

program in american studies
2005 newsletter

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
AMERICAN STUDIES

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INTRODUCING NEW DIRECTOR & NEW FACULTY
MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE IN CHARGE

By Brynn Forte '05

The American Studies program at Stanford is proud to welcome Professor Shelley Fisher Fishkin as its new director. Fishkin came to Stanford in 2003 from the University of Texas at Austin, where she was chair of the Department of American Studies. Fishkin, who has a Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University, is the author of the award-winning books *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America*, and *Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African-American Voices*, as well as, most recently, *Lighting Out for the Territory: Reflections on Mark Twain and American Culture*. She has also published articles on writers including Gloria Anzaldúa, Frederick Douglass, Theodore Dreiser, W.E.B. DuBois, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Erica Jong, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Tillie Olsen. An expert on nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature and cultural history, with a particular focus on issues of race, gender and ethnicity, Fishkin is probably best known for her research on Mark Twain and race, which has been featured twice on the front page of the *New York Times*. She is the editor of the 29-volume *Oxford Mark Twain*, the *Oxford Historical Guide to Mark Twain*, and *Is He Dead? A Comedy in Three Acts* by Mark Twain. Fishkin discovered *Is He Dead?*--an unpublished, unproduced, and neglected play by Twain--in the Twain Papers at UC Berkeley; it has been optioned by a Broadway producer who is working with Fishkin to bring it to the stage.

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR – Greg Taylor '05

Newsletter Staff and Contributors

Brynn Forte '05 Kaylan Lasky '06 David Louk '06

Laurel Stewart '05 Greg Taylor '05 Brian Goodman '06



Fishkin, a Professor of English at Stanford, is also the co-editor of such works as *People of the Book: Thirty Scholars Reflect on Their Jewish Identity*, the "Race and American Culture" book series published by Oxford University Press between 1993 and 2003, the *Encyclopedia of Civil Rights in America*, *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*, and *Sport of the Gods and Other Essential Writing by Paul Laurence Dunbar*. She has lectured on American Studies in Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, France, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, the Netherlands, Turkey, the U.K. and throughout the U.S. Fishkin currently serves as President of the American Studies Association and as Director of the ASA's International Initiative.

A number of other distinguished faculty members have joined or returned to the American Studies Committee in Charge during the last five years.



David W. Brady, Centennial Professor in Public Policy, Professor of Political Science, and Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of the Hoover Institution, focuses on the American Congress, the party system, and public policy. He has studied critical congressional realignments of 1860, 1896, and 1932, and has written on topics including Internet voting, the women's movement, regulation of the nuclear industry, and apportionment.



Henry Breitrose, a Professor Emeritus of Communication, has taught at Stanford since 1960. He has published widely on film aesthetics and criticism and currently serves as vice president of CILECT, the International Association of Film and Television Schools.



Scott Bukatman, Associate Professor of Art History, is the author of three books, most recently *Matters of Gravity: Special Effects and Supermen in the 20th Century*. Since his arrival here in 1997, Bukatman has been working on establishing a film program at Stanford.

Gordon Chang, Professor of History, specializes in the historical connections between race and ethnicity in America, on the one hand, and Asian-American history and foreign relations, on the other. He is the author of *Morning Glory, Evening Shadow: Yamato Ichihashi and His Wartime Writing, 1942-1945*, and *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972*. He is currently at work on a study of Asian-Americans and politics.



Michele Elam, Associate Professor of English (as of September), is the author of *Race, Work, and Desire in American Literature, 1860-1930* and articles on American literature, race, and pedagogy. She has been a Hewlett Fellow at Stanford's Research Institute of Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity as well as a Visiting Associate Professor of English.



Estelle Freedman, Edgar E. Robinson Professor of U.S. History and Feminist Studies, is the author of several books, including *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*. Her current research focuses on the influence of feminism in the West.



Nicholas Jenkins, Assistant Professor of English, came to Stanford in 1998. His current projects include a critical edition of W.H. Auden's *The Double Man*, as

well as a book entitled *The Island: W.H. Auden and the Making of a Post-National Poetry*.



Gavin Jones, Associate Professor of English, is the author of *Strange Talk: The Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded Age America*. Jones's current project is a book that will focus on the representation of poverty in American literature. He has published articles on authors including George W. Cable, Theodore Dreiser, W.E.B. DuBois, Paule Marshall, and Herman Melville.

Douglas McAdam, Professor of Sociology, specializes in the study of social movements, political sociology, network analysis, life course, and comparative and historical sociology. He is the author of books including *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* and *Freedom Summer*. He has just stepped down as Director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences.



Hilton Obenzinger, Associate Director of Undergraduate Research Programs for Honors Writing, is the author of *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania*, as well as two novels and two books of poetry including *Cannibal Eliot and the Lost Histories of San Francisco*, a novel of invented documents that recounts the history of San Francisco from the Spanish conquest to the 1906 earthquake and fire, and *New York on Fire*, a history of the fires of New York in verse.



David Palumbo-Liu, Professor of Comparative Literature, is the author of several books, the most recent of which is *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*, and numerous essays.

He just completed a term as Director of the Program in Modern Thought and Literature.

Rob Reich is an Assistant Professor of Political Science. Professor Reich is the author of *Bridging Liberalism and Multiculturalism in Education*, and he is the 2002-2004 National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow.



Frederick Turner, Assistant Professor of Communication, is the author of *Echoes of Combat: The Vietnam War in American Memory*. He is currently researching the influences of contemporary cyberculture.

Barry Weingast, Ward C. Krebs Family Professor of Political Science, is the author of many books and papers, the most recent of which is "Agenda Manipulation, Strategic Voting, and Legislative Details in the Compromise Of 1850," which appeared in David Brady and Matthew D. McCubbins's *Theoretical Explanations on the History of Congress*.



Bryan Wolf came to Stanford in 2002 as the Jeanette and William Hayden Jones Professor in American Art and Culture.

Wolf recently published *Vermeer and the Invention of Seeing*, and also recently co-authored a textbook entitled *American Encounters: Art and Cultural Identity from the Beginning to the Present*.

These faculty join continuing members of the American Studies Committee in Charge: **Barton Bernstein** (History), **Joseph Corn** (American Studies), **Wanda Corn** (Art and Art History), **Arnold Eisen** (Religious Studies), **Jay Fliegelman** (English), **Richard Gillam** (American Studies), **Jack Rakove** (History), **Ramón Saldívar** (English/Comp Lit), **Richard White** (History), **Gavin Wright** (Economics).

DECADENCE AND DISSENT: ALLEN GINSBERG IN PRAGUE

by Brian Goodman '06



Last fall, in a Czech pub discussing American poetry with a famous Czech dissident, I thought to myself, how did I ever find myself doing this?!

The previous winter, in Hilton Obenzinger's "American Comedy and Satire" class, I discovered a historical incident that perfectly combined a lot of my interests. In a lecture about literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin's theories, Hilton briefly mentioned that the famous beat poet Allen Ginsberg had been kicked out of Prague by the Communist government in 1965. I soon discovered that Stanford's Special Collections houses all of Ginsberg's private journals and notebooks as well as declassified U.S. government documents about the incident. I also discovered that Ginsberg had been elected the King of May in a student demonstration borrowing from a medieval tradition that had been forbidden during the Stalinist '50s. The election was one of the driving forces behind his expulsion. After applying for and receiving the research grant from Undergraduate Research Programs, and with the support of Professor Shelley Fisher Fishkin, I spent my fall in Prague trying to figure out just what happened during Ginsberg's short stay in the Eastern Bloc in 1965.

In Prague I had the opportunity to interview a number of the young students who met and saw Ginsberg in 1965. Now these students have moved on to important positions in Czech society. Some of the country's most important dissenters against the Communist regime, some of the country's most significant writers and scholars and even its first president, the world-famous human rights champion Vaclav Havel, were deeply shaped by Ginsberg's visit to Prague in 1965. Havel goes as far as to point to the Beats and the American counterculture as being one of the seeds that eventually gestated and blossomed in the form of the peaceful historic Velvet Revolution in 1989. But the legacy of Ginsberg's visit is not so clear-cut. Many critics point to this incident as an inflammatory and ultimately damaging experience in Czech cultural history. By pushing the limits of the Communist authorities' liberalism of the mid-1960s, Ginsberg, and the students supporting him, may have precipitated the Soviet invasion of 1968. The significance and implications of this incident sprawled in almost too many directions to cover during my three-month stay in Prague.

What is also fascinating is the lack of scholarship completed on this subject, especially in the Czech Republic. I was able to publish an article in an English-language journal of Central European affairs alongside articles by Havel and Mikhail Gorbachev. The article prompted a great deal of interest from *Přítomnost*, a leading Czech journal which decided to include a 40th anniversary section commemorating Ginsberg's visit. The section included my own article translated into Czech, a language I wish I could read! All the Czech journalists I met and all the people I interviewed suggested another source or interesting direction to move with my research and I look forward to delving further into this rich topic by writing an honors thesis in American Studies on the subject. It's still hard for me to believe that I ever found myself talking to famous Czech dissidents over a cold Czech beer in the same poetry cafes where Ginsberg spread his inflammatory message of alternative lifestyles and the ultimate importance of human freedom during that curious week in 1965. ❧

WHERE YOUNG ALUMNI ARE NOW?

By Kaylan Lasky '06

A future health policy analyst, a lawyer, a film expert, and professor—what do all of these people have in common?

American Studies is applicable to nearly any career track, as its broad scope allows students to tailor the major to their own unique interests. But what to do after life on The Farm? Four recent alums, Kelly McKenzie, Matt Brewer, Meredith Narrow, and Kelly Sisson, have set out on diverse career paths after first exploring their interests through American Studies ■■■

Kelly McKenzie

As a health research assistant at the Center for Studying Health System Change based in Washington, D.C., Kelly McKenzie ('03), is responsible for a range of projects. At HSC she studies the American health system, writes articles and issue briefs to educate policy-makers on issues related to public programs such as Medicaid. Kelly is interested in furthering her education by pursuing a doctorate in health policy. She says that she "would like to focus on the inequities in the system, especially how the poor and minorities are affected by the high cost of medical care."

Kelly believes that her American Studies training influences her current work. She explains that the interdisciplinary approach has served her in her job, where she can see the bigger picture because she brings together the knowledge of many disciplines that relate to her field. Furthermore, her honors thesis, gave her "... the first glimpse of what the real research process looks like. Now it's what I do for a living!"

Matt Brewer

Matt Brewer ('03), Stanford hip hop artist and 2001 ASSU President, is in his first year at Yale Law School, after spending a year in Beijing as a Luce Scholar. While in China, he worked in the music industry doing international market research and songwriting for both a government-owned and a private music company. He says that he was drawn to China because of his interest in political systems, and the fact that in this era the Chinese people have many economic freedoms but few political ones.

Matt's honors thesis also explored political disenfranchisement. He did a case study on the disproportionate number of African-Americans' votes discarded during the 2000 election in Chicago. At law school, he is continuing the work he began with his honors thesis, researching a different facet of the election in Chicago. In the future, Matt hopes go back to Chicago to practice law, perform community development work, and possibly explore work in politics.

Kelly Sisson

Kelly Sisson ('03) is currently in her second year of doctoral study at the University of Michigan Program in American Culture where she is "continuing old interests and finding new ones." Her focus there is on

19th century U.S. history, the West, and borderlands. Kelly's interest in these subjects began with her American Studies honors thesis, titled "Chilean Contract Laborers in the Gold Rush." She got the idea for the thesis when reading Isabel Allende's novel *Daughter of Fortune*, after returning from studying abroad in Santiago. Her thesis won the Golden Medal for Excellence in Humanities and Creative Arts and the John and Marjorie Hines Prize in American History. In October, Kelly will present a paper entitled "Pacific Bound" at a meeting of the Western Historical Association, her debut at an academic conference. After graduate school, she looks forward to teaching or possibly working for a publishing company.

Kelly valued her time as an American Studies major partly because of the contact she had with excellent professors such as Richard White and Richard Gillam, who challenged her and encouraged her in her academic career. She also says that it is rare to find an "extraordinary intellectual community of students" like the one she found among American Studies majors, and that the bonding among them has lasted well after graduation.

Meredith Narrow

After graduating in 2004, Meredith Narrow moved to Washington, DC, where she is working as Program Coordinator for Stanford in Washington. In this role, her main job is to act as a liaison between students, faculty, and staff. She herself participated in the program during her junior year, when she had an internship with *National Geographic*, an experience which helped expand her interest in film. She has long been interested in film studies, her major concentration being in visual and material culture. She wrote an honors thesis, entitled "Influence and Impact of Sundance Film Festival," which studied how the film festival was created and how it evolved. Meredith has volunteered at a number of film festivals and is involved in other creative endeavors. She loves her current job working with students, but is passionate about working in film in the future. Her plans involve graduate school in film history and then work in television or academia. She feels indebted to the major because it allowed her to "pursue her interests and how they intersected in a way another major would not have."

STANFORD AMERICAN STUDIES ALUM NAMED MASTER OF CALHOUN COLLEGE AT YALE UNIVERSITY

By Kaylan Lasky '06

Jonathan Holloway ('89) always assumed he'd become a doctor. But the pre-med requirements were tedious, while the courses that fulfilled the requirements of his major in American Studies engaged his intellect in much more satisfying ways. It was not until spring quarter of his senior year when professors encouraged him to apply that he gave any thought to graduate school. The intellectual community is happy that he did.

After exploring public policy as a Coro Fellow for one year, he won a Ford Fellowship to pursue a doctorate in history at Yale University, where he is currently a professor of history, African American Studies, and American Studies. Professor Holloway has returned to Stanford this year as a Fellow of the Stanford Humanities Center. He terms the prestigious fellowship an "absolutely decadent year," adding with a grin, "you can quote me on that."



He enjoys the "delicious irony" that he is in charge of a college named after preeminent pro-slavery spokesman Senator John C. Calhoun

As a fellow, he has a year's leisure to work on the book he has begun, entitled "Jim Crow Wisdom: Memory, Identity, and Politics in Black America 1941-2000." The project examines how blacks during this era claimed a privileged moral space in America by developing carefully defined interpretations of the discriminatory place to which white society assigned them. It uses memoirs, popular literature, film, and other media to investigate how blacks articulated ideas about their "place" in America and employed race memories to preserve black elite status and influence. The project's title is an allusion to Richard Wright's recounting of a childhood memory. Wright's mother yelled at him and beat him after he retaliated in a fight against a young white boy, and he later realized that she had literally been beating "gems of Jim Crow wisdom" into him to teach him how to survive in a country where whites and blacks are given different privileges. Jonathan Holloway is also the author of *Confronting the Veil: Abram Harris Jr., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche, 1919-1941* and the editor of Ralph Bunche's *A Brief and Tentative Analysis of Negro Leadership*. Holloway believes that

concepts he learned in American Studies courses at Stanford have fundamentally influenced his work; he also credits the outstanding faculty members whom he got to know—including Barton Bernstein, Richard Gillam, and Stanford Humanities Center Fellow Elliot Gorn—with allowing him to "envision that [he] could be faculty too." Like the faculty who befriended him at Stanford, he is committed to undergraduate life. He has recently been named master of Calhoun, one of Yale's twelve residential colleges. He enjoys the "delicious irony" that he is in charge of a college named after preeminent pro-slavery spokesman Senator John C. Calhoun, especially given Holloway's academic focus. Despite students' periodic rallying cries to change the name of the college, Holloway supports keeping it the same because it provides a forum for students to discuss the central role of race in the United States, "from its founding to its present." Although he sympathizes with the students' desire to change what is offensive to many, he believes that "changing the name lets Yale off the hook when it comes to issues of race in America and it also invites a convenient historical amnesia—and that's the last thing this country needs. The name irritates and annoys—and it should—but I find that we need these irritations and annoyances as reminders of where we've been, how far we've come, and how much further we need to go." ❧

SPOTLIGHT ON: *American Studies* Alum MARK WEINER

Professor of Law and author of *Black Trials: Citizenship from the Beginnings of Slavery to the End of Caste*, published October 2004.

By Kaylan Lasky '06

So what have you been up to since graduation?

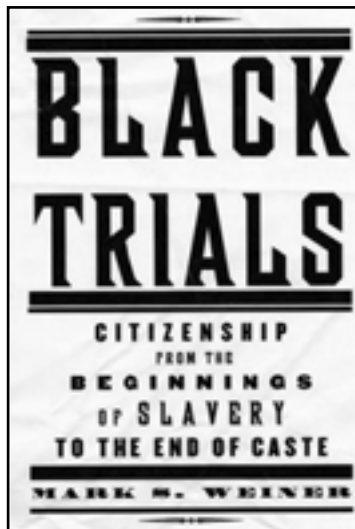
I graduated in 1989. After commencement, I published a small Soviet-American student magazine, worked as a freelance writer, and researched for the Minnesota Historical Society. I moved to New Haven in 1991 and received a Ph.D. in American Studies and a J.D. from Yale. Other than a summer doing research at the Library of Congress, another working for Texas Rural Legal Aid, and another at Stanford, I have been in New Haven pretty much ever since. I am currently a professor at Rutgers School of Law. My main teaching areas are constitutional law and professional responsibility.

How did the American Studies major shape you and how has it allowed you to pursue your goals?

Being a part of the American Studies program shaped my entire life. I suppose I essentially made it my career. But here is one important thing it's done for me. In whatever I teach and whatever I do, I always draw on the broad understanding of American history and culture I received at Stanford. Majoring in American Studies gave me historical knowledge and a whole way of thinking.

I'd like to know about Black Trials, What was your inspiration for it?

Black Trials began as a course for the American Studies program. Joe Corn was on leave in 1997-98, and I had the privilege and delight of returning to Stanford to teach two classes, one of which I called "Major Trials in African-American History." We examined accounts of legal cases involving black Americans from the colonial era to the present. The students enjoyed the class, and based on their enthusiasm, I decided that I would write a book based on the topic. The book is a history of conceptions of race and national identity as told through the linked stories of fourteen major legal cases. I wanted the book at once to provide a model for thinking about race and citizenship and be an exercise in narrative history in which the conceptual model would be as much implicitly carried by the literary tropes of the book as by explicit analysis. The story about citizenship that I tell involves



the conflict between three ways of thinking about American identity rooted in three distinct visions of law itself, based on the jurisprudential principles of liberalism, Christianity, and caste; it describes the victories, and the ironies, associated with the triumph of liberal political ideals in America.

Which Stanford professors have been influential in your life?

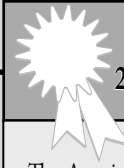
Three faculty members were especially important for me. The first is Richard Gillam. He did something incredibly important for me, which those writing a thesis should bear in mind. After I had worked reasonably hard on my essay, I gave it to

him sometime in the spring, looking forward to spending the rest of the year walking in the foothills. When I met with Prof. Gillam a couple of weeks later, I walked into his office and he handed back my pages and basically told me to start over from scratch. I couldn't believe it. I'm sure I must have been really mad at the time. But I can say with confidence that this was the single most important thing that any teacher has ever done for me. The other faculty member who meant a lot to me was Joe Corn. Joe published my first academic article about corporate food museums in *American Quarterly*, and it was his going on leave that brought me to Stanford to teach the course that lay the foundation for *Black Trials* and to meet my future wife! The third faculty

member who was important to me was Jay Fliegelman, whose course on early American literature really taught me how to read.

What are your future goals?

I'd like to keep thinking and writing about the things that interest me and work to become as good a teacher as those I had at Stanford. As for what I'd like to study, I've turning my attention lately toward a few academic areas: the topic of "political culture" in political science, the history of the American legal profession, and comparative law. ■■■



BLACK TRIALS has just received a
2005 ABA SILVER GAVEL AWARD

The American Bar Association has presented these prestigious awards since 1958 to recognize products in media and the arts published or presented during the preceding year that are exemplary in fostering the American public's understanding of law and the legal system. The Silver Gavel Award is the ABA's highest honor in recognition of this purpose.

AMERICAN STUDIES BBQS WITH SATIRE'S BEST

By Greg Taylor '05

On Friday, November 7, 2003 the Stanford program in American Studies had the honor of playing host to John Collier, Greg Daniels, and Paul Lieberstein, writers and producers for the popular series *King of the Hill* and *The Simpsons*. Co-sponsored by English 173, "American Comedy and Satire: Topics in Laughter and Ethics," and supported by a grant from the Program in Ethics and Society, the event, *Homer, Hank, & the American Dream: Social and Political Satire on American Television*, brought Stanford students face to face with three men who have shaped the face of modern satire.

Collier, Daniels, and Lieberstein gave students a glimpse into the usually closed off world of the professional comedy writers' room. When asked about the key to the longevity of *The Simpsons*, Daniels explained how before *The Simpsons* ever went on air, executive producer James L. Brooks secured a "kill switch" for the program. Brooks has the right to pull the plug on *The Simpsons* at any time, giving him the leverage and wall of independence that the writers have used to keep their satire fresh and biting without the fear of network reprisal. Daniels went on to clarify that if at any time the producers felt the network was trying to exert too much control over the content of *The Simpsons*, then they had the contractual right to simply end the show's run. Since *The Simpsons* is now a ratings powerhouse, the network would rather allow them total artistic freedom and face the consequences with the public than risk losing the ratings. However, while he has enjoyed the freedom such a "kill switch" has brought to the show, he admitted that he has no idea how Brooks managed to convince Fox to give him that right before the show had even come on the air.

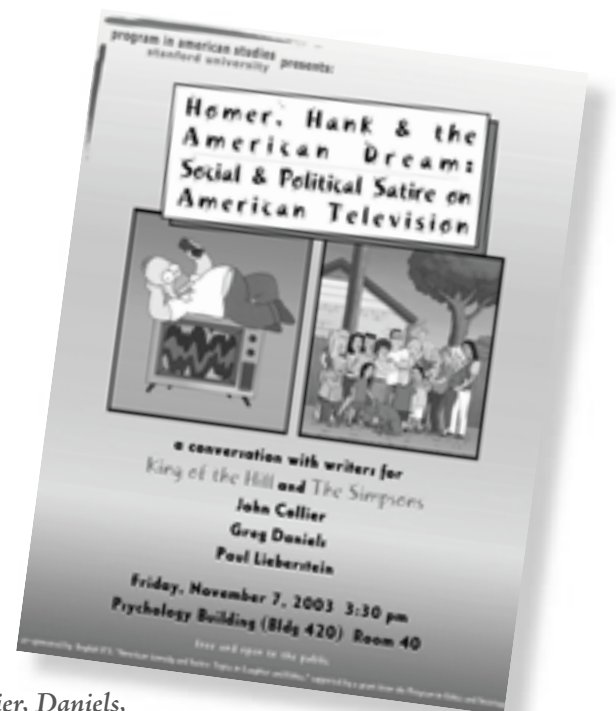
Professor Hilton Obenzinger, instructor of English 173, lauded the event as a means of opening up a whole new realm of appreciation for these two shows that goes beyond mere fandom: "This was a terrific and unique event. It showed Stanford students the nature of satire and comedy and how it's produced in the writing room. If we close ourselves off to things like *The Simpsons*, we're closing ourselves off to large realms of art and both the students and the university lose."

After the talk, Collier, Daniels, and Lieberstein retired to a private dinner with American Studies students. Over a "King of the Hill"- style Texas BBQ, students had the opportunity to interact, one-on-one, with each writer/producer. Addressing how *The Simpsons* has evolved over its ongoing sixteen year run,

Paul Lieberstein explained that he has never felt pressure to compromise the original *Simpsons* formula in order to compete with more racy animated programs such as *Family Guy* or *South Park*. He attributes the endurance of *The Simpsons* to Brooks's kill switch and the efforts of executive producer Sam Simon to keep the show true to its original vision.

However, he does acknowledge a gradual change in the nature of *The Simpsons* over time. He points out that the original *Simpsons* functions like a regular family sitcom with strong emphasis on character development and storylines. Now, *The Simpsons* has evolved into more of a variety show, but still draws upon that strong core of characters it developed over the first few seasons. Lieberstein criticizes shows like *Family Guy* for skipping the character development – something he says is key to good writing in any genre – and jumping right into a variety show format.

Collier, Daniels, and Lieberstein stand as conquerors of the borders between mass media and art. *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill* are rare programs that can span both realms. ■■■



Collier, Daniels, and Lieberstein gave students a glimpse into the usually closed off world of the professional comedy writers' room.

FIFTY YEARS AFTER BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION, INEQUITY STILL A PROBLEM

By Greg Taylor '05

“The public school system has failed to provide acceptable opportunities to 80-90% of students of color.”

On Thursday, April 15, 2004, the American Studies program ushered in the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* with a symposium on the successes and failures of the decision. The symposium featured legal scholars, historians and scholars of education conveying their varied opinions of Brown’s legacy, beginning with a keynote lecture from New York University Law School Professor Derrick Bell Jr.

Bell has been a scholar and activist in the area of education law and civil rights since the 1960s, when he played a vital role in trying the school segregation cases of the time. He became the first black tenured professor at Harvard University in 1971, only to leave in 1992 in protest of Harvard Law School’s lack of women of color on the faculty.

Bell’s keynote lecture focused on arguments he raised in *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*, his recently-published book on the *Brown* decision. Bell is critical of the function and limitations of the *Brown* decision. For example, he believes that integration in United States schools was brought about more by exigencies related to the Cold War than by a deep-rooted commitment to quality education for black children. Simply, when the interest of white Americans converge with those of black Americans, Bell said, then the goals of black Americans are much more likely to be addressed. Given the ways in which white resistance to busing and other integration strategies lessened the impact of the *Brown* decision, Bell concluded that the meaning of *Brown* today is primarily symbolic.

The symposium continued with two panel discussions. “The Promise of *Brown*,” the first panel discussion, featured three main speakers: James Jackson, Professor of Psychology, Director of the Program for Research on Black Americans, and Senior Research Scientist at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan; Mary Dudziak, Professor of Law and History at the University of Southern California; and Daryl Michael Scott, Professor of History at Howard University. Judge LaDoris Cordell, Vice Provost of Campus Relations at Stanford University, employed her judicial skills as the panel’s moderator.

Whereas the first panel explored the shortcomings and pitfalls of the *Brown* decision, the second panel, titled “The Impact of *Brown*,” investigated the impact of the case on the Civil Rights movement as a whole, even the effect on the affirmative action disputes of today. The panel featured Stanford Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Civil Rights Clinic Michelle Alexander, Stanford School of Education Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Youth and Education Law Clinic William Koski, and moderator Sally Dickson, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Associate Dean of Humanities and Science at Stanford University.

The second panel ranged from probing the political and social ramifications of the case to exploring the personal significance the decision held for the panel’s members. Professor Michelle Alexander explained, “My love affair with *Brown* started at an early age. Our nation is still gripped by a romantic notion of the decision, but

in many ways its influence has been understated and misunderstood.” Alexander acknowledged that 50 years is a short amount of time for historical judgments, but that she still feels that she can successfully argue that the *Brown* decision has failed its goal of education equity. She maintained that the public school system in the United States has failed to provide acceptable opportunities to 80-90% of students of color.

Despite these failures, Alexander still believes that *Brown* was a pivotal moment for the Civil Rights movement and a valuable step in the precedent that it sets.

“There would have been no legal foundation for any argument to sit at the front of a bus or at the same lunch counters,” Alexander said. “The precedent of *Brown* is extremely important. Without it, it’s quite possible the civil rights movement may never have occurred.”

At the same time, she believes that modern civil rights groups rely too heavily on judicial action as a means of social reform. Alexander would like to see more emphasis on public advocacy efforts and blames *Brown* for this increased reliance on the law. She gave recent affirmative action cases as prime examples of this problem – adding that only three percent of colored people actually benefit from affirmative action policies, yet affirmative actions gets the majority of the press and legal coverage as well as dominating the agendas of most civil rights organizations.

Koski and Darling-Hammond added that *Brown* may have created an environment in American education where schools are simply made adequate

rather than equal. Koski commented that issues of standardized testing and school accountability have distracted from the real issues of educational equity. As a result, schools that serve African-American, Latino, and Asian-American students don’t receive equal funding to those that serve predominantly white students.

Darling-Hammond went a step further, calling these types of schools “apartheid schools” given the devastating poverty in the public school system that prevents many students from successfully completing their education. She pointed out an achievement gap between white students and students of color that has been widening since 1990 and the declining graduation rates of minority students. Using a local example, Darling-Hammond said that Palo Alto High School spends twice as much on academic and maintenance programs as Ravenswood High School in East Palo Alto.

American Studies sponsored event, Brown v. Board of Ed: A Fiftieth Anniversary Symposium, was a great opportunity to look at the beginnings of American Civil Rights.

“People pretend kids start on a level playing field,” she added. “There is this presumption that some kids don’t work as hard and need extra help but that’s just not the case.”

Overall, each panelist pointed out that *Brown* has been a mixed bag for American schools. At best, the case provided a legal precedent for the Civil Rights movement. However, at worst, it has harmfully refocused the movement towards exclusively legal remedies to racial inequality and made much of the country complacent with the current state of the public school system. ❧



Mark Twain

at the *Turn-of-the-Century: 1890-1910*

a Stanford-UC Santa Cruz Conference

sponsored by American Studies in April 2004

by Shelley Fisher Fishkin



What if we view the writing of Twain's later years not as a failed attempt to recreate past successes, but as his efforts to light out into new territory ahead of the rest—the territory of the theorist of history, for example? Or of the politically savvy writer who knows that reason alone cannot make inroads against ingrained assumptions and prejudices?

The last two decades of Mark Twain's life remain relatively neglected by scholars. Stanford's American Studies Program and the University of California at Santa Cruz sponsored this international conference on late Twain in April 2004 to attempt to reassess this important final period, and to explore some alternative and generative ways of coming to terms with the last two decades of Mark Twain's life as a writer.

Papers were presented by professors Gregg Camfield (University of the Pacific), Shelley Fisher Fishkin (Stanford), Susan Gillman (UCSC), Karen Lystra (Cal State Fullerton), Peter Messent (University of Nottingham, U.K.), Hilton Obenzinger (Stanford), Forrest Robinson (UCSC), John Carlos Rowe, (UC-Irvine), and David Smith (Williams). Professor Edgar Dryden (University of Arizona) editor of the *Arizona Quarterly*, served as moderator. Co-sponsors included the Stanford English Department, H & S Dean's Office, and Humanities Center, as well as the UCSC Literature department, American Studies program, Dean's Office, and the Delmas Foundation. The conference papers were published as a special issue of the *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literatures, Culture, and Theory* (Spring 2005) co-edited by Shelley Fisher Fishkin and UCSC American Studies professor Forrest Robinson.

In place of a failed writer paralyzed by personal despair and professional exhaustion, the papers presented at this conference revealed a figure possessed of enormous creative energy, actively and

imaginatively engaged with his world, and producing an impressive body of texts in both familiar genres and wildly experimental genres. Where earlier critics bemoaned Twain's descent into unbridled digression and incoherence, these papers found method in the madness. Texts previously dismissed as generally without interest turn out to bristle with intriguing personal revelations and deft negotiation of some of the culture's thorniest dilemmas.

The papers presented at this conference suggest that proverbial "problems" with Twain's late work—such as his difficulty with endings, his tolerance for anachronisms, his use of impossible-to-categorize forms—may actually be his inspired response to the challenge of imaginatively presenting problems that his society had failed to solve. His apparent flaws, in other words, may actually turn out to be virtues—productive, generative ways of engaging insoluble social and political dilemmas.

Rather than abandoning during these decades the themes and subjects that were central to his greatest triumphs—particularly racism in the slave South—we see Twain connecting them to broader contemporary issues such as anti-Semitism and imperialism in fresh ways. We see him grappling with some of the central challenges of his era—such as masculinity and the anxieties surrounding it; the persistence of prejudice and injustice; the promises and pitfalls of technological and economic "progress."

The idea that the last two decades of Twain's life were characterized



primarily by failure makes sense only if we measure them against the narrowest definition of success—a definition that even at his most “successful” Twain manages to elude. Did Twain ever master conventional form and structure, even in his greatest work? Or does the improvisatory openness of all of his best work find new realization in some of the wildly experimental work of his final decades? Twain may never have repeated the feat of writing a work as stunningly innovative as *Huckleberry Finn*—but isn’t that work so *sui generis* as to defy the possibility of a viable sequel (despite the fact that Twain tried to write several under the misapprehension that he could)?

What if we view the writing of Twain’s later years not as a failed attempt to recreate past successes, but as his efforts to light out into new territory ahead of the rest—the territory of the theorist of history, for example? Or of the politically savvy writer who knows that reason alone cannot make inroads against ingrained assumptions and prejudices?

For both Susan Gillman and Hilton Obenzinger, Twain’s “explosive failures” of form may be anything but. “What I

take away from these explosive failures,” Gillman writes, “is not their sense of futility and despair (though they surely cannot be discounted), but rather their incredible energy, their sheer excess. It’s the ostentatious unfinished business, the almost inexhaustible detail of current political events and figures that multiply, so obsessively and so memorably, in these tales.” Or, as Obenzinger writes, “Simply put: with reality as bizarre and incoherent as it appears at the turn of the century, how could a satiric novelist rooted in a mimetic, realist tradition of representation produce anything more violently deluded or impossible than King Leopold’s atrocities and the U.S. war in the Philippines? . . . When reality and personalities are so extreme, then the imaginative disruptions of the wildest fictions and satires seem to fall short – or tend to explode.” If we view much of Twain’s writing during the last two decades of his life not as the ill-fated efforts of a fiction-writer or fabulist, but the clear-sighted efforts of a theorist of history frantically trying to engage the frustrating mess before it repeats itself yet again, the famous fumbles begin to look like evidence of frighteningly-apt finesse.

Other failures of form may turn out to be, on closer examination, not failures after all. For example, John Carlos Rowe argues that there is a purpose to the associative, digressive, wandering method in *Following the Equator*. That purpose is “ultimately to effect psychological changes in deep-seated social prejudices Twain does not believe can be changed by merely rational means.”

The conference’s reevaluation of the last two decades of Twain’s life begins just before those decades begin with Gillman’s look at *Connecticut Yankee* (1889). While usually viewed as

signaling the end of Twain’s most creative and imaginative years, here *Connecticut Yankee* signals a beginning: the emergence of a fascinating, deeply-engaged and deeply-engaging writer pondering profound questions about civilization, and about history. Moving to a more personal plane, papers by Forrest Robinson and Peter Messent showed Twain negotiating his culture’s constructions of manhood and the anxieties that accompanied that process through their explorations of the dynamics of Twain’s friendship with Ulysses S. Grant and Henry Huttleston Rogers. Twain and ideas of empire was the focus of papers by Gregg Camfield (on Twain’s relationship with Rudyard Kipling) and John Carlos Rowe (on *Following the Equator*). Empire was also central to Shelley Fisher Fishkin’s study of Twain’s understanding of what anti-Semitism, racism and imperialism had in common, and to Hilton Obenzinger’s new look at *The Mysterious Stranger*. Finally, David Smith probed how Twain managed to “speak the most outrageous truths and yet not alienate his audience,” and pondered whether iconoclasm may have “had a larger place in the discourse of his time than it has in our own dismal present.”

Twain’s insight into the ways in which history repeated itself, combined with his uncanny prescience and modern sensibilities make him seem almost more a man of our time than of his own. How does a writer who was born in the nineteenth century and died in the twentieth century manage to have so much to say to 21st-century readers? That enigma, among others, animated this stimulating gathering of scholars. ¶¶

program in american studies
SPONSORED EVENTS



DONALD WEBER

Genealogies of Jewish Stand Up

Donald Weber is the Lucia, Ruth, and Elizabeth MacGregor Professor of English and Chair of the Dept. of English at Mt Holyoke College. He is the author of *Haunted in the New World: Jewish American Culture from Cahan to "The Goldbergs,"* forthcoming in 2005.

Presented by the Program in American Studies at Stanford University and the American Cultures Workshop, the Department of English, the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, Hillel at Stanford, English/American Studies 173: American Comedy and Satire and Undergraduate Research Programs



WERNER SOLLORS

Harvard University

From "Arabian Nights" to Hans Christian Andersen's play "Mulatto":

On An Anthology of Interracial Literature

Presented by The Program in American Studies at Stanford University, The American Cultures Workshop & The Department of English



an illustrated lecture by

LILLIAN ROBINSON

From Greeks to Geeks: Feminist Mythologies in the Comics

Lillian Robinson, Principal of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University in Montreal, is the author of feminist classics including *In the Canon's Mouth: Dispatches from the Culture Wars; Sex, Class and Culture; and, most recently Wonder Women: Feminisms and Superheroes* (Routledge, 2004)

presented by Stanford University's Program in American Studies, The Institute for Research on Women And Gender, The Program in Feminist Studies and the Department of Art History



DAVID BRADLEY

Reading from his work in progress, *The Bondage Hypothesis: Meditations on Race and American History*, a work of Creative Nonfiction

David Bradley, author of two novels, *South Street* and *The Chaneyville Incident* (winner of the Pen/Faulkner Award) and a contributor to such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *Harpers*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and *The Village Voice*

Co-sponsored by American Studies and the Program in Creative Writing

**STANFORD UNIVERSITY'S PROGRAM IN AMERICAN STUDIES
announces**

**PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR: A CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE
AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY, MARCH 9-11, 2006**



This conference will celebrate the centennial of Dunbar's death by exploring new critical perspectives on the full range of his career as a poet, novelist, lyricist, dramatist, and journalist. The conference organizers will edit a selection of the papers for a special issue of *African American Review*.

We welcome papers exploring Dunbar as an individual challenged by complex psychological, esthetic, social, and political pressures. We seek lectures that place him in the context of historical phenomena such as slavery and the Civil War, Reconstruction, lynching, race riots, and landmark Jim Crow legislation such as *Plessy v. Ferguson*. We want to consider Dunbar as a regional, national, and international writer, and as a stylistic innovator of the highest order. We also invite papers on his relationship to his literary predecessors, contemporaries, and successors--writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, James Whitcomb Riley, William Dean Howells, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Mark Twain, W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Charles Chesnutt, James Weldon Johnson, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Langston Hughes, and more recent poets. We also hope to explore Dunbar's engagement with the musical theater, popular song, minstrelsy, spoken-word poetry, and reading-speaking tours; with visual culture, such as the Hampton Camera Club; and with notable cultural events, such as the World's Columbian Exposition.

Sponsored by the American Studies Program at Stanford University, this conference is organized by the director of the program, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Gavin Jones (Stanford), Meta DuEwa Jones (George Washington), Arnold Rampersad (Stanford), and Richard Yarborough (UCLA). Co-sponsors include the Office of the President of Stanford University; Office of the Dean of Humanities & Sciences; Department of English; Department of History; Stanford Continuing Studies; Program in African and African American Studies; Stanford Humanities Center; and the Central Region Humanities Center.

If you are interested in presenting a paper, or in attending the conference, please let us know **at once** at the email address below. Note that August 1 is the deadline for receiving paper proposals. To propose a paper, please send an abstract of about 600 words in length by August 1, 2005, along with a one-page c.v. and contact information to: DunbarConference@stanford.edu

The conference will be free to all registrants. In addition, we expect to provide travel and lodging support for all presenters.

Honors Thesis Awards

Awards: 2002



GOLDEN MEDAL FOR EXCELLENCE IN HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE ARTS

MIGUEL DE BACA: *The Whip and the Cross: The Constructed Identities of the Penitente Brotherhood in New Mexico*

Also; **ARTURO ISLAS JUNIOR PRIZE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

WILLIAM A. CLEBSCH AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH

MAURA MARINO: *Balancing Personality and Pedagogy: A Work Plan for Service Learning at East Palo Alto High School*

ALBERT J. GELPI AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH

EMILY CADEI: *The Pornography Debates Within the Feminist Movement:*

Free Speech, Discrimination, and the Politics of Sexuality

DAVID M. POTTER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH

KATRIN MARIE MILLER COWAN: *Story as History: Images of War in American Children's Picture Books*

GEORGE G. DEKKER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH:

KADY DODDS: *Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Fireside Chats*

Awards: 2003



WILLIAM A. CLEBSCH AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH

MARISSA EGERSTROM: *Big Promises: Class Attitudes and Political Myths in the American Youth Mentoring Movement*

GEORGE G. DEKKER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH

TREVOR SCOTT KNAPP: *Omissions in NAACP History: Revising Traditional*

Understandings of Civil Rights in the Postwar Period

DAVID M. POTTER AWARD FOR CREATIVE EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS WORK

MATTHEW VAN DER SLUIS: *Shelter Me Always: Perspectives on Permanence in the American Home*

GOLDEN MEDAL FOR EXCELLENCE IN HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE ARTS

and co-winner of **JOHN AND MARJORIE HINES PRIZE IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND AMERICAN STUDIES**

KELLY SISSON: *Diaspora, Deseos, and Dead Gringos: Chileno Contract Laborers and the California Gold Rush*

Awards: 2004



GOLDEN MEDAL FOR EXCELLENCE IN HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE ARTS

MEREDITH NARROWE: *Sundance, Hollywood, and Independent Film:*

The Foundations of America's Most Famous Film Festival

WILLIAM A. CLEBSCH AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH

JENAIS ZARLIN: *Cracking C.R.A.C.K. Even Wider: Disproving the Accusation*

that Project Prevention is a Throwback to the Eugenics Movement

DAVID M. POTTER AWARD FOR CREATIVE EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS WORK

EVAN BERGER: *The Hummer*

GEORGE G. DEKKER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH

NOAH DANIEL LICHTENSTEIN: *The Hanford Nuclear Waste Site: A Legacy of Risk, Cost and Inefficiency*

GEORGE M. FREDRICKSON AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS RESEARCH

SARAH MARIE MANTILLA: "Sassing Back: African American Female Identity Development 1900-1940"

AN AMERICAN STUDIES MAJOR IN WASHINGTON

By David Louk '06

Anglophiles have Oxford. Francophiles have Paris. For students of American Studies? As I learned fall quarter, we've got Stanford in Washington.

Although Stanford in Washington students are drawn primarily from the fields of Political Science, Economics and International Relations, SIW is a terrific program for American Studies majors as well. What happens outside of class at SIW is as instructive and stimulating as what happens in the classroom.

The field trips enriched our understanding of American history and culture—and were also a lot of fun. Our first weekend at SIW, we were treated to a visit of Thomas Jefferson's estate, Monticello, including an excellent tour of the closed-to-the-public dome room. Other field trips included a tour of Gettysburg, a candlelit visit to Mount Vernon, and a trip to Valley Forge, with a stop in Philadelphia for dinner at the City Tavern (whose patrons included our founding fathers), and a nighttime "ghost story tour" of old Philadelphia. There were also shorter trips to the Smithsonian, National Mall, Arlington National Cemetery and the Supreme Court to hear oral arguments, as well as nighttime tour of the Jefferson, Lincoln, Washington, FDR, World War II, Vietnam and Korean War memorials. Any American Studies major would be moved reading Franklin Roosevelt's quotes, seeing the names of soldiers who died in World War II, or standing in front of the famous statue of a seated Abraham Lincoln.

In addition to meeting the figures of our past, Stanford-in-Washington gave us an excellent opportunity to meet individuals currently making American

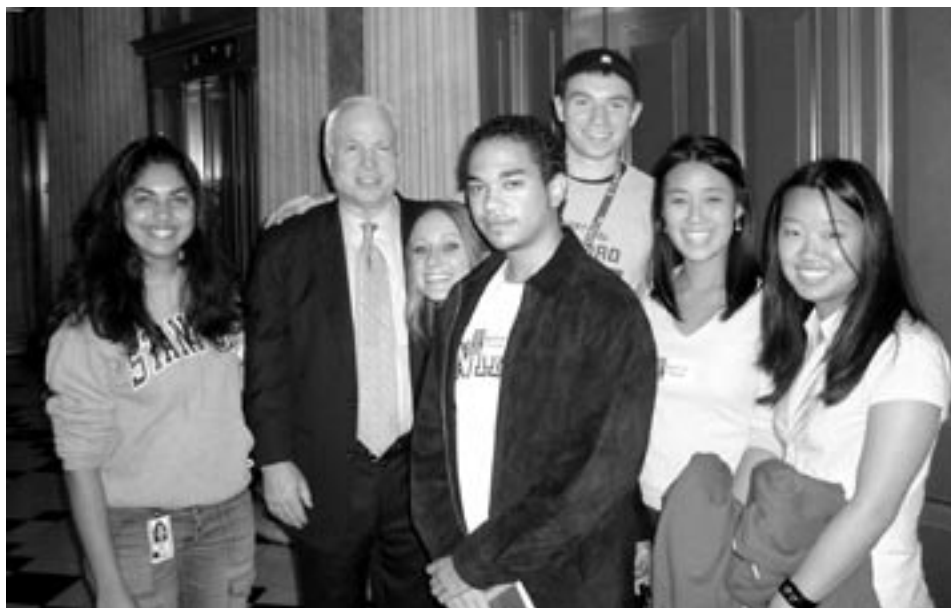
history. We met with Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage at the State Department, had lunch with Supreme Court Justice Steven Breyer, and had a question-and-answer session with former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara after viewing the documentary about his career, "The Fog of War."

Many of us met with Senators, Congressmen, Executive Branch officials and countless others as part of our internships, a vital aspect of the SIW experience. I spent my quarter interning in Senator Patrick Leahy's Judiciary Committee office. That experience gave me the opportunity to witness our nation's lawmakers at work: sitting in on committee meetings, watching them vote on the floor, and riding with them on the subway to and from the Capitol building. The internship culminated with a lunchtime one-on-one with the Senator, an experience few constituents,

let alone a random kid from Oregon, get to have.

SIW was one of the defining moments of my Stanford career ▬

*Many of us met with
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SIW experience.*



Shirin Sharif, Senator McCain, Alli Dencker, Brett Hudson (all public policy majors), David Louk (American Studies), Pallen Chiu (Poli Sci), and friend

"WOMEN ON THE VERGE" CANTOR ARTS CENTER'S EXHIBITION

By Brynn Forte '06

Cantor Arts Center's exhibition entitled "Women on the Verge: The Culture of Neurasthenia in 19th-Century America" allowed museum-goers to step backwards in time into Gilded Age America. The exhibition, which ran from October 20, 2004 to February 6, 2005, provided a fascinating look at century-old cultural representations of a distinctly American cultural phenomenon. "Women on the Verge" also afforded many students in American Studies the opportunity to draw from primary visual and written sources in their studies, as the exhibition was directly relevant to several courses that examined various aspects of 19th and early 20th century American culture. Several professors teaching classes in American Studies took advantage of this timely resource by integrating the exhibit into their courses through visits to the museum and subsequent class discussions. Professor Wanda Corn's course on "American Art and Culture in the Gilded Age" visited the gallery, as did Professor Judith Richardson's "American Women Writers" seminar.

Neurasthenia, the American "disease" around which the exhibition was centered, was a condition that affected countless individuals in the decades following the end of the Civil War. It was a condition that would now be diagnosed as one of many mood disorders or physical maladies, including such things as depression, anemia, anorexia, and chronic fatigue. Chaotic aspects of modern society, such as excessive noise and activity, were thought to be the cause. Women, particularly those of privileged social positions, were most often affected. The "epidemic" of American

nervousness that swept the nation during the 19th century has been obsolete since the 1920s; diagnoses have become more specialized, and treatments more sophisticated. The paintings and other cultural relics displayed in the Halperin Gallery, however, were tangible, immortalized evidence of a national obsession with American nervousness.

The gallery was decorated to resemble a Gilded Age parlor, complete with antique furniture, including a Victorian-era fainting couch. The hand-stenciled yellow wallpaper, a nod to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's novella that chronicled one woman's horrific experience with her treatment for nervous depression, completed the atmosphere. The walls of the parlor were adorned by paintings on loan from the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C.; these works included portraits by Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Thomas Eakins, and other featured American artists. The paintings depicted women with a ghostly pallor, watery eyes, and a general quality of listlessness, all of which were thought to be symptoms of neurasthenia.

Around the perimeter of the gallery were glass cases that displayed American medical journals and advertisements dating back to the mid- to late-19th century. The journals allowed the visitor a glance at detailed chronicles of the symptoms of nervousness, while the advertisements for tonics and pills revealed not only an account of the possible treatments, but also a growing market of people willing to capitalize on a lucrative cultural phenomenon.

While countless individuals were being diagnosed with neurasthenia, however, American women were beginning to take on more active roles in society, engaging in politics and sports, attending college, and beginning careers. Interspersed with these other objects were samples of cartoons depicting the fiercely independent New American Woman taking the world by storm. These cartoons, while humorous and high-spirited, revealed a growing sense of anxiety about the new role of women, a frightening alternative to the docile, neurasthenic types represented by Dewing and Eakins.

"Women on the Verge" was organized by Claire Perry, Curator of American Art at Cantor, Amanda Glesman, a doctoral candidate in Art History, and Dr. Katherine Williams, director of the Women's Wellness Clinic at Stanford Hospital. The three organizers brought their own individual knowledge and interests to the project, which gave the exhibition its distinctly interdisciplinary approach. This helped to make the material relevant not only to art history buffs, but to those interested in the history of medicine, American literature, gender studies, social history, and popular culture. The exhibition offered an insightful, albeit slightly disturbing, historical glimpse of the experience of 19th-century women, and called into question the cultural origins of a disease long-forgotten. By employing a wide range of media, "Women on the Verge" illuminated an important, but often overlooked, aspect of American culture in a way that was interesting and accessible to a wide range of students and museum visitors. ■■■

**AMERICAN STUDIES PROFESSORS
FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA VISIT STANFORD**

Professors of American literature from Algeria, Egypt, Gaza, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen who are trying to develop American Studies at their universities visited Stanford on April 4, 2005, to meet with Stanford American Studies faculty and American Studies majors. The visitors included Dr. Maha Benabdellaziz, lecturer in English at the University of Blida, Algeria; Mr. Eid Ahmed Abdel Wahab Mohamed, lecturer in English at Al Azhar University in Cairo; Mr. Gihad M. Alastal, lecturer in English at Al Aqsa University in Gaza; Dr. Lubna Abdal Jabbar, head of the English Department at Baghdad University; Dr. May Maalouf-Alfy, Associate Professor of English at Lebanese University and Holy Spirit University in Lebanon; Dr. Ghada Dahman, Head of the English Department, Damascus University; and Dr. Mahmood Ali Shamshir, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Languages, Sanaa University in Yemen. They met with Stanford American Studies faculty Shelley Fishkin, Gavin Jones, Hilton Obenzinger and Bryan Wolf, and with American Studies majors Brian Goodman, Tanya Koshy, Kaylan Lasky, Ari Neumann and Megan Shackleton. ❧



Profs. Fishkin, Bryan Wolf, and Hilton Obenzinger with visiting scholars



Prof. Gavin Jones leads discussion with scholars.

美国研究

Last November Stanford's American Studies program hosted visits to Stanford by four of China's leading Americanists. Dr. Sun Youzhong, Vice Dean of the School of English and International Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University; Deng Yuping MA Program Coordinator, American Society and Culture, at East China Normal University; Dr. Wang Jianping, Director, Institute of American Studies at Northeastern University, and Qiu Wangsheng, Professor of English, Sichuan University, attended classes, visited the library, and met informally with students and faculty. Their visits were made possible by a collaboration arranged by director Shelley Fishkin between the U.S.-China Education Trust and the American Studies Association, which funded their trips to the U.S. for the ASA's annual meeting, as well as for their two days at Stanford.

The four Chinese professors discussed how American Studies is taught in China and engaged in an intriguing discussion with their U.S. colleagues about how Chinese-American texts and topics are taught in the U.S. at a lunch with Stanford American Studies faculty members Gavin Wright, Dick Gillam, Gordon Chang, and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, as well as Berkeley Professor Cynthia Sauling Wong, CSRE fellow Birgit Rasmussen, IRWG scholar Marilyn Yalom, MTL graduate student Steven Lee, Vietnamese Fulbrighter Hien Dinh Minh, and freshman Ben Fong. They had further conversations at private meetings with various faculty members, and attended a wide range of classes. They had the opportunity to continue the conversation with American Studies committee-in-charge members Henry Breitrose, Joe and Wanda Corn, Michele Elam, David Palumbo-Liu, Jack Rakove, Ramón Saldivar, and Fred Turner, and their spouses, at a dinner at Professor Fishkin's home. ❧

STANFORD AMERICAN STUDIES INAUGURATES SISTER SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP WITH GEORGIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER



Stanford's American Studies program was the first American Studies Program in the country to participate in the International Partnerships program sponsored by the American Studies Association. This program, which encourages and supports "sister school" relationships between U.S.-based American Studies programs and programs outside the U.S., was launched last year as part of ASA president Shelley Fisher Fishkin's International Initiative.

Stanford's American Studies program entered into an international partnership with the Center for American Studies at Tbilisi State University in the Republic of Georgia, which is also home to the Georgian American Studies Association. Vasil Kacharava, director of the American Studies Center, has told us how deeply he and his colleagues appreciate the hundreds of books in American history, literature, politics, art, gender

studies, and economics, that Stanford faculty have collected and shipped to his institution. The donated books will do much to help make the library of the American Studies Center in Tbilisi increasingly central to the teaching and research of Georgian Americanists. (If you have books in American Studies that you would like to donate, please bring them to the program's office in building 250).

Professors Kacharava and Medzmariashvili are delighted to be able to include articles by Stanford faculty on topics as diverse as literature, education, politics, economics, gender studies, intellectual history, and material culture in the Georgian *Journal of American Studies*

Hundreds of books in American history, literature, politics, art, gender studies, and economics, that Stanford faculty have collected have been shipped to Tbilisi State University in the Republic of Georgia

In addition, seven Stanford faculty on the American Studies Committee in Charge and one advanced graduate student in History have contributed short articles that will be translated into Georgian and printed in the next two issues of the *Journal of American Studies* of Georgia, edited

by Professors Vasil Kacharava and Elene Medzmariashvili. Professors Kacharava and Medzmariashvili are delighted to be able to include articles by Stanford faculty on topics as diverse as literature, education, politics, economics, gender studies, intellectual history, and material culture. Articles by Stanford faculty that will appear in the *Georgian Journal of American Studies* include "The Civil Rights Revolution in the American South: An Economic View" by Professor Gavin Wright (Economics); "Why Same-Sex Marriage, Why Now?" by Professor Estelle B. Freedman (History); "Passing in the Post-Race Moment" by Professor Michele Elam (English); "The Perils of Customizing Education Through Homeschooling" by Professor Robert Reich (Political Science); "Either Or or And," by Professor Nicholas Jenkins (English); "C. Wright Mills in Perspective" by Professor Richard Gillam (American Studies), "Disaster Remnants: Family Artifacts from the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire" by Andrea Davies Henderson (History), and "The Transnational Turn in American Studies" and "Of Cultures and Canons: A Brief for Transnational American Literary Studies" by Professor Shelley Fisher Fishkin (English).

Director Shelley Fishkin first met Professor Kacharava at the American Studies Association annual meeting in Hartford in 2003. His description of the challenges of developing American Studies in Georgia, his ambitious goals, and his request for assistance,

AMERICAN STUDIES IN HANOI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

led her to develop the International Partnership program for the ASA, which provides small grants to the U.S. partner institutions to help subsidize the cost of mailing books and other educational materials, as well as other forms of collaboration. After Stanford got the ball rolling by establishing an ASA-supported sister school relationship with Tbilisi State University, U.S. American Studies programs at George Washington University, Rutgers, the University of California at Berkeley, San Jose State, Washington State, and Utah State University established ASA-supported sister school relationships with American Studies programs in Austria, China, Czech Republic, Israel, Spain, and the West Bank.

Several Stanford faculty were able to meet Professor Kacharava in person at the ASA Annual Meeting in Atlanta last fall. He told them how pleased he was to have this relationship with Stanford's program, since he had so many positive memories of a year he spent doing research as a visiting scholar here in the late 1980s. Shelley Fishkin had the pleasure of meeting Professor Medzmariashvili at the European American Studies Association meeting in Prague, where she enjoyed hearing about her efforts to strengthen research and teaching in Georgia on women in American culture and society. Professor Medzmariashvili, who will be doing research in the U.S. next year on a Fulbright, is looking forward to visiting Stanford sometime in the near future. ❧



Hien Dinh Minh, a member of the faculty at Hanoi National University, is a visiting Fulbright Scholar at Stanford this year. We asked her to tell us something about American Studies at her university.

American Studies is alive and well at Hanoi National University. Although the field has been taught for only a few semesters, its well-trained teaching staff of seventeen has high hopes for its future growth. The program is headed by Dr. Le The Que, Dean of the International Studies Department in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, where American Studies is housed at HNU. Approximately thirty students major in American Studies each year, and Dr. Que believes that the program, which focuses on American History, American Culture, U.S. Government, U.S. Economics, and U.S. Foreign Relations, is a strong one that is destined to continue to attract outstanding students.

Stanford American Studies faculty are actively helping with curriculum development in American Studies at HNU. Program Director Shelley Fisher Fishkin, for example, has helped me think through ways of integrating historical perspective into my American Literature syllabus.

Those of us who teach American Studies at HNU hope that with the support of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, the program will increasingly attract students who have a serious interest in American culture, and students who want to put this knowledge into practice after graduation by pursuing careers that will help bridge the gap between Vietnam and the U.S.A. In all of the many aspects of culture, language, and social practice, graduates of this department will act doubly as interpreters of Vietnam to America and America to Vietnam. Due to the success which it has already had and even more because of its great potential, the program hopes to eliminate any lingering question that such cooperation between the two countries cannot prosper.

RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS, HONORS, AND ACTIVITIES

By Greg Taylor '05

Members of Stanford's American Studies Committee have been busy adding to the scholarship in their fields.

GORDON CHANG (History) recently published "Whose 'Barbarism' Whose 'Treachery'? Race and Civilization in the Unknown United States-Korea War of 1871" in the *Journal of American History*.

WANDA CORN (Art and Art History) recently published "Artists' Homes and Studios, A Special Kind of Archive" in *American Art*. She also published "Brian Fag" in *Women on the Verge: The Culture of Neurasthenia in Nineteenth-Century America* and "Teaching Museums" in *Picasso to Thiebaud, Modern and Contemporary Art from the collections of Stanford University Alumni and Friends*. In addition, Corn also published "Hartley's Native Amerika" in *Marsden Hartley* and "A Note on Grant Wood's *July Fifteenth*" in the *Cantor Arts Center Journal*.

ARNOLD EISEN (Religious Studies) has been at work upon a book entitled *Rethinking Zionism*. He has given papers and written articles on such themes as the imagination of community by American Jewish thinkers, the imagination of the hyphenated self by that same group of thinkers, and the integration of covenant with pluralism in the thought of two Israeli Orthodox thinkers.

MICHELE ELAM (English) recent winner of the 2004 St. Clair Drake Outstanding Teaching Award, published *Race, Work, and Desire in American Literature, 1860-1930* and is currently completing "Mixed Race in the New Millennium," a study of "mixed race" representation in cultural and literary studies. She also published "Du Boisian Erotics: Priapism, Politics, and Perfectionism" in *W.E.B. Du Bois and the Gender of the Color Line* and "Politics & the Practice of 'Mixed Race'" in *Navigating the Frontline of Academia*. In addition, she has also recently published "Towards Desegregating Syllabi: Teaching Race & American Literary Realism" in *Teaching Literature: A Companion*, a review essay of Henry B. Wonham's *Playing the Races: Ethnic Caricature and American Literary Realism in American Literary Realism*, and "Kara Walker" in the *African American National Biography*.

SHELLEY FISHER FISHKIN (English) co-edited (with David Bradley) *Sport of the Gods and Other Essential Writings by Paul Laurence Dunbar* (out this summer), and (with Forrest Robinson) "Mark Twain at the Turn-of-the-Century, 1890-1910," a special issue of the *Arizona Quarterly* (which includes her article, "Mark Twain and the Jews.") She published "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies-Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004" in *American Quarterly* (a Japanese translation of it has been published in a Japanese journal), and published "American Studies in the 21st Century: A Usable Past" in the *Journal of British and American Studies* [Korea]; "Looking Over Mark Twain's Shoulder As He Writes: Stanford Students Read the *Huck Finn* Manuscript," in *The Mark Twain Annual*, and "The Bondwoman's Escape: Hannah Crafts Rewrites the First Play Published by an African American." In *Essays on The Bondwoman's Narrative*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. She has given keynote talks this year at American Studies conferences in the U.K. and Ireland, and will give keynote talks this summer in China, Japan and Korea.

RICHARD GILLAM (American Studies Program) published in a variety of journals, including *The American Quarterly*, *The American Scholar*, *The Gettysburg Review*, and *The Yale Review*, among others. He has just completed a short essay on the sociologist and critic, C. Wright Mills, which will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Georgian Journal of American Studies*. This spring quarter he will be on leave working on a new project.

NICK JENKINS (English) will publish "Looking into John Ashbery's 'A Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror'" in the forthcoming edition of the journal *Literatura na Swiecie* and "Either Or or And" in the forthcoming *Georgian Journal of American Studies*. He also published "Vin Ordinaire" in the January 2005 W.H. Auden Society newsletter.

GAVIN JONES (English) has recently published "Poverty and the Limits of Literary Criticism" in *American Literary History* and "Poverty, Gender, and Literary

Criticism: Reassessing Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*." in *Comparative American Studies*. He has also published a review of Edward G. Gray's *New World Babel: Languages and Nations in Early America* and *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature: A Reader of Original Texts with English Translations* titled "Language Nation" in *American Literary History*. Jones has two forthcoming articles, "Mark Twain and the American Language" in *A Companion to Mark Twain* and "Dialect" in *American History through Literature*.

DOUG MCADAM (Sociology) recently published his book *Social Movements and Organizations*. In addition, he has published "Anti-Americanism as Contentious Politics" in *Anti-Americanism* and "Collective Action" in the *Encyclopedia of Sociology*. He also co-wrote "From Bowling to Action: The Durable Nature and Organizational Roots of Collective Civic Engagement" in *American Journal of Sociology*; "'There Will Be Fighting In the Streets': The Distorting Lens of Social Movement Theory" in *Mobilization*; and "Scale Shift in Transnational Contention" in *Transnational Contention* and "Organizations and Movements" in *Social Movements and Organization Theory: Building Bridges*.

HILTON OBENZINGER (URP/English) recently published a novel, entitled *A*Hole*. He also reviewed *Imagining the Holy Land: Maps, Models, and Fantasy Travels* for the *Journal of American History*. In addition, Professor Obenzinger wrote "Holy Land Narrative and American Covenant: Levi Parsons, Pliny Fisk, and the Palestine Mission" in *Religion and Literature* and "Better Dreams: Political Satire and Twain's Final 'Exploding' Novel" to be published in the forthcoming issue of the *Arizona Quarterly*. He also participated in a panel discussion on rhetoric and war titled "On Being a Traitor."

RAMON SALDIVAR (English/Comp. Lit.) was named a recipient of the Western American Literature Association Distinguished Achievement Award in October of 2003. This is an award given annually to a scholar in the area of Western American literature, for lifetime contributions. Saldívar adds that "the award was all the more special to [him] because [he] was co-recipient with [his] brother José D. Saldívar (UC Berkeley) and [his] sister Sonia Saldívar-Hull (U Texas San Antonio)." Also, with Paula Moya, he co-edited a special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* (MFS) on "Fictions of the Trans-American Imaginary." His new book, titled *The Borderlands of Culture: Social Aesthetics and the Transnational Imaginary of Américo Paredes*, is scheduled for publication in autumn 2005.

FRED TURNER (Communications) has had an article accepted at *Technology and Culture*, the leading journal for the history of technology, entitled "Where the Counterculture Met the New Economy: Revisiting the WELL and the Origins of Virtual Community." While nearly all scholars to date have argued that "virtual community" first emerged as a concept alongside digital networks, Turner's article shows how the concept in fact emerged when those networks met the intellectual legacy of the American counterculture and the networked professional practices of the New Economy. In this way, the piece relocates digital networks within the mainstream of American cultural, as well as technological, history.

GAVIN WRIGHT (Economics) recently published "Slavery and American Agricultural History" in *Agricultural History*, which was awarded the Carstensen Prize as the best article published in this journal during 2003. He has also published the article "Order Without Law: Property Rights During the California Gold Rush" in *Explorations in Economic History* and "Persisting Dixie: The South as an Economic Region" in *The American South in the Twentieth Century*.

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