

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

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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 Plangere 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

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Stealing BEAUTY

by Richard E. Miller



The 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 sabbaticals, I walked the streets of European towns, wandered down country paths, and scrambled up hillsides in search of a view—letting 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 *Leaves 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, expression, 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 aspirations, the disappointments, the anxieties of everyday life, I was, 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 extraordinary 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. □

giving *Inspiration*

by Carolyn Williams



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. Russell—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 inspiration 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, those 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 well worth debunking.

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.

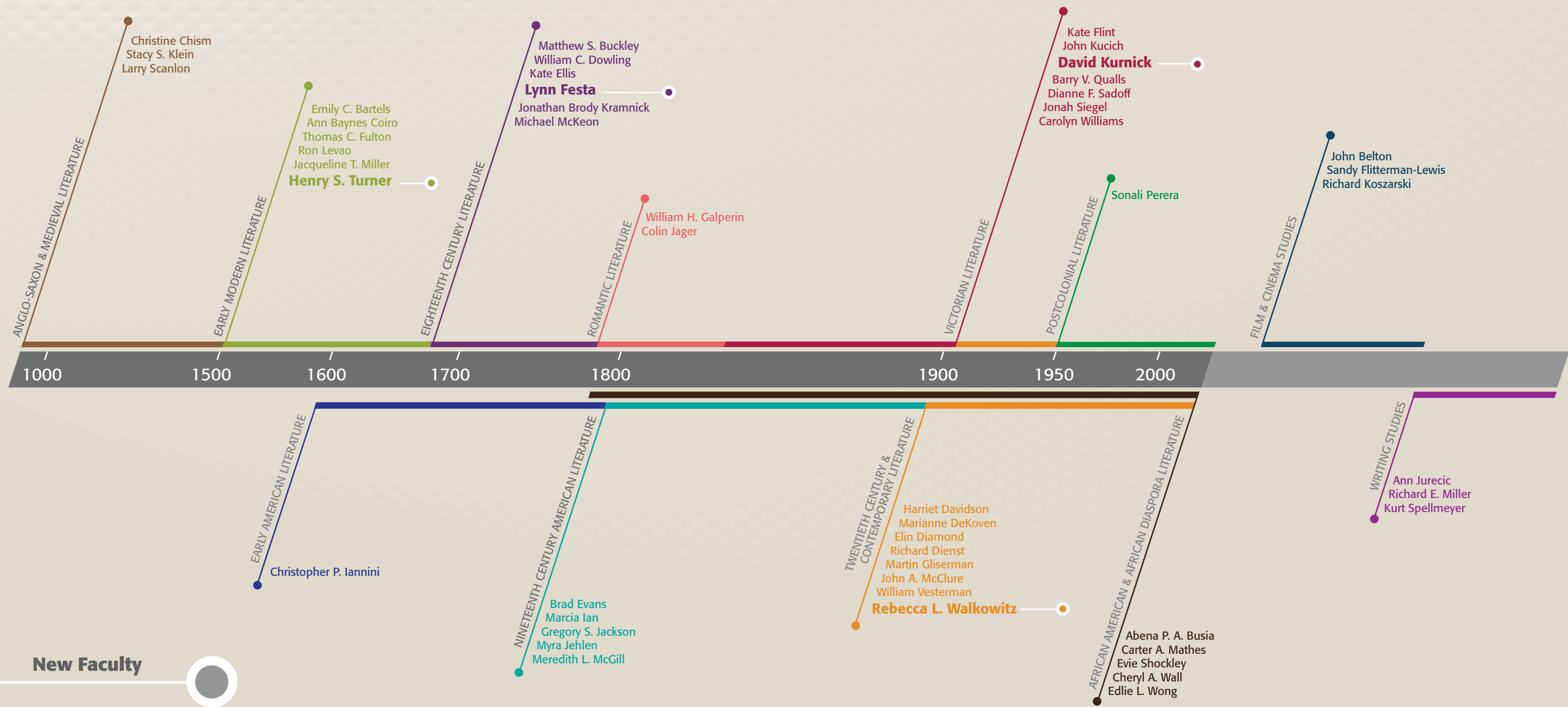
True for all forms of traditional writing, this model of inspiration and expression is also true for the expanded sense of creative writing we are developing in Writers House. There, writing, “broadly construed,” includes digital and web-based forms of writing as well as essays, poems, plays, and fiction.

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. □

Carolyn Williams

Primary Areas of Specialization



New Faculty

New Faculty Profiles

Lynn Festa

by Michael McKeon



“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 is 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 available individuals became for sympathetic identification, the kind of emotional and virtual knowledge that flourishes in the absence of actual contact. But identification could also create a crisis of identity, in which the borders between self and other seemed in danger of dissolution and in need of rigorous reinforcement. This ambivalent dynamic of a culture in the throes of modernization, torn between individual and society, is the dynamic of sentimental-

ism, and it suffused, although in different ways, all levels of life in eighteenth century France and Britain.

With originality, force, and based on the evidence of a very diverse range of writings, Professor Festa shows that empire was, of all institutions, perhaps the most subtly and thoroughly dependent on the sentimental dynamic. In both fiction and reality, sense merged with sensibility. Identification with the suffering of distant strangers bred the pleasures of a pity that fed off the suffering it deplored. The empathetic defense of the victim could induce self-defense against the victim responsible for creating that vulnerability. Rapacious exploitation and violent conquest abroad became softened into moving spectacles detached, by their very emotional power, from the squalor of actuality. Festa's expertise in both national cultures deepens the plausibility of her readings, which are trenchant without being reductive.

Festa 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 Radcliffe Institute, the American Council of Learned Societies, and 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. □

David Kurnick

by Kate Flint



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 some rapture. She had just heard, she said, an extraordinarily brilliant presentation from a graduate student about William Makepeace Thackeray'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 prestigious award. Even then, he was already making a name for himself 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 welcome 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 novelistic innovation.

Kurnick demonstrates that the lingering presence of the theatrical in the work of these novelists 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 theatrical permits the expression of a historical malaise in ways that fitted only awkwardly with the direction that fiction was taking at the time. For even if the narrative voices within Victorian fiction often perceive the theatrical as being distinct from the genre of the novel, this was simply not true. Nor should the novels in question be thought of as having in some sense vanquished the theatrical: they feed 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: *Middlemarch* 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 understanding 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 Ablow, 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.

Since 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 Nineteenth Century Novel,” he has taught “Queer Theories and Histories.” He has been very much engaged with our co-curricular programming of speakers and events in nineteenth century studies and in gender and sexuality studies. Last year, he was a fellow at the Center for Cultural Analysis as part of the yearlong working 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



Henry S. Turner

by Emily C. Bartels



"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."

— Henry S. Turner

Henry S. Turner joined the Rutgers English faculty as an associate professor 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

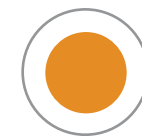
MA and an MPhil from Columbia, a BA from Wesleyan University, a Diplôme Supérieur d'Études Françaises from the University of Bourgogne, and another MA from the University of Sussex. Before attending Columbia, he taught for a year in the Department of English at the University of Nice. Turner came to 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, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580-1630*, was awarded honorable mention from the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, in competition 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 Aristotelian 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, poetics and politics, 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 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 lucky to have him pursue that goal at Rutgers. □



Rebecca L. Walkowitz

by Marianne DeKoven

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. Giles 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 Modernisms*. Her other publications have appeared in collections and journals such as *ELH: English Literary History*, *Contemporary Literature*, *MLQ: 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 Jed Esty's *A 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 globalisms. 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 politically 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 perversity, in the sense of obstinacy, indirection, immorality, and at-

titude," she seeks to "consider the relationship between gestures of idiosyncratic contact or distance and those of sympathetic association." This critical cosmopolitanism encompasses both unlikely gestures of extra- or transnational affiliation and disturbing gestures of intranational 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 developed 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 decentering project. For Woolf, Walkowitz develops the tactic of "evasion"—a brilliant insight which clarifies a great deal of what had heretofore seemed elusive and insufficiently motivated in Woolf's work.

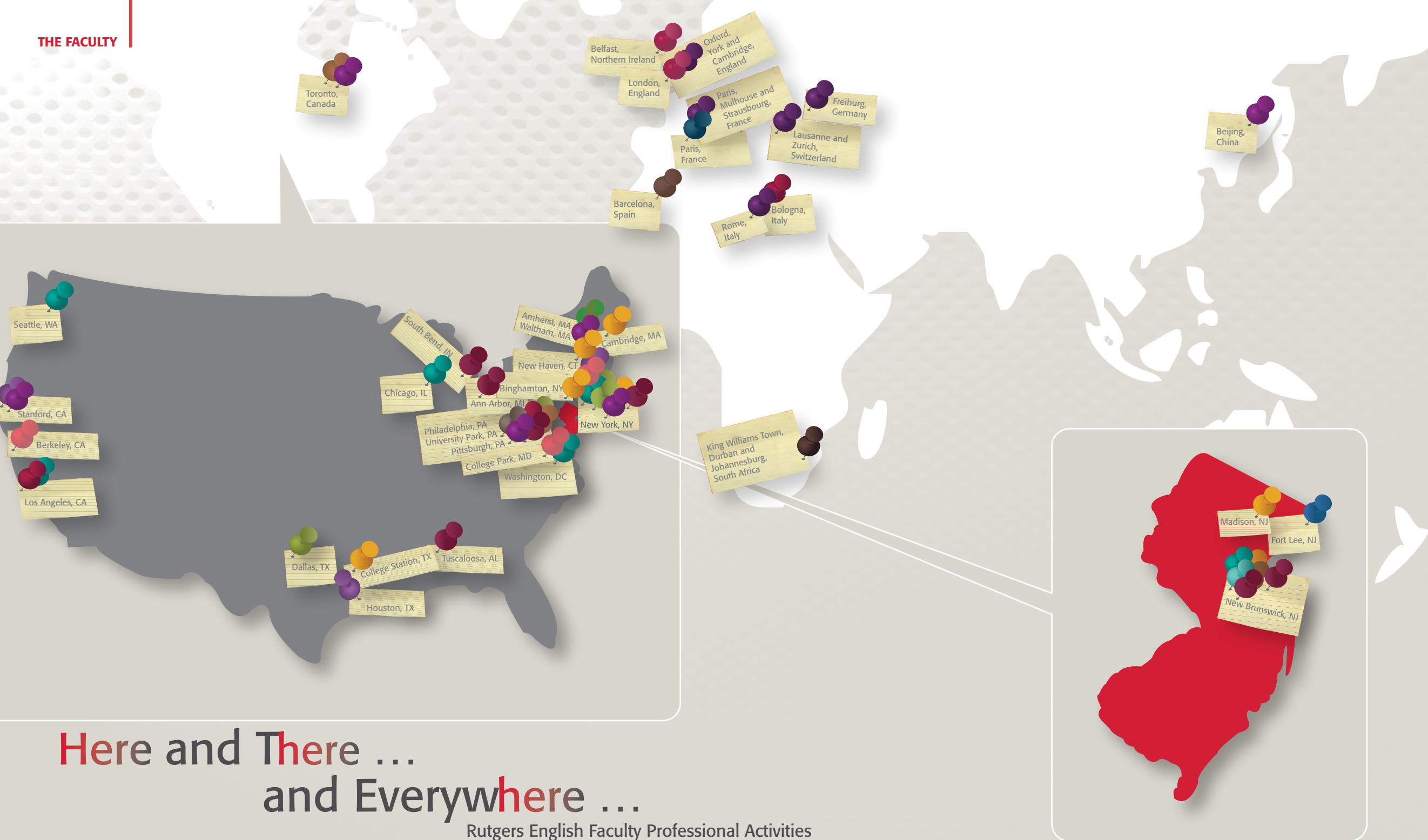
In the second half of the book, "Modernist Cosmopolitanism," the argument for critical cosmopolitanism is easier to make, because the intention to produce some kind of original, inventive relation to cosmopolitanism is apparent in the authors and texts Walkowitz discusses: Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains 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 Paradigm: Translation, Comparison, and the New World Literature*, 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. □



"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 my introductory lecture course. It's nice to see these students again, but it's also nice to have them there to introduce new students to the peculiarities of my classroom. The recruitment effect lends intimacy and continuity to a program that, because of its size, can lack the personal contact that students and faculty often receive at smaller schools. The recruitment effect: it 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



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; invited speaker at Penn State University and Columbia University

● **Elin Diamond:** organizer of the Translation³ Conference at Rutgers University

● **Brad Evans:** executive producer of the Edward Curtis film project, screened in Los Angeles; Seattle; Chicago; Washington, DC; New York City; and at Rutgers University

● **Kate Flint:** keynote speaker for two conferences at the Institute of English Studies at the University of London, and for a conference at Queen's University in Belfast, Northern Ireland

● **Sandy Flitterman-Lewis:** invited speaker at the Institut National de l'Histoire de l'Art in Paris, France

● **Colin Jager:** invited speaker at the Townsend Center for the Humanities at the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Maryland, College Park; and Yale University

● **Stacy S. Klein:** invited speaker at the University of Pennsylvania; roundtable panelist at the Medieval Academy Annual Meeting at the University of Toronto

● **Richard Koszarski:** television program host for Bergen County Television's *Fort Lee Today*

● **Jonathan Brody Kramnick:** invited speaker at the Stanford Humanities Center, Rice University, and Yale University

● **John Kucich:** keynote speaker for a conference 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 Kurnick:** invited speaker 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

● **Meredith L. McGill:** organizer for the Global Poetess Symposium at Rutgers University

● **Michael McKeon:** invited visiting professor at the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, France; invited speaker the University of Lausanne, the University of Zurich, the University of Mulhouse, the University of Strasbourg, the University of Freiburg, Sapienza University of Rome, John Cabot University, Oxford University, York University, and the University of Cambridge

● **Richard E. Miller:** keynote speaker for conferences at Beijing Normal University in China and at the University of Toronto; invited speaker at Stanford University, Brandeis University, St. John's University, Fordham University, Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the University of Pittsburgh

● **Sonali Perera:** invited speaker at the University of Massachusetts Amherst

● **Dianne F. Sadoff:** invited speaker at Temple University and Indiana University South Bend

● **Evie Shockley:** invited participant at an art exhibition shown in King Williams Town, Durban, and Johannesburg, South Africa

● **Larry Scanlon:** organizer of the Formalisms New and Old Conference at Rutgers University

● **Jonah Siegel:** paper presenter at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Annual Conference in Bologna, Italy

● **Henry S. Turner:** keynote speaker for a conference at St. John's University; organizer of the Historicisms and Its Discontents Conference at Rutgers University

● **Rebecca L. Walkowitz:** invited speaker at Yale University, Harvard University, Columbia University, Texas A&M University, Drew University, and Penn State University; organizer of the Modernism's Transnational Futures Symposium at Rutgers University

● **Edlie L. Wong:** invited speaker at Temple University and Villanova University

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 are felt in Murray Hall, across the campus, and, indeed, worldwide.

Here are 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 Humanities Reader* to teach a new generation of students in expository writing to think, read, and write critically about the enduring challenges and opportunities of our time.

● **Evie Shockley** had two of her poems reproduced and featured in the Biko 30/30 Art Exhibition, 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 Anglophone 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, Planting America, 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 Moore Theater, the Field Museum, the National Gallery of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and Rutgers University.

● Beginning in fall 2008, **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



transforming Undergraduate Education

by Barry V. Qualls



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 a rationally organized system for all of Rutgers–New Brunswick—including the new School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and, succeeding Cook College, the new School of Environmental and Biological Sciences—and our students are enrolled in schools whose faculty are responsible for admissions, general education, and graduation policies.

I am convinced that new and returning students have seen the benefits at once. The Byrne Family First-Year Seminar Program,

which offer courses limited to 20 students and are taught only by tenured and tenure-track faculty, have generated excitement among students, parents, faculty, and well-nigh everyone who hears about the seminar program. Last year, over 1,500 students signed up for one of over 100 seminars. For the 2008-2009 academic year, we are offering 130 seminars, enough for 2,800 entering students. In addition, we created a new Office of Fellowships and Postgraduate Guidance to assist students applying for external fellowships like the Fulbright, Rhodes, Marshall, Gates, Goldwater, and Truman. This past year, four Rutgers University undergraduates earned Gates fellowships to pursue graduate work at the University of Cambridge; only Harvard University equaled this number.

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 the work of several current and former Rutgers English faculty members, including Alicia Ostriker, Evie Shockley, Miguel Algarín, and Rachel Hadas. 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.

Deep Reading : Novels and Computers

Martin Gliserman

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*.

Uncle Tom’s Cabin: Everybody’s Protest Novel, Everybody’s Racist Novel

Barry V. Qualls

Harriet Beecher Stowe’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 150 years after its publication, this famous novel continues to generate debate and anger: it is accused 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 this controversial novel and examine its afterlife when it entered popular culture around the world. We will ask the questions: What is a protest novel? What is a stereotype and what are the uses of stereotypes? We’ll meet the characters who lived on the page and evaluate for ourselves the multilayered literacy, cultural, and racial meanings of a book that changed American history.

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 his innovative use of popular print might speak to our twenty-first century experience of media shift. □

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 Mettler Hall, where 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 were enrolled in the same sections of introductory courses on social justice and expository writing, and are members of a first-year interest group led by a peer instructor. Over the course of the year they met faculty and community activists and participated in a service learning alternate spring break trip.

- Students in the RU-TV Living-Learning Community at Winkler 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 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 Writers House, of course, which brings together students interested in creative writing, broadly construed. The “Beyond the Cineplex” Learning Community and the Wellness Learning Community will be introduced in the coming academic year as non-residential learning communities. What characterizes all the learning communities is the link between the learning taking place in the classroom and the active engagement in group project work outside the classroom.

The Office of Undergraduate Education believes that learning communities are a powerful means of further involving undergraduates in the research life of 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 Bredlau. I found myself inspired by the work of modern women writers, but Jeanette Winterson’s *Written on the Body* changed the way I read entirely. I was in awe of Winterson’s captivating and stylish poetics and how deeply the themes of the novel were woven into its language. My thesis examined Winterson’s attempt 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 on 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 project. Both she and Elizabeth Bredlau suggested that I speak with Professor Marianne DeKoven, who had worked previously on Winterson. They were the perfect compliments to my research, and allowed me to work at my own pace and in my own style.

How has Rutgers prepared you for life after college?

Tutoring has impressed upon me the endless and overwhelming opportunities that education can afford a person, in both roles of teacher and student. I decided to join Teach for America not only to perform service to a system badly in need of support, but also to satisfy my own desires for personal fulfillment through continuing education.

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.



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 Jeanette Winterson’s *Written on the Body*,” which won the 2008 Jordan Flyer Honors Award, examined how Winterson uses poetics 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. □

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 Kusch 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.

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 Coiro and Professor Jacqueline T. Miller during junior year, and Professor Richard Diesnt 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.



SARA GROSSMAN, who graduated in May 2007, grew up on a large flower farm in South Jersey. While at Rutgers, she studied English literature and music history and developed an interest in poetry written about the country and about country houses. In her thesis, “Containing the Country House Poem: Genre and Interpretation”, she explored Andrew Marvell’s country house poem, “Upon Appleton House,” and the problem of generic interpretation in the early modern period. She was the winner of the 2007 Irving Blum Prize for best undergraduate essay, and currently farms flowers in South Jersey with her father and three brothers.

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. □

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Amy Meng
Class of 2011

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 Art’s 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*.

What has been your proudest achievement to date?
I am an alumna of the Governor’s School for the Arts, a month-long program in New Jersey that, annually, accepts twelve writing students from the state.

What are your plans for next year?
Continue to do what I’m doing, and maybe try to attend more extracurricular events. □

Our Future Alumni

Chris McGowan
Class of 2010



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?
I read Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections*, William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, Vladimir Nabokov’s *Invitation of a Small Creature*, and, in preparation for my independent study with Professor Richard E. Miller in the fall semester, *The Oedipus Cycle*. I’m 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. □

MODERNISM & GLOBALIZATION SEMINAR SERIES

A Critical Conversation Begins

by Rebecca L. Walkowitz

This year, the English department launched the Modernism & Globalization Seminar Series, a three-year initiative that will culminate with a major conference in spring 2010. This series will explore the effects of globalization on the production, circulation, and study of twentieth- and twenty-first century literature and culture. With 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, transnational and comparative literary studies, and globalization.

The series began in November 2007 with the Modernism's Transnational Futures Symposium, which featured short presentations 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

English and comparative literature at Yale University. My colleagues from the English department—Marianne DeKoven, Elin Diamond, and John A. McClure—opened the subsequent discussion, which led to an intensive conversation among all the panelists about new transnational methodologies. Faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates joined in a lively debate about the history of modernity and the locations of literary modernism.

Modernism & Globalization hosted its second event in February 2008 with a visit by Ross Posnock, 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 Posnock led a discussion at the Center for Cultural Analysis on the critic 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 Wittgenstein and William James to the novels of the late British-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. □

MODERNITY AND THE NATIVE AMERICAN

Kate Flint Delivers Opening Lecture

by John Kucich

The Department of English inaugurates 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 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, 1776-1930*, 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 role. 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 chastening role in British attitudes toward native peoples in their own colonies. Although traditionalism has long been a hallmark of Native American culture, Professor Flint demonstrated that the concept of tradition in Indian society existed in dialogue with western modernity, rather than simply in opposition to it. □

Lectures & series

RUTGERS BRITISH STUDIES PROJECT

An Interdisciplinary Collaboration

by Michael McKeon

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 Alastair Bellany and Seth Koven from the history department, and Ann Baynes Coiro, 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 Technol-

ogy. 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 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 Franz Boas 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. □

SEXUALITY SPEAKERS SERIES

Continuing Traditions at Rutgers English

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 in 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 editors Janet Halley (Harvard Law School) and Andrew Parker (Amherst College), as well as several contributing writers: Michael Cobb (University of Toronto), Lee Edeman (Tufts University), Joseph Litvak (Tufts University), Jeff Nunokawa (Princeton University), and Kate Thomas (Bryn Mawr College). In February, Martha Vicinus,

the Eliza M. 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 co-sponsored the lectures by Madhavi Menon and Kathryn Schwarz, 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 Studies 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. □

MAKING HISTORY AT RUTGERS

A Conference on Rethinking Master Narratives

by John Kucich

On Friday March 7, 2008, over 100 faculty and graduate students from Rutgers University, as well as from Columbia University, Princeton University, New York University, the University of Pennsylvania, and other nearby schools gathered at Alexander Library for the Making History: Rethinking Master Narratives Conference. The conference spotlighted the efforts of distinguished scholars of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British history and literature to reimagine the place of master narratives in their work. Master narratives are the grand stories or “myths” people tell in order to organize their perceptions of everyday reality, and to drive off the contradictions that ordinary life inevitably poses to their most cherished beliefs.

The conference’s four plenary speakers are among the leading figures in their fields: Nancy Armstrong, the Nancy Duke Lewis Professor of Comparative Literature and English at Brown University, and a specialist in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction; Dror Wahrman, the Ruth N. Halls Professor of History at Indiana University, and an expert on eighteenth century history; Catherine

Hall, a historian of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century class and sexual politics from University College London; and Suvir Kaul, a scholar of eighteenth century literature and colonial culture at the University of Pennsylvania.

These four scholars analyzed grand national stories and the belief systems they anchor. But they also turned a skeptical eye on their own tendency to reject master narratives as false or lacking in interpretive power. Their papers moved energetically across a wide range of topics: Darwin’s theories of individual and collective development and their surprising affinity with gothic narrative; the tendency of eighteenth century intellectuals in law, science, finance, politics, and religion to situate individuals within complex providential systems; the invention of the basic themes of British imperialism in the early nineteenth century; and persistent histories of British cultural identity that assume it rose entirely from within, as the manifestation of national character traits and progressive social forces, rather than being acted upon and shaped by global forces that Britons often could not control or comprehend.

The speakers and their audience engaged in a dynamic exchange of perspectives over both particular issues and general theoretical principles. The Making History Conference provided a rare opportunity for scholars from different disciplines and different periods of study to discuss vitally important common issues. □

conferences

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 into the eighteenth, while also taking account of what was genuinely novel about this broad historical period.

Foremost among these novelties is the growing internationalism of the world we describe as “early modern,” from the East Indies to Russia to Africa to the Americas. Arguably no field has played a more important role in establishing historicism as an international critical orthodoxy than the field of early modern stud-

ies, which continues to furnish topics of inquiry that drive literary scholarship in the academy as a whole. At the same time, some of the most exciting recent work in early modern studies has begun to reexamine the methodological foundations of historicism and to propose new departures: toward problems of form, figure, and style; toward a renewed interest in “theory”; toward comparative literature; toward the deliberate anachronism of “presentism.”

The conference brought four leading critics to Rutgers: Jean E. Howard, the George Delacorte Professor of Humanities at Columbia University, speaking about reading and the historicist imperative; Aranye Fradenburg, a professor of English and medieval studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, speaking on Freud and Chaucer; Madhavi Menon, an assistant professor of literature at American University, speaking on “homo-history”; and Kathryn Schwarz, an associate professor of English at Vanderbilt University, speaking on misogyny and masquerade.

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 torments; its finest sublimation, but also the root of its most persistent neuroses. □

LOST AND FOUND IN TRANSLATION

A Conference on Translation Studies

by Elin Diamond

On April 3 and 4, 2008, the Program in Comparative Literature presented TRANSLATION³, a conference on translation studies. The conference aimed to assess a field that, over the last three decades, has incorporated poststructuralist literary theory, postcolonial theory, and globalization theory, while still retaining the value of linguistic fidelity to an original text. Viewing translation in the broadest sense—as both a real world activity and a productive discipline in the academy—the conference’s speakers explored the three dimensions of translation: culture, institution, theory.

In the opening Culture panel, Lydia Liu and Bruce Robbins, both from Columbia University, considered MAT (machine-assisted translation), a technology that augurs the promise of universalism by replacing English as the mediating tongue between languages. In pointed contrast, Emily Apter (New York University) presented a paper exploring the “untranslatable” in what she has famously named the “translation zone.” Alamin Mazrui (Rutgers University) showed how translations of European texts into Swahili have become zones of political contestation; and Jebaroja Singh (William Patterson University) described Dalit women’s oral narratives and performances where translation acts as cultural resistance.

The untranslatable returned differently in the Theory panel. Brent Hayes Edwards (Columbia University) limned the horror of lynching in the Cole Porter tune, “Miss Otis Regrets”; and Michael Levine (Rutgers University) traced the trauma in Art Spiegelman’s graphic novel, *Maus*. Eduardo Cadava (Princeton University) figured translation as an act of love and inevitable betrayal, and his meditation on philosopher Walter Benjamin set up the lively dialogue between Xudong Zhang and Richard Sieburth, both from New York University.

The Institution roundtable was, according to all who witnessed it, the most memorable part of TRANSLATION³. For here were practitioners in the translation trenches, a place where life-or-death outcomes can rest on the hair-trigger accuracy of a translator. Rosemary Arrojo (SUNY, Binghamton) described the beginnings of translation studies in the United States from the 1970s to 2003, the year she helped launch a doctoral program at Binghamton. Robert Joe Lee, from the New Jersey Judiciary, informed—and terrified—the audience with stories about the lack of trained court interpreters in the state’s court system. Julie Livingston (Rutgers University) gave a striking account of medical intervention in Botswana. Christopher Taylor (University of Trieste) discussed the theory and practice of cinematic dubbing and subtitling.

Translations studies stages powerful encounters between languages, literatures, cultures, and traditions. With the dozens of languages spoken at Rutgers, we might imagine a new concentration in translation studies that combines our real-world lives and histories with our most adventurous academic perspectives. □

WRITERS HOUSE BOOKMARK SERIES

2007 - 2008

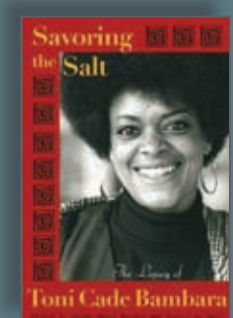
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LITERARY STUDIES



DESIGNING MINDS, DESIGNING SPACES



REMEMBERING TONI CADE BAMBARA



RELIGION AND SECULARISM PAST AND PRESENT, HERE AND ABROAD





WRITERS **AT** RUTGERS

READING SERIES

2007 - 2008

JAYNE ANNE **PHILLIPS**

MARK **DOTY**

JOYCE CAROL **OATES**

SHERMAN **ALEXIE**

JAMES **SUROWIECKI**

COLSON **WHITEHEAD**

ALISON **BECHDEL**

LI-YOUNG **LEE**

Sherman Alexie | Yehuda Amichai | Maggie Anderson | Russell Banks | Alison Bechdel | Wesley Brown | Michael Cunningham
Edwidge Danticat | Toi Derricotte | E. L. Doctorow | Mark Doty | Jonathan Franzen | Amitav Ghosh | Linda Gregg
Marilyn Hacker | Richard Howard | June Jordan | Jamaica Kincaid | Maxine Hong Kingston | Jhumpa Lahiri | Chang-Rae Lee
Li-Young Lee | Jonathan Lethem | Paule Marshall | W. S. Merwin | Susanna Moore | Azar Nafisi | Joyce Carol Oates
Brenda Marie Osbey | Alicia Ostriker | Jayne Anne Phillips | Kalamu ya Salaam | Selah Saterstrom | Evie Shockley | Charles Simic
James Surowiecki | Jean Valentine | Susan Wheeler | Edmund White | Colson Whitehead | C. K. Williams | Jay Wright

JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS

by Carolyn Williams

Jayne Anne Phillips inaugurated last year's Writers at Rutgers Reading Series on September 26, 2007. A well-known writer of fiction, Phillips is the director of the new MFA Program in Creative Writing at Rutgers–Newark, and shares our goal, here at Rutgers–New Brunswick, of bringing great writers to our campuses.

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 experimentations in narrative voice, *Black Tickets* also featured quirky, brooding, and inventive characters that still seem representative of their time. Along with *Fast Lanes*, another well-

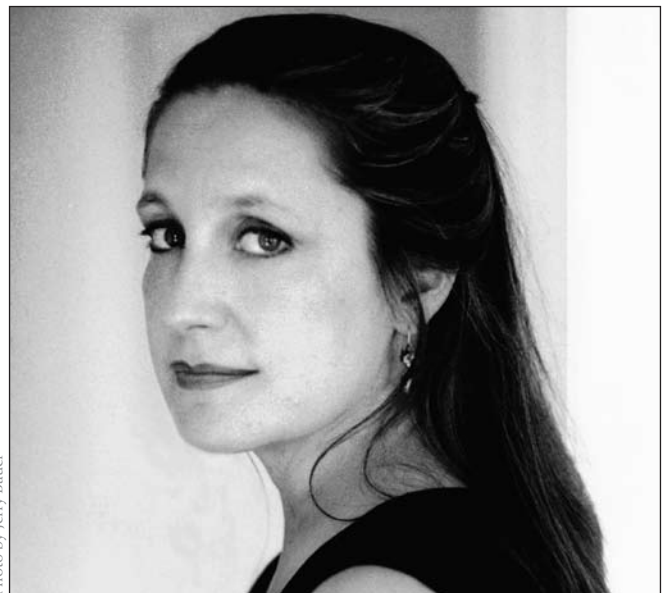


Photo by Jerry Baurer

known collection, *Black Tickets* has had a strong shaping effect on the genre of the short story.

Phillips's first novel, *Machine Dreams*, follows one American family from World War II to the Vietnam War. This family's trials and triumphs, both individual and collective, seem to be symptomatic 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 primeval violence, communal relations, and the ineradicable effects of childhood experience.

The mysteries of family life continue to inform Phillips's most recent novel, *WomanKind*, 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. □

Editor's Note: Jayne Anne Phillips read from a work-in-progress at the event, which was attended by 150 people. Carolyn Williams delivered a version of these remarks at the reading.

MARK DOTY

by Barry V. Qualls

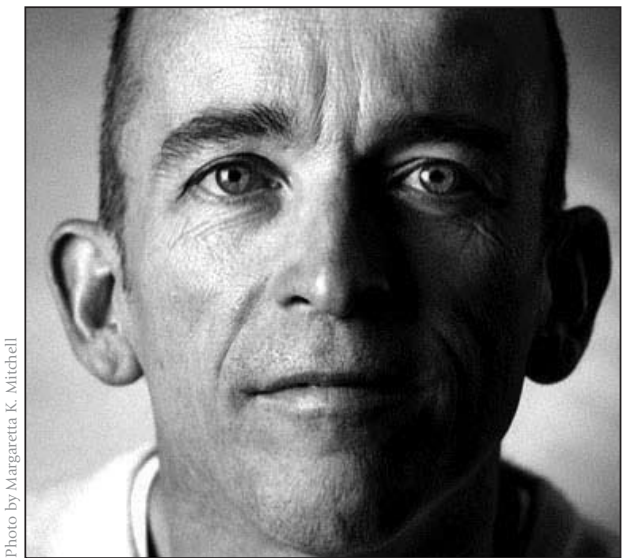


Photo by Margaretta K. Mitchell

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 "Couture" from his just published volume, *Atlantis*:

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 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 desolation, and the possibilities of love.

Doty came to public attention with *Turtle, Swan; Bethlehem in Broad Daylight*; and *My Alexandria*, which received the T. S. Eliot Prize. He has won numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, and, with eight volumes of poetry, including *Fire to Fire: New and Selected Poems*, which appeared last spring, his is one of the most recognizable voices in American poetry.

But his voice has become equally strong, equally necessary, in prose: *Heaven's Coast*, the memoir of the death of his lover Wally from AIDS; *Firebird*, his autobiography of a boy growing up in a peripatetic family and finding his life, and his art, in Judy Garland and Petula Clark; *Still Life with Oysters and Lemon*,

a wondrous exploration of a seventeenth century Dutch painting that is also a meditation on stilled lives and still lifes; and, most recently, the glorious *Dog Years*, a memoir on the deaths of the two retrievers, Arden and Beau, to whom his earlier poems and first memoir had already given vigorous life.

If you want to know about Doty, you listen—as we will this evening. But you will come close to him, too, by noting the authors of epigraphs of his volumes: Wallace Stevens, Hart Crane, Walt Whitman, William Blake, and Emily Dickinson. All of this is to suggest the richness of allusion in Doty's language, the need to work with the language of others, to connect to their worlds.

Doty needs sunflowers and chiffon; needs Judy Garland and Petula Clark, Keats and Dickinson, to reconstitute worlds—for life, as it were. And the creation of art is at the center of this need: "I believe that art saved my life," Doty reveals in *Firebird*. "The gift of faith in the life of art, or, more precisely, a sense that there was a life which was not mine, but to which I was welcome to join myself. A life which was larger than any single person's, and thus not one to be claimed, but to apprentice oneself to."

But let's allow Beau, the golden retriever, to have the last words about Doty. From *Sweet Machine's* "Golden Retrievals":

Fetch? Balls and sticks capture my attention
seconds at a time. Catch? I don't think so.
Bunny, tumbling leaf, a squirrel who's—oh
joy—actually scared. Sniff the wind, then

I'm off again: muck, pond, ditch, residue
of any thrillingly dead thing. And you?
Either you're sunk in the past, half our walk,
thinking of what you never can bring back,

or else you're off in some fog concerning
—tomorrow, is that what you call it? My work:
to unsnare time's warp (and woof!), retrieving,
my haze-headed friend, you. This shining bark,

a Zen master's bronzy gong, calls you here,
entirely, now: bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow.

Maybe Beau's work—to unsnare time's warp (and woof!)—is a poet's work too. □

Editor's Note: Over 300 people attended Mark Doty's reading on October 17, 2007. Doty will join the Rutgers English faculty in 2009 as a Distinguished Writer. Barry V. Qualls delivered a version of these remarks at the reading.

WRITERS **AT** RUTGERS READING SERIES FALL 2008 - SPRING 2009



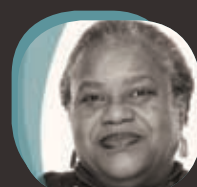
JUNOT DÍAZ
Mon Sept 8 | 8 PM



OLIVER SACKS
Wed Oct 29 | 8 PM



CARYL PHILLIPS
Wed Nov 12 | 8 PM



BERNICE JOHNSON REAGON
Wed Feb 18 | 8 PM



REBECCA SOLNIT
Wed Mar 11 | 8 PM



TINA CHANG



BRENDA SHAUGHNESSY
Wed Apr 1 | 8 PM



TRACY K. SMITH

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. Conciseness 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' *oeuvre* 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 "prolific," which has become a kind of Homeric epithet for her. It is certainty apt, but what the term fails to capture is the human alertness 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 can find these rolled out on the Celestial Timepiece website, but one statistic I cannot resist invoking is the fact that she has been included in the *New York Times Notable Books of the Year* for 38 books over the last 39 years. This is an amazing record of consistently high inventiveness, the result not only of imaginative brilliance, but also of a mental toughness and stamina that perhaps explains some of her fascination with professional boxers. It used to be said of the Canadian heavyweight, George Chuvalo, that if every fight were a fight-to-the-finish, he would have been undefeated.



Photo by Jean-Christian Bourcart

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. □

Editor's Note: Over 400 people attended Joyce Carol Oates' reading in the Rutgers Student Center Multipurpose Room on November 12, 2007. The English department is grateful to Robert McGarvey, Ron Levao, and other members of the Class of 1970 for underwriting this extraordinary event. Ron Levao delivered a version of these remarks at the reading.

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 to the walls with 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 tormented. 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 28, 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 pieties 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. Selections of this conversation are available for viewing at the whTube 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.



Photo by Rob Casey

JAMES SUROWIECKI

by Richard Dienst

The philosopher Peter Sloterdijk tells the story of the Roman emperor, Vespasian, who mockingly sniffed a coin to see how it smelled. Sloterdijk argues that there are only two schools of thought about money: those who say it smells and those who say it doesn't. 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.



Photo by David Surowiecki

incredibly rich in argument, anecdote, and implication. For me, what's most fascinating is the suggestion that the "wisdom of crowds" might manifest itself in radically new ways, setting off all kinds of experiments in collective decision making and self-organization.

The Wisdom of Crowds is a book that leans 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

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 qualifications, has been put forth most intriguingly by James Surowiecki, in his 2004 book *The Wisdom of Crowds*. The book is

act of talking about business matters to a readership that may 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 Floyd 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. □

Editor's Note: Held at the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum on February 6, 2008, James Surowiecki's reading drew a crowd of 125 people. Richard Dienst delivered a version of these remarks at the event.

COLSON WHITEHEAD

by Keith Wailoo



Photo Courtesy of the American Program Bureau

and explores the trajectory of the narrative and the lingering appeal of folk heroism 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 *Apex Hides the Hurt*, which he has described as concerning "identity, history, and the adhesive bandage industry."

He has also published a collection of thirteen essays—meditations on New York—entitled *The Colossus of New York*, and has penned many essays, reviews, and contributions for the *New York Times*,

New York Magazine, *Granta*, *Harper's*, and *Salon*. In 2002, he was a recipient of the prestigious MacArthur "genius" grant funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

We're extremely fortunate to have a writer of such accomplished breadth and originality and intelligence with us this evening at Rutgers. Whitehead will read from his forthcoming novel, *Sag Harbor*, an autobiographical work that describes his youthful exploits in the 1980s on Long Island. □

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 2000 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,

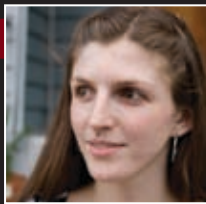
Editor's Note: Over 250 people attended Colson Whitehead's reading on February 20, 2008, in the Rutgers Student Center Multipurpose Room. Keith Wailoo, the Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of History, delivered a version of these remarks at the reading.

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WRITERS FROM RUTGERS READING SERIES FALL 2007 - SPRING 2008



Evie Shockley



Candice Amich



Anne Keefe



Michael Leong



Beth Loffreda



Wesley Brown



Cheryl Clarke



Andrew Krivak

Evie Shockley and graduate student poets Candice Amich, Anne Keefe, and Michael Leong launched last year's Writers from Rutgers Reading Series at the dedication ceremony for Writers House on October 3, 2007. Three other events completed the program for the series: a discussion between Richard E. Miller and Beth Loffreda about her book, *Losing Matt Shepard*; a joint reading featuring Wesley Brown and Cheryl Clarke; and a reading by Andrew Krivak from his memoir, *A Long Retreat*.

ALISON **BECHDEL**

by Hillary Chute

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, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald or James Joyce. The aesthetic control Bechdel exhibits in *Fun Home*—in its language, its pictures, 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 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 Proustian 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*,



Photo by Greg Martin

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 drawing 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 *Hot*, *Throbbing Dykes to Watch Out For*, *Post Dykes to Watch Out For*, and *Dykes and Sundry 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 whTube section of 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.

LI-YOUNG **LEE**

by Meredith L. McGill

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-Brockport. 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.



Photo by Donna Lee

While these details of Lee's biography and this sequence of titles may serve as a bare-bones introduction to 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 *precision*," 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—those 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, 2008, 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 deemed the winner in the debate despite being roundly defeated by the skeptic Philo. What matters, according to Jager, is not the debate or its conclusions, in which skepticism prevails, but the dialogue itself, which projects a social unity grounded in belief or in the way the “idea of a designing God is made coherent by the act of coming together to debate its probability.”

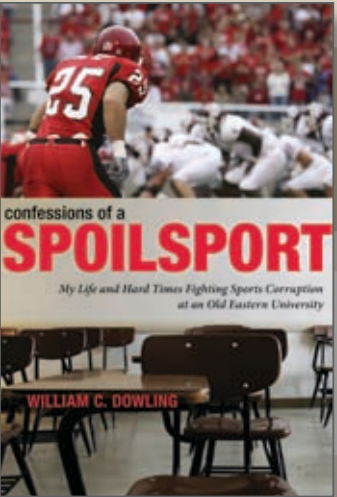
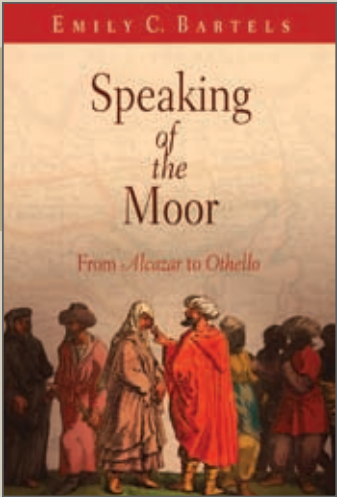
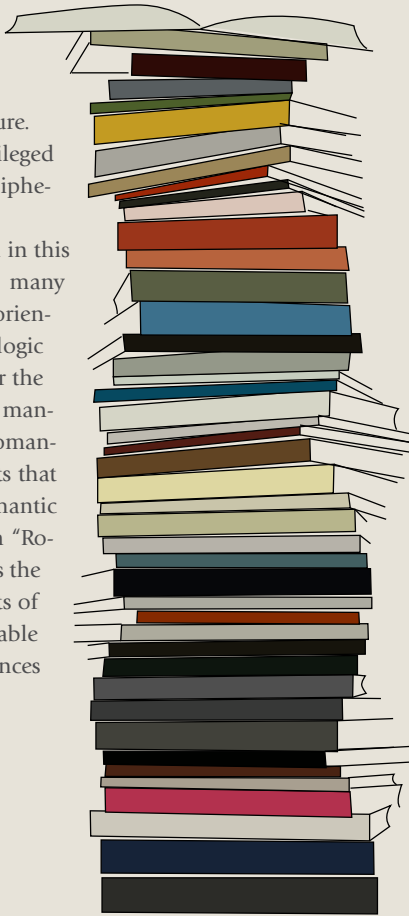
This sense of belief as practice—as something sufficiently present and habitual regardless of its impoverishment at the hands of experience—proves the basis, too, of Jager’s reading of Anna Barbauld’s “A Summer Evening’s Meditation.” Once again it is failure—specifically the cognitive and epistemological failure of Barbauld’s flight of fancy—that is key. Even as the poem follows Hume in demonstrating the futility of the analogical argument, it

also follows Hume in demonstrating analogy’s persistence as an idea predicated on belief or habit.

Jager next turns his attention to Paley himself, whose *Natural Theology* prosecutes an argument that, following Hume’s conclusion in the *Dialogues*, stresses the inclination to “feel in a certain way” when presented with the evidence of intricately formed objects from nature. The emphasis is not necessarily on the strength of Paley’s argument as much as on the “emotional force” of statements such as this one: “We find that the eye of a fish, in that part of it called the crystalline lens, is much rounder than the eye of terrestrial animals. What plainer manifestation of design can there be?” But that is not all. In segueing to Immanuel Kant, another opponent of design, Jager shows how the idea of purposiveness—namely that an object is made for a purpose—is a “sensibility” owned by the argument for design. Thus, even as purposiveness remains a matter of judgment rather than a question of intention in Kant’s aesthetic theory, it also registers as a desire for completion, or for a teleological judgment in which intention or design remains the only vocabulary at Kant’s disposal.

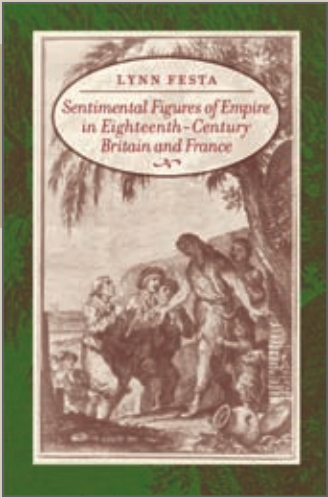
The chapters on Wordsworth are taken up with an intentionality that is a way of reading nature of which poetic creation remains the vehicle par excellence. Returning to the idea of Wordsworth as nature poet, Jager mobilizes design to show not only how poetic creation for Wordsworth is a matter of reading nature correctly, but also how poetry is effectively a gift of nature itself. In what might well be the study’s most compelling instance of differentiation or multiple modernity, Jager reads the “analogy passage” at the close and 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. □



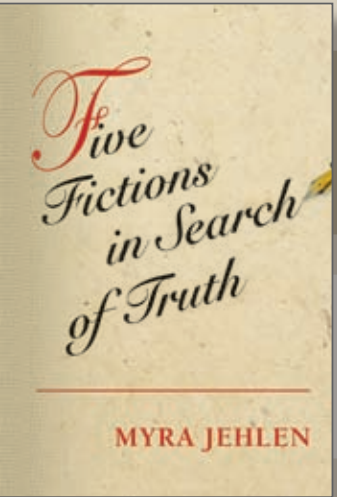
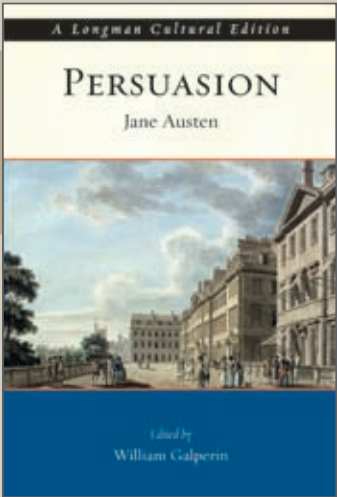
Emily C. Bartels
Speaking of the Moor: From “Alcazar” to “Othello”
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008

William C. Dowling
Confessions of a Spoilsport: My Life and Hard Times Fighting Sports Corruption at an Old Eastern University
Penn State University Press, 2007



Lynn Festa
Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France
Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007

Kate Flint
The Transatlantic Indian, 1776-1930
Princeton University Press, 2009

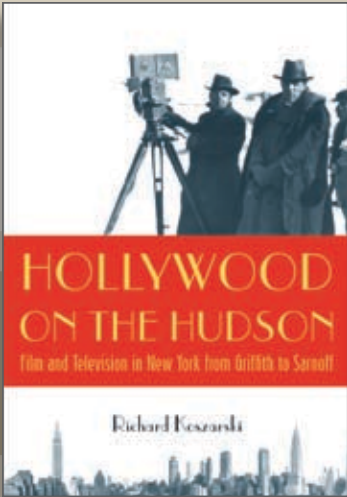


William H. Galperin
Editor
Persuasion
Longman, 2008

Myra Jehlen
Five Fictions in Search of Truth
Princeton University Press, 2008

Richard Koszarski

*Hollywood on the Hudson:
Film and Television in New York from Griffith to Sarnoff*
Rutgers University Press, 2008



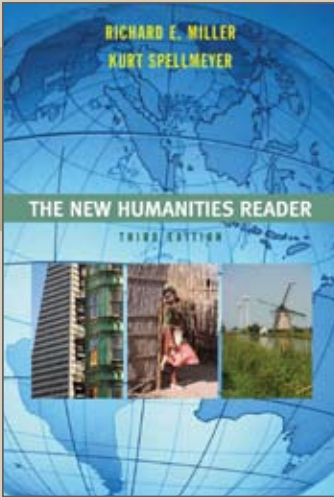
John A. McClure

*Partial Faiths:
Postsecular Fiction in the Age of Pynchon and Morrison*
University of Georgia Press, 2007



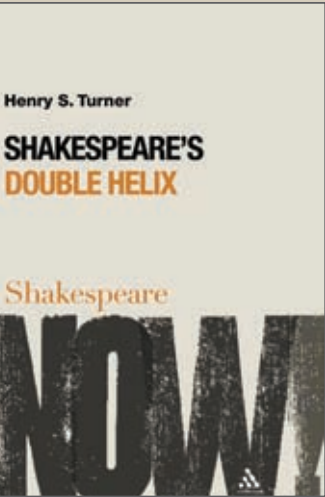
**RICHARD E. MILLER
KURT SPELLMEYER**

THE NEW HUMANITIES READER



Henry S. Turner

**SHAKESPEARE'S
DOUBLE HELIX**



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, 2008

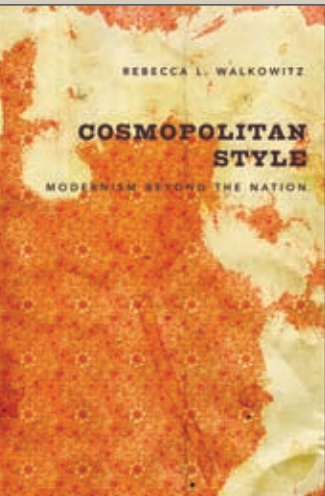
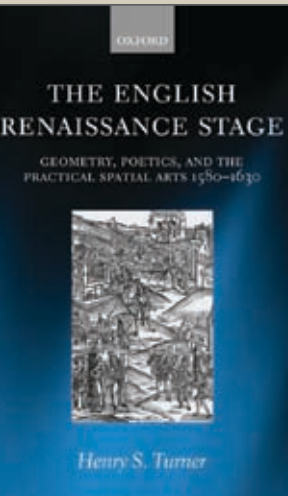
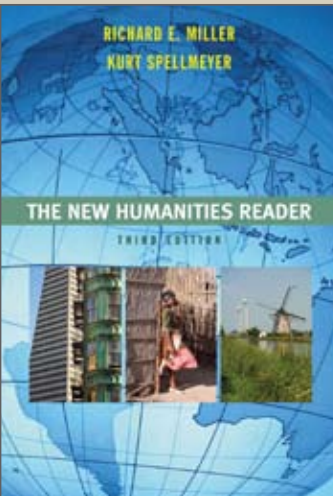
Meredith L. McGill

Editor
*The Traffic in Poems:
Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange*
Rutgers University Press, 2008



Richard E. Miller

Co-Editor (with Kurt Spellmeyer)
The New Humanities Reader, Third edition
Houghton Mifflin, 2008



Henry S. Turner

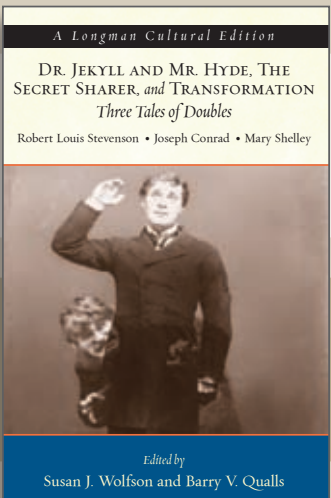
*The English Renaissance Stage:
Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580-1630*
Oxford University Press, 2006

Rebecca L. Walkowitz

Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation
Columbia University Press, 2006

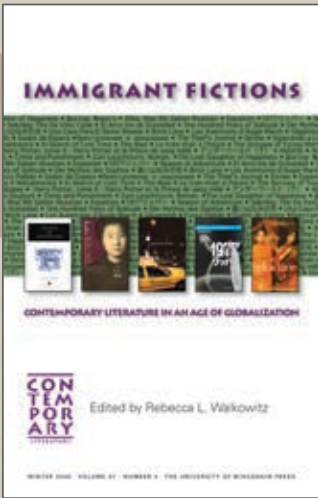
Barry V. Qualls

Editor (with Susan J. Wolfson)
*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The Secret Sharer,
and Transformation: Three Tales of Doubles*
Longman, 2008



Jonah Siegel

Editor
*The Emergence of the Modern Museum:
An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Sources*
Oxford University Press, 2007



Rebecca L. Walkowitz

Editor
*Immigrant Fictions:
Contemporary Literature in an Age of Globalization*
University of Wisconsin Press, 2007

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
Praeger Publishers, 2006

Reviewed by Richard E. Miller and Martha Nell Smith

“Meet Me in Atlantic City” was the subject heading of Martha’s email in November 2005, letting me know she had extra tickets to see Bruce Springsteen’s solo concert in Atlantic City. A few hours after receiving this email, I was hurtling down the Garden State Parkway 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 reveled 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 devote 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 songwriter who crooned in bars and at dances on the Jersey shore in the late 1960s to the rock star who packs arenas from the Meadowlands to Oslo today—a larger-than-life figure rumored to perform at the halftime show at next year’s Super Bowl.

The strength of *The Words and Music of Bruce Springsteen* resides both in its contextualizations—gossipy anecdotes and fun facts that inform the circumstances of Springsteen’s writing—and in its syntheses of three decades of rock and roll criticism, which draws on insights such as Jon Landau’s perhaps overly-famous but prescient May 1974 conclusion that, “at the Harvard Square theatre, I saw my rock’n’ roll past flash before my eyes. And I saw something else: I saw rock and roll future and its name is Bruce Springsteen.” Kirkpatrick reminds us that those words were written after seeing the Boss warm up for Bonnie Raitt. Other fun facts that are highlighted are quips from early interviews about Elvis Presley’s influence (“Man, when I was nine, I couldn’t imagine anyone not wanting to be Elvis Presley”) and about the impact of rock and roll during his adolescence (“I was dead until I was thirteen” and caught the rock and roll bug). Kirkpatrick also succinctly retells the history of bar band culture down the Jersey shore in the late 1960s, of Springsteen’s brief stints in the bands, The Castiles and Steel Mill, and of his 1972 meeting with legendary producer John Hammond that resulted in him playing later that very night at The Gaslight Café in Greenwich Village and recording a demo the next day.

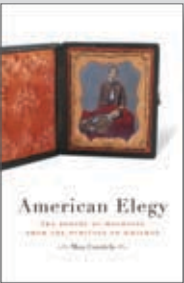
Romping with Springsteen’s own word play—“Madman drummers, bummers and Indians in the summer with a teenage diplomat / In the dumps with the mumps as the adolescent pumps his way into his hat”—Kirkpatrick deftly traces Springsteen’s developments in songwriting and as a songwriter. And he documents how 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 Friday, “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-songwriter “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 Afterword takes us back to the moment Landau witnessed “rock and roll future” by reflecting on the recently released DVD of Springsteen’s first European performance, *Hammersmith Odeon, London ’75*. Here, Kirkpatrick flatly declares, “The band’s rendition [of *She’s the One*] is a revelation: tight and inspired, one of the best performances ...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, intently singing into a microphone, harmonica hanging 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 circumstances 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), an associate professor of English at University of North Carolina–Charlotte, and Martha Nell Smith.



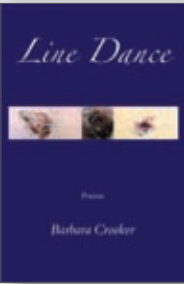
Sarah Aronson (BA 1984)
Head Case
Roaring Brook Press, 2007



Max Cavitch (PhD 2001)
Associate Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania
American Elegy: The Poetry of Mourning from the Puritans to Whitman
University of Minnesota Press, 2007



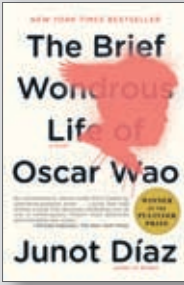
Alan Cheuse (PhD 1974)
Professor of English, George Mason University
The Fires
Santa Fe Writer’s Project, 2007



Barbara Crooker (BA 1967)
Line Dance
WordTech Communications, 2008



Walter Cummins (BA 1957)
Professor Emeritus of English, Farleigh Dickinson University
Local Music
Egress Books, 2007



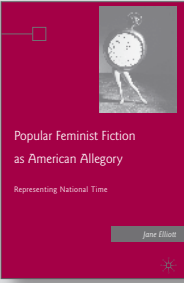
Junot Díaz (BA 1992)
Associate Professor of Creative Writing, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao
Riverhead, 2007



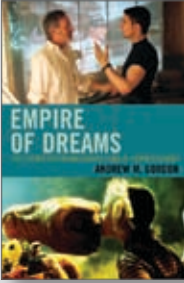
Monika Elbert (PhD 1987)
Professor of English, Montclair State University
Enterprising Youth: Social Values and Acculturation in Nineteenth-Century American Children’s Literature (Editor)
Routledge, 2008



Sarah Ellen Zweig (PhD 2000)
Assistant Professor of English, Rice University
The Fringes of Belief: English Literature, Ancient Heresy, and the Politics of Freethinking, 1660-1760
Stanford University Press, 2008



Jane Elliott (PhD 2004)
Lecturer in English, University of York
Popular Feminist Fiction as American Allegory: Representing National Time
Palgrave Macmillan, 2008



Andrew M. Gordon (BA 1965)
Associate Professor of English, University of Florida
Empire of Dreams: The Science Fiction and Fantasy Films of Steven Spielberg
Rowman & Littlefield, 2007



Penny Harter (BA 1961)
The Night Marsh
WordTech Communications, 2008



George Held (PhD 1967)
W is for War
Cervená Barva Press, 2006

Jaime Hovey (PhD 1995)
A Thousand Words: Portraiture, Style, and Queer Modernism
Ohio State University Press, 2006

Diane Kiesel (BA 1975)
Adjunct Professor of Law, New York Law School
Domestic Violence: Law, Policy and Practice
LexisNexis, 2007

Rob Kirkpatrick (BA 1990)
Senior Editor, Thomas Dunne Books
The Words and Music of Bruce Springsteen
Praeger Publishers, 2006

Andrew Krivak (MA 2002)
A Long Retreat: In Search of a Religious Life
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008

Saikat Majumdar (PhD 2005)
Assistant Professor of English, Stanford University
Silverfish
HarperCollins India, 2007

Dawn Miller (BA 1989)
Portrait of Vengeance
PublishAmerica, 2007

Dawn Miller (BA 1989)
Murderous Descent
PublishAmerica, 2006

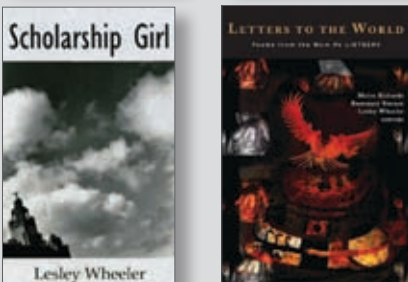
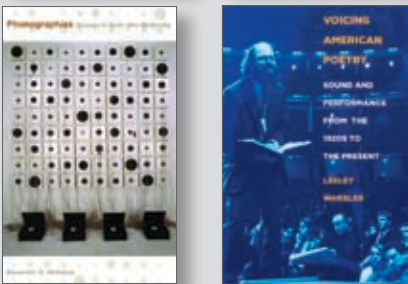
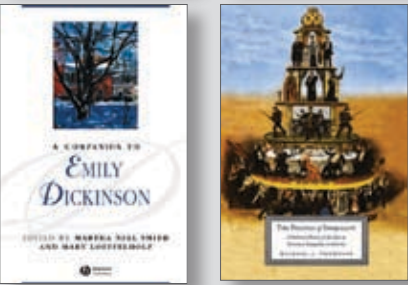
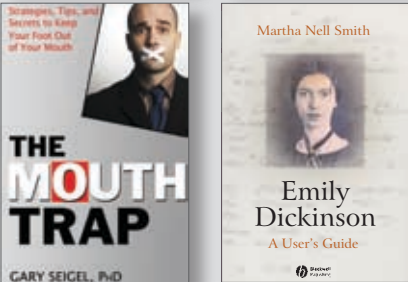
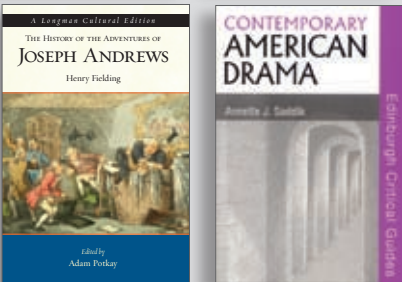
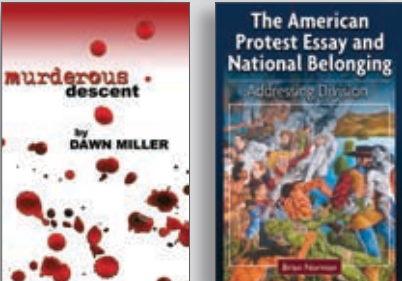
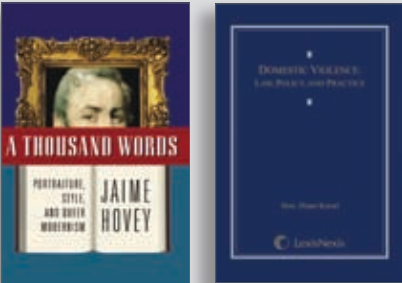
Brian Norman (PhD 2004)
Assistant Professor of English, Loyola College
The American Protest Essay and National Belonging: Addressing Division
State University of New York Press, 2007

Robert Pinsky (BA 1962)
Professor of English, Boston University
Gulf Music
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008

Adam Potkay (PhD 1990)
Margaret L. Hamilton Professor of English, College of William & Mary
The Story of Joy: From the Bible to Late Romanticism
Cambridge University Press, 2007

Adam Potkay (PhD 1990)
Margaret L. Hamilton Professor of English, College of William & Mary
The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews (Editor)
Longman, 2007

Annette J. Saddik (PhD 1995)
Assistant Professor of English, New York City College of Technology
Contemporary American Drama
Edinburgh University Press, 2007



Annette J. Saddik (PhD 1995)
Assistant Professor of English, New York City College of Technology
The Traveling Companion & Other Plays (Editor)
New Directions, 2008

Andrew P. Scheil (BA 1990)
Associate Professor of English, University of Minnesota
The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England
University of Michigan Press, 2004

Gary Seigel (PhD 1981)
The Mouth Trap: Strategies, Tips, and Secrets to Keep Your Foot Out of Your Mouth
Career Press, 2008

Martha Nell Smith (PhD 1985)
Professor of English and Founding Director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH)
University of Maryland, College Park
Emily Dickinson: A User's Guide
Blackwell, 2009

Martha Nell Smith (PhD 1985)
Professor of English and Founding Director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH)
University of Maryland, College Park
A Companion to Emily Dickinson (Editor)
Blackwell, 2008

Michael J. Thompson (BA 1995)
Assistant Professor of Political Science, William Patterson University
The Politics of Inequality: A Political History of the Idea of Economic Inequality in America
Columbia University Press, 2007

Michael J. Thompson (BA 1995)
Assistant Professor of Political Science, William Patterson University
Confronting the New Conservatism: The Rise of the Right in America (Editor)
New York University Press, 2007

Michael J. Thompson (BA 1995)
Assistant Professor of Political Science, William Patterson University
The Logos Reader: Rational Radicalism and the Future of Politics (Editor)
University Press of Kentucky, 2006

Alexander G. Weheliye (PhD 1999)
Associate Professor of English and African American Studies, Northwestern University
Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity
Duke University Press, 2005

Lesley Wheeler (BA 1989)
Professor and Chair of English, Washington and Lee University
Voicing American Poetry: Sound and Performance from the 1920s to the Present
Cornell University Press, 2008

Lesley Wheeler (BA 1989)
Professor and Chair of English, Washington and Lee University
Scholarship Girl
Finishing Line Press, 2007

Lesley Wheeler (BA 1989)
Professor and Chair of English, Washington and Lee University
Letters to the World: Poems from the Wom-Po Listserv (Editor)
Red Hen Press, 2008

Faculty News

Emily C. Bartels published *Speaking of the Moor: From “Alcazar” to “Othello.”*

John Belton published work on filmmakers Howard Hawks and John Ford in *MLN: Modern Language Notes* and on the digital manipulation of color in cinema in *Film Quarterly*. His 2002 October article on digital cinema was recently translated into Russian and reprinted in *Illuminace*. He was awarded the 2008 Academy Film Scholar Fellowship from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Matthew S. Buckley received a Rutgers University Research Council Grant to support his project on *The Recueil Fossard: A Critical Edition*. He has an article on the body and meaning in early *commedia dell’arte* forthcoming in *Theatre Survey*.

Abena P. A. Busia gave an invited lecture on globalization and family structures in Africa at the Social Trends Institute Expert Meeting in Barcelona in March 2008.

Ann Baynes Coiro published an article on John Milton and the Restoration book trade in *Milton Studies*. She gave invited lectures at Penn State University and Columbia University, and presented a paper at the Shakespeare Association of America Annual Conference in Dallas. The Rutgers University representative to the Folger Institute’s executive council, she also chairs the program committee for the institute. She is a member of the MLA executive committee for seventeenth-century English literature.

Elin Diamond organized the Translation³ conference at Rutgers University in April 2007.

William C. Dowling published *Confessions of a Spoilsport: My Life and Hard Times Fighting Sports Corruption at an Old Eastern University*. His book, *Oliver Wendell Holmes in Paris: Medicine, Theology, and the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, was recognized as a 2007 Honor Book by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.

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 *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*. She was awarded a Charles A. Ryskamp Research Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to work on her next book, *The Personality of Things in Eighteenth-Century Britain*.

Kate 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 Idea of America in Nineteenth Century British Studies Conference and at the Evidence of Reading/Reading the Evidence Conference, both held this summer at the Institute of English Studies at the University of London. This September, she will deliver a keynote lecture at the Century’s End Conference at Queen’s University in Belfast. Her book, *The Transatlantic Indian, 1785-1930*, is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.

Sandy Flitterman-Lewis gave an invited lecture on French filmmakers Agnes Varda and Marguerite Duras at the Institut National de l’Histoire de l’Art in Paris in March 2007.

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*.

William H. Galperin edited a Longman Cultural Edition of *Persuasion*.

Christopher P. Iannini was awarded a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to complete the research and writing for his book, *Fatal Revolutions: Caribbean Nature and the Routes of American Literature*.

Gregory S. Jackson has a book, *The Word and Its Witness: The Spiritualization of American Realism*, forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press.

Colin Jager was awarded a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to work on his next book, *Romanticism and Secularism*. He gave invited lectures at the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Maryland, College Park; and Yale University.

Myra Jehlen has a book, *Five Fictions in Search of Truth*, forthcoming from Princeton University Press.

Stacy S. Klein was appointed executive director of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists. 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 misogynies in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval English Literature*; on the Old English verse *Judith* in *Gender and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography*; and on mourning and the production of community in Anglo-Saxon literature in *Laments for the Lost: Medieval Mourning and Elegy*.

Richard Koszarski published *Hollywood on the Hudson: Film and Television in New York from Griffith to Sarnoff*. He co-hosted *Fort Lee Today* on Bergen Community Television, and introduced the film, *Foolish Wives*, for the City University of New York’s City Cinematheque Program. He was interviewed for

the Lucasfilm documentary, *Erich von Stroheim: Profligate Genius*, included in *The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones* DVD set, as well as for Richard Shickel’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 Interpretation*, and another on Lucretius in *Matters of Life and Death*.

John Kucich delivered the keynote lecture at the Victorians 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 Kurnick 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 Jamaica, 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, *Imagine the Sound: Black Radicalism and Experimental Form in Post-1965 African-American Literary Culture*.

John A. McClure published *Partial Faiths: Postsecular Fiction in the Age of Pynchon and Morrison*.

Meredith L. McGill edited *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange*. She organized the Global Poetess Symposium in May for the Center for Cultural Analysis, which featured presentations by Rutgers English alumni Max Cavitch (PhD 2001) and Jason R. Rudy (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 Anglophone at the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle. The seminar, on the idea of the public sphere in seventeenth and 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 Lausanne, the University of Zurich, the University of Mulhouse, the University of Strasbourg, the University of Freiburg, Sapienza 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 Spellmeyer to prepare students to think, read, and write about the enduring challenges and opportunities of our time, is forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin.

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

Barry V. Qualls co-edited, with Susan J. Wolfson, a Longman Cultural Edition of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The Secret Sharer, and Transformation: Three Tales of Doubles*.

AWARD-WINNING FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP



WILLIAM C. DOWLING
Oliver Wendell Holmes in Paris: Medicine, Theology, and the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table
University of New Hampshire Press (2006)

New Jersey Council for the Humanities
Honor Book (2007)



HENRY S. TURNER
The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580-1630
Oxford University Press (2006)

Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts
Honorable Mention, Michelle Kendrick
Memorial Book Prize (2007)



REBECCA L. WALKOWITZ
Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation
Columbia University Press (2007)

Society for the Study of Narrative Literature
Honorable Mention, Barbara Perkins and
George Perkins Award (2008)

Dianne F. Sadoff gave invited lectures at Indiana University South Bend and Temple University. Her book, *Victorian Vogue: Nineteenth-Century British Novels on Screen*, is forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press.

Evie Shockley was invited to read from her poetry collection, *a half-red sea*, at the Writers from Rutgers Reading Series, the Academy of American Poets Bryant Park Reading Series, the Poetry Now Series at Williams College, the Fishhouse Reading Series at Bowdoin College, the Poets Out Loud Reading Series at Ford-ham University, and the Center for Book Arts Broadside 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 ex-ecutive committee for twentieth century American literature.

Larry Scanlon organized the Formalisms New and Old Conference at Rut-gers University in April 2008, which featured presentations by Rutgers Eng-lish alumnus Christopher Warley (PhD 2000) and doctoral candidates Col-leen 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 Bologna. He was elected to serve on the MLA executive committee for the Victorian period.

Kurt Spellmeyer co-edited, with Richard E. Miller, the third edition of *The New Humanities Reader*, forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin.

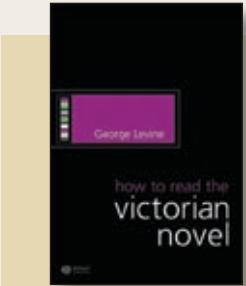
Henry S. Turner published *Shakespeare’s Double Helix* and an article on lit-erature and mapping in early modern England in *The History of Cartography: Cartography in the European Renaissance*. His book, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580-1630*, was awarded Honorable Mention for the 2007 Michelle Kendrick Memorial Book Prize by the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts. The director of the Program in Early Modern Studies at Rutgers, he organized the Historicisms and Its Discontents Conference in October 2007, and the New Horizons in Early Modern Studies Colloquium in April 2008, which featured presentations by Rutgers faculty from the English, French, philosophy, and art history depart-ments. He delivered a keynote lecture at St. Johns University.

Rebecca L. Walkowitz edited *Immigrant Fictions: Contemporary Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Her book, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation*, was awarded Honorable Mention for the 2008 Barbara Perkins and George Perkins Award by the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature. She co-authored an article with Douglas Mao on new modernist studies in *PMLA*, and has an article on Kazuo Ishiguro forthcoming in *NOVEL*. She gave invited lectures at Texas A&M University, Yale University, Harvard Uni-versity, Drew University, Columbia University, and Penn State University. She became co-editor of *Contemporary Literature* in June and was elected program chair of the Modernist Studies Association. The coordinator of the Modernism & Globalization Seminar Series at Rutgers, she organized the Modernism’s Transnational Futures Symposium in November 2007, which featured presentations by Rutgers English faculty Marianne DeKoven, Elin Diamond, and John A. McClure.

Cheryl A. Wall was named the Board of Governors Zora Neale Hurston Professor of English in January 2008. She co-edited, with Rutgers alumna Linda Janet Holmes, *Savoring the Salt: The Legacy of Toni Cade Bambara*. With Rutgers University President Richard L. McCormick, she co-chairs the univer-sity’s diversity and equity initiative.

Eddie L. Wong published a review essay on recent scholarship on slavery in *American Quarterly*, and an art exhibit catalog of the work of digital artist Kinga Araya, *Passing Estrangement / Étrangère de passage*. She has an article on anti-slavery literature and law forthcoming in *American Literature*, and gave invited lectures at Temple University and Villanova University. Her book, *Neither Fugitive Nor Free: Slavery, Freedom Suits, and the Legal Culture of Travel*, is forthcoming from New York University Press.

FACULTY EMERITUS BOOKS



George Levine
How to Read
the Victorian Novel
Blackwell, 2007



Alicia Ostriker
For the Love of God:
The Bible as an Open Book
Rutgers University Press, 2007

IN MEMORIAM



William Walling died unexpectedly, from a heart attack, on December 3, 2007. He was 74. Professor Walling earned his PhD from New York University in 1966, and published a literary biography of Mary Shelley in 1972. At Rutgers, he taught courses on William Shake-speare, Robert Frost, and Wallace Stevens. He also launched the English department’s film studies program. Two Fulbright teaching fel-lowships took him and his family to Algeria in 1969 and Senegal in 1979. He taught at Rutgers for four decades and retired in May 2006.

DEPARTURES

David L. Eng, a specialist in Asian American literature, will join the Department of English at the University of Pennsylvania.

Shuang Shen, a specialist in Chinese diasporic literature, will join the Department of Chinese at Lingnan University in Hong Kong.



GRADUATE PROGRAM PLACEMENT

Dr. Kristie Allen (PhD 2008)
Macalester College
Dissertation: “Second Nature: The Discourse of Habit in Nineteenth Century British Realist Fiction”
Committee: Kate Flint (Director), Richard Dienst, and Carolyn Williams

Paul Benzon (PhD expected 2008)
Temple University
Dissertation: “The Language of Information: Media Technology, Novelistic Appropriation, and Literary Form, 1968-2004”
Committee: Richard Dienst (Director), Brent Hayes Edwards, and John A. McClure

Dr. Angela Florschuetz (PhD 2007)
Trinity University (tenure-track position)
Dissertation: “The Mother’s Mark: Representations of Maternal Influence in Middle English Popular Romance”
Committee: Christine Chism (Director), Larry Scanlon, and Stacy S. Klein

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

Dr. Jeremy Glick (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 Hayes Edwards (Director), Elin Diamond, and Michael McKeon

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

THE ABC’S OF AWARD-WINNING DISSERTATIONS



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 of English, Concordia University
Dissertation: “The Shape of Intimacy: Private Space and the British Social Imagination, 1650-1770”
Committee: Jonathan Brody Kramnick (Co-Director), Michael McKeon (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 Retribution: Rethinking Early Modern Revenge Tragedy”
Committee: Emily C. Bartels (Director), Ann Baynes Coiro, and Ron Levaio
Shakespeare Association of America J. Leeds Barroll Dissertation Prize (2007)

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: Affect, Narrative, Neoliberalism”
Committee: Richard Dienst (Director), Marianne DeKoven, and John A. McClure

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

DISSERTATION FELLOWS SUMMER 2008

Saladin Ahmed
Dissertation: “Wonder Books: Reading, Writing, and Publishing Superstition in England”
Director: Paula McDowell (now at New York University)

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

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

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

Brian Garland
Dissertation: “Earthrise: The Polymorphous Planetarities of American Extended Form, Fiction, and Poetry, 1950-1975”
Director: John A. McClure

Michael Masiello
Dissertation: “Ancient Modernism and Its Discontents: Forms of Poetic Memory in the Works of Edmund Spenser”
Director: Ron Levaio

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 Roxburgh
The Goethe-Institut, Federal Republic of Germany

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

PROBLEMS IN HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION SEMINAR FELLOWS FALL 2008

Saladin Ahmed
Dissertation: “Wonder Books: Reading, Writing, and Publishing Superstition in England”
Director: Paula McDowell (now at New York University)

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

Brian Garland
Dissertation: “Earthrise: The Polymorphous Planetarities of American Extended Form, Fiction, and Poetry, 1950-1975”
Director: John A. McClure

Michael Gavin
Dissertation: “A Social History of English Literary Criticism, 1660-1780”
Director: Jonathan Brody Kramnick

Carrie Hyde
Dissertation: “Styling Citizenship: The Alienated States of Literature, 1820-1868”
Director: Michael Warner (now at Yale University)

Jay Kratz
Dissertation: “Gentle Reader: Early Modern Christian Texts and the Morality of Subversion”
Director: Jacqueline T. Miller

Meghan Lau
Dissertation: “The Shape of History: Literary Form and the First World War”
Director: Marianne DeKoven

Trinyan Mariano
Dissertation: “Discourses of Ordinary Justice”
Director: Meredith L. McGill

Colleen R. Rosenfeld
Dissertation: “Indecorous Thinking: Style, Form, and Spenserian Poets”
Director: Jacqueline T. Miller

Anantha Sudhakar
Dissertation: “Emergent Futures: South Asian American Cultural Production and the Politics of Community”
Director: David L. Eng (now at the University of Pennsylvania)

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

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
• Spencer L. Eddy Prize (for the best literary essay accepted in a professional journal): “Postwar Typewriting Culture, Andy Warhol’s Novel, and the Standardization of Error,” in *PMLA*
• Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning- Presidential Graduate Fellow

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

Daniel Couch
Ralph Johnson Bunch Distinguished Graduate Fellowship

Gregory Ellermann
Marius Bewley 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 Moynahan Price (for the best essay on a literary topic)

Kathleen Howard
Catherine Musello Cantalupo Prize (for the best essay on literature and religion)

Stephanie Hunt
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Fellowship

Louetta Hurst
Rutgers University Presidential Fellowship

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

Shakti Jaising
Rutgers Institute for Research on Women Graduate Fellowship

Patrick Jehle
Barry V. Qualls Dissertation Fellowship

Dawn Lilley
Graduate School–New Brunswick Student Teaching Award

Philip Longo
Honorable Mention, Marius Bewley 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 Bevier Dissertation Fellowship
• Daniel Francis Howard Travel Fellowship for Graduate Research
• Folger Institute Award

Natalie Roxburgh
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

Ameer Sohrawardy
Folger Institute Award

Kirsten Tranter
• Honorable Mention, Spencer L. Eddy Prize (for the best literary essay accepted in a professional journal): “Samuel Sheppard’s *Faerie King* and the Fragmentation of Royalist Epic,” in *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*
• Australia 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 Moynahan Prize (for the best essay on a literary topic)
• Barry V. Qualls Dissertation Fellowship

News

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM



Nova Roman (BA 2007), a double major in English and political science, was one of thirty student-athletes initiated into the Rutgers’ Delta Chapter of the National College Athlete Honor Society, Chi Alpha Sigma, who were selected for membership based on outstanding scholarship, earned athletic letter, and excellent character and citizenship.



Rising Rutgers senior and English major **Matt Cortina**, and Virginia Tech senior Grant Gardner, co-founders of the nonprofit organization Planting America, Inc., rode their bikes this summer on a 101-day cross-country journey planting one million trees to promote social and environmental responsibility.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM AWARDS

Elana Aaron
Mitchell Adelman Memorial Scholarship for Creative Writing

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

Christine Beers
Mitchell Adelman Memorial Scholarship for Creative Writing

Jaya Bharne
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 Hardie
Evelyn Hamilton Award (for fiction)

Amy Mazzariello
Evelyn Hamilton Award (for poetry)

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

Janis Rodgers
• Academy of American Poets Enid 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)

News

ALUMNI

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 adult novel, *Head Case*, which was listed as a “quick pick title for reluctant readers” by the Young Adult Library Services Association.

Mary Baglivo (BA 1979), the Chief Executive Officer at Saatchi & Saatchi Americas, was named Advertising Woman of the Year by the Advertising Women of New York. She also received the Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award from the Rutgers University Alumni Federation.

Joan Baranow (PhD 1992), an assistant professor of English at Dominican University of California, produced the documentary, *Healing Words: Poetry and Medicine*, which was aired on the Public Broadcasting Service in July.

Danielle Bobker (PhD 2007), an assistant professor of English at Concordia University, won the Rutgers Graduate School–New Brunswick Dean’s Award for Excellence in Research.

Nick Bujak (BA 2007) is a student in the graduate program in English at Johns Hopkins University.

Max Cavitch (PhD 2001), an associate professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, published *American Elegy: The Poetry of Mourning from the Puritans to Whitman*.

Alan Cheuse (PhD 1974), a professor of English at George Mason University and the book reviewer for the National Public Radio’s All Things Considered, published *The Fires*.

Amy Cedeno (BA 2003) 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 Lecture at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. A recipient of Harvard’s William F. Milton Fund fellowship, she has recent and forthcoming articles in *PMLA*, *Mfs: Modern Fiction Studies*, and *Women’s Studies Quarterly*.

Barbara Crooker (BA 1967) published another poetry collection, *Line Dance*.

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 *Titus Andronicus* in *Shakespeare Quarterly* and on *The Spanish Tragedy* in *English Literary Renaissance*.

Walter Cummins (RC 1957) published his short story collection, *Local Music*.

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.

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*.

Sarah Ellen Zweig (PhD 2000), an assistant professor of English at Rice University, has a book, *The Fringes of Belief: English Literature, Ancient Heresy, and the Politics of Freethinking, 1660-1760*, forthcoming from Stanford University Press.

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.

Penny Harter (BA 1961) published another poetry collection, *The Night Marsh*.

George Held (PhD 1967) published his poetry collection, *W is for War*.

Matthew Hersh (BA 2003) has been hired as the associate editor for *Shelterforce Magazine*, the publication of the National Housing 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 Fayetteville State University, published articles on *The Two Gentleman of Verona* in *Explicator* and on the southern American term “you-all” in *American Speech*.

Michael Jones (RC 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 Enspire 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 *Domestic Violence: Law, Policy, and Practice*.

Robert Kirkpatrick (BA 1990), a senior editor at Thomas Dunne Books, published *The Words and Music of Bruce Springsteen*.

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

Eric Krebs (MA 1973) produced an off-Broadway play entitled *The Castle*.

Andrew Krivak (MA 2002) published a memoir, *A Long Retreat: In Search of a Religious Life*, and read in Writers from Rutgers reading series.

Vincent A. Lankewish (PhD 1997) received tenure at the Professional Performing Arts School in New York City, and published articles on teaching Walter Pater in high school in *The Pater Newsletter* and on gay male dance culture in *On the Meaning of Friendship between Gay Men*.

Marilee Lindemann (PhD 1991), an associate professor of English at the University of Maryland, College Park, delivered the second annual Rutgers English Graduate Alumni Lecture in November. She was the

recipient of the Michael Lynch Service Award, given by the Modern Language Association Gay, Lesbian, Queer Caucus, for her work as the director of the LGBT Studies program at the University of Maryland and her innovative scholarship and teaching in queer studies. In April, she organized a 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 Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania’s Penn Humanities Forum during the next academic year.

Saikat 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 1989) published *Portrait of Vengeance* and *Murderous Descent*.

E. B. Moss (RC 1979), the founder of the marketing and promotions services company, Moss Appeal, published an opinion piece for the Corporate Social Responsibility Newswire, CSRwire.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 Protest Essay and National Belonging: Addressing Division* 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 Maples 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.

Robert Pinsky (BA 1962), a professor of English at Boston University, published *Gulf Music*.

Martin Joseph Ponce (PhD 2005), 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 Potkay (PhD 1990), the Margaret L. Hamilton Professor of English at the College of William & Mary, published *The Story of Joy: From the Bible to Late Romanticism*, an article on William Wordsworth in *PMLA*, and an omnibus review of recent scholarship in eighteenth century studies in *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. He also edited a Longman Cultural Edition of *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews*. A newly appointed member of the PMLA 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 theater on transnational modernism.

Gina Restivo (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 Hawai’i to fulfill requirements towards her PsyD 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 Champions*, 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 2003), an assistant professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley, 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 Traveling Companion and Other Plays* by Tennessee Williams.

Andrew P. Scheil (BA 1990), an associate professor of English of the University of Minnesota, received the Medieval Academy of America’s John Nicholas Brown Prize and the Best First Book Award from the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists for *Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England*.

Gary Seigel (PhD 1981) published *The Mouth Trap: Strategies, Tips, and Secrets to Keep Your Foot Out of Your Mouth*.

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 2005), an assistant professor of English at the University of North Texas, has a forthcoming article on Marie de France’s *Guigemar* in *Medium Ævum*.

Martha Nell 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 *Emily Dickinson: A User’s Guide* is forthcoming from Blackwell as part of its Introduction to Literature Series. Another project, *Emily Dickinson’s Correspondence: A Born-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 *Modern Philology*.

Kate Stanton (PhD 2003), a lecturer in women’s and gender studies and the Allston Burr Resident Dean at Harvard College, was awarded a certificate of distinction in teaching by Harvard University.

Jason Teeple (BA 1995) works as a product developer for Vantage and is a part-time student in a doctoral program at the University of Brighton.

Michael Thompson (BA 1995) published *The Politics of Inequality: A Political History of the Idea of Economic Inequality in America*, edited *Confronting the New Conservatism: The Rise of the Right in America*, and co-edited *The Logos Reader: Rational Radicalism and the Future of Politics*.

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

Ken Urban (PhD 2006), a preceptor in expository writing at Harvard University, published articles on 1990s British theater in *Cool Britannia: British Political Drama in 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 Eskimos*, *The Happy Sad*, and *Tecmessa*. The recipient of a playwriting fellowship from Boston’s Huntington Theatre Company, he was named a 2007 Person of the Year by nytheatre.com.

Lesley Wheeler (BA 1989), a professor of English at Washington and Lee University, published *Scholarship Girl* and *Voicing American Poetry: Sound and Performance from the 1920s to the Present*, and edited *Letters to the World: Poems from the Wom-Po Listserv*.

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

Sandra Young (PhD 2008) is an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Photo Courtesy of Saatchi & Saatchi



▷ MARY BAGLIVO

BA 1979

Chief Executive Officer
Saatchi & Saatchi Americas

named Advertising Woman of the Year
by Advertising Women of New York

received Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award
from Rutgers University Alumni Federation

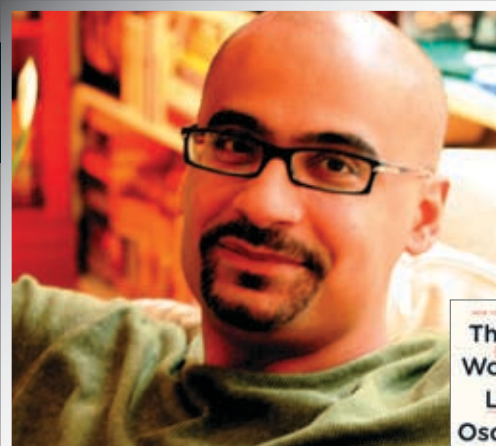


Photo by Lily Oei

▷ JUNOT DÍAZ

BA 1992

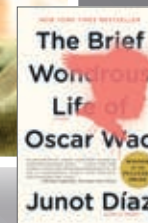
Author

Associate Professor of Creative Writing
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao
Riverhead (2007)

awarded Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (2008)

awarded National Book Critics Circle Award for Best Novel (2007)



ALUMNI SHOWCASE

BAGLIVO DÍAZ LINDEMANN PHELAN PRESTON SCHEIL URBAN WEHELIYE

▷ MARILEE LINDEMANN

PhD 1991



Associate Professor of English
Director of LGBT Studies Program
University of Maryland, College Park

received Michael Lynch Service Award
from Modern Language Association
Gay, Lesbian, Queer Caucus

▷ PEGGY PHELAN

PhD 1987



Ann O'Day Maples Chair in the Arts
Professor of Drama and English
Stanford University

received Distinguished Alumni Award
from Graduate School–New Brunswick

▷ CARRIE J. PRESTON

PhD 2006



Assistant Professor of English and
Women's Studies
Boston University

named Peter Paul Career Development Professor
by Boston University

▷ ANDREW P. SCHEIL

BA 1990



Associate Professor of English
University of Minnesota

*The Footsteps of Israel:
Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England*
University of Michigan Press (2004)

awarded John Nicholas Brown Prize (2008)
by Medieval Academy of America

awarded Best First Book Prize (2005)
by International Society of Anglo-Saxonists

▷ KEN URBAN

PhD 2006



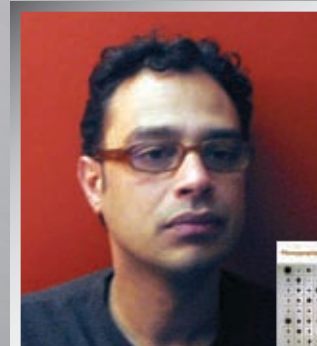
Playwright

Preceptor in Expository Writing
Harvard University

named Person of the Year (2007)
by nytheatre.com

▷ ALEXANDER G. WEHELIYE

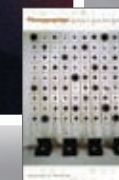
PhD 1999



Associate Professor of English and
African American Studies
Northwestern University

Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity
Duke University Press (2004)

awarded William Sander Scarborough Prize (2005)
by Modern Language Association





EDLIE L. WONG
Assistant Professor of English
Rutgers University
*From Emancipation to Exclusion:
Contract, Citizens, and Coolies*



ALEXANDER G. WEHELIYE
Associate Professor of English and African
American Studies | Northwestern University
*Modernity Hesitant: The Civilizational Diagnostics
of W.E.B. Du Bois and Walter Benjamin*



COLLEEN R. ROSENFELD
Doctoral Candidate, Graduate Program of
Literatures in English | Rutgers University
*"Indecorous Thinking: Style, Form,
and Spenserian Poetics"*

| Background Historical Context | Project Description | Texts and Authors Considered |
|--|---|---|
| In the era of emancipation, the ideals of contract freedom and voluntary exchange began to coalesce into a political worldview. Emancipation ushered a new paradox into American life and thought: it nullified one kind of property relation—the buying and selling of chattel slaves—to consecrate the market made up free persons who voluntarily sold their labor as property. | By placing Asian immigration within the analytical and historical framework of African American slavery, <i>From Emancipation to Exclusion</i> illuminates how the radical reconstruction of postbellum citizenship, American geopolitics, and national belonging led to the ratification of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the nation's first racially specific immigration law. | Writers Frederick Douglass, Mark Twain, and James Williams; Senator James G. Blaine; illustrator Thomas Nast; and reformer Wong Chin Foo |
| 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 extensively with Marxism, and attempted to salvage supposedly premodern concepts, while taking into account newly urban environments. | <i>Modernity Hesitant</i> seeks to trace the convergences between their thoughts, especially their critiques of progress and modern civilization, to reevaluate the histories of and the porous boundaries between aesthetics and politics, the modern and the pre-modern, the human and the social sciences, the visual and the textual, and the religious and the secular. | Du Bois's <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , <i>Darkwater</i> , <i>The Philadelphia Negro</i> , <i>One-Way Street</i> , <i>Dark Princess</i> , and major essays and autobiographical writings; Benjamin's <i>The Arcades Project</i> and major essays and autobiographical writings |
| 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 dissatisfied 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. | "Indecorous Thinking" explores this specter in the poetic corpus of Edmund Spenser. By understanding these poetic figures as detached or detachable from the schoolroom exercises that were intended to promote their decorous use, these figures indicate faultlines in the architectonic plates of early modern intellectual history. Spenser's poetic practice confounds any set ideological division between thinking (invention) and speaking (elocution). | Spenser's poetic corpus, including <i>The Faerie Queen</i> ; <i>The Shepheardes Calendar</i> ; <i>Prosopoeia</i> , or <i>Mother Hubbard's Tale</i> ; <i>Daphnaïda</i> ; <i>Colin Clouts Comes Home Again</i> ; Spenser's prose tract, <i>A Veue of the Present State of Ireland</i> |

6,991

The number of views of Richard E. Miller's presentation to the Rutgers Board of Governors on **YouTube**

“

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 . . . ”

Junot Diaz, Rutgers English alumnus (BA 1992) and Pulitzer Prize winning author of the novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, in the *New York Times*, November 25, 2007. Significant parts of Diaz's novel are set at Rutgers–New Brunswick

The number of graduating students with a major in English

309

\$500,000

The initial gift towards the establishment of Writers House

“

Accreditation is vitally important for colleges and universities in this country because it makes you eligible for student and federal financial aid. It makes us eligible for grants and contracts that support our research activities as well as for all sorts of other programs . . . It also means that students who graduate from Rutgers have a diploma that means something. ”

Philip Furmanski, executive vice president for academic affairs at Rutgers University, on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's accreditation process, in an interview with Ashanti Alvarez, associate editor of *Rutgers Focus*, on January 25, 2007

Editor's Note: From March 9 to March 12, 2008, a team of external peer educators from the Middle States Commission toured Rutgers' campuses and met with key constituencies—faculty, staff, students, board members, alumni, and administrators. The visit is the culmination of 18 months of intensive self-study by nearly 200 members of the Rutgers community. In June 2008, the Middle States Commission reaffirmed the accreditation of Rutgers until 2013.

+ QUOTES 2007 - 2008

NUMBERS

\$64,153

The amount of gifts to Rutgers English

415

The number of gifts to Rutgers English

“

I am proud to announce a bold initiative to expand the pipeline of talented students coming to Rutgers from underrepresented communities. Our student body is diverse, but too few young men and women—and especially too few young men—enroll at Rutgers from our state's large cities, including Rutgers' hometowns . . . So we will establish the Rutgers Future Scholars Program, a pilot project aimed at reaching minority and low-income students who might otherwise never consider college within their grasp. ”

Richard L. McCormick, president of Rutgers University, on diversity and higher education, in his annual address to the university community, on September 28, 2007

2,525

The number of attendees at the Writers at Rutgers Reading Series events

22

The number of graduating students with honors in English

The ranking of the graduate program in English by *U.S. News and World Report*

16

22

The number of PhDs conferred by the graduate program in English

Institutions and Archives

Where We Work Murray Hall and Beyond

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 with this support is open. Perhaps to the Dickens Universe Conference at the University of California, Santa Cruz; the Digital Media and Composition Seminar at The University of Ohio; or to archives in Boston, Ann Arbor, or Los Angeles. By sustaining this support, the Mellon Foundation continues to make it possible for our graduate students to answer the call of their own research. □

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, its 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, “Lord, what fooles these 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 1970, 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. □

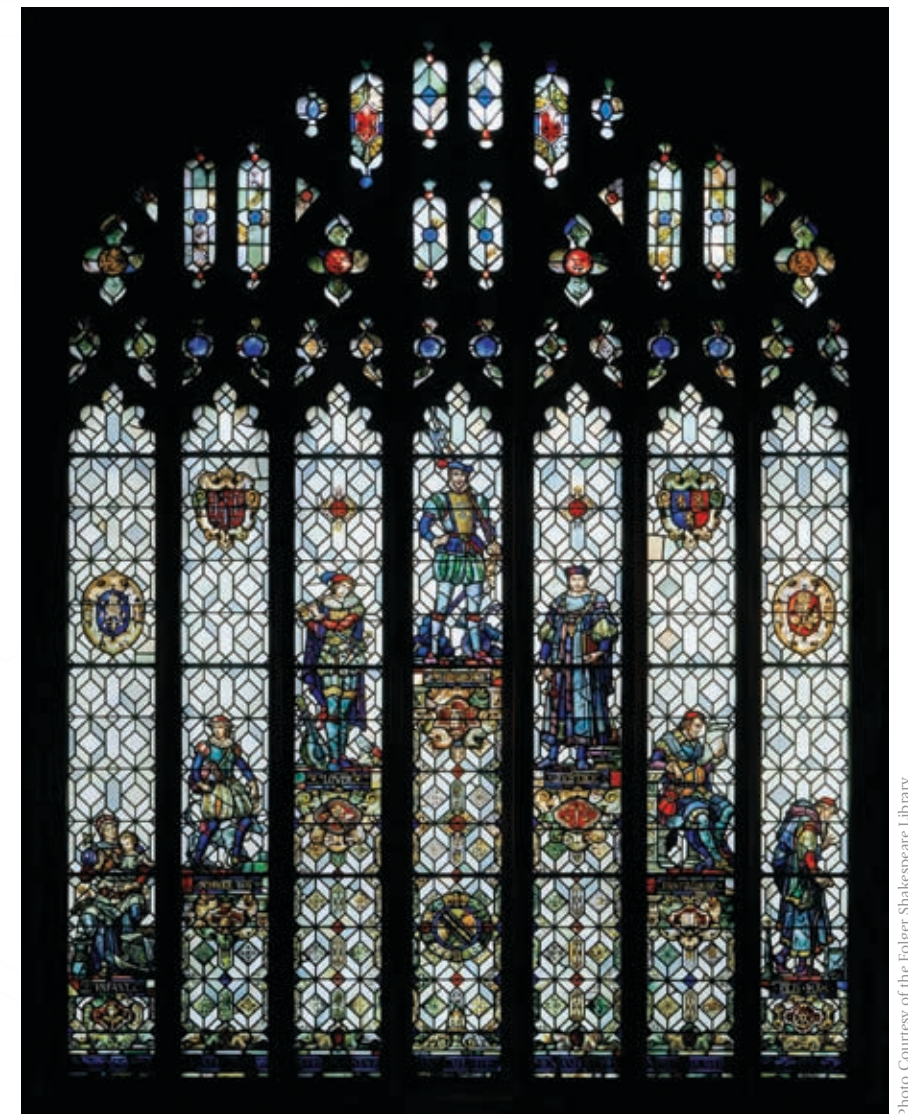


Photo Courtesy of the Folger Shakespeare Library

Northwestern University Music Library

by Louis R. Carlozo



When I wasn’t spilling cappuccino on my jeans while running to class or trying to impress girls by reciting passages by John Keats, my time at Rutgers in the 1980s 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 groundbreaking art at the same time.

So it marked a throwback 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 400 music manuscripts.

I went officially as a *Chicago Tribune* features writer on assignment, but unofficially as a Beatles fan hoping to see history up close. Never did I suspect that I would get to make a little bit of history as well. I immediately noticed that the collection included a specimen that any Fab Four fan would consider a prize: Paul McCartney’s draft of “For No One” (from the 1966 *Revolver* album) scrawled on an envelope, containing two missing choruses and a few unpublished verses. The draft of “For No One” reveals that McCartney first called the song “Why Did It Die?” He also finished a pair of choruses that went unused. The first chorus reads: “Why did it die? / You’d like to know. / Cry—and blame her.” And the second reads: “Why let it die / I’d like to know / Try—to save it.” The document suggests that McCartney spent some time tinkering with these choruses before abandoning them. He wrote the middle lines to both choruses in black ink that appears nowhere else on the paper. He scribbled the verses, most of which made the final cut, in pencil.

Given the chance to hold McCartney’s manuscript in my hands for a photo op, I found myself shaking. I’ve been a musician and songwriter my entire adult life, and to me The Beatles represent the gold standard by which all other popular music is measured. Holding those lyrics may be as close as I’ll ever get to them.

As a writer—a person ever in quest of connections, metaphors, and parallels—I couldn’t help but think back to my days by the banks of the Raritan, to that other Beatles moment. Back then, studying The Beatles as closely as William Wordsworth and Nathaniel Hawthorne didn’t seem like such a stretch.

Yet there is more: my teachers in the English department—Timpane, Susan Wolfson, Elaine Showalter, Alan Nadel, Susan Dannenbaum, and William Keach—made literature and creative writing ring out like music of the spheres to me. In leading me to writers who found their own voices, those rock stars of the classroom helped me begin the quest to find my own voice. And I began to sing. □

The Library of America

by Myra Jehlen

You can tell an 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 editions; 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 already 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 Poirier, who joined the project during the planning stages in 1977 and stepped down as chairman of its board of directors in 2006. Significantly, for much of the time he was building The Library of America, Professor Poirier 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 Poirier 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 still 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 collecting the works of such canonical writers as Emerson, Faulkner, Baldwin, Alcott, Adams, and Longfellow and 25 volumes of poetry in the American Poets 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 importance 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 situation 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. □



Photo Courtesy of the Library of America

Hackensack High School

by Ann Jurecic

Every fall, first year students arrive at Rutgers already having heard that Expos 101, the expository writing course that most of them are required to take in their first semester, is writing boot camp. On the first day of class, there’s a palpable anxiety among the students as to whether their high school education prepared them for writing college essays.

Having taught writing for many years, I know that, although this anxiety can be transformed into motivation, it is also an unfortunate consequence of a lack of communication between secondary and higher education professionals about what is expected of college writers.

In 2006, I had an opportunity to bridge this perception gap. I gave a keynote presentation at a meeting of the New Jersey Writing Alliance in which I described Rutgers’ expectations regarding writing and reading to high school and college faculty from across the state. Afterward, I received a call from Michael Wojcik, an assistant to the superintendent in the Hackensack school district, who asked me to meet with a group of teachers and administrators to discuss how the district could better prepare high school students for college. We began our collaboration with a workshop modeled after the training that the Rutgers writing program offers to its new instructors. After the workshop, I posed the question: “If this is what will be expected of your students when they begin college, what should you do to get them ready?”

On a warm day this May, nearly a year after my keynote presentation, I met with 20 middle school and high school faculty and administrators at the conference center on Douglass Campus. After

handing out copies of *The New Humanities Reader*, the textbook used in our expository writing classes, and co-edited by my colleagues Richard E. Miller and Kurt Spellmeyer, we worked on selecting readings, composing assignments, and evaluating samples of student writing. By mid-afternoon, we were ready to discuss what teachers could do in their classrooms to prepare students for college writing. The teachers saw immediately that they could make small changes: assigning longer readings and a greater range of texts, and giving assignments in which students respond to problems or puzzles that have no easy solutions. They also talked at length about initiating larger institutional changes that would support the creativity and learning of teachers as well as students.

By the end of the day it was clear that the conversation should continue and this marked the beginning of a collaborative relationship between the Rutgers Writing Program and Hackensack High School. Since then, groups of English and social studies teachers

have visited composition classes at Rutgers and met with writing program instructors; in exchange, Rutgers faculty and writing program administrators have observed classes at Hackensack High School. With each exchange, we bring more teachers from both institutions into the discussion. With the goal of deepening the engagement between Rutgers English and Hackensack High School, we hosted a two-day intensive version of the Expos 101 training program this summer in Writers House for a dozen Hackensack faculty and administrators. In the future, we plan to work together on faculty development and curriculum revision.

What will come of this institutional partnership? Ideally, our two institutions will create a new model to bridge the gap between high school and college writing instruction. At the very least, we hope that, from now on, graduates from Hackensack High School will arrive at Rutgers and walk into Expos 101 fully prepared to take up the challenge. □

LOOKING BACK

RUTGERS IN THE 1970s

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

In September, the Rutgers Student Government Association published a satirical manifesto entitled "The Freshman Unhandbook" in the *Rutgers Targum*, introducing first-year students to campus life

1973 - 1974

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

1975 - 1976

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



Rutgers University football and basketball teams are undefeated

1978

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

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

1970

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

72

1972



Rutgers College becomes co-educational

The university undergoes major structural re-organization and creates provosts for the Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick campuses

74

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

1973

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

1971

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



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

1977

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"

Mason W. Gross, the sixteenth president of Rutgers University, dies on October 11

1976



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*

The School of Creative and Performing Arts, later renamed the Mason Gross School of the Arts, was declared a separate degree-granting unit of the university

77

1977 - 1978

Paul Fussell is awarded a Guggenheim fellowship, becoming the sixth Rutgers English professor in the last seven years to receive a Guggenheim, joining John J. Richetti (1970), George Levine (1971), Thomas R. Edwards (1972), Richard Poirier (1974), and William Phillips (1976)

78

1979



The Library of America is co-founded by Richard Poirier

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

1979

RUTGERS IN THE LATE 1970S: SELECTIVE REFLECTIONS

by Bill Matthews

I am often asked why I majored in English. The glib and easy answer is, it was the only thing I was good at. But what really attracted me to English is what I saw in the teachers who taught me the discipline: a great eagerness and thirst for knowledge; a mind open to inquiry and deliberate thinking; and a respect for carefully considered thought, whether from the mind of a scholar or the mind of a scruffy nineteen-year-old student. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I had wandered through high school in a haze of adolescent angst fueled by long drives in the quickly disappearing New Jersey countryside. I like to think that the ambivalent, unmotivated, world-weary me of 1976 was a reflection of the times, the sad implosion of the hope of the sixties—but that is only part of the story. I was one of seven kids from a working class family, so close in age—the first six were born in just over seven years—that all through grade school and high school we were perceived as a single entity moving through the school system. The deal my parents made with us was that they would pay for one year of college, but that after that we were on our own.

When I stumbled into college, the draft had ended, deferments were no longer needed, and small colleges all over the country were desperate for students. A college in northern Maine caught me up, and before I knew what was happening, I was on a twelve-hour bus ride, six hundred miles away from home.

I suddenly found myself in love. Not with a person—that would come much later—but with words, stories, poems, essays, the back of cereal boxes, anything that had something to say. As this passion intensified, so did my anxiety over my rudderless life: I had to grab the rudder and steer it somewhere. The destination was not important, but the direction was. All the compass points (and my nearly empty wallet) seemed to point back to New Jersey. And so, in the fall of 1977, I found myself a student at Rutgers College.

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 the pages of one of the novels we were reading, and who showed me how words could capture a whole world. George Kearns, whose glasses were on a permanent slide down his nose, taught me poetic form and meter. Pat Tobin, 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 Wolfson, who taught Romantic literature, and the elegant, gentle David Kalstone, 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've 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 "*cliché*," it is a truth universally acknowledged that, without Rutgers, I would not be the person I am today. □



SYLLABUS

1970

Marius Bewley

1971

Paul Fussell

Richard Poirier

Thomas R. Edwards

Bridget Gellert Lyons

1973

Julian Moynahan

1975

Paul Fussell

1977

Elaine Showalter

David Kalstone

1978

Thomas F. Van Laan

Patricia Drechsel Tobin

1979

Daniel F. Howard

THE FACULTY BOOKSHELF IN THE 1970s

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I started at Rutgers in 1974 in the Graduate Program of Literatures in English, and earned my PhD in 1982. Since then, I have worked for over 25 years at the Alexander Library as the humanities librarian specializing in English and American literature. My giving over the last few years has consisted of buying and donating books to the library—mostly contemporary fiction and critical editions of classic works—but this past year, I decided to work with the graduate program to purchase books suggested by students writing their dissertations. This way I can both develop the library's collections and give immediate help to students at a critical stage during their research. The Alexander Library and the English department are the two parts of the university that mean the most to me—and I'm glad to be able to make a small return to the university where I've spent more than half my life.

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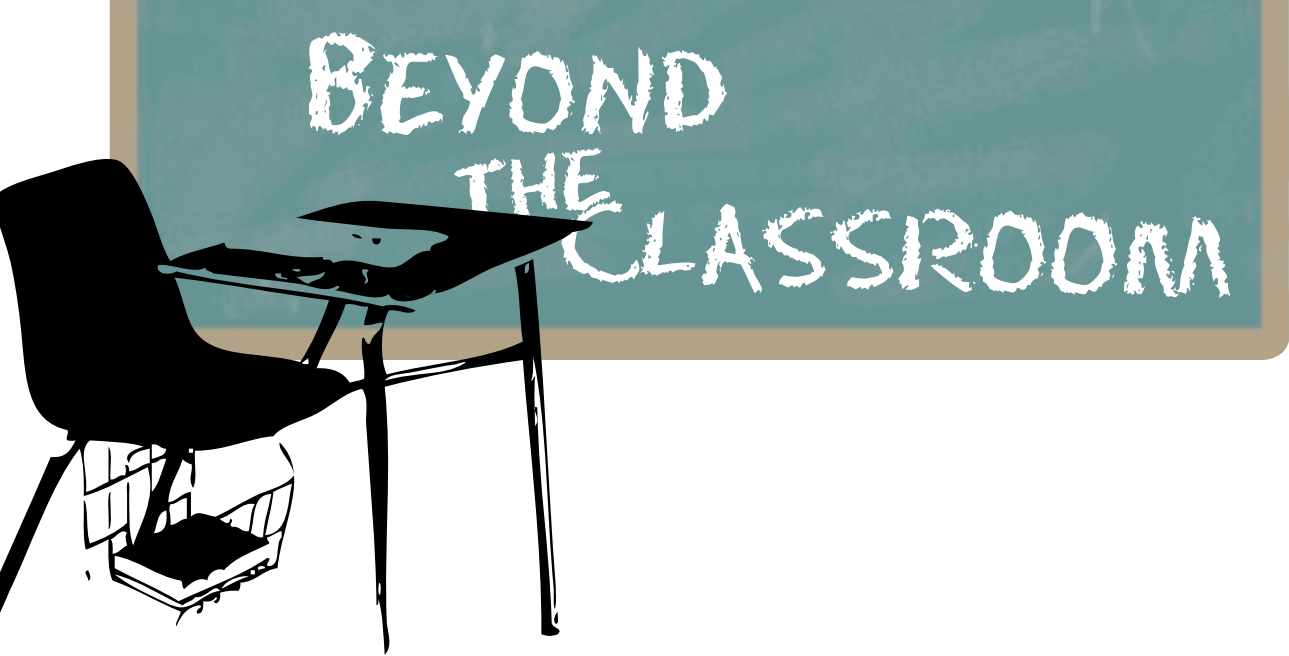
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We have developed a deep appreciation for the strong foundations the Graduate Program of Literatures in English helped us to establish. In ways small and large, literal and figurative, Rutgers English made it possible for us to become scholars, writers, teachers—and a couple. The department's brave, early support for feminist research and teaching encouraged us to forge our own paths and trust our own judgments. We are pleased to give back to the graduate program and have chosen to focus our giving on the moment when a student strives to become a scholar in her or his own right—the period of researching and writing a dissertation. Our hope is that our gift will encourage others to give so that Rutgers English can continue to produce forward-looking, ambitious, and courageously creative scholars and teachers. That's why we've chosen to invest in the future of Rutgers English.

PROFILES
IN GIVING



FROM PAGE TO STAGE: A YOUNG PLAYWRIGHT'S JOURNEY

by Ken Urban

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 felt most palpably at your first production, in front of your first audience, seeing your words come alive. Rich Bencivenga (BA 2006) understands that lesson 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 in 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 military service, something he had rarely done in the past. A member of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division, 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 injuries. Like many veterans, he lived with the mental scars of combat that often made his nights restless. Czahor, now reaching the end of his life, felt the time was right to let these memories

go. Hearing these stories compelled Bencivenga: he needed to write about his grandfather's military service. As is often the case, the play finds the writer.

Both a memory play and a *Bildungsroman*, *Flight of the Iron Butterfly* opens with the narrator, Old John, who tells us of his decision to join the military. A younger John, along with a chorus, enact the seminal events in John's life: from his decision to leave the family farm in Hillsborough, New Jersey, to basic training and jump school, to that fateful leap onto the beaches of Normandy. A lepidopterist, an authority on butterflies, interrupts the story on occasion. John is the audience's butterfly, who we see grow from a confused Jersey boy to a hero in battle. Despite the play's valorization of the 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 Hillsborough 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. □



PRESCRIBED READING

by Ann Jurecic



A group of students and faculty at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School meet, once or twice each month, in a study room of the Medical Education Building. They do not meet to discuss emergency medicine, community health, or genetics research. No, these are the members of the Finer Things Club—a book group made up of an eclectic set of readers, including a cardiothoracic surgeon, a pathology researcher, the school's course director for biological chemistry, as well as a future medical student with degrees in neuroscience and philosophy, a first-year student with a doctorate in philosophy, and two 2007 Rutgers English alumni, Daniel Marchalik and Alex Kasavin.

The Finer Things Club is the brainchild of Marchalik, a first-year medical student with a longstanding interest in the medical humanities, which links humanistic study with medical education and practice. When the academic year began in September 2007, Marchalik stirred up interest among a handful of faculty and students to begin a book group that would counteract the regimented approach to learning in medical school, where few students or faculty feel they have time to read literature. Seven people showed up for the first meeting to discuss Samuel Shem's *House of God*, a comic novel about interns at a famous teaching hospital. The book choice was a bit of a flop, but it helped the group to realize that they wanted to focus on topics other than medicine. Marchalik explained, "we wanted to do something so far from our circumstances and so literary that the only connection we could establish to the medical school would be the meeting's location." Thus, when they decided to tackle Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, the intellectual challenge of that novel became the catalyst for the club's success. By the fourth meeting, the club had grown in size and were making ever bolder choices, selecting for discussion Ciriadwen Dovey's *Blood Kin*.

Among the regular participants is William Zehring, a biochemistry professor and a self-declared amateur reader who finds these

gatherings to be a refreshing break from his routine. "There's not enough art in life," Zehring remarks. "The book club fulfills that need." He pauses as he searches for words to sum up the experience and then concludes simply, "It's ...delicious."

Rutgers English alumnus Alex Kasavin brings an outsider's perspective to the conversation. Kasavin, who has no formal connection to the medical school, began attending because he missed literary discussions. From the start, he was surprised by how reading became a fundamentally social as well as cultural experience for members of the group. "There's another world of reading out there, another culture of reading," he observed. "Books provide an excuse to get together with other people, and getting together is also an excuse to engage with the books. Participants are making an effort to learn and to enrich themselves through literature."

Now that Marchalik has launched a thriving book group, his work is not over. His application for the club to carry non-credit elective status has been approved by the medical school. In addition, he's been asked to resurrect the Humanities and Medicine elective—a course in which visiting scholars give lectures about the links between medicine and other fields of study, such as history, film, literature, philosophy, and popular culture. As the school's reigning humanist, Marchalik has even been given a budget for bringing art and beauty to the building's dreary hallways.

Although Marchalik has stated that the goal of the book club is to prevent med school burnout, upon reflection, he admits that studying literature is more than a diversion. The more you read, he speculates, "the more lives you have access to and the richer life you can build for the people you meet. You learn that everyone has a story." Remaining connected to literature and the arts, he suggests, reminds you of the intimate, interior lives of others. "In medical school," he concludes, "we're taught every day to think of patients in terms of symptoms. The book club invites us to think of patients more fully and more humanistically in terms of stories." □

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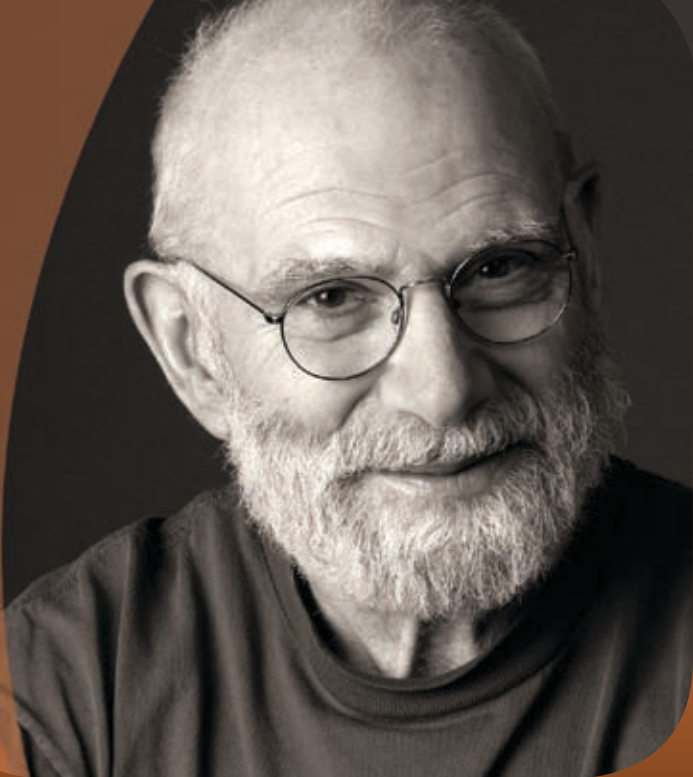


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— Junot Díaz, Rutgers University alumnus, in the *New York Times*,
November 25, 2007. Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*
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parts of the novel are set at Rutgers–New Brunswick.

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