalism in New York from Griffith to Scorsese. He co-hosted First Law Today on Bergen Community Television, and introduced videos, for the City University of New York’s City Cinematique Program. He was interviewed for the Lieutenant documentary, Erich von Stroheim: Propaganda Genius, included in The Adventurer of Young Indiana Jones DVD set, as well as for Richard Sheldon’s PBS documentary, You Must Remember This: The Warner Bros. Story.

Jonathan Brody Kramnick—was selected as a faculty fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center, where he will work on his next project, Problems of Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Philosophy. He gave invited lectures at Rice University, Yale University, and the Stanford Humanities Center. He has a forthcoming article on print culture in The Eighteenth-Century: Theory and Interpretations, and an essay on Lucullus in Matters of Life and Death.

John Kucich—delivered the keynote lecture at the Victorian Institute Conference at the University of Alabama, and was a roundtable panelist at The Future of Victorian Studies Conference at the University of Michigan. He organized the Making History: Rethinking Master Narratives Conference at Rutgers University in March 2007.

David Kumikoshi—gave invited lectures at the University of Pennsylvania; the University of California, Los Angeles; the State University of New York at Binghamton; and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Carter A. Mathes—received the Global Opportunity Award from the School of Arts and Sciences to complete archival research in Japan, and was selected as a Scholar-in-Residence at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, where he will work to complete his book, Imagining the Sound: Black Radicalism and Experimental Form in Pre-1965 African-American Literary Culture.


Meredith L. McGee—edited The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange. She organized the Global Poem Symposium in May for the Center for Cultural Analysis, which featured presentations by Rutgers English alumni Max Cavitch (PhD 2001) and Jason R. Brady (PhD 2004). She has been appointed director of the Center for Cultural Analysis for the next two years.

Michael McKeon—spent time last spring in Paris, where he taught a doctoral seminar at the Institut du Monde Anglais at the Sorbonne University. The seminar on the relationship between photography and literature in the eighteenth-century Britain, was attended by French graduate students specializing in English literature. While in Europe, he also gave invited lectures at the University of Lorraine, the University of Paris, the University of Strasbourg, the University of Freiburg, Sapun- za University of Rome, John Cabot University, Oxford University, York University, and the University of Cambridge.

Richard E. Miller—delivered keynote lectures at the University of Toronto’s 2008 Humanities Retreat and at the Literacies of Hope Conference in Beijing. He gave invited lectures at Stanford University; Brandeis University; St. John’s University; Fordham University; Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons; and the University of Pittsburgh. This summer, he was a visiting professor at Ohio State University’s Digital Media and Composition Seminar. The third edition of The New Humanities Reader, the textbook he designed and co-edited with Kurt Spellman, prepared students to think, read, and write about the enduring challenges and opportunities of our time, is forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin.

Sonali Pereira—published an article on feminist literature and socialist ethos in difference, and another article on Marxist ethics in contemporary Sri Lanka in Postcolonial Studies. She gave an invited lecture at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.


AWARD-WINNING FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

HONOR ROLL

2007 - 2008

Eve Shockey was invited to read from her poetry collection, a half-red sea, at the Wittemen Reading Series, the Academy of American Poets Bryant Park Reading Series, the Poetry Now Series at Williams College, the FallHouse Reading Series at Boudin College, the Poets Out Local Reading Series at Freiham University, and the Center for Book Arts Bradley Reading Series. Her poem “a thousand words” was reproduced at an art exhibition, held in South Africa in 2007, commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the death of anti-apartheid activist Stephen Bantu Biko. She was elected to serve on the MLA executive committee for twentieth-century American literature.

Larry Scanlon organized the Formulas Now and Old Conference at Rutgars University in April 2008, which featured presentations by Rutgers English alumnus Christopher Warley (PhD 2000) and doctoral candidates Colleen R. Rosenfeld and Scott Trudell.

Jonah Siegel edited *The Emergence of the Modern Museum: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Sources*. In March, he presented a paper at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Annual Conference held in Boston. He was elected to serve on the MLA executive committee for the Victorian period.


Rebecca L. Walkowitz edited *Immigrant Fictions: Contemporary Literature in the United States*. She co-authored an article with Douglas Mao on new modernist studies in *The History of Cartography: Cartographic Environments in the Early Renaissance*. Her book, *The Shape of Intimacy: Private Space and the British Social Imagination, 1560-1790*, was published in 2007. She has also served on the steering committee of the Modernism & Globalization Seminar Series at Rutgers, she organized the Mediations & Globalization Seminar at Rutgers, she organized the Mediations & Globalization Seminar Series at Rutgers, and gave invited lectures at Texas A&M University, Yale University, Harvard University, Drexel University, Columbia University, and Penn State University. She became co-editor of *Contemporary Literature* in June and was elected program chair of the Modernists Studies Association. The coordinator of the Modernism & Globalization Seminar Series at Rutgers, she organized the Modernists’ Transnational Futures Symposium in November 2007, which featured presentations by Rutgers English faculty members, including Dr. Angela Florschuetz and Dr. Susan Nakley.

Cheryl A. Wall was named the Board of Governors Zeade Haleiun Professor of English in January 2008. She co-edited, with Rutgers alumnus Linda Janet Holmes, *Saving the Salt: The Legacy of Zahi Gadi Aboussouh*. With Rutgers University President Richard L. McCormick, she co-chairs the university’s diversity and equity initiative.


Dr. Kristie Allen (PhD 2008) Macalester College
Committee: Kent Hie (Director), Richard Dienst, and Carolyn Williams

Paul Benzon (PhD expected 2008) Temple University
Committee: Richard Dienst (Director), Brent Haynes Edwards, and John A. McClure

Dr. Angela Florschuetz (PhD 2007) Trinity University
Committee: Christine Chism (Director), Larry Scanlon, and Stacy S. Klein

Theresa Geller (PhD expected 2008) Grinnell College
Dissertation: “Genetic Subversions: De-Formations of Character in the Popular Imagination”
Committee: Richard Dienst (Director), Brent Haynes Edwards, and Richard Koszarski

Dr. Jeremy Gluck (PhD 2007) Hunter College of The City University of New York (tenure-track position)
Dissertation: “Taking Up Arms Against a Sea of Troubles: Tragedy as History and Genre in the Black Radical Tradition”
Committee: Brent Haynes Edwards (Director), Elin Diamond, and Michael McKern

Dr. Piia Mustamaki (PhD 2008) Oberlin College
Dissertation: “Redefining Political Theater: Anarchism and the Problem of Identity”
Committee: Elin Diamond (Director), Brent Haynes Edwards, and David L. Eng

Dr. Susan Nakley (PhD 2008) St. Joseph’s College (tenure-track position)
Dissertation: “ ‘From every shires ende’: Chaucer and Forms of Nationhood”
Committee: Larry Scanlon (Director), Christine Chism, and Jacqueline T. Miller

Rachel Smith Boston University
Dissertation: “ ‘More than a Feeling, Albeit, Narrative, Neoliberalism’”
Committee: Richard Dienst (Director), Marianne DeKoven, and John A. McClure

Megan Ward Oberlin College
Dissertation: “Feeling Middle Class: Sensory Perception in Victorian Literature and Culture”
Committee: Kate Flint (Director), Jonah Siegel, and Carolyn Williams

Sarah C. Alexander Doctoral Candidate
Dissertation: “The Residuum: Victorian Street Life and Discourses of Excess”
Committee: Kate Flint (Director), Jonah Siegel, and Carolyn Williams

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion Fellowship (2008-2009)

Danielle Bobker (PhD 2007) Assistant Professor, Concordia University
Dissertation: “ ‘The Shape of Intimacy: Private Space and the British Social Imagination, 1560-1790’”
Committee: Jonathan Brody Kraskin (Co-Director), Michael McKern (Co-Director), and Paula McDowell

Graduate School—New Brunswick
Dean’s Award for Excellence in Research (2008)

Christopher Crosbie (PhD 2007) Assistant Professor, North Carolina State University
Dissertation: “Philosophies of Reiteration: Rethinking Early Modern Revenge Tragedy”
Committee: Emily C. Barlow (Director), Ann Barnes Coon, and Ben Leven

Shakespeare Association of America
DISSERTATION FELLOWS SUMMER 2008

Saladin Ahmed
Director: Paula McDowell (now at New York University)

Sarah C. Alexander
Dissertation: “The Readings: Victorian Street Life and Discourses of Excess”
Director: Kate Flint

Sean Barry
Dissertation: “Romantic Pedantry”
Director: William H. Galpeote

Sonali Barua
Dissertation: “South Asian Literature and Music”
Director: Brent Hayes Edwards (now at Columbia University)

Jonathan Brody
Dissertation: “American Extended Form, Fiction, and Poetry, 1820-1868”
Director: Carrie Hyde

Brian Garland
Director: John A. McCurie

Michael Masiello
Director: Ron Leveo

Paul Yeoh
Dissertation: “Rediscovering the Educational Power of Literature: Victorian Literature and the Civilizing Process”
Director: Kate Flint

RESEARCH FELLOWS SUMMER 2008

Kevin Cattrell
Futures of American Studies Institute, Dartmouth College

Aditi Gupta
The Latin/Greek Institute, The City University of New York

Carrie Ho
Center for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto

Philip Longo
School of Criticism and Theory, Cornell University

Brian McGrath
Houghton Library, Harvard University

Benjamin Ogden
Wits Institute for Social & Economic Research, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Honey (Michelle) Phillips
The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Natalie Rosburgh
The Goethe-Institut, Federal Republic of Germany

John D. Thomas
Andres-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School

DISSERTATION FELLOWS FALL 2008

Sarah C. Alexander
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion Fellowship

Candice Amich
Jacob K. Javits Fellowship (2006-2009)

Paul Benzon

Tyler Bradway
Jacob K. Javits Fellowship (2007-2010)

SARAH C. ALEXANDER
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion Fellowship

CANDICE AMICH
Jacob K. Javits Fellowship (2006-2009)

PAUL BENZON

MILO ERBISMANN
Center for Cultural Analysis Fellowship

MICHAEI GAVIN
Mariani Bowley Prize (for the best essay written in coursework)

MICHAEL HARTY
Graduate School–New Brunswick Special Study Award

MARIANNA HUNT
Remedial Futures: South Asian American Cultural Production and the Politics of Community"
Director: David L. Eng (now at the University of Pennsylvania)

Colleen R. Rosenfeld
Graduate School–New Brunswick Special Study Award

Michael Hardy
Catherine Moynihan Prize (for the best essay on a literary topic)

Kathleen Howard
Catherine Moseillo Cantaboglo Prize (for the best essay on literature and religion)

Stephanie Hunt
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Fellowship

Louetta Hunt
Rutgers University Presidential Fellowship

Miriam Jaffe-Foger
Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Writing Program by a Teaching Assistant

Shahri Jaising
Rutgers Institute for Research on Women Graduate Fellowship

Patrick Kehoe
Barry V. Qualls Dissertation Fellowship

Dawn Lilley
Graduate School–New Brunswick Student Teaching Award

GrADUATE PROGRAM FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

Sarah C. Alexander
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion Fellowship

Candice Amich
Jacob K. Javits Fellowship (2006-2009)

Paul Benzon

Tyler Bradway
Jacob K. Javits Fellowship (2007-2010)

Daniel Couch
Ralph Johnson Bunch Distinguished Graduate Fellowship

Gregory Ellermann
Mariani Bowley Prize (for the best essay written in coursework)

Michael Gavin
Center for Cultural Analysis Fellowship

Aditi Gupta
Graduate School–New Brunswick Special Study Award

Michael Hardy
Catherine Moynihan Prize (for the best essay on a literary topic)

Kathleen Howard
Catherine Moseillo Cantaboglo Prize (for the best essay on literature and religion)

Stephanie Hunt
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Fellowship

Louetta Hunt
Rutgers University Presidential Fellowship

Miriam Jaffe-Foger
Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Writing Program by a Teaching Assistant

Shahri Jaising
Rutgers Institute for Research on Women Graduate Fellowship

Patrick Kehoe
Barry V. Qualls Dissertation Fellowship

Dawn Lilley
Graduate School–New Brunswick Student Teaching Award

Philip Longo
Honorable Mention, Mariani Bowley Prize (for the best essay written in coursework)

Benjamin Ogden
Graduate School–New Brunswick Special Study Award

Megan Paustian
Jacob K. Javits Fellowship (2008-2012)

Colleen R. Rosenfeld
• Graduate School–New Brunswick Louis Renier Dissertation Fellowship

• Daniel Francis Howard Travel Fellowship for Graduate Research

• Folger Institute Award

Natalie Rosburgh
Graduate School–New Brunswick Special Study Award

John Savarese
The Dickens Universe, University of California, Santa Cruz

Sarah Sheridan
The Dickens Universe, University of California, Santa Cruz

Matthew Sherrill
Lane Cooper Fellowship

Ben Singer
National Development and Research Institute Training Fellowship

Anne Sohawary
Folger Institute Award

Kirsten Tramm
• Honorable Mention, Spencer L. Eddy Prize (for the best literary essay accepted in a professional journal): “Samuel Shapero’s Faerie King and the Fragmentation of Royalist Epic,” in SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900

• Australian Council for the Arts Emerging Writer’s Grant

Scott Trudell
Folger Institute Award

Mark Vareschi
Center for Cultural Analysis Fellowship

Paul Yeoh
• Honorable Mention, Catherine Moynihan Prize (for the best essay on a literary topic)

• Barry V. Qualls Dissertation Fellowship

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM AWARDS

Elana Aaron
Mitchell Adelman Memorial Scholarship for Creative Writing

Sharay Allen
Edna N. Herzberg Prize (for an outstanding original composition)

Christine Beard
Mitchell Adelman Memorial Scholarship for Creative Writing

Jaya Barme
Jordan Lee Flyer Honors Award (for outstanding promise and achievement in the study of language and literature)

Daina Lynn Galante
Edna N. Herzberg Prize (for an outstanding original composition)

Jessica Nadle
Evelyn Hamilton Award (for fiction)

Amy Mazzariello
Evelyn Hamilton Award (for poetry)

Anna Pokazanyeova
Jordan Lee Flyer Honors Award (for outstanding promise and achievement in the study of language and literature)

Janis Rodgers
• Academy of American Poets Emile Dame Memorial Prize
• Edna N. Herzberg Prize (for an outstanding original composition)

Zeynep Uzumu
Julia Carley Poetry Prize

Elizabeth Varall
John and Katherine Kinsella Prize (to support honors thesis research)

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM AWARDS

Eric Gary Anderson (PhD 1994) is the director of a new interdisciplinary minor in Native American and indigenous studies at George Mason University. As vice president of the Southern American Studies Association, he will be hosting the organization’s biennial meeting in February 2009.

Joseph Anfuso (BA 1970) is the founder and president of the faith-based missions and relief organization, Forward Edge International. The organization is engaged in, among other projects, the long-term recovery effort in the Gulf Coast, building a “village” for children living in Nicaragua, and developing a feeding program for AIDS orphans in Kenya.

Sarah Aronson (BA 1984) published a young adults novel, Field Case, which was listed as a “quick pick title for reluctant readers” by the Young Adult Library Services Association.

Mary Baglivo (BA 1973), the Chief Executive Officer at Saatchi & Saatchi Women of New York, also received the Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award from the Rutgers University Alumni Federation.

Joan Baranow (PhD 1992), an assistant professor of English at Drexel University, received the Public Broadcasting Service in July.

Danielle Bobker (PhD 2007), an assistant professor of English at Concordia University of California, produced the documentary, It’s a Local Music. Domenican University of California, produced the documentary, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao in 2007, which received much critical acclaim and was awarded the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 2007 National Book Critics Award for Best Novel.

Monika Elbert (PhD 1987), a professor of English at Montclair State University, edited Enterprising Youth: Social Values and Acculturation in Nineteenth-Century American Children’s Literature.


Jane Elliott (PhD 2004), a lecturer at the University of York, published Popular Feminist Fiction as American Allegory: Representing National Time.

Sarah Elliott (PhD 2001), an assistant professor of English at California State University, Sacramento, received tenure in 2007.

Andrew M. Gordon (BA 1965) published Empire of Dreams: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Films of Steven Spielberg and was promoted to the rank of full professor in the English department at the University of Florida.

Lindsay Halladay (BA 2002), an actress and hip-hop artist based in Los Angeles, has finished shooting the film, A Perfect Getaway, starring Steve Zahn and Milla Jovovich.

Amy Cedeno (BA 2005) has started a new job at the biopharmaceutical company, Covance.

Hillary Chute (PhD 2007), a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows, delivered this year’s Schlesinger Lecturer at the BuckHill Institute for Advanced Study. A recipient of Harvard’s William F. Millin Fund fellowship, she has recent and forthcoming articles in PhDLA, Modern Fiction Studies, and Women’s Studies Quarterly.


Christopher Crosbie (PhD 2007) will join the faculty at North Carolina State University as an assistant professor of English. The recipient of the J. Leeds Barroll Dissertation Prize from the Shakespeare Association of America, he published articles on Timaeus andromache in Shakespeare Quarterly and on The Spanish Tragedy in English Literary Renaissance.

Walter Cummins (BC 1957) published his short story collection, Local Mets.

John DeLaurentis (BA 2006) is an English teacher at North Plainfield High School and a part-time lecturer in the modern Greek studies program at Rutgers University.

Junot Díaz (BA 1992), a professor of creative writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the fiction editor of the Boston Review, published The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao in 2007, which received much critical acclaim and was awarded the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 2007 National Book Critics Award for Best Novel.


Jane Elliott (PhD 2004), a lecturer at the University of York, published Popular Feminist Fiction as American Allegory: Representing National Time.

Jason Gieger (PhD 2001), an assistant professor of English at California State University, Sacramento, received tenure in 2007.

Andrew M. Gordon (BA 1965) published Empire of Dreams: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Films of Steven Spielberg and was promoted to the rank of full professor in the English department at the University of Florida.

Lindsay Halladay (BA 2002), an actress and hip-hop artist based in Los Angeles, has finished shooting the film, A Perfect Getaway, starring Steve Zahn and Milla Jovovich.
Robert Harper (BA 1974), a professional actor, delivered the commencement address for University College at Rutgers in May 2007.


George Held (PhD 1967) published his poetry collection, W’s is for Vor.

Matthew Hersch (BA 2005) has been hired as the associate editor for Shakespearian Magazine, the publication of the National Humanities Institute, a national research and policy organization dedicated to fostering decent, affordable housing for everyone.

Jaime Hovey (PhD 1995) published A Thousand Words: Portraiture, Style, and Queer Modernism.

Natasha Hurley (PhD 2007), a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Alberta, was awarded a fellowship jointly funded by the American Antiquarian Society and the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

Eric Hyman (PhD 1984), a professor of English at Fairfield University, published articles on The Tate Gentlemen of Versailles in Eklektik and on the southern American term “you-all” in American Speech.

Michael Jones (BC 1970) has retired from his position as principal of Lexington High School, in Massachusetts, after thirty-two years of teaching and service in public education.

Alex Kasavin (BA 2007) started a new job at Austin-based Empire Learning, a company providing multimedia rich elearning solutions.

Diane Kiesel (DC 1975), an acting New York Supreme Court Justice and an adjunct professor of law at New York Law School, published Demonic Violence: Law, Policy, and Practice.


Julian Kloslow (PhD 2005) will join the faculty at Virginia Tech as an assistant professor of English.

Eric Kubly (MA 1973) produced an offBroadway play entitled The Cottage.


Vincent A. Lankesich (PhD 1997) received tenure at the Professional Performing Arts School in New York City, and published articles on two-day queer studies conference which brought together faculty and graduate students from the consortium of universities in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Beth Loffreda (PhD 1997) is the new director of the MFA program in creative writing at the University of Wyoming. She was featured as a speaker in the Writers from Rutgers reading series.

Kathleen Lubey (PhD 2005), an assistant professor of English at St. John’s University, published an article on Joseph Addison in Eighteenth-Century Fiction. She will be an Andrew W. Mellon Presidential Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania’s Penn Humanities Forum during the next academic year.

Saikal Majumdar (PhD 2005), an assistant professor of English at Stanford University, published a novel, Silverfish.

Bill Matthews (BA 1981), the senior director of development research and prospect management at the Rutgers University Foundation, published three poems in Adagio Verse Quarterly.

Dawn Miller (BA 1985) published Portrait of Vengeance and Muscular Desire.

E. B. Moss (BC 1975), the founder of the marketing and promotions services company, Moss Appeal, published an opinion piece for the Corporate Social Responsibility Newsline, CSWwire.com, and was featured in articles in the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

Alicia Nadkarni (BA 2005) was promoted to production editor at Rutgers University Press.

Brian Norman (PhD 2004) published The American Priest Essay and National Belonging: Addressing Diversity and will be joining the faculty at Loyola College in Maryland as an assistant professor of English.

Peggy Phelan (PhD 1987), the Ann O'Day Maple Chair in the Arts and a professor of drama and English at Stanford University, received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Graduate School-New Brunswick.


Martin Joseph Poncin (PhD 2003), an assistant professor of English at The Ohio State University, published an article on Filipino diaspora studies in Philippine Studies, and spent the summer conducting research at the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University for his book project on the relationship between Filipino studies and Asian American studies.

Adam Potthay (PhD 1993), the Margaret L. Hamilton Professor of English at the College of William & Mary, published The Story of Joy: From the Bible to Late Roman Fiction, an article on William Wordsworth in PhilMiLA, and an omnibus review of recent scholarship in eighteenth-century studies in SEL. Studies in English Literature, 1500-1800. He also edited a Longman Cultural Edition of The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews. A newly appointed member of the PhilMiLA editorial board, he gave invited lectures at Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Michigan. He will deliver the third annual Rutgers English Graduate Alumni Lecture in November 2008.

Carrie Preston (PhD 2006), an assistant professor of English and women’s studies at Boston University, was named a Peter Paul Career Development Professor in 2007. The professorship was created with support from entrepreneur Peter T. Paul, president of Paul Financial, LLC, to help Boston University recruit and retain promising young faculty. She will use the award to begin a book project that traces the influence of Japanese Noh theatre on transnational modernism.

Gina Redivo (BA 2000), a student at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers, has accepted an internship with the Central School District in Hawaii to fulfill requirements towards her PhD degree.

Kenneth Rodgers (BA 1996), a senior producer for NFL Films and the NFL Network, was recognized for his work on America’s Game: The Super Bowl Champion, with a Sports Emmy Award for outstanding edited sports series. He is producing a new season of the HBO series, Hard Knocks: Training Camp with the Dallas Cowboys, and directing Disney’s What’s Next? commercial campaign. In 2007, the series Hard Knocks was nominated for three Sports Emmy Awards and won the Emmy in the outstanding music composition category.

Michael D. Rubenstein (PhD 2005), an assistant professor of English at California State University, Long Beach, has an article on reading and human rights forthcoming in Social Text.

Annette Saddik (PhD 1995), an associate professor at the New York College of Technology at the City University of New York, published Contemporary American Drama and edited The Travelling Companions and Other Plays by Tennessee Williams.

Andrew P. Schael (BA 1990), an associate professor of English at the University of North Texas, has a forthcoming article on Marie de France’s Poor Belonging: Addressing Division in Marie de France’s ‘The Story of Joy’ in Anglo-Saxon England.


Barbara Timmerman Soifer (BA 1992) was promoted to director of marketing services at IEEE, a non-profit organization and the world’s leading professional association for the advancement of technology.

Nicole D. Smith (PhD 2003), an assistant professor of English at the University of North Texas, has a forthcoming article on Marie de France’s Gisigamer in Middeleeuwen.

Martha Neil Smith (PhD 1985), a professor of English and the founding director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) at the University of Maryland, College Park, co-edited A Companion to Emily Dickinson. Her Elegy Dickinson: A User’s Guide is forthcoming from Blackwell as part of its Introduction to Literature Series. Another project, Emily Dickinson’s Correspondence: A Brief Digital Inquiry, is forthcoming from the University of Virginia Press Electronic Imprint.

Richard Squibbs (PhD 2007) will join the faculty at DePaul University as an assistant professor of English. He has a forthcoming article on the periodical essay in Modère Philologie.

Kate Stanton (PhD 2001), a lecturer in women’s and gender studies and the Allison Burn Resident Dean at Harvard College, was awarded a certificate of distinction in teaching by Harvard University.

Jason Teplee (BA 1993) works as a product developer for Vantage and is a part-time student in a doctoral program at the University of Binghamton.


David Toisa (PhD 1996), an assistant professor of English at California State University, Sacramento, received tenure in 2006.

Ken Urban (PhD 2000), a postdoctoral in expository writing at Harvard University, published articles on 1990s British theatre in Cool Britannia: British Popular Culture of the 1990s, on Philip Ridley in Modern Drama, and on Sarah Kane in A Concise Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Drama. Three of his plays opened in the last year: The Private Lives of Eldorado, The Happy Sad, and Tyrnove. The recipient of a playwrighting fellowship from Boston’s Huntington Theatre Company, he was named a 2007 Poem of the Year by mytheatre.com.


Grant Wylde (BA 2007) is a student in the graduate program in English at Princeton University.

Sandra Young (PhD 2004) is an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.
Mary Baglivo
BA 1979
Chief Executive Officer
Saatchi & Saatchi Americas

Mary Baglivo was named Advertising Woman of the Year by Advertising Women of New York and received Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award from Rutgers University Alumni Federation.

Junot Díaz
BA 1992
Author

Junot Díaz is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the author of The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (2008) and the National Book Critics Circle Award for Best Novel (2007).

Baglivo Díaz Lindeyman Phelan Preston Scheil Urban Weheliye

Marked highlights of alumni achievements:

- Mary Baglivo, Chief Executive Officer at Saatchi & Saatchi Americas, was named Advertising Woman of the Year by Advertising Women of New York and received Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award from Rutgers University Alumni Federation.
- Junot Díaz, BA 1992, is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the author of The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (2008) and the National Book Critics Circle Award for Best Novel (2007).
- Andrew P. Scheil, BA 1990, PhD 2006, Associate Professor of English at the University of Minnesota, is the author of The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England (University of Michigan Press, 2004), which was awarded the John Nicholas Brown Prize (2008) by the Medieval Academy of America and the Best First Book Prize (2005) by the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists.
- Ken Urban, PhD 1999, is a Professor of Drama and English at Stanford University and was named the Ann O’Day Maples Chair in the Arts. He received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Graduate School–New Brunswick.
- Mary B. Baglivo, Chief Executive Officer at Saatchi & Saatchi Americas, was named Advertising Woman of the Year by Advertising Women of New York and received Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award from Rutgers University Alumni Federation.
- Peggy Phelan, PhD 1987, is the Elizabeth Corey Professor of Drama and Women’s Studies at the University of Michigan and received the Michael Lynch Service Award from the Modern Language Association and the Gay, Lesbian, Queer Caucus.
- Carrie J. Preston, PhD 2006, Assistant Professor of English and Women’s Studies at Boston University, was named Peter Paul Career Development Professor by Boston University.
- Andrew P. Scheil, BA 1990, PhD 2006, Associate Professor of English at the University of Minnesota, is the author of The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England (University of Michigan Press, 2004), which was awarded the John Nicholas Brown Prize (2008) by the Medieval Academy of America and the Best First Book Prize (2005) by the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists.
- Ken Urban, PhD 1999, is a Professor of Drama and English at Stanford University and was named the Ann O’Day Maples Chair in the Arts. He received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Graduate School–New Brunswick.
- Mary B. Baglivo, Chief Executive Officer at Saatchi & Saatchi Americas, was named Advertising Woman of the Year by Advertising Women of New York and received Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award from Rutgers University Alumni Federation.
In sixteenth century England, pedagogues began to produce rhetorical manuals in the English vernacular with the intention of supplementing the traditional training of the humanist schoolroom. These manuals were composed by scholars who were disenchanted with the insularity of the university, and who imagined audiences traditionally excluded from this training. The specter of rhetoric’s unregulated deployment assumes the form of poetic figures—tropes of thought and schemes of sound—that operated in defiance of the standards of classical decorum. Critics often consider the ideas of W.E.B. Du Bois and Walter Benjamin as incompatible. However, both thinkers were expressly concerned with bearing witness to modern civilization from the vantage point of the seemingly non-civilized. They espoused forms of messianism, engaged critiques of progress and modern civilization, and national belonging led to the radicalization of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the nation’s first racially specific immigration law.

In the era of emancipation, the ideals of contract freedom and voluntary exchange began to coalesce into a political worldview. Emancipation ushered a new paradigm into American life and thought: it nullified one kind of property relationship—the buying and selling of chattel slaves—to consecrate the market made up free persons who voluntarily sold their labor as property.

Background Historical Context

Project Description

Texts and Authors Considered

Background Historical Context

In the era of emancipation, the ideals of contract freedom and voluntary exchange began to coalesce into a political worldview. Emancipation ushered a new paradigm into American life and thought: it nullified one kind of property relationship—the buying and selling of chattel slaves—to consecrate the market made up free persons who voluntarily sold their labor as property.

In sixteenth century England, pedagogues began to produce rhetorical manuals in the English vernacular with the intention of supplementing the traditional training of the humanist schoolroom. These manuals were composed by scholars who were disenchanted with the insularity of the university, and who imagined audiences traditionally excluded from this training. The specter of rhetoric’s unregulated deployment assumes the form of poetic figures—tropes of thought and schemes of sound—that operated in defiance of the standards of classical decorum.

Critics often consider the ideas of W.E.B. Du Bois and Walter Benjamin as incompatible. However, both thinkers were expressly concerned with bearing witness to modern civilization from the vantage point of the seemingly non-civilized. They espoused forms of messianism, engaged critiques of progress and modern civilization, and national belonging led to the radicalization of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the nation’s first racially specific immigration law.

By placing Asian immigration within the analytical and historical framework of African American slavery, From Emancipation to Exclusion illuminates how the radical reconstruction of postemancipation citizenship, American geopolitics, and national belonging led to the radicalization of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the nation’s first racially specific immigration law.

Critics often consider the ideas of W.E.B. Du Bois and Walter Benjamin as incompatible. However, both thinkers were expressly concerned with bearing witness to modern civilization from the vantage point of the seemingly non-civilized. They espoused forms of messianism, engaged critiques of progress and modern civilization, and national belonging led to the radicalization of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the nation’s first racially specific immigration law.

In the era of emancipation, the ideals of contract freedom and voluntary exchange began to coalesce into a political worldview. Emancipation ushered a new paradigm into American life and thought: it nullified one kind of property relationship—the buying and selling of chattel slaves—to consecrate the market made up free persons who voluntarily sold their labor as property.

In the era of emancipation, the ideals of contract freedom and voluntary exchange began to coalesce into a political worldview. Emancipation ushered a new paradigm into American life and thought: it nullified one kind of property relationship—the buying and selling of chattel slaves—to consecrate the market made up free persons who voluntarily sold their labor as property.
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
by Richard E. Miller

Rutgers English has a special relationship with the Mellon Foundation. None of the research and writing projects that the foundation makes possible for our students through its generous funding takes place at their headquarters in New York City. The dissertation seminar on “Problems in Historical Interpretation” taught by Michael McKeon, now in its third year and funded by the Mellon Foundation, takes place in Murray Hall. The writing that seminar participants produce gets generated in libraries, coffee shops, and apartments in Philadelphia, New York City, the boroughs, and all points in between.

Can one learn without traveling? For the past four years, the Mellon Foundation has funded the department’s Future Traditions Project, which has included research monies for advanced graduate students to conduct research and writing during the summer months. These funds have made it possible for graduate students to move beyond the walls of the classroom to study Latin in Rome or French at Middlebury College; to visit the British Library or university archives in Indiana, Texas, and California; and to attend summer seminars at Cornell University or Dartmouth College.

This year, the Mellon Foundation has provided the School of Arts and Sciences with nearly $3 million to support travel and dissertation writing across the humanities. Where our own graduate students will go during the summer is not yet known, but this year given free license to explore the riches of the Folger has been the basis for much of my scholarly work since. Holding the letters John Donne wrote from prison after eloping with Anne More, for example, was eerie and moving. Then and since, the vaults of the Folger reveal to me a past that is at once viscerally present and ineffably strange.

The Folger Shakespeare Library
by Ann Baynes Coiro

The Folger Shakespeare Library sits across the street from the Library of Congress and the Supreme Court in Washington, DC, in a white façade carved with bas-relief scenes from Shakespeare’s plays. But the library is an architectural treasure with a sense of humor—facing the Capitol, Puck presides over a fountain proclaiming, “Lend, who so looth those mortals be?” The library’s public mission is to increase knowledge of Shakespeare and of the early modern world. This mission is served by changing exhibitions in the Great Hall based on the library’s vast holdings and by performances and lectures in a small theater modeled after the Globe.

Beyond the witty, splendid riches of the Folger Shakespeare Library’s public spaces is an inner sanctum, open only to scholars. The Folger is a great rare book library, home to the largest collection of Shakespeare materials in the world as well as to an extensive collection of books, manuscripts, and art from the early Renaissance through the eighteenth century. It is a cherished resource for Rutgers faculty and graduate students from English and many other departments who work on the early modern world.

The Folger Library has the third largest collection of books printed in England before 1640, but at its heart is the Shakespeare collection. The library holds, for example, 79 copies of the First Folio of 1623. It also has an extensive collection of promptbooks, many of them for Shakespearean productions, as well as records of actors and directors who engaged with Shakespearean work from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. The library’s catalog, moreover, is available as an online resource that enriches our scholarship and our classrooms.

Early modern studies is an important part of Rutgers English. In 1979, Rutgers University became a founding member of the Folger Institute, a consortium of American and British colleges and universities that offers multidisciplinary programs on a wide range of topics. Rutgers faculty and graduate students from across the disciplines come to the library not only as readers, but as participants of the Folger Institute. The institute offers courses designed for graduate students, including the masters seminar in research methods and the dissertation seminar, which brings together students in the early stages of their dissertation research.

There are, in addition, a wide variety of seminars and workshops on focused topics offered for faculty or a mix of faculty and graduate students.

My own relationship with the Folger goes back many years. I had the dazzling good fortune to be hired right out of college to work as the Folger’s assistant acquisitions librarian. Although I decided to go on to graduate school, my year given free license to explore the riches of the Folger has been the basis for much of my scholarly work since. Holding the letters John Donne wrote from prison after eloping with Anne More, for example, was eerie and moving. Then and since, the vaults of the Folger reveal to me a past that is at once viscerally present and ineffably strange.
INSTITUTIONS AND ARCHIVES

When I wasn’t spilling cappuccino on my jeans while running to class or trying to impress girls by reciting pas-
sages by John Keats, my time at Rut-
gers in the 1960s allowed me to knit my passions for words and music into a self-styled whole. As an English major, I not only set my life’s course on becoming a writer, I also became a huge Beatles fan.

My Shakespeare professor, John Timpane, told me something I have never forgotten, that Shakespeare was akin to an Elizabethan age Beatle, an artist who could somehow please the public’s tastes and craft groundbreak-
ing art at the same time.

So it marked a throughback of yeah-yeah-yeah proportions when I accepted an invitation, this March, to examine some lyric manuscripts by The Beatles, housed at Northwestern University’s Music Library in Evanston, Illinois, which had been obtained in the early 1970s from composer and musician John Cage, as part of his collection of 410 music manuscripts.

The Library of America
by Myra Jehlen

You can tell a idea is good by the way it seems obvious the moment it is proposed. The idea of The Library of America is in that category. Of course it is a good idea to publish a series of books representing, in the library’s phrase, “the best and most significant” American writing. It is then evident that this series needs to be produced with great rigor, so that its volumes serve as standard, authoritative edi-
tions; that these editions should be broadly available, and therefore not too expensive, that they should be attractive, convenient to use and carry about, and also recognizable, which more or less requires they be uniform, and that they be kept in print permanently.

The Library of America began publishing in May 1982 with four volumes by Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Walt Whitman. Though the idea of The Library of America had been thought of almost in the 1940s, its real start was in the mid 1950s when Edmund Wilson, inspired by the French series, La Pléiade, suggested an American version to Jason Epstein, the editorial director at Random House who would become one of the founding members of the library.

Another recognizable figure in the history of The Library of America is Richard Poitier, who joined the project during the plan-
ing stages in 1977 and stepped down as chairman of its board of directors in 1999. All the while he was building The Library of America, Professor Poitier was also building Rutgers English, transforming it into a nationally recognized department with an excellent research faculty, a comprehensive curriculum in literary history, and a competitive student body. In 1985, Professor Poitier defined the relation of The Library of America thus: the suc-
cess of the project shows “that so many people—not a whole country, but a great many people—are giving a signal that they still think there’s something going on in books that are hard to read and to make.”

It is in response to this signal that, in addition to over 180 volumes col-
lecting the works of such canonical writers as Emerson, Faulkner, Baldwin, Alcott, Adams, and Longfellow and 25 volumes of poetry in the American Po-
est project, some ten anthologies have appeared thus far, including one on food writing, another on Americans in Paris, a third on New York writing, and a fourth on environmental writing. The quality of the writing and its impor-
tance is as high in these volumes as in the others, while the subjects nicely mix up the categories in which readers, especially American readers, are wont to be divided and confined.

Mixing up the categories in another way, The Library of America has begun publishing works by living authors, beginning with Saul Bellow and Philip Roth. The criteria are the same but the situ-
ation makes all the difference. For when it publishes living authors, the library comes onto the current literary stage, linking past writing to present. This linkage illuminates something that may be obscure in reading only past writings, namely the mutual engagement of writing with the life of the time.

The Library of America is obviously a good idea in regard not only to the national literary tradition but, broadly, to the national culture and its relation to artistic and intellectual pursuits.
1970 - 1971
Rutgers English shifts the focus of its first-year English curriculum from literary criticism to basic composition

John J. Richetti joins the English department as an associate professor

1970
Rutgers College becomes co-educational

1970
In May, student activists take over Rutgers President Mason W. Gross’s office in the Old Queens building to protest the U.S. invasion of Cambodia

1970
In September, the Rutgers Student Government Association published a satirical manifesto entitled “The Freshman Unhandbook” in the Rutgers magazine, introducing first-year students to campus life

1970
The number of female undergraduates doubles from 544 to 1,323

1970
Edward J. Bloustein (right) becomes university president upon the retirement of Mason W. Gross (left)

1971
Charles L. Bunch, a wealthy investor from Edgewater, New Jersey, dies and unexpectedly leaves $10 million to Rutgers for biological research; in return, the University Heights Campus is renamed Bunch Campus in his honor

1972
Stanislaw Rowley, a beloved and distinguished professor of English, and a frequent contributor to the New York Review of Books, passes away in January; a Stanislaw Rowley Fund is established to recognize student work

1972
Pulitzer Prize winning poet Stanley Kunitz joins Rutgers English as a visiting professor of creative writing

1973
The university undergoes major structural reorganization and creates provosts for the Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick campuses

1973 - 1974
Paul Fussell, the John DeWitt Professor of English Literature, wins the National Book Award for Arts and Letters for The Great War and Modern Memory

1973
In his October 2 New York Times op-ed piece, Rutgers University President Edward J. Bloustein writes about renewed spirit on the Rutgers campuses that “reflect the beginnings of a new era”

1974
Mason W. Gross, the sixteenth president of Rutgers University, dies

1975
Rutgers English faculty struggles to adapt to larger class sizes resulting from a surge in student enrollment

1976
The university initiates a four-year general honors program named after Colonel Henry Rutgers

1976

1976
The Library of America is co-founded by Richard Poirier

1977
Paul Fussell joins the English department as an associate professor of creative writing

1977
The university begins to create a unified Faculty of Arts and Sciences; changes are completed in 1980

1977
Charles L. Busch, a wealthy investor from Edgewater, New Jersey, dies and unexpectedly leaves $10 million to Rutgers for biological research; in return, the University Heights Campus is renamed Busch Campus in his honor

1977
Following a controversial legal battle, the Partisan Review moves from Rutgers University to Boston University, along with its editor-in-chief, William Phillips

1978
The University of America is co-founded by Richard Poirier

1978
In September, the Rutgers Student Government Association published a satirical manifesto entitled “The Freshman Unhandbook” in the Rutgers magazine, introducing first-year students to campus life

1979
The university initiates a four-year general honors program named after Colonel Henry Rutgers
This was probably the first deliberate decision I had ever made in my life—and what a decision it was.

One of the first courses I took was a Victorian literature course with Barry Qualls, who seemed to have stepped out of the pages of one of the novels we were reading, and who showed me how words could capture a whole world. George Keats, whose glasses were on a permanent slide down his nose, taught me poetry from and to patton. A fierce powerhouse of words and intellect, taught a course called "Time and the Novel," which opened doors I didn't even know existed, and that I still can't figure out how to close. There was william keach and susan wolfe, who taught Romantic literature and the elegant, gentle Daniel follett, who taught modern poetry and gave me the gift of Elizabeth bishop, the poet I return to again and again.

What being an English major at Rutgers has taught me is the most important thing of all: how to think. More specifically, how to move an idea from spark to flame, seed to flower, or, even more concretely, from thought to words on the page. This is a gift of immeasurable value that I have carried all through my life, and that has served me well in the nearly 30 years I've been a researcher, grant writer, fundraiser, pharmaceutical marketer, writer, parent, domestic partner, and now, rapidly aging baby boomer. Although Pat Tobin would have used her blue pen and written, "clue," it is a truth universally acknowledged, that without Rutgers, I would not be the person I am today.
Trust our own judgments. We are pleased to give back to the graduate program and have chosen to brave, early support for feminist research and teaching encouraged us to forge our own paths and ways small and large, literal and figurative, Rutgers Liturgies in English helped us to establish. In ways small and large, literal and figurative, Rutgers Liturgies in English helped us to establish. In ways small and large, literal and figurative, Rutgers Liturgies in English helped us to establish.
Every playwright remembers the first one. As I tell my students, you never fully understand your play until you see it on its feet. It’s a lesson that well. After readings at the Edison Valley Playhouse and on Livingston Campus, Bencivenga’s play, Flight of the Iron Butterfly, was first produced during this year’s Reunion Weekend, and debuted at The George Street Playhouse in August. While the show is the culmination of a two-year journey for Bencivenga, its history stretches back over sixty years, tracing the story of Bencivenga’s grandfather during World War II. Bencivenga was a student in the introductory and advanced playwriting courses I taught at Rutgers in 2005 and 2006. In the advanced course, I asked the students to write a play unlike what they had written before, and to push themselves out of their comfort zones. I remember Bencivenga decided to abandon a project early to the semester because there was something else he felt he had to write.

Bencivenga’s grandfather, John Paul Czahor, ill with cancer, began talking about his grandfather during World War II. For his service, Czahor and his men parachuted onto the beaches of Normandy on that fateful June day in 1944. For his service, Czahor received the Bronze Star for valor in duty and a Purple Heart for his wartime experience, its closing lines remind us of the mental scars of those who fought in WWII. “No. I’ll never go back,” Young John says. “Normandy means too much for me to go for a visit. As long as I know it’s there, that’s all I need of Normandy.”

The May production at Rutgers was a homecoming for both author and audience, which was comprised of veterans from the Rutgers Living History Society—men who knew the story of Young John well—and students from Hillbrough High School, where Bencivenga graduated from in 2001. When I asked what it was like to be in the audience during his first production, he remarked, “I was deeply affected by the responses I saw and heard from people around me. I understood the play in a whole new way.”

The other valuable lesson about seeing your play on its feet for the first time is how the experience makes you hungry for more.
Writers at Rutgers Reading Series

FALL 2009 - SPRING 2009

Presented by Department of English

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 | 8 PM

Brenda Shaughnessy

Tracy K. Smith

Tina Chang

Wednesday, March 11, 2009 | 8 PM

Wednesday, February 18, 2009 | 8 PM

Wednesday, November 12, 2008 | 8 PM

Wednesday, October 29, 2008 | 8 PM

Wednesday, September 18, 2008 | 8 PM
Rutgers, honestly, it was like a wonderland for me, like going from the black and white of Kansas to the Technicolor of Oz. I had never been around the density of so many smart, beautiful people.