

## program in american studies 2007 newsletter

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Director	1
Paul Laurence Dunbar Centennial Conference	2
Stanford Students' Adventures at the Oakland ASA	5
New Members of the Committee-In-Charge	9
New Faculty Books	10
American Studies Activities	11
Humanities Center Workshop in American Cultures/Transnational American Studies	12
Feature: Fred Turner	14
Visiting Speakers	15
Interview with Arnold Rampersad	16
Honors Thesis Awards	18
American Studies in Washington	19
American Studies in Australia	20
Alumni Updates	22
American Studies Career Night: Law	24
The Nicholas Yarris Story	25
Articles by Stanford Americanists in the <i>Georgian Journal of American Studies</i>	26
Faculty News	27



## STANFORD UNIVERSITY AMERICAN STUDIES

### FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Shelley Fisher Fishkin*

*Professor of English and Director of American Studies*

When Kelley Fong first came into my office for advising, I was startled to meet my younger double. She had graduated from Staples High School in Westport, Connecticut. I had graduated from Staples High School in Westport, Connecticut. She had been President of the Spanish Club. I had been President of the Spanish Club. She had been an editor of the newspaper. I had been an editor of the newspaper. She had been admitted to Swarthmore College. I had been admitted to Swarthmore College....But there our paths diverged. Kelley declined Swarthmore to attend Stanford at least in part because Stanford had an American Studies program and Swarthmore did not. I, on the other hand, actually did attend Swarthmore (for two years, before transferring to Yale), and didn't discover the field of American Studies until graduate school. Kelley was way ahead of me on that front. I was very pleased when she expressed interest in being Editor of the American Studies Newsletter, and I am delighted by the energy and professional aplomb she has brought to the entire enterprise.

During the two years since our last biennial Newsletter appeared, American Studies at Stanford has thrived. American Studies majors have written prize-winning honors theses on everything from the desegregation of Baltimore, to the smear campaign of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, to the *Daily Show's* assault on American news media, to the importance of poet Allen Ginsberg for the Czech student movement. They have pursued studies of comparative environmental policies at Australia's Great Barrier Reef, and have learned about American politics in the corridors of Congress. They helped organize the Paul Laurence Dunbar Centennial Conference at Stanford, and they attended the American Studies Association Annual Meeting in Oakland; they met with American Studies scholars from the Republic of Georgia, China, Korea, and Taiwan, had dinner with the poet laureate of Louisiana, and had lunch with the leading expert on the place of

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the piano in American cultural history. American Studies faculty have published monographs, anthologies, articles, editions, and a long-awaited biography.

This newsletter provides an overview of what's been happening in American Studies at Stanford. Thank you to Kelley Fong and the Newsletter staff of American Studies majors who contributed their articles, ideas, and images. We are all grateful to Activities coordinator Julia Cherlow '07 for having organized Café AmStud, an informal weekly gathering that helped foster friendships and build community. We are indebted, as always, to the intelligence, grace and good humor which staff members Monica Moore and Jan Hafner bring to the American Studies office, solving each problem that lands on their desks with expertise and élan. I would like to take this opportunity to thank three faculty members who have recently left the Committee-in-Charge for having shared their time and expertise so generously over the many years of their active involvement in the program: Henry Breitrose (Communication), Joe Corn (American Studies, History), and Wanda Corn (Art History). A special thanks goes to Joe Corn for having been such a dedicated Coordinator of the American Studies Program at Stanford.

It's also a pleasure to welcome three faculty members who recently joined the American Studies Committee-in-Charge since the last Newsletter appeared – Arnold Rampersad (English), Judith Richardson (English), and Caroline Winterer (History); and I'd like to thank the entire Committee-in-Charge for the time and energy they generously share with our majors. All of you know, of course, that American Studies at Stanford is the vibrant and vital place it is because you – the students – are so smart and so much fun to teach! ❧



Shelley Fisher Fishkin

THE PROGRAM IN AMERICAN STUDIES PRESENTS  
**PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR** FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2006  
**CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE** SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2006  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY



Elizabeth Alexander Yale University  
Marcellus Blount Columbia University  
David Bradley University of Oregon  
Joanne Braxton College of William and Mary  
Michael Cohen New York University  
Michele Elam Stanford University  
Joanne Gabbin James Madison University  
Adrian Gaskins University of Minnesota  
Donna Akiba Harper Spelman University  
Jennifer Hughes Emory University  
Jennifer James George Washington University  
Gene Jarrett University of Maryland  
Blair L.M. Kelley North Carolina State University  
Thomas Leuchtenmüller Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Switzerland  
Xilao Li William Rainey Harper College  
John Lowe Louisiana State University  
Deborah McDowell University of Virginia  
Elizabeth McHenry New York University  
William J. Maxwell University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
James Miller George Washington University  
Harryette Mullen University of California-Los Angeles  
Aldon Lynn Nielsen Penn State University  
Nadia Nurhusein University of Massachusetts-Boston  
Yolanda Pierce University of Kentucky  
Lauri Ramey California State University-Los Angeles  
Greg Robinson Université du Québec, Canada  
Lillian Robinson Concordia University, Canada  
Wilfred Samuels University of Utah  
Ray Sapirstein Jocelyn Lee Photography, NYC  
Reynolds Scott-Childress State University of New York-New Paltz  
Amritjit Singh Rhode Island College  
James Smethurst University of Massachusetts-Amherst  
Jennifer Terry University of Durham, U.K.  
Nicole Walligora-Davis Cornell University  
Kenneth Warren University of Chicago  
Cary Wintz Texas Southern University  
Loretta Woodard Marygrove College

Conference Organizers  
Shelley Fisher Fishkin Stanford University  
Gavin Jones Stanford University  
Meta DuEwa Jones University of Texas at Austin  
Arnold Rampersad Stanford University  
Richard Yarbrough University of California-Los Angeles

FRIDAY, MARCH 10  
8:30-6:30 Oak Lounge  
Tresidder Student Union

SATURDAY, MARCH 11  
8:30-6:30 Levinthal Hall  
Stanford Humanities Center

Register and view full program at <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/dunbar/>  
Free and Open to the Public

CO-SPONSORS: STANFORD UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF HUMANITIES & SCIENCES, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, CONTINUING STUDIES, PROGRAM IN AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES, THE HUMANITIES CENTER; THE CENTRAL REGION HUMANITIES CENTER (OHIO UNIVERSITY)



PROFESSOR DAVID BRADLEY (University of Oregon), author of *The Chaneyville Incident*, and co-editor of the Modern Library edition of Dunbar's writings, presenting the final paper of the conference, entitled, "Factoring Out Race: The Cultural Context of Paul Laurence Dunbar"

By Kelley Fong '09

More than 200 scholars convened at Stanford in March 2006 to participate in a celebration of the centennial of Paul Laurence Dunbar's death. A prolific and influential poet, novelist, lyricist, dramatist, and journalist, Dunbar was the first African American to make his living as a writer.

The conference was organized by three members of the American Studies Committee-in-Charge – Prof. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Prof. Gavin Jones, and Prof. Arnold Rampersad – as well as two Stanford alumni, Prof. Meta Jones of UT-Austin and Prof. Richard Yarborough of UCLA.

"Dunbar was one of the most talented, complex, and versatile writers America has produced, but he has never received the scholarly attention he deserves," said Fishkin, who, with conference attendee David Bradley recently co-edited a Modern Library/Random House edition of Dunbar's most important writings.

One of the conference's aims was to address this lack of scholarly discourse on Dunbar. According to Rampersad, Dunbar was "a towering figure in African American culture" in his time, and his work is extremely important to the development of black writing. "A conference on his life and work was vitally important in his centenary year, and this one came off brilliantly," Rampersad said. "We had outstanding scholar-critics attend and present papers. The level of scholarly and critical discourse was consistently high."

Held on March 10 and 11, the event

drew 43 speakers from universities around the nation and around the world, in disciplines such as English, History, American Studies, and African American Studies.

The event attracted, in the words of Prof. Greg Robinson of l'Université du Québec à Montréal, "an outstanding group of scholars and Dunbar fans. I chatted with natives of Germany, India, and Taiwan, among others." He added that the event's strong African



American presence allowed him to see Dunbar through the eyes of the black community. "I was touched by the extremely supportive atmosphere they created," Robinson said. "I have never in my life had so many people from an audience congratulate me on a piece I presented."

Conference attendees also enjoyed "Dunbar's Children," a performance of Dunbar's poetry about and for children directed by Prof. Harry Elam of the drama department and performed by the Stanford Committee on Black Performing Arts. Robinson said the performance was a highlight of the conference for him. "It not only was entertaining, but the context in which the performance was presented"

– through a paper by Prof. Michele Elam – "made clear the determination of the poet, in writing the pieces, to construct a world in which African Americans could be let alone and able to enjoy such seemingly commonplace family lives," he said.

Participants also attended eight sessions held throughout the weekend, which included themes such as "Realism, Humor, and Dialect," "Faith and Folklore," "The Racial Politics of

*"A conference on [Dunbar's] life and work was vitally important in his centenary year, and this one came off brilliantly."*

the Nadir," "Framing Dunbar," "Beyond Blackness," "Traveling and Abroad," and "Legacies."

Novelist David Bradley, an associate professor at the University of Oregon, said the conference was unlike any he had ever attended. Because the papers were presented in plenary session, "the discussions outside the room were extensions of the conference." Bradley added that there were many opportunities for interaction and discussion over the course of the weekend – "and for once, the food was excellent."

Prof. Joanne Braxton of the College of William and Mary said that the conference might be the best she had ever attended. Braxton described the conference as "well-structured and intellectually stimulating." She added

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## PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE

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that the papers given “were of the highest caliber. Many new perspectives emerged. Together we celebrated Dunbar’s life and work and set new directions for Dunbar scholarship in the twenty-first century.”

Looking back on the conference, Rampersad said that it was more successful than any of the organizers had dared to expect. “[It was] a terrific tribute to the effectiveness of our Program in American Studies,” he said.

Selected papers will be edited for a special issue of *African American Review*, and a video of the entire conference, organized session by session, may be viewed online by following the link at the American Studies Program’s Web site (<http://www.stanford.edu/group/HSP/AmStud/>). ❧

Joanne Braxton of the College of William and Mary gives the introductory paper of the conference, entitled “*Dunbar: The Originator.*”



James Miller, Professor of English and American Studies and Director of Africana Studies at George Washington University, introduces the speakers at the first session of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Centennial Conference. From left to right, Joanne Gabbin, Professor of English, James Madison University, who delivered a paper entitled “Intimate Intercessions: The Poetry of Dunbar;” Elizabeth McHenry, Associate Professor of English, New York University, who delivered a paper entitled “Beyond the Presence of Dunbar;” Greg Robinson, Associate Professor of History at l’Université du Québec à Montréal, and Lillian Robinson, Principal of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University (Montreal), who jointly delivered a paper entitled “Dunbar: A Credit to His Race?” Sadly, Lillian Robinson passed away in September. The paper she presented at the conference with her nephew, Greg Robinson, was her last public presentation of her work.



Kelley Fong



Philana Omorotionmwan '07



Philana Omorotionmwan '07, and William Lowell Von Hoene '08



Philana Omorotionmwan '07 and Mondaire Jones '09 (seated)

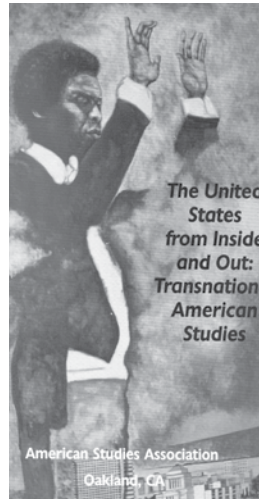


Mondaire Jones '09 and Naima Green '08

**“Dunbar’s Children”, a performance of Dunbar’s poems about and for children, was directed by Prof. Harry J. Elam, Jr., introduced by Prof. Michele Elam, and featured a cast of Stanford students including Mondaire Jones, Naima Green, Philana Omorotionmwan, and William Lowell Von Hoene.**

## REFLECTIONS ON THE AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

By Courtney Hill '08



*Program for the 2006 ASA Conference in Oakland.*

*Stanford American Studies majors who attended enrolled in a one-credit course on "New Research in American Studies," which gave them the opportunity to explore as a group over the course of fall quarter the scholarship they encountered at the ASA Conference and the contexts that informed it.*



### FIRST EDITIONS OF PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR'S ILLUSTRATED GIFT BOOKS,

*Poems of Cabin and Field*, *"Howdy Honey Howdy,"* and *Candle-Lightin' Time* were

on display in Green Library in an exhibit mounted as part of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Centennial Conference in March 2006. The exhibit, "Majors and Minors: The Multivalent Paul Laurence Dunbar," curated by Ray Sapirstein (Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Albany), with the aid of assistant curator Rhonda Goodman, graduate student in Art History and Humanities, featured

Stanford's diverse holdings of Dunbar's works. One of the most celebrated African American figures at the turn of the twentieth century,

Dunbar published fiction, poetry, journalism and popular music in a short career spanning only thirteen years. The exhibit highlighted six books of Dunbar's African American dialect poetry illustrated with photographs—landmarks in African-American history, literature and visual culture.

This past autumn a handful of Stanford's American Studies majors were offered the opportunity to take part in the annual conference of the American Studies Association (ASA) from October 12-15, 2006, in Oakland. The conference, which was titled *The United States from Inside and Out: Transnational American Studies*, featured many sessions on multicultural and international perspectives on American Studies, introducing students to the broader issues being explored by American Studies scholars worldwide.

Monica Bhattacharya '07, Julia Cherlow '07, Kelley Fong '09, Ashlea Graves '07, Courtney Hill '08, David Lai '08, and Milton Solorzano '07 joined several Stanford graduate students and faculty members at the conference. In Oakland, they attended workshops, panels, and roundtable discussions addressing topics ranging from evolving perspectives of femininity, transnational perspectives on American architecture, and even the international influence of the Haitian revolution. Graduate students, professors, and independent scholars presented their papers and research to welcoming ears, sharing thoughts and theories that helped students understand the emerging issues

and hot topics within the American Studies community and how these topics connect our American Studies majors to scholars around the globe. Majors also had the chance to man the International Initiative booth at the book exhibit. Additionally, they enjoyed breakfast with Dr. Elene Medzmariashvili, an American Studies scholar from Tbilisi State University in the Republic of Georgia. Students kept journals throughout the weekend with their notes from panel sessions as well as reflections on the conference as a whole.

Aside from the ample academic opportunity available at the conference, students were able to connect with faculty outside of the classroom on a less formal level. Students, scholars, and professors swapped conference stories over coffee, grabbed a bite to eat downtown, and even boogied down at the ASA President's Reception and Dance. One student recalled, "The highlight of the conference for me was definitely being at the reception on Saturday night, dancing with Professor Fishkin. It reminded me that she's not just our director, she's a real person who I can go to when I have a problem or a question and who shares my academic passions."

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Another student added, “I really liked the breakfast discussion we had with the professor from our sister school in the Republic of Georgia. I felt like listening to her experience helped me understand why other countries have such an active interest in American studies and gave me a greater appreciation for the privilege I’ve had in studying here at Stanford.”

Although it may seem otherwise, the ASA conference was about more than having fun and learning about new things. Students also had the chance to apply what they discovered to their own scholarly interests. I, for one, left the conference with more than just a greater knowledge of important events in American history or a better understanding of the social struggles of different cultural organizations—I left with a renewed passion to explore my own interests and a desire to work toward sharing those with others, as the presenters and panelists I had listened to were able to do. Overall, the conference was an excellent experience, where students had the chance to better appreciate the work of the field’s pioneers as well as their peers and really connect to the larger American Studies community. ❧



Courtney Hill

## YOUTH VOICES AND YOUTH ACTIVISM

By Kelley Fong '09

The ivory tower of academia is being chipped away at – and in my mind, that’s not a bad thing.

While at the American Studies Association annual conference, I attended a session entitled “Youth Voices and Youth Activism in Oakland: Transforming the Public Sphere.” Speaking at the session were an integrated group of academics and activists – Jennifer Tilton, of Wesleyan University; Victor Rios, of the University of San Francisco, Victor Duarte, of Huastec Organization; and Lissa Soep, of Youth Radio. The session was chaired by Taj James of the Movement Strategy Center.

The fact that this session even existed is testament to the increasing emphasis on the connections between the institution of the university and its surrounding community. At the American Studies conference, I envisioned professors whose research interests would be aligned with what I traditionally thought of when I thought about humanistic study – Puritan ideology, for example, or nineteenth-century African-American literature. While these kinds of topics were certainly not absent, I was excited to find out about the plethora of groundbreaking research focused directly on contemporary communities. Nowhere was this more evident than this session, which boasted professors right alongside leaders in Bay Area

community organizations.

Many of my academic interests were merged in this session, which reminded me of the essence of American Studies: connections across disciplines. Issues of history, gender, local culture, cultural differences, the media, social movement activism, community organizations, and youth development all came together in a coherently articulated narrative about youth activism in Oakland.

Hearing about this topic from different perspectives enriched my understanding on the topic. Tilton opened the session by discussing the power of organizing as a youth movement, drawing from her own research about youth in urban environments and juvenile justice. Because youth are expected to challenge authority, she argued, they create a space for protest politics. In addition, their link to childhood and innocence forges a strategic connection that they use to their advantage, employing rhetorical emphases on home, family, and recreation.

Soep used her experience with Youth Radio, an independent media production company and nonprofit after-school company, to flesh out the concept of the youth voice, vital to Tilton’s notion of the youth movement. She presented an excerpt from a radio program and emphasized how her organization aims to promote the youth voice

as one infused with real and lasting expression. Youth Radio puts the power and strategy of organizing as a youth movement, as discussed by Tilton, into action.

Rios looked at youth activism through the lenses of gender and race, focusing on the early life experiences that motivate young Chicana women to become activists. His research focused on youth, race, and crime in an urban setting, and he used interviews from Chicana activists to examine the roots of their feminist activism. His finding that feminism and activism are developed in childhood and early adolescence further underscores the power of youth activism.

Duarte works with Huaxtec, an organization in Oakland that aims to reduce youth involvement in gangs by empowering them. From his experiences with youth organizing, Duarte discussed the benefits of working as a grassroots organization, in contrast to a nonprofit organization. His argument about the nature of youth organization came not from journal articles he had scoured or research studies he had conducted, but rather from true experience in the field.

The talks each individual gave

contributed to a nuanced understanding of youth activism. By addressing the issue from a number of different angles, the session accomplished more than it could have if it had taken the perspective of a single discipline or field. The fact that these organization leaders would even be invited to speak at the American Studies conference shows that what they have to say is of value to an academic audience as well as a general community audience.

This session to me embodied the integration of traditional academic study with community-based study, and it seems scholars are increasingly drawing from both areas in their work. I see signs of this even in my own education; at Stanford, we are lucky to have so many examples. To offer a few: my Sophomore College Class, "The University as a Local and Global Citizen," which focused on the very issues of university-community connection. The opportunities offered by and faculty involved in the Haas Center for Public Service. The many service-learning classes that seek to engage students in experiential and reflective education. The community writing projects in the PWR department, which get students involved in real-world writing for nonprofit organizations.

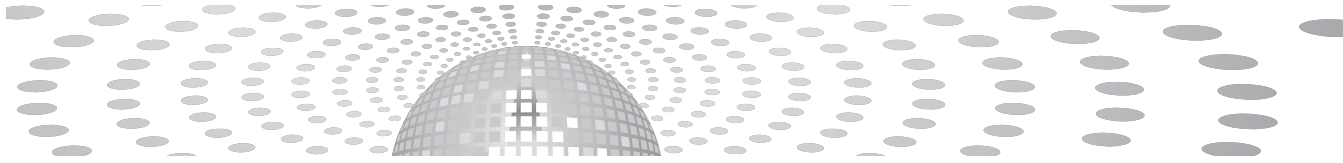
The new track in the history major, entitled "Public History and Public Service."

To me, academic study ought to draw connections – between the concrete and the abstract, the near and the far, the historical and the contemporary. The field of American Studies does just this. We are no longer limited even to studies of America and by Americans – in fact, the theme of the 2006 conference was "The United States from Inside and Out: Transnational American Studies." The field is increasingly aware of the need to collaborate with international scholars and produce a vision of America that does not look solely inward. Integrating traditional academic pursuits with their applications in the community offers vibrant and dynamic possibilities for collaboration and connection, possibilities which I hope to explore through American Studies. ❧



Kelley Fong

*"To me, academic study ought to draw connections – between the concrete and the abstract, the near and the far, the historical and the contemporary."*



## DISCO AS A POLITICAL SPACE? REFLECTIONS ON MY FIRST FORAY INTO THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF THE ACADEMY

By Julia Cherlow '07

The Academy can be a pretty racy place. Trust me, I know...now.

Previous to visiting the 2006 American Studies Association Conference in Oakland, I possessed a general sense of what academic scholarship entailed. During my three-plus years at Stanford, I had perused *American Quarterly* and poked around in *Academic Search Premier*, in search of such dry articles as "Examining the Impact of Welfare Reform, Labor Market Conditions, and the Earned Income Tax Credit on the Employment of Black and White Single Mothers." Though dry, such articles were dependable, predictable, even comfortable. . . based on their titles, I could expect to find an analysis of some sort of real world phenomena with tables, statistics, quotes, opinion polls and the like. Such concrete papers calmed me. But my predilection for their predictability prevented an awareness of the diversity of research taking place in the field of American Studies. My trip to Oakland quickly brought an end to this naiveté.

I vividly recall the instant my sense of the Academy morphed. It was the moment Alice Echols confidently stated - in a lecture entitled "Disco as a Political Space?" - that "disco stood for a new sexual order that seemed to arouse something like castration anxiety in rockers." Sitting there atop the 21-story Oakland Marriott Convention Center, I couldn't help but wonder if Ms. Echols, University of Southern California Associate Professor of English, had really just said, "castration anxiety?" If she had, then what had she meant by this *castration anxiety*, and how did disco have anything to do with it? And even if it did, how did this have anything to do with American Studies? Glancing around the AJ Topper seminar room, I speculated whether anyone else was as perplexed as me. Shockingly, I witnessed rows of intent listeners nodding and smiling - actually identifying with these sentiments! And these people had Ph.D.s! Perhaps it was I, the lowly B.A. candidate, who was missing the connections.

With the prospect of two full days of confusion ahead of me - Echols' lecture was the first I attended at the Conference - I decided to withhold judgment and listen to what she had to say. Remarkably, I found the rest of her talk quite engaging. I had never before thought about the political implications of such songs as "Love Hangover" by Diana Ross, with its repetition of the line "If there's a cure for this, I don't want it." Echols effectively pointed out that, released in 1976, this song served as an anthem for the American Queer Community - "Out" and proud, no longer searching for a *cure*. Additionally, I was intrigued by Echols' proposal that disco dance clubs provided a unique space for the acceptance and embrace of gender bending in America. Answering my questions about the castration anxiety noted above, Echols intelligently argued that disco's embrace of the sexually empowered female (with such groups as Labelle) deposed what she called the phallogocentric rocker idol - heterosexual males could no longer claim a monopoly on sexuality in music. I was amazed by Echols' professional approach to what I considered risqué material. Her research obviously exhibited a keen understanding of disco and its implications on the American political scene.

The rest of my time in Oakland confirmed my newfound belief in the broad potential of American Studies research. Attending lectures such as "Style and Transnational Commodity Culture," (which focused on the implications of male leisure-wear in the 1950's) and "Singed Out: Young Women, Femininity and Sexuality in 1960s-70s Popular Culture," reminded me that any theme, when approached from a scholarly angle, holds the potential for serious investigation. Though my studies at Stanford have monumentally altered the way I view America, the scope of my inquiry has been quite conservative: American law, American Literature, American Drama, American Race Relations, American Politics, etc. I credit the 2006 American Studies Association Conference with expanding my comfort zone and opening up my eyes to the racier side of the Academy. ¶



Julia Cherlow



Compiled by Claire Borthwick '07

### ARNOLD RAMPERSAD



professor of English, was a member of the English department from 1974 to 1983, and returned to Stanford in 1998. His interests include biography and autobiography, as well as W. E. B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, and literature of the South. He has authored books on DuBois, Hughes, Jackie Robinson, and most recently Ralph Ellison, published in April 2007. Additionally, he has edited volumes of Langston Hughes' poetry and works by Richard Wright, and, with Shelley Fisher Fishkin, co-edited the *Race and American Culture* book series published by Oxford University Press.

Rampersad teaches courses including "W.E.B. Du Bois and American Culture" (with Michele Elam), "American Sports, American Lives," "African American Poetry," "Great Works of the African-American Literary Tradition," and "Studies in American Biography."

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### JUDITH RICHARDSON



an assistant professor of English, has taught at Stanford since 2001, after receiving her Ph.D. at Harvard. She published a book, *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley*, and articles on Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. Recently she published an article on haunted trees related to racially-motivated lynchings in late nineteenth century folklore, and currently she is working on a project titled "Tattooed Ladies: The Exotic Domestic Life of New England Women in the Nineteenth Century."

Richardson's courses include "American Hauntings," "American Women Writers 1850-1920," and "American Literature and Culture to 1855."

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### CAROLINE WINTERER



assistant professor of History, has been teaching at Stanford since 2004. She specializes in the intellectual and cultural history of 18th- and 19th-century America. She has received a number of awards, including two fellowships from the Mellon Foundation, three from the Spencer Foundation, a fellowship at the National Humanities Center, and a Howard Foundation Fellowship from Brown University. She was most recently the recipient of the William H. and Frances Green Faculty Fellowship at Stanford. Along with Paula Findlen (History) and Giovanna Ceserani (Classics), she directs the Ancients and Modern Workshop at the Stanford Humanities Center. Her first book, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) was reprinted in paperback and won a prize. She has also published articles in the *Journal of American History*, *American Quarterly*, and *Modern Intellectual History*. Her

second book, *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750-1900*, will be published by Cornell University Press in June 2007.

Winterer teaches courses including, "Colonial and Revolutionary America," "The American Enlightenment," and "19th-Century U.S. Cultural and Intellectual History."

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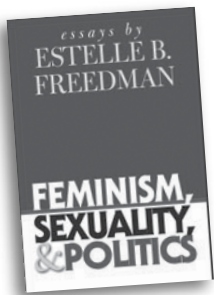
Compiled by Kelley Fong '09

**GORDON CHANG** co-edited *Chinese American Voices: From The Gold Rush to the Present* along with Judy Yung and Him Mark Lai. Published in March 2006 by University of California Press, the book is an anthology of primary documents and stories by Chinese Americans. The collection of documents, many of which have never been published or translated into English, includes letters, speeches, testimonies, oral histories, personal memoirs, poems, essays, and folksongs. Together, the diverse voices featured provide an insightful and panoramic perspective on the Chinese American experience since the mid-nineteenth century.

**RAMÓN SALDÍVAR** published his third book, *The Borderlands of Culture: Social Aesthetics and the Transnational Imaginary of Américo Paredes*, in March 2006. Published by Duke University Press, the book uses Américo Paredes, a key figure in studies of the Mexican/United States border, to delve into issues of the modern American borderlands, transnationalism, and globalism. Saldívar examines Paredes' poetry, prose, and journalism in addition to his important role as a cultural scholar, folklorist, and ethnographer.

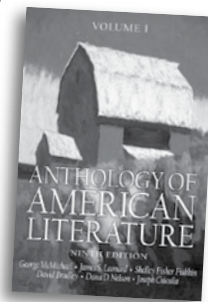


**ESTELLE FREEDMAN** published eleven essays in *Feminism, Sexuality, and Politics*, a May 2006 collection published by the University of North Carolina Press. The essay collection, which includes eight previously published and three new essays, focus on issues of women's activism and sexual boundaries. Collectively, Freedman's essays explore the way gender, sexuality, and politics have evolved over the past two centuries. This is Freedman's fifth book and first collection of essays.



In September 2006, **FRED TURNER** published his second book, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*. Published by the University of Chicago Press, Turner's book follows the relationships and forces shaping the countercultural figure Stewart Brand, exploring how computers and cyberspace came to represent a digital utopia modeled on the communal ideas of hippies. In November 2006, Turner presented at a public symposium co-sponsored by the Program in American Studies entitled "From Counterculture to Cyberculture: The Legacy of the Whole Earth Catalog." For more on Turner and this book, please see Katie Harrington's feature on page 14.

**SHELLEY FISHER FISHKIN** was an editor of the *Anthology of American Literature*, volumes 1 and 2, ninth edition. Fishkin edited the anthology, published in December 2006 by Prentice Hall, along with George McMichael, James S. Leonard, David Bradley, Dana D. Nelson, and Joseph Csicsila. The anthology consists of two volumes of classic and new selections from America's literary beginnings to the contemporary era. In addition, an Italian translation of Fishkin's edition of Mark Twain's play, *Is He Dead?* was published in Rome under the title *Le avventure di un artista defunto. Una commedia in tre atti* (Roma: Editore Cooper, 2006).



Following his biographies on W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, and Jackie Robinson **ARNOLD RAMPERSAD** published *Ralph Ellison: A Biography* in April 2007. In the book, published by Knopf, Rampersad takes advantage of extensive access to Ellison's correspondence to paint a detailed and probing portrait of Ellison, author of the highly acclaimed and widely read *Invisible Man*. For more on this biography, please see Tracy Oliver's interview with Rampersad on page 16.



**NICK JENKINS'** *An Outcast of the Island: W.H. Auden and the Regeneration of England* was published in May 2007 by Harvard University Press. The book closely examines the opening of Auden's career as a poet, beginning in the 1920s and taking the reader through the next couple decades of Auden's life and poetry. Jenkins uses new archival material by and about Auden to shed light onto both the poet and the English spirit at this time.

*American Hungers: The Problem of Poverty in U.S. Literature, 1840-1945*, by **GAVIN JONES**, is forthcoming from Princeton University Press in October 2007. Jones' second book will combine social theory with literary analysis to look at literature through the lens of poverty – a perspective that is vastly underrepresented in current scholarship, despite permeating American literature across time, space, and genre. *American Hungers* brings the condition of poverty to the forefront of the history of literary representation in America.

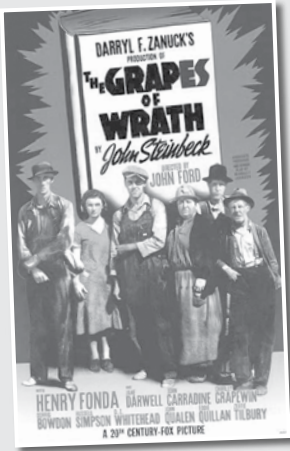


"Homeless," by Oscar Rejlander, Courtesy George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

**BRYAN WOLF** is the co-author of a new college-level textbook, *American Encounters*. The textbook, on the history of American art, was co-written by Angela Miller and Janet C. Berlo and will be published in October 2007 by Prentice Hall.

## NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN STUDIES ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

By Julia Cherlow '07



Under the inspiring direction of Program Director Shelley Fisher Fishkin, American Studies at Stanford has inaugurated a quarterly program that seeks to connect American Studies majors with the diverse cultural offerings in the Bay Area.

During fall quarter, a group of American Studies majors attended a showing at the Stanford Theater in downtown Palo Alto of the 1940 film *The Grapes of Wrath*, directed by John Ford and starring Henry Fonda. Alongside professors Richard Gillam and Shelley

Fisher Fishkin, as well as Communications chair Jim Fishkin and Patrick Dooley, a visiting Steinbeck scholar from Syracuse University, the students continued the evening with a lively discussion of the film and its connection to the Steinbeck novel at Buca di Beppo, a nearby Italian eatery.

For the winter quarter event, Professor Fishkin organized a group of American Studies students and faculty to attend "The American Piano" at Dinkelspiel Auditorium. "The American Piano" was conceived by acclaimed author and music historian

Joseph Horowitz, who believes that "the piano, a neutral democratic medium as comfortable in the night-club as the concert hall, has inspired a protean American canon reflective of the American experience." In a lecture that preceded the concert, Horowitz made a case for the centrality of a black virtuoso tradition to the American concert repertoire, arguing that the longtime exclusion of composers like Scott Joplin and Art Tatum from the classical canon mirrored the larger socio-political stresses which he summarized as the "jazz threat." A selection of this concert repertoire – alongside work by composer Mark Applebaum, a member of the Stanford faculty – was performed by pianists Steven Mayer and Anthony de Mare. The Monday following the performance, a few lucky American Studies majors attended a special lunch with Professor Fishkin and Mr. Horowitz at the Faculty Club.

In addition to these cultural forays, American Studies has also inaugurated a weekly "Café AmStud," that takes place on Wednesday afternoons in Building 250. These casual affairs offer students and faculty in the major the opportunity to converse about all things "American Studies," while getting their caffeine fix for the afternoon. ☪



Julia Cherlow

## BLUE DOOR

By Tracy Oliver '07

On May 9th, 2007, 15 students and Stanford faculty, including American Studies majors and American Studies director Shelley Fisher Fishkin, attended the critically acclaimed production of *Blue Door* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. The play is written by African-American playwright Tanya Barfield and directed by acclaimed actor Delroy Lindo. It is performed by Teagle Bougere and David Fonteno, both actors who have played prominent roles on Broadway.

Recently nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, Barfield's *Blue Door* revolves around four generations of African-American males, beginning with slavery and ending in the present. With analysis of the institution of slavery, lynching, assimilation in education, interracial marriage, stereotypes, and fear of African-American men, the play has sparked stimulating intellectual discussion in Berkeley and throughout the world.

Following the production, the students and faculty had an opportunity to discuss the play with the director and the actors over dinner. ☪



Tracy Oliver



American Studies major Tracy Oliver '07 interned on the Berkeley Repertory Theatre production of *Blue Door* for five weeks. Broadway actor Teagle Bougere (left) is featured on the set with Tracy.

## HUMANITIES CENTER WORKSHOP IN AMERICAN CULTURES/ TRANSNATIONAL AMERICAN STUDIES

By Nigel Hatton, Stephen Lee, and Jayson Sae-Saue, graduate students in *Modern Thought and Literature* and coordinators of the workshop series

The American Studies workshop kicked off its reinauguration at the Stanford Humanities Center on October 11th in an effort to grasp critically the various methods and understandings of the “transnational turn” in American Studies. Our first speaker, Claudia Sadowski-Smith, assistant professor of English at Arizona State University, theorized a preliminary framework which seeks to bridge forms of Asian American and Latino Studies. In focusing on undocumented land-crossings of U.S. borders in the short stories of Edith Eaton written at the turn of the 20th century, and the 21st-century novel *Tropic of Orange* by Karen Tei Yamashita, professor Sadowski-Smith argues that revisiting the history of Asian undocumented immigration across U.S. borders facilitates certain conversations between the diverse range of ethnic studies. Professor Sadowski-Smith suggests such a geographical and historical emphasis on immigration in Asian American, Asian Canadian, Chicana/o, and Latina/o literary production moves us away from pan-national conversations and into inter-hemispheric and trans-pacific dialogues.

Our second speaker of fall quarter, Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Professor of History and Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America at Brown University (November 14th), shared portions of her many projects which seek to uncover and recover the history of Asian migration to Latin America and the Caribbean, and to document and analyze the contributions of these immigrants to the formation of Latin/Caribbean societies and cultures across the Americas. As such,

her work contributes towards theorizing diasporas and transnationalism while situating the long, varied, and continuous history of contact between Latin America and Asia including coolie labor in Cuba and Peru, Chinese voluntary associations on the US/Mexico border, and current and future conceptualizations of Asia-Pacific in a global economy.

Roshni Rustomji-Kerns was our last speaker of fall quarter (November 21st). Rustomji-Kerns, Professor Emerita of Sonoma State University (formerly a visiting scholar at the Center for Latin American Studies at Stanford University, and the editor of *Living in America: Poetry and Fiction* by South Asian American Writers) addressed how literature and art mediate transnational Asian Latin American/Latin American Asian histories and lives. She shared many first-person narratives and poems by Asian Latin American artists writing and living throughout the hemisphere. Her talk focused on what she calls “encounters” between Asians and the Americas. Lastly, after situating the concept of borders within a truly transnational perspective, professor Rustomji-Kerns revisited the history of Mirrha-Catarina de San Juan (1612-1688), more commonly known as “La China Poblana.” (Mirrha-Catarina de San Juan was born in India and died in Puebla de Los Angeles, New Spain). Professor Rustomji-Kerns demystified the figure of Mirrha in which, according to Margarita de Orellana, the essence of Mexicana femininity is concentrated.

In the winter quarter the American Cultures workshop featured scholars completing books on the transnational figures James Baldwin (1924 – 1987) and W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963). Magdalena J. Zaborowska, associate professor in the Program in American Culture and the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies at the University of Michigan, made two presentations on Baldwin; both attempted to expand and complicate our understanding of Baldwin’s transatlantic contributions to

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*The Humanities Center  
Workshop in American  
Cultures/Transnational  
American Studies welcomed  
a number of guests “in an  
effort to grasp critically  
the various methods  
and understandings of  
the ‘transnational turn’  
in American Studies.*

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American identity politics, queer studies, and philosophy and literature. In her presentation titled, "Writing (African) America from the 'Erotic Margin': James Baldwin's Turkish Decade," Zaborowska argued that Baldwin's presence in Istanbul during the 1960s, and participation in its intellectual and artistic scenes, greatly influenced some of his major writings. Drawing upon interviews with Turkish residents who knew Baldwin, unpublished letters, and her work in Turkish archives, Zaborowska pointed to ways in which Istanbul enriches scholarship on Baldwin and his relationship to internationalism. The "Turkish Decade" workshop also featured a viewing of Sedat Pakay's 1970 film, "James Baldwin: From Another Place."

Zaborowska's second lecture, co-sponsored with the Program in African and African American Studies, focused on Baldwin, architecture and the Frankfurt School theorist Walter Benjamin. In her remarks titled, "From Baldwin's Paris to Benjamin's: The Architectonics of Race and Sexuality in Giovanni's Room," Zaborowska merged the fields of literary studies and architecture to draw parallels between Benjamin's study of 19th-century Parisian arcades and the fictional spaces created in Baldwin's novel.

Reading Baldwin through Benjamin (especially his, "Paris the Capital of the 19th Century"), Zaborowska suggested that architectural interrogations of fiction can lead to greater insight into spatial examinations of race, gender and sexuality.

Eric Porter, Stanford Humanities Center fellow, and associate professor in the department of American Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, shifted the focus of the American Cultures workshop from Baldwin to the important African-American scholar and activist W.E.B. Du Bois. His presentation, "The Problem of the Future World': W.E.B. Du Bois in the 1940s," provided a glimpse into his larger book project, *The Knot of Race: The Challenge of W.E.B. Du Bois' Mid-Century Writings*. Porter focused on the Du Bois in the 1940s to extract ideas about race, global activism, and human rights that are often elided in over-arching studies of Du Bois, whose life spanned important moments in the 19th and 20th century.

The workshop continued with three spring quarter events. On April 17, University of Michigan historian Penny

Von Eschen presented a draft of her latest research. She is best known for her 1997 book, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*. This work connects domestic struggles for African American equality with anti-colonialism in Africa, and is considered a pioneering work in transnational American studies.

On May 3, the department hosted Northwestern University American Studies professor Kate Baldwin, author of "Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain: Reading Encounters between Black and Red, 1922-1963". This work focuses on the positive and negative relationships between African American writers and the Soviet Union – particularly, Soviet promises of equality and "internationalism." She is currently writing a book entitled "Authenticating Nations: Cultural Fictions of Soviet and American Women during the Cold War."

Finally, closing out the workshop series, on May 17 our own Gordon Chang from the history department discussed his current project on Asian American visual arts in California.

The workshop series was attended by faculty and graduate students from Stanford and other Bay Area schools, as well as by interested Stanford American Studies majors.



Nigel Hatton Stephen Lee Jayson Sae-Sae



## FEATURE: FRED TURNER

By Katie Harrington '08

In the midst of the dotcom boom years ago, Professor Fred Turner found inspiration for his latest book, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, The Whole Earth Catalogue, and the Rise to Digital Utopianism*. Perplexed as he flipped through *Wired* magazine, he had asked himself, *How could computers, once thought of as tools of the Cold War, now be linked with the counterculture movement?* His journalistic intuition took control, and he began researching backwards to figure out what caused the change.

Similar sentiments had fueled his shift from journalism to academia. Referencing what sparked his interest to write his first book, Turner said he sensed he was writing about things with deep historical origins but at the time he had no sense of their history. He felt as a journalist he had become a really competent sailor: he could watch the cultural chop and see the squalls of stories come up, but the waves themselves were caused by deep, slow, cold currents of whose source he had no idea. But Turner wanted to be an oceanographer, not just a sailor.

This was another chance to research the source of the waves. He followed people's histories back through time,

researching the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, the *Whole Earth Review*, the *Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link* and more. He had to go deep within the current.

Turner has always been a writer. From his first days of grammar school to his senior thesis, he was writing poetry. He has taught English and written theater reviews for an English-language magazine in Berlin. He's written for the *Boston Phoenix*, *Boston Sunday Globe*, and Pacific News Service. As a journalist covering Chinese students in America during Tiananmen Square, he decided to switch to academic writing. He was writing many short pieces about the current events at the time, yet he had a constant sensation that there was a much deeper source for the events. His 600- to 750-word limits didn't allow the type of oceanographic work he craved. Frustrated, he began writing academically. Since then, he's written numerous academic papers and essays, and in 1996 he published his first book, *Echoes of Combat: the Vietnam War in American Memory*, now in its second edition.

As a poet, Turner learned to adhere to tight formatting and word limits, and as a journalist, he had honed his ears to know what to listen for and his hands to know how to scribble fast. He knows the writing drill boils down to researching, thinking, and typing. However, writing a book is more than just compiling information in comprehensible prose. For Turner, it's an obsession. It's a sickness. It's doing jail time...It's a love affair.

He grew up in a time when words were supposed to be felt from the soul and expressed on the page like creative explosions. Turner knows it's all about putting himself in his tall-backed swivel chair and typing. "I can get myself in

the room and sit at the desk, even if it's miserable and I'm having a bad day...I'll put the hours in, and putting the hours in inevitably means getting a page count," he says.

Turner's office is in his home, and when he's not researching, writing, or fighting writer's block with long hot showers, he opens his office door and separates his book life from his home life. He practices yoga, swims, and runs.

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*"Writing a book is more than*

*just compiling information*

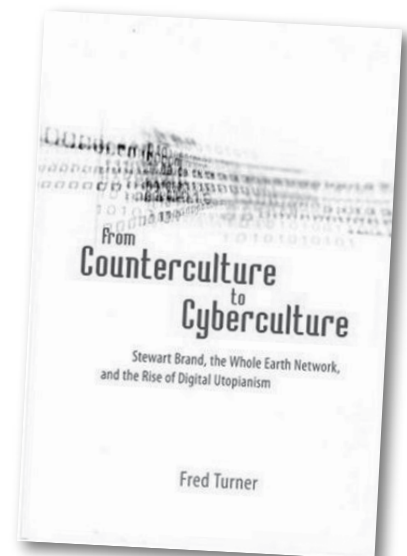
*in comprehensible prose.*

*For Turner, it's an obsession.*

*It's a sickness. It's doing jail*

*time...It's a love affair. "*

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Additionally, his interest in playing the Appalachian dulcimer often competes with his daughter's practicing her clarinet at home. He, his wife, and his daughter read together each night, and pictures of encouragement his daughter has drawn for him hang from his office corkboard. Whenever he wants, he can look at Cinderella and read her words "Keep up the good work!" Cinderella, after all, he says knows a thing or two about work.

Sometimes he needs the encouragement. At times, his research for *From Counterculture to Cyberculture* was overwhelming. He knew early on that the people he was researching were connected to cyberculture, but he didn't know how to articulate their connection and tell the story. He would sit in his office at MIT, where he was teaching at the time, and flip through *Whole Earth Catalogues* asking himself, *what do I do with this stuff?*

Organizational skills and routinized methods of doing things trumped his moments of panic. He developed schemes for organizing the information and created long lists of how everything fit together. He would talk with people, including his wife who, from time to time, acted as a sounding board for his ideas.

For Turner, finishing a book compares to saying goodbye to a dear friend. "When a book is done for me, it's not always an occasion for happiness. It's actually a painful thing, because you have to let it go... You have to send it out into the world and you really don't know how people are going to receive it."

He's hoping *From Counterculture to Cyberculture* will have a lasting impact not only on the fields of history of

technology and communication, but also in American Studies programs across the country. Living in an era of globalization, Turner believes American Studies is a tremendously important field. "We're a huge force on the world stage. Knowing how our history and culture interacts with other histories and cultures is extremely important."

Last November, he moderated the "Whole Earth Symposium," sponsored jointly by the Communication Department, the American Studies Program, and Stanford University Libraries. Additionally, this spring he contributed to the "How I Write" conversation series at the Stanford Writing Center.

The book was an organizing force in his life, and with it gone, Turner felt a sense of temporary disarray. He panicked and jumped back into new research, writing papers and reading in new areas. He said, "You spend all of this time making the book coherent, and then you have to start with the incoherence of new projects. It's like being back in the spaghetti. I'm back in the spaghetti now. But that's okay."



Katie Harrington

program in american studies

SPONSORED EVENTS



During the spring following the hurricane that devastated the Gulf Coast, American Studies and the Creative Writing Program sponsored a visit to Stanford by Brenda Marie Osbey, poet laureate of Louisiana, who read from several of her collections of poems centered on New Orleans.



American Studies and the Department of English sponsored a symposium at Stanford on Feb. 6, 2006 entitled "American Literary Studies in Asia." The symposium featured scholars Prof. Kun Jong Lee (Korea University), Prof. Gongzhao Li (Luoyang University of Foreign Languages, China), Prof. Te-Hsing Shan (Academia Sinica, Taiwan) and Prof. Sau-ling Cynthia Wong (UC-Berkeley) and was moderated by Prof. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, director of the American Studies Program.

## INTERVIEW WITH ARNOLD RAMPERSAD

By Tracy Oliver '07

**TRACY OLIVER:** How did the biography of Ralph Ellison come about? Where did your research begin with Ellison?

**ARNOLD RAMPERSAD:** Ralph Ellison died in 1994. Before he died, he arranged for his papers to be given to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.. Around 2000, I agreed to write a biography. Until then, the papers were closed for the most part. I was granted exclusive access to everything in the archive, which is quite large – a couple hundred boxes of papers that go from Ellison's birth to his death. I had not intended to write a biography for Ralph Ellison, but after a publisher asked me if I'd be interested in writing such a book, I thought about it and I said yes once I knew that I would be supported by Ellison's widow, Fanny Ellison, and her advisors.

**TO:** When writing biographies, where do you usually begin? In the case of Ellison's biography, where did you start?

**AR:** Before starting work, I made sure that I had a formal agreement with Mrs. Ellison that gave me full access but also stated clearly that no one could interfere with what the final manuscript would look like. Neither Mrs. Ellison nor her advisors, legal and otherwise, would have the right to approve the manuscript before publication. I wanted, of course, to satisfy them; but I didn't know what I would find and I knew there were probably things I would discover that they would not like. I would be free to publish the book that I wanted to publish. For me, the next step is going to the primary sources, the letters especially but also Ellison's manuscripts. I found lots and lots of letters to and from Ellison. From early on, he kept carbon copies of his most of his outgoing mail. Like Langston Hughes and W.E.B. Du Bois, about whom I had already published books, the Ellisons saved nearly everything, including the most casual writing, from early in their lives. They were always interested in posterity and how they would be seen. They knew that biographers would need every scrap of paper.

**TO:** Describe the research process in terms of looking at the materials in the archive. Is there specific information that you are searching for?

**AR:** That's stage one, the archive. Getting through all of this takes a fair amount of time and patience. I like to read every page in the archive or at least look at every leaf, to see if it's useful or valuable. Sometimes as a researcher you find nuggets of evidence in strange places. Once reading the primary material at the Library of Congress was out of the way, I thought I had a good sense of the main contours of Ellison's life. Then there was the matter of looking at other archives besides the Library of Congress. There's a lot of material at in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale, for example. Most of Ellison's letters to Langston Hughes and to Richard Wright are there. There are other libraries that possess important material.

**TO:** In addition to the archives, what people did you interview?



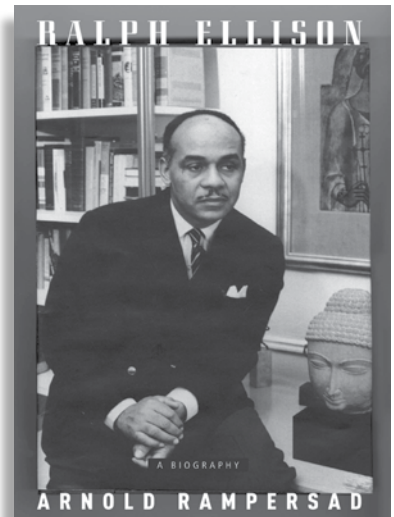
*Arnold Rampersad, professor of English, recently published the first major biography of African-American writer Ralph Ellison.*

*In the biography, published in April 2007, Rampersad made use of the exclusive access he had to Ellison's papers.*

How informative or reliable were the interviews in comparison to the written documents?

**AR:** I began to talk systematically to people. In the case of someone like Ellison, who died in 1994—fairly recently—you have all sorts of people still alive and important to catch before they, too, like Ellison, pass on. I was able to interview individuals such as the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and the religion and literature authority Nathan A. Scott, Jr. of the University of Virginia before they died. Interviews are very important. At the same time, you have to be careful with interviews. Oral evidence is often unreliable. Sometimes people want to help you so much that perhaps without thinking about it, they offer inaccurate testimony. Sometimes interviewees have such large egos that they try, unconsciously perhaps, to muscle the main subject out of the way. You have to be careful with oral evidence, and I always try to find a second source to confirm what's been claimed. And this vigilance applies to letters as well. Almost all of our letters are strategically composed. You assume a certain persona which changes from letter to letter, depending, for example, on the individual to whom you are writing and also the goal you wish to achieve in writing the letter. One always has to read between the lines in biography and do basic detective work. Intuition can be very important.

**TO:** How does the Ellison biography compare to your previous biographies (Hughes, Du Bois, and Robinson)?





**AR:** Of the books I've written, this one on Ellison is closest in character to the two volumes I did on Langston Hughes's life. With Du Bois, I wrote an intellectual biography, limited because I couldn't gain access to his papers. I did a biography of Jackie Robinson. He's an athlete and an important figure in Civil Rights History, but he wasn't a writer, although he was a newspaper columnist for some years. The Hughes books and this one are alike in being literary biographies—studies of a writer's life. This project was different in part because I was more experienced as a biographer. The truth is that when I started to write about Langston Hughes, I really wasn't sure what I was doing—the job seemed immense and the best methods and practices unclear. I was learning on the job, as it were, how to be a biographer. Also, Hughes and Ellison were so different. My task was to forget Hughes and everyone else I'd written about and focus on Ellison. I had to understand his youth, his interaction with his parents, his grandparents, his other family, his schoolmates, whites and blacks, in Oklahoma City where he was born and lived from 1913 to 1933. The first twenty years of his life he spent in Oklahoma City. What happens in one's early life resonates, of course, often through rest of the life. I had to deal with the effect on him of the death of his father when Ralph was three. What did it mean that his mother was a domestic servant, after the family fell into poverty because of his father's death? Young Ralph was up and down a lot in terms of his morale, his sense of possibility, his personal happiness. He was unhappy a lot during his adolescence. For example, when many of his high school classmates were going off to Fisk or Morehouse for college, he couldn't go because he didn't have money. It was two years after high school before he finally got off to college in Tuskegee. And then he goes to New York in 1936 thinking he's going to make some money and pay for his senior year at Tuskegee and graduate, but in fact he never returns to Tuskegee to graduate. He becomes a radical, a leftist, perhaps a communist. He meets Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, Alain Locke, and other influential figures. Then around 1942, he begins to pull away from radicalism and into faith in liberal, cosmopolitan humanism. He certainly became anti-communist.

**TO:** How do you determine what information to include? How do you decide which aspects of a person's life are important? Do you try to include everything?

**AR:** With all the material resulting from research, you can't possibly include everything. You're always selecting. Although if you write a book that is over 500 pages, someone is bound to complain and say, "Hey, he didn't seem to leave anything out!" I've always wanted a result that generally calls for longer books. My goal as a biographer of African-American subjects is to document the actual texture, the complex texture of African-American life at a certain level. I don't think those people are understood well or represented often enough. I don't think that many of their life stories have been told, or told adequately. I

still think even now African American life is represented in highly limited and not always flattering or accurate ways on the television screen or in books. But if you read my Langston Hughes, you see black people of intelligence and education, for the most part, interacting with each other in highly professional, artistic ways and also interacting with white people in the world, trying to make their way as artists or as people interested in art. That's what I tried to show in Hughes and that's what I try to show in Ellison—how such blacks of achievement actually lead their lives.

**TO:** How does one determine the truth in writing biographies? What makes a good biography?

**AR:** So called "truth," objective truth, is very hard to come by in autobiography or biography, but I try to be factually accurate and at the same time discover what really is at the heart of whatever controversy Ellison or any other subject happened to be in, or whatever complex phase of his life he was passing through. The biography has to make important and sometimes quick decisions about what to include and what to set aside. There is a tendency in biographers, especially those that involve questions of social justice, to want to suppress what is bad and emphasize what is good. I have never believed in that approach. I will include anything that is negative if it is important to the character. After all, my subjects are finally people who have triumphed in one way or another. They succeeded, they achieved—Hughes, Robinson, Du Bois, Ellison. If they attained heights, you should show the human cost to them of achieving those heights. There is always a human cost for human achievement. The artist pays, and often the people about them, including family, pay. The artists' lives weren't super-clean simply because they achieved great things. In fact, serious artists are probably more prone than other people to living in psychological turmoil. So I believe in trying to show that turmoil.

In the end, however, a biography is a narrative, a story, and the biographer's first task in this respect is to hook and hold the reader, and to entertain as well as instruct the reader through the telling of the story of the life in question. This is perhaps the most pleasant and immediately rewarding part of biography, especially as one necessarily employs techniques drawn from the writing of fiction—while making as sure as one can that one is not offering fiction. Biography is nothing less or more than the history of an individual, and history is to me the central discipline of the humanities and perhaps of culture itself. ¶



Tracy Oliver

## HONORS THESES 2005

**HANNA ASRAT** -- *Moonlit Walks with Wild Things: Journeys Through Art And Imagination In Picture Books*

Recipient of the George G. Dekker Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research

**BENJAMIN HUSTON** -- *Taking Fake News Seriously: The Daily Show's Satirical Assault on the American News Media*

Recipient of the David M. Potter Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research

**CARLYN REICHEL** -- *Knee-Deep, The Smear Campaign in Modern America*

*Politics: A Case Study of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth*



Recipient of the William A. Clebsch Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research

Carlyn's thesis was also awarded a coveted Firestone Medal, a School of H & S award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research

**GREGORY TAYLOR** -- *Masquerading Politics as Policy: A History of Arizona's AIMS Test*

## HONORS THESES 2006

**BRIAN GOODMAN** -- *Kral Majales/King of May: Allen Ginsberg and the Czech Culture of Dissent*

Recipient of the David M. Potter Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research

**JEREMY JACOBS** -- *"Out" is "In": How Larry David's "Seinfeld" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm*

*"Made Jewishness "Hip" through the Blurring of Mainstream and Jewish Humor*

Recipient of the Albert J. Gelpi Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research

**TANYA KOSHY** -- *Remodeling Resistance: Black Civil Society and the Battle Against*

*Baltimore's Residential Segregation Ordinances (1910-1918)*

Recipient of the David M. Potter Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research



Tanya's thesis was also a co-winner of the prestigious John and Marjorie Hines Prize for Undergraduate Research in American History. She was the second American studies student to win the prize in the last four years. According to Prof. Richard Gillam, the winning theses for this award are selected from over 15 departments at Stanford. "It's the one that ranges across departmental and disciplinary lines," he said of the prize.

**LAUREN MCCOY** -- *Fourth and Inches: The Struggle Against Football's Glass Ceiling for Minorities*

Recipient of the George M. Fredrickson Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research

**EMILY O'BRIEN ROBERTS** -- *Mary Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative: The History of a Text*

Recipient of the George G. Dekker Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research

By Nell Selander '07

Stanford in Washington (SIW) may be within the United States and therefore not part of the Stanford study abroad program, but for anyone who has ever stepped into the world of SIW, you know that it may as well be on another planet. Led fearlessly by Adrienne Jamieson, the program guides you through a rigorous three-month, full-time internship, a full class load, and countless field trips and cultural events. But these aspects of SIW are not what make it truly unique. It may be that the Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, Stanford's own Stephen Krasner, lives in the building or that Associate Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer happens to make house calls. Somehow, though, these are just part of the experience.

I arrived in Washington, D.C. a bit apprehensively after a whirlwind of summer activities: a grueling two-month stint as an administrative assistant for a criminal defense attorney, a one-week tour of New York City, two weeks in Lansing, Michigan with my mom's family, and another week in a D.C. suburb, attempting to stave off the crushing humidity with my 12-year-old cousin. Needless to say, I was ready to see people my own age. But at the same time I was terrified. Terrified the friends I knew who would be at SIW would suddenly become freakishly weird and never speak to me again, terrified that my internship would bore me to death (or worse, that I would be supremely under-qualified), terrified, even, that I would hate D.C. Growing up in San Francisco, anything remotely southern seemed scary and bewildering and I imagined D.C. a haven for racist rednecks. Luckily, I was wildly impressed with the city and the program, finding all of my misconceptions and fears to be entirely unfounded.

The quarter unfolded easily enough. As incredible as it sounds for a college student, I grew accustomed to waking up at 7:30 a.m., getting dressed in a suit and heels, and catching the metro in time to be at work at 9 a.m.; not to mention coming home at 5 p.m. to have a quick dinner and then class until 9 p.m. This sort of schedule, although totally foreign to me, gave me a sense of duty and accomplishment; my roommate and I even devised a strategy of "Executive Decision-Making:" our daily outfits were always subject to an up or down vote, no time for debate when there is mail to be sorted or a phone to be answered. Dinner conversations centered around the politics of the day: who saw Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie touring the capitol, what the bomb scare was all about, and how typical it is that the World Bank has the best cafeteria in D.C. This may not seem like politics, but in D.C., everything is fair game.

Everyday experiences became inside jokes between myself, the other students in the program, and the staff. After all, not everybody just happens to get into an elevator with Senator Barbara Boxer on a normal day, but in D.C., this is ordinary. Having brunch with a Presidential appointee is ordinary. Having former CIA Director, George Tenet, sit on your couch and discuss his role in the decision to go to war with Iraq is a bit out of the ordinary, but not unimaginable. And to have a group



Participants in Stanford in Washington, fall 2005, with Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer

of nearly 30 college students sit quietly, listen, understand, and respond to such influential people and their choices, which shape national and international policy, I thought was out of the ordinary and perhaps even unimaginable, until I went to SIW. This is the norm: you are expected to read two newspapers every day and to be able to write a memo on any topic in under an hour. This is what life in D.C. is all about, and SIW is a crash course in this exciting, constantly changing, and challenging lifestyle.

For an American Studies major, this experience was not only eye opening, but also life-shaping. I learned about American history and politics while traipsing through the rolling fields of Gettysburg and listening to a lecture by Senator Susan Collins. I learned about the policy-making process through conversations with *Washington Post* journalist Walter Pincus, Congressman Edward Markey, and Justice Stephen Breyer. What more could anyone with a passion for studying America wish for? Perhaps a trip to the Kennedy Center, a visit to Monticello, or a tour of the monuments at night, a free Sunday to visit as many Smithsonian Museums as possible? Been there, done that. Now I am working on my thesis, deciding what to do after graduation, and all I can think about is D.C. I cannot wait to get back to the city where, no one works in August because it is too hot, where Congressional recesses mean everyone gets a few more days of casual dress, where newspaper headlines are last week's news by midmorning, and where Republicans show Fox News in their offices and Democrats show CNN. It is polarized and opinionated, but it is genuinely a kind and, at times, a laid back city. Maybe, after all, it is the southern influence... ¶¶



Nell Selander

## AMERICAN STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA

By Caley Anderson '08

It is understandable why you would be confused: why would an American Studies major study abroad in Australia? Wouldn't it would be better to travel around, say, the United States? The answer may seem to be yes, but Australia and the U.S. have more in common than you might initially think. Studying in Australia helped put many American issues into perspective; comparing the way the United States approaches issues with the Australian way was eye opening. Plus, where else can you snorkel on the Great Barrier Reef one day and then hike in the rainforest the next?

The "issues" I specifically learned about involved environmental management problems and cultural diversity. The classes offered in Stanford's Australia program included Coastal Resource Management, Coral Reef Ecology, Coastal Forest Ecology, and Australian

Studies. Most of our time was spent out in the Australian environment, and we never stayed longer than two weeks in one place. Living a purely transient life for three months was exciting, exhausting, and exhilarating all at once. I lived out of a (large) suitcase for so long that I forgot I owned other clothes. Coming home was like Christmas because I could choose between more than three pairs of shoes.

Studying in Australia is not for the faint of heart. If the thought of living without the Internet for days at a time, riding on a bus for four straight days, wearing the exact same seven shirts for three months or constantly living with seven other people in one small room doesn't scare you off, then I offer to you crocodiles, sharks, box jellyfish, sand flies and leeches.

As you may be able to deduce, Stanford's Australia program is not like any of the other study abroad programs the university offers. It takes the notion of experiential learning to

a completely new level, one that I'm not entirely sure anyone can prepare you for. Our Coastal Forest Ecology class involved, not surprisingly, quite a bit of hiking in myriad types of forests: sclerophyll, rainforest and mangroves for starters. The one common thread between them was our professors' complete disregard for the path. Usually we would be on the designated hiking path just long enough to get us deep enough into the forest so we could veer off into the wilderness. Luckily, with few exceptions, the plants weren't going to hurt you (the only thing in Australia that seemed safe), so traipsing through thick vegetation was rather fun. The first hike, however, was startling. We were hiking in a line behind our professor, on a well-trod path, when suddenly he veered sharply to the left and started climbing up a rather sheer wall of vegetation. We all looked at each other with trepidation, but when he didn't show any signs of stopping, we threw all caution to the wind and dove in. It was an adventure, literally



*"Studying in Australia helped put many American issues into perspective; comparing the way the United States approaches issues with the Australian way was eye opening. Plus, where else can you snorkel on the Great Barrier Reef one day and then hike in the rainforest the next?"*

using roots to hoist myself up the hill. “Don’t forget to observe the liannes on the trees!” our professor yelled haphazardly over his shoulder as we struggled over fallen tree trunks and boulders. No worries, right?

If that wasn’t enough to convince me that this was going to be the most bizarre experience of my life, we then spent two weeks on a tropical island on the Great Barrier Reef. While my friends in the Florence program were visiting Switzerland over the long weekend, we were snorkeling for class—our assignments included photographing and identifying as many fish species as possible, collecting and analyzing phytoplankton samples, and trying to determine coral health based on its color. I studied for my mid-term while sitting on pristine white sand watching the waves break on the beach. I know what you’re thinking: tough life, right?

Amazingly enough, I may have learned—and retained—more knowledge from the three months of total immersion in Australia than from any other class I have taken. I can speak comfortably and knowledgeably regarding the health of the coral reef ecosystem and what the government is doing to try to manage the bleaching problem. I can discuss mangrove dieback and what actions are being undertaken at the different levels of government to reverse the trend. I can tell you how activists in northern Queensland managed to save the Daintree Rainforest and get it listed as a World Heritage Site and what the pros and cons are of tourism in the area. I can also speak to Australia’s cultural history and Indigenous cultures and

understand why any environmental management decision is much more complex than it appears on the surface. And, if that isn’t enough, show me a fish, and I can probably tell you its name and an interesting (at least to me) fact about it.

How does this relate to American Studies, again? Beyond just general edification, learning about Australia’s environmental policies and management frameworks was an invaluable tool for comparing the United States’ approach. My concentration within American Studies is environmentalism, and learning so completely about the Australian system helped me understand better what may or may not work in policy and implementation. We were fortunate because we not only theoretically learned about Australia’s problems and solutions, but we lived in them and were able to speak with governors, activists, EPA members, councilmen, and scientists. We saw the issues from all angles in a way I don’t think we do here in America.

I have not figured out why, but environmental problems are talked about much more openly and freely in Oz. While they also have not signed the Kyoto Protocol, rainforest and reef preservation are at the forefront of many minds. They are willing to admit that there are problems that need to be solved, and in many regions, they are finding productive ways to achieve these goals. This is not to say Australia is perfect or that their environmental dilemmas are the same as the United States, but for the first time in a while, I felt hopeful about the future. Being in Australia inspired me to come back

to my own country and do as much as I could to fix the problems here. If you ever have the opportunity to travel to Australia, seize it. Do not think twice – just go. Go north to the Daintree, south to Sydney, out to Heron Island, hike through Lamington and don’t forget that four day bus trip from Rockhampton to Port Douglas. You might find yourself a changed person, and at the least you will be in some of the most beautiful places on the planet. Just watch out for those crocodiles. ☪



*Caley Anderson*

By Dean Schaffer '10

When students tell friends they're majoring in American Studies, a common response is, "Exciting! But... What can you do with that?" Well, the answer is just about anything. Eight recent alums in American Studies showcase the diversity of careers which their major allows: freelance writing, professional tennis, policy research, and more. The interdisciplinary courses taken by American Studies students help them to explore their diverse interests and prepare future graduates to pursue practically any path in academia, government, public service, or the private sector once they leave the Farm.

### EMILY CADEI '02



Emily Cadei spent the year after graduation working as an intern at various general interest publications. Eventually, though, she decided to experiment with politics, so she moved to Washington, D.C., in the summer of 2003 without "a job or a place to live." She remembers that her American Studies courses first piqued her interest in politics and social justice. In Washington, she began working for *The Hotline*, the *National Journal's* online daily briefing of American politics; she called her experience "an initiation by fire," but it helped her decide to go back to graduate school for a master's in Political Science.

She is currently finishing the second year of a two-year master's program at Oxford University. She says the intensive work she did on her honors thesis—which focused on feminism and the debate over pornography and won the Gelpi Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Honors Research—helped prepare her for graduate-level work.

But before she went back to school, she volunteered in Hoedspruit, South Africa, for three months. She helped run a journalism program for "disadvantaged rural women," assisted women in a weaving cooperative with their "English and marketing skills," and wrote a few freelance articles, one of which was published in *Ms.* magazine. After earning her master's, she plans to

return to work in the field of political journalism.

### JON COHEN '03

Jon Cohen has worked at an impressive collection of entertainment companies, including the Endeavor Talent Agency, Alcon Entertainment, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, and Davis Entertainment. Although he started out as an employee in the mailroom at Endeavor about a week after graduating from Stanford, he's currently a story editor at Davis.

In addition to his minor in Film Studies, his major in American Studies provided him with "knowledge of American history and literature [that] has been a valuable tool in creating and developing film projects." He also started research on an honors thesis about the portrayal of marijuana in American film; though he eventually decided not to write it, the preliminary work he did helped him gain a better understanding of American cinema.

In the future, he hopes to work as a creative executive at a "studio or production company focused on making intelligent, elevated genre movies and solid, character-based dramas." Eventually, he says, he plans to work as a studio executive and later as a producer in his own company.

### BROOKE HANSON '02



As a graduate student at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, Brooke Hanson is certainly utilizing the knowledge she gained from her American Studies major concentration: Visual and Material Culture. In her words, "I see the major and concentration as a lens into our own history and values... The concentration examines the creative output that our society, throughout history, produced." She wrote an honors thesis on the intersection of religion, television, and popular culture through an examination of the TV show *Touched by an Angel*.

Right after graduation, Brooke moved to Los Angeles to work in the film industry. At USC, she is working on her thesis short film, a romantic comedy/drama about an illegal immigrant in

an American college who meets the son of an anti-immigration politician at a barbeque. "It's a story about where policy meets people," she says. She got much of her inspiration and some of the film's ideas from a class she took at Stanford—"The American Dream," taught by Prof. John Manley. To Brooke, the film represents many of the crucial ideas in American Studies: looking at the "primary sources... that reveal the individual experiences behind political tides." In the future, she plans to pursue her "Hollywood Dream" by working on music videos or developing an independent feature film.

### DAVID MARTIN '03



As the 2006 Rookie of the Year for World Team Tennis, David Martin has been actively playing professional tennis ever since he graduated. But that doesn't stop him from

making good use of his education in American Studies. He's competed all over the country and the world, and says his undergraduate work gave him "a great foundation to understand countries that I go to [and] why they might treat me well or poorly as an American." He says the perspective he gained on America from his classes has helped make his current international traveling even more interesting and gives him a tool to "bridge gaps or misunderstandings that people might have about me as an American and vice versa."

His plans for the future? After continuing with tennis, he plans to go to law school and eventually "be a high school teacher and coach a sport." Ultimately, though, he believes the knowledge he gained was valuable in and of itself: "American Studies has simply given me a greater understanding of what it is to be an American, the ethos of America, and how it came to be as it is today."

**KELLY MCKENZIE '03**

Rather than major in Political Science, Kelly McKenzie opted to major in American Studies with a concentration on politics. Today, she works in social welfare policy and policy research, and she has no regrets about her decision: "[American Studies] allowed me to understand the broad human context in which policy is created and implemented.... I felt that studying political theory in a vacuum would give me an incomplete [understanding] of the policymaking process."

Kelly currently works in Washington, D.C., at the Center for Studying Health System Change, where she studies the access of low-income individuals to health care and writes articles and briefs about welfare programs such as Medicaid. She is also a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children in the capital's family court system and volunteers for the Washington, D.C. Stanford Association as vice president. Although her honors thesis was unrelated to her professional field, she says the experience "gave me an appreciation for qualitative research."

This coming fall, she will enroll at the University of Michigan to pursue an MBA and an MSW (master's in social work); afterward, she hopes to focus on "supporting innovative community-based collaborations that promote social justice."

**JENNY MILLER '03**

After graduating in 2003, Jenny Miller explored Europe for a few months before returning to San Francisco in the fall. She eventually landed a job as an editorial assistant for the

Bay Area lifestyle magazine *7x7*. After moving to Austin, Texas, she began her career as a freelance writer; later, she worked for about a year and a half at *Brilliant* magazine, which focuses mainly on the luxurious lifestyle of the Texas elite. According to Jenny, the magazine's relatively small staff gave her the opportunity to learn about many facets of the industry. Since June, she

has again been working as a freelance writer for local publications, largely because she enjoys the flexible lifestyle.

In the future, she plans to continue writing, probably switching back and forth between freelancing and working on staff. She says that her education in American Studies gave her a "good foundation" from which to work. Even though her articles on fashion and lifestyle do not directly relate to her undergraduate work, she says she has no regrets: "The understanding I got of our culture helps me have a context for understanding the world, which is something that's important for a journalist."

**MEGHAN O'CONNOR '02**

After working for ESPN's *Sportscenter* for two years, Meghan O'Connor moved to Washington, D.C.,

where she landed a job as a Production Coordinator for National Geographic Television. She worked primarily on "Hunter and Hunted," a documentary-style show on animal attacks. After a year, she was promoted to Associate Producer; her responsibilities included developing, researching, and editing episodes; she says one of the most challenging aspects of her job is "to balance the demands between educational and entertaining content."

The flexibility of the American Studies major allowed Megan to take a variety of journalism classes, many of which have proven valuable over the years: "I find myself referencing my old journalism classes now and again." She firmly believes that American Studies provides students with a strong foundation in writing: "The most important thing I have taken away from the American studies major has been the ability to write. Researching and putting together a script for a documentary involves the same sort of process as researching and writing a college paper." In the future, she plans to continue to pursue her interest in documentaries and hopes eventually to become a producer in the Bay Area.

**RAHIEL TESFAMARIAM '03**

Rahiel Tesfamariam's major in American Studies included a concentration in History and Society with a specialization in Race and Ethnicity, and these areas of thematic interest have remained instrumental in her life and career. After graduating and working for various organizations and publications, she became the youngest-ever editor-in-chief of *The Washington Informer*, an African-American newspaper in the nation's capital, in 2004. She says that, throughout her career in journalism, her education in American Studies allowed her "to look at matters of today but place them in a context within the past, offering a well-rounded perspective."

When she resigned from her post at the *Informer* in 2005, she went to the Middle East, Europe, and East Africa to pursue the love of traveling she developed during her winter quarter abroad at Oxford in her senior year at Stanford.

Rahiel is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity degree at Yale Divinity School, where she has been named the first William Sloane Coffin, Jr. Scholar for Peace and Justice. This year, she will represent Yale in China and do service work in Jamaica, India, and Bangladesh. In the future, she hopes to continue pursuing her passion for both Christian ministry and social justice.



Dean Schaffer

## LIFE-AFTER-STANFORD AMERICAN STUDIES CAREER NIGHT: LAW

By Kelley Fong '09

One of the career paths many American studies majors are drawn to is that of law. On March 7, 2007, the first of a series of Life-After-Stanford career evenings was held. At a leisurely dinner, current majors were joined by five Stanford American studies alums who chose to pursue careers in the law after graduation.

Meredith Ely '08 said that the event was a great opportunity for her to hear about the different ways one could get involved in the law profession. "Many of us had a vague idea that we wanted to go to law school, but the looming questions of 'What is law school actually like?' 'Is law school even right for me?' and 'Is it possible to raise a family if I work in the legal industry?'" still plagued us as juniors and seniors in the Stanford bubble of comfort," she said.

Guest alums included Marisa Deutsch '97, who worked at a Los Angeles law firm for three years before transitioning into commercial real estate law; Andrea Wendt '01, who practices general civil and commercial litigation in addition to bankruptcy law, employment law, and pro bono work; Meg Wilkinson '02, a 2006 graduate of Boalt Hall at UC-Berkeley and a current clerk for Judge John T. Noonan, Jr. on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco; and Katie Tafolla-Young '01, who, after starting a program to encourage high school students to apply to college and teaching English at Oregon State University, is pursuing a J.D./Ph.D. in law and sociology.

The four recent alums were joined by surprise guest Julie Lythcott-Haims '89, dean of freshmen and transfer students at Stanford. An American studies major herself, Dean Julie graduated from Harvard Law School in 1994 and then worked as a corporate lawyer in Palo Alto for several years.



Jacquelyn Gauthier '08, Carlee Brown '09, alum Katie Tafolla-Young '01, and Monica Bhattacharya '07 at the "Life-After-Stanford – Careers in the Law" dinner



Alums Marisa Deutsch '97, Julie Lythcott-Haims '89, Meg Wilkinson '02 and Ari Neumann '07 at the "Life-After-Stanford – Careers in the Law" dinner

Ely said the lawyers who attended "drew a very inclusive picture of the law world, showing us that from working in corporate law to deriving policies to being a clerk, the law community was as diverse as our interests were."

Jacquelyn Gauthier '08 said that she left the dinner inspired to follow her passions. "Julie Lythcott-Haims illustrated the point with her story of wanting to go into family law but giving in to the pressures to go corporate. I have had the same concerns and felt

maybe I should just go for the law that will give the largest salary," she said. "However, after hearing their first-hand accounts and the hint of regret in their voices, I have never wanted to be a human rights lawyer more. The ever-present temptations to give up on your dreams for more money or greater prestige now seem insignificant thanks to the wonderful women who spoke that night."

All five guests shared their thoughts about law school, the career choices they made, the challenge of crafting a viable balance between life and work, and how insights and skills they learned as American Studies majors came in handy along the way. By answering student questions about the field and providing personal accounts of possible career paths, the five alums helped the students – Monica Bhattacharya '07, Carlee Brown '09, Meredith Ely '08, Jacquelyn Gauthier '08, Dani Levine '07, Ari Neumann '07, Jessica Satre '07, Nellie Selander '07, Megan Stacy '07, and Diane Sutherland '07 – a fuller understanding of how they might use their American studies degrees to pursue law.

"The guests welcomed all of our questions, ranging from complex technicalities to their personal lives and motivations," said Ely. "Overall, we were able to get a much better sense of where we fit into this world and how our goals and talents could one day shape that very world." ■



Kelley Fong



## "FROM MY LIFE IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT TO MY LIFE OF FREEDOM": THE NICHOLAS YARRIS STORY

By Jacquelyn Gauthier '08

On Tuesday, April 10th, 2007 in Cubberley Auditorium, over 200 undergraduates, graduates, faculty and community members joined Stanford Beyond Bars to hear Nicholas Yarris tell his story. Stanford Beyond Bars (SBB) is a non-profit, undergraduate service organization concerned with issues of incarceration and the criminal justice system as a whole. The mission of SBB is to raise awareness and promote discussion while fueling a passion for improving the system of incarceration.

Yarris was invited by SBB to speak about his experience with the incarceration system. Convicted of rape and murder of a Pennsylvania woman, Nick was sent to death row, where he spent 23 years in solitary confinement until he was finally exonerated with the use of DNA evidence.

Yarris began his story with the traumatic experiences he went through as a child, including abuse by an older man, leading to his problems

with drug and alcohol use. While he was guilty of having committed some petty theft, he was astonished to find himself falsely accused of a murder that he had nothing to do with, a victim of lies and evidence-manipulation by police and prosecution desperate to send *someone* to jail for a heinous crime committed by someone else. Yarris was innocent. Yet he spent 23 horrific years on death row.

Yarris could have lost hope and given up the fight against the system, but instead he fought to be the first man on death row to have DNA used to prove his innocence. Following his exoneration, Yarris was determined not to complain about his misfortunes or the hardships he had gone through. Instead, he pledged to use his release as a chance to raise awareness about the problems with the death penalty and present England's Parliament with reasons to use an economic embargo to end the death penalty in the United States one state at a time.

Yarris does not want sympathy, but

change. Stanford Beyond Bars was proud to give him an opportunity to share his story and spark discussion. Members of the audience asked a number of insightful questions following the speech. Yarris was joined by Stanford professor William Abrams, who gave the audience appropriate context about the death penalty, and Brian Johnson, the editor of the award-winning documentary "After Innocence" that followed the stories of Nick and six other exonerated men (and which was shown at Stanford earlier in the term). SBB would like to thank the American Studies Program for their support of this event. ❧



Jacquelyn Gauthier



(From left to right) Professor William Abrams, who studies the death penalty; documentary editor Brian Johnson; guest Nicholas Yarris; Stanford Beyond Bars president and American Studies major Jacquelyn Gauthier '08

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*Yarris could have lost hope and given up the fight against the system, but instead he fought to be the first man on death row to have DNA used to prove his innocence.*

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For the third consecutive year, Stanford faculty and students have contributed articles to the annual produced by the American Studies Association of the Republic of Georgia – the *Journal of American Studies* – edited by professors Vasil Kacharava and Elene Medzmariashvili, with Stanford contributions edited by Shelley Fisher Fishkin. The thick annual, over 500 pages long, with contributions from scores of Georgian scholars in American Studies, includes sections devoted to “History,” “Politics,” “USA-Georgia Relations,” “Culture,” “Education,” “Social and Women’s Studies,” “Military Issues,” “Literature,” “Arts and Architecture,” and “Economics and Natural Sciences.” Articles by Stanford faculty and students were translated into Georgian by our Georgian colleagues, and published in Georgian with English abstracts.

Stanford contributions to the 2005 volume included: “Some Perspectives on the Origins of American Television Documentary,” by Henry Breitrose (Communication); “‘Not Man Apart’: Rocks, Hawks, and Robinson Jeffers,” by John Felstiner (English); “Of Cultures and Canons: A Brief for Transnational American Literary Studies” by Shelley Fisher Fishkin (English); “Why Same-Sex Marriage, Why Now?” by Estelle Freedman (History); “‘Cultural Pluralism’ and ‘the Self-Determination of Nations’ - Towards a Dialogue Between American Multiculturalism and Soviet Mnogonatsional’nost” by Steven Lee, Ph.D.

candidate, Modern Thought and Literature; “The ‘Cold War’ and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement: The Unexpected Connection,” by Doug McAdam (Sociology); and “From Royal to Republican: The Classical Image in Early America” by Caroline Winterer (History).

Stanford contributions to the 2006 volume journal included: “Are There Other Ways to Think About the ‘Great Interregnum?’” by Gordon Chang (History); “Loyalty to Mankind: Revisiting Mark Twain’s ‘The War-Prayer,’” by Mark Donig ’09; “Dunbar’s Children” by Michele Elam (English); “Bright Trout Poised in the Current: All Things Whole and Holy for Kenneth Rexroth” by John Felstiner; “A Twain for Our Time” by Shelley Fisher Fishkin; “Peace, Fiction, and Imagination: Maxine Hong Kingston’s *Fifth Book of Peace*,” by David Palumbo-Liu (Comparative Literature); “Service Learning and Multiple Models of Engaged Citizenship” by Robert Reich (Political Science); “How Digital Technology Found Utopian Ideology,” by Fred Turner (Communication); and “Marking the Grave” by Marilyn Yalom (Clayman Institute for Gender Research). ❧



### *Congratulations, Jan!*

In 2006, American Studies Academic and Student Services Administrator Jan Hafner received the Dean’s Award of Merit for her “outstanding performance and dedication to the Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities Program and to the School of Humanities and Sciences.”

Also a competitive swimmer, Hafner placed first for her age group in the Treasure Island Triathlon in 2002 and third for her age group in the 2004 Big Sur Half Marathon. Additionally, she recorded personal best times at the XI FINA World Masters Swimming Championships in 2006.

## Recent Publications and Updates: American Studies Committee-in-Charge

COMPILED BY ALLYSIA FINLEY '10

### BARTON BERNSTEIN

(History) published three major essays: (1) "The Puzzles of Interpreting J. Robert Oppenheimer: His Politics, and the Issues of His Possible Communist Party Membership," in Cathryn Carson and David Hollinger, eds., *Reappraising Oppenheimer: Centennial Studies and Reflections* (Berkeley, 2006), 77-112; (2) a 20,000-word review-article on Hasegawa's *Racing the Enemy*, in the H-Diplo Roundtable (2006); and (3) "Introducing Interpretive Problems of Japan's 1945 Surrender: A Historiographical Essay on Recent Literature in the West," in Hasegawa, ed., *The End of the Pacific War: Reappraisals* (Stanford, 2007), 9-64 plus lengthy endnotes. Bernstein also gave about a dozen lectures at Stanford and elsewhere on various subjects including, among others, US conservative and liberal/radical critics of the 1945 atomic bombings; the "decision" to use the atomic bombs; physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer; Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Cuban missile crisis of 1962; "Dr. Atomic" (the John Adams-Peter Sellers opera on Oppenheimer and the bomb); and on Senator Joseph McCarthy and McCarthyism. Bernstein continued his research on: (1) the A-bomb, decisionmaking, and international nuclear culture; (2) scientists, weaponry, and ethical responsibility; and (3) World War II and early-postwar race issues, the multiple understandings of race in the US, and the relationships of racial representations to the media and to medicine.

### GORDON CHANG

(History) co-published *Chinese American Voices* with Judy Yung and Him Mark Lai and *Before Internment Essays* by Yuji Ichioka with Eiichiro Azuma.

### SHELLEY FISHER FISHKIN

(English) published an article, "Asian Crossroads/Transnational American Studies," in the *Japanese Journal of American Studies*; the article was also translated into Chinese for the *Chungwai Literary Monthly*. Her essay, "Of Cultures and Canons: The Case for Transnational American Literary Studies" was translated into Georgian and published in the *Georgian Journal of American Studies*. Fishkin also published "Race and the Politics of Memory: Mark Twain and Paul Laurence Dunbar" in the *Journal of American Studies* (U.K.); "American Literature and the Politics of Race" in *Doshisha American Studies*; "Mark Twain and American Culture" in *The Mark Twain Review* (Korea) and "Mark Twain: Icon, Gadfly and Conscience" in *Bancroftiana*. Her article on "Wars of Words: American Writers and War," appeared in *The United States in Time of War and Peace*, ed. Zhou Baodi (Beijing), her essay on "Mark Twain and the Theatre" was published in the Blackwells' *Companion to Mark Twain*, ed. Louis J. Budd and Peter Messent, and an Italian translation of her edition of Mark Twain's play, "Is He Dead?" was published in Rome (*Le avventure di un artista defunto. Una commedia in tre atti*). In addition, she was co-editor of the *Prentice Hall Anthology of American Literature*, ninth edition. Fishkin also gave keynote talks at national

American Studies conferences in China, Japan, Korea, Russia, Spain, and Taiwan, as well as the keynote talk at the Fourth International Charlotte Perkins Gilman conference at the University of New England and at the 50th Anniversary Conference of the American Studies Association of Texas. Additionally, she served as director of the International Initiative of the American Studies Association.

### ESTELLE FREEDMAN

(History) recently published *Feminism, Sexuality, and Politics: Essays*. Her most current work *The Essential Feminist Reader*, an edited documentary anthology, will come out later this year.

### HILTON OBENZINGER

(English and Honors Writing Program) recently published the following articles: "Melting-Pots and Promised Lands: Zionism, the Idea of America, and Israel Zangwill" in *America in the Middle East: The Middle East in America*; "Piety and Politics: American Travelers to the Holy Land, Israel and Palestine" in *Cambridge Companion to American Travel Writing*; "Review of *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania* by Scott Trafton" in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*; "Melting-Pots and Promised Lands: Zionism, the Idea of America, and Israel Zangwill" in *America in the Middle East: The Middle East in America*; and "Wicked Books: Herman Melville, American Religion, and New World Revelation" in *Blackwell Companion to Herman Melville*. He also gave the lecture "American Palestine: Melville, Twain and the Holy Land Mania" in Beirut. In addition, he participated in the following conferences: "Mark Twain and Travel: Respondent," "150 Years of *Leaves of Grass*," "Melting-Pots and Holy Lands: Israel Zangwill, Zionism, and the Idea of America," and "Stanford's 'How I Write' Project: Creating a Writing Community."

### DAVID PALUMBO-LIU

(Comparative Literature) recently published "Atlantic to Pacific: James, Blackmur, Todorov and Intercontinental Form" in *The Planet of American Literature* and "Pre-emption, Perpetual War, and the Future of the Imagination" in *Boundary 2*.

### JACK RAKOVE

(History) is spending his 2006-2007 sabbatical as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, where he is optimistic about completing one book--*Revolutionaries: Inventing an American Nation, 1773-1791* and starting another, *Beyond Belief, Beyond Conscience: The Radical Significance of the Free Exercise of Religion* for the new Oxford University Press series on Inalienable Rights. He is also proud of having written a historian's *amicus curiae* brief for the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*.

### ROB REICH

(Political Science) recently published "When Adequate Isn't: The Retreat From Equity in Educational Law and Policy and Why it Matters" with William S. Koski in the *Emory Law Review*; "Philanthropy and its Uneasy Relation to Equality," in *Taking Philanthropy Seriously: Beyond Noble Intentions to Responsible Giving*; "Philanthropy and Its Uneasy Relation to Equality," in *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly*; "Service Learning and Multiple Models of Engaged Citizenship" in *Boston*

*University Journal of Education*; and the "Editor's Introduction" for a special issue of *Theory and Research in Education* on the work of Susan Moller Okin.

### JUDITH RICHARDSON

(English) this year published an essay on James Fenimore Cooper and the rise of local history and completed an article on the ghosting of the Dutch in America for a book to be published in the Netherlands. She appeared on a panel titled "The Imperial Mission" at the ASA meeting in Oakland--an appearance linked to her current project, "Tattooed Ladies: The Exotic Domestic Life of New England Women in the Nineteenth Century." She also recently completed an essay on ghostly trees, bridging her enduring interest in hauntings with an emerging interest in "vegetable matter" in 19th century American culture.

### FREDERICK TURNER

(Communications) recently published *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*, which was reviewed by the *New York Times*, the *Times of London*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. American Studies joined the Stanford Library in sponsoring a symposium that drew nearly 300 people featuring three key figures from the book--Stewart Brand, Howard Rheingold and Kevin Kelly. At the symposium, Turner spoke about the cultural legacy of the *Whole Earth Catalog*.

### CAROLINE WINTERER

(History) recently published *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750-1900*. She also gave invited talks at Northwestern University and Dartmouth College, and papers at the annual meetings of the American Historical Association, the American Studies Association, the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, and the American Philological Association. In addition she published the following four articles and book chapters: "The Female World of Classical Reading in Eighteenth-Century America," in *The Atlantic Worlds of Women's Reading, 1500-1800*; "Is There an Intellectual History of Early American Women?" in *Modern Intellectual History*; "Victorian Antigone: Classicism and Women's Education in America, 1840-1900," in *American Women and Classical Myths*; and "Classical Oratory and Fears of Demagoguery in Antebellum America," in *Classical Antiquity and the Politics of America*.

### BRYAN WOLF

(Art and Art History) spent the past year on sabbatical as the Violet Andrews Whittier Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center completing his portions of *American Encounters*, a new college-level textbook on the history of American art. He also continued research and writing on his current book, *The Dream of Transparency*, a study of visual culture from the mid-eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. During this time, he has continued his work as Co-Director of Stanford's new Arts Initiative, a major University program to expand the presence arts in all facets of Stanford life. In the fall quarter of 2007, Wolf will team-teach with Shelley Fisher Fishkin a new Introduction to the Humanities (IHUM) lecture course on "American Memory and The Civil War."

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