



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

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 Poets 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



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

Our Future Alumni

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. ☐

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 to 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 to a Beheading*, 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 of the world's most distinguished authorities on Victorian literature and culture. The range of her work, which includes studies of fiction, poetry, art, popular science, psychoanalysis, visual culture, the periodical press, and, most recently, transatlantic representations of Native American culture, is unparalleled. Her book, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, which won the British Academy's 2002 Rose Mary Crawshay Prize for the best work of literary scholarship by a woman writer of the year, is a comprehensive study of the relationship between Victorian art and literature. Her landmark book, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914*, is a groundbreaking analysis

of Victorian controversies surrounding issues of women's reading and has since become standard reading for students of nineteenth century women's studies.

In her lecture, Professor Flint outlined some of the discoveries and conclusions from her forthcoming book, *The Transatlantic Indian, 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. □

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. □

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. □

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