In this, my fourth year as director of the Center for 21st Century Studies, C21 has continued to fulfill its core mission while securing new resources to enhance interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaborative research on campus as well as through national and international academic networks.

We continue our traditional mission to support individual UWM faculty and staff research. Our UWM fellows program supports seven fellows with released time from teaching to provide increased time for scholarship as part of an interdisciplinary community of scholars. We also support a UW System fellow and, thanks to the Provost’s Office, a postdoctoral fellow whose work relates to the year’s research theme and who contributes to the UWM community. Last year’s postdoc, Dehlia Hannah (Columbia University, Philosophy), will be curating an exhibit on climate change aesthetics with UWM’s NOVA Gallery in Spring 2015. In addition to our annual conference and book series (now seguing from Indiana University Press to the University of Minnesota Press), C21 continues to invite as speakers scholars working across disciplinary and interdisciplinary research fields who provide new models to encourage innovative research.

Encouraging transdisciplinary research has been part of my directorship from the first year of my tenure. With the generous support of the Chancellor’s Office we will sponsor two new Transdisciplinary Challenge projects for the coming year along with a ten-member Transdisciplinary Seminar, bringing together a multi-disciplinary group of faculty to explore the topic of “Language.”

The most rewarding development for the coming year is the commencement of the three-year $1.35 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) to pursue a pilot program in Interdisciplinary Graduate Humanities Education Research and Training (IGHERT). Since 2011 C21 has been working with the CHCI and collaborators from California, Germany, and Australia on developing the proposal. It is gratifying when so much hard work done for so long by so many people gets rewarded in the end. Of course, now the hard part really starts, beginning with our first meeting in Santa Cruz in September.

Finally, the coming year has been designated the “Year of the Humanities” at UWM, and we have chosen as our theme “Humanities Futures.” While this theme will inevitably prompt lament about the current state of the humanities, we hope throughout the year to explore some of the many possible conceptual and methodological futures that lie ahead for interdisciplinary humanities and social science research, scholarship, and teaching.

Richard Grusin, Director
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Bringing together artists, humanists, and social and natural scientists from a diverse set of fields including queer studies, geography, geology, political science, anthropology, literature, film studies, philosophy, and feminist studies, C21’s Spring 2014 conference on Anthropocene Feminism considered the ways in which feminism has long been concerned with the Anthropocene, and what current interest in the Anthropocene might mean for feminism, in its evolving histories, theories, and practices.

In many ways, the Anthropocene is a strikingly resonant iteration of the problematic forcefully articulated in Donna Haraway’s “Cyborg Manifesto,” which sees the human, nonhuman, culture, and nature as inextricably entangled, and warns that the consequences of attempts to dominate human and nonhuman nature can be at once devastatingly successful and productively perverse. Indeed, the concept of the Anthropocene has arguably been implicit in feminism, critical theory, and queer theory for decades, a genealogy that is largely ignored, or worse, erased, by the masculine authority of science.

Spanning two and a half days, the conference featured six plenary speakers, a film screening and discussion with the film’s director, and fourteen breakout sessions made up of three dozen presenters, including those who traveled to Milwaukee from across the United States as well as from Canada, England, Germany, Scotland, Sweden, and Australia. Attendees used the hashtag #antfem to tweet about the sessions, and many new connections and friendships, both virtual and material, were made between scholars across the globe over the course of the conference.
On Thursday, Elizabeth Povinelli (Anthropology, Columbia University) opened the conference with her lecture, “The Four Figures of the Anthropocene.” Povinelli noted that, although the histories of sexuality would consume much of the final years of his life, Michel Foucault was not interested in sexuality in and of itself but only in relation to how it entangled itself in modern forms of power. Rather than the four figures and strategies of sexuality, which characterized power relations within Foucault’s lifetime—the hysterical woman (a hysterization of women’s bodies), the masturbating child (a pedagogization of children’s sex), the perverse adult (a psychiatrization of perverse pleasure), and the Malthusian couple (a socialization of procreative behavior)—Povinelli asked, what would the figures of power be if Foucault were writing today in the shadow of climate change, the emergence of the security state, and the shaking of neoliberalism?

Following Povinelli, Natalie Jeremijenko (Art, NYU) explained her work at the xDesign Environmental Health Clinic in an entertaining slide talk, “Wrestling Rhinoceros Beetles, Singing with Mussels, and Other Lifestyle Experiments.” The Clinic prescribes and develops locally optimized and often playful strategies to effect remediation of environmental systems and to promote environmental health through projects that benefit, and are compelling to, both human and nonhuman organisms. In addition to the projects referenced in the title of the talk, other projects Jeremijenko introduced us to included Salamander Superhighway, Moth Cinema, and FLOSS (Free Libre Open Source [food] Systems) to name just a few.
On Friday, Myra Hird (Environmental Studies, Queen’s University) began the day with “Landscapes of Terminal Capitalism, Aporias of Responsibility: Lifeworlds Inherited, Inhabited and Bequeathed.” Hird described her research on three Canadian waste landscapes, arguing for an understanding of waste as a form of “terminal capitalism”: a state whereby our only solution for dealing with the toxicity our relentless consumption and planetary depletion generates is to produce permanently temporary waste deposits for imagined futures to resolve. In this way, Hird argued, whether in the form of mining, nuclear, industrial, hazardous, sewage or municipal, and whether it is dumped, landfilled, incinerated or buried deep underground, waste constitutes perhaps the most abundant and enduring “trace” of the human for epochs to come.

Following a morning breakout session of three panels and a vegan/vegetarian lunch, Beth Stephens (Art, UC-Santa Cruz) screened her and Annie Sprinkle’s film Goodbye Gauley Mountain: An Ecosexual Love Story. The film traces the history of mountain top removal (MTR) coal mining in West Virginia, showing its effects on the land’s geography and human residents. Goodbye Gauley Mountain raises awareness about the devastation of MTR while at the same time imagining positive strategies for changing human relations with and to the earth, as exemplified in Stephens and her partner Sprinkle’s vows to elements of the natural world, which they enact in elaborate marriage ceremonies as a type of performative activism. The screening was followed by a lively discussion in one of the panels in the next breakout session.

In Friday’s final plenary, “Your Shell on Acid: Posthuman Vulnerability, Anthropocene Dissolves,” Stacy Alaimo (English, University of Texas at Arlington) argued that feminism offers invaluable modes of grappling with onto-epistemological and profoundly ethical matters that both become us and undo us. According to Alaimo, the toxic bodies of the Anthropocene call us to dissolve into an ethics of vulnerability, to inhabit the biophysical landscapes of risk, fluctuation, uncertainty, pleasure, and harm. Rather than imagining the human subject as a geological force who has left his mark on the planet, Alaimo called for industrialized humans to consider how ocean acidification dissolves the shells of sea creatures, and to contemplate their own shells on acid—liquefying the outline of the human.
Juliana Spahr (English, Mills College) opened Saturday’s proceedings with a Marxist exploration of the concept of the Anthropocene in “Gender Abolition and Ecotone War,” a provocative turn that sparked much audience discussion during the question and answer session. Spahr’s talk, part of a work in progress she is completing with fellow poet Joshua Clover, began with the example of the Hawaiian creation chant the *Kumulipo* as an entry point to attempting to think about what sorts of anti-capitalist, and thus ecological, struggle might be meaningful in this moment. Spahr then turned to Italian Marxist-feminism, and ended with some thoughts about the all-too-brief blockade of the Port of Oakland in 2011. Spahr’s talk was followed by the third breakout session and the second vegan/vegetarian lunch.

Claire Colebrook’s (English, Penn State) talk, “We Have Always Been Post-Anthropocene” was aptly titled to conclude the plenary lectures. Colebrook noted that the proposed conception of the Anthropocene epoch marks as radical a shift in species awareness as Darwinian evolution was for the nineteenth century. If the notion of the human species’ emergence in time required new forms of narrative, and imaginative and ethical articulation, then the intensifying sense of the species’ end makes a similar claim for rethinking our processes of self-presentation and self-preservation. Colebrook argued that it might be worth redefining all those hypermodern proclamations of a posthuman and postracial future as “hypomodern,” as refusals of the species’ bounded temporality. She explicitly connected this conception of species’ end to feminist critique, noting that it is the possibility of transcending sexual difference—of arriving at indifference—that has always been harbored as the human species’ end. Following Colebrook’s plenary and a final breakout session, all of the plenary speakers and C21 director Richard Grusin joined in a free-wheeling wrap-up session including questions, comments, and other contributions from the audience.
Lecture Series: Changing Climates

C21’s research and public programming for 2013–14 were focused on the theme Changing Climates, which considered not only climate change proper but also the many other climates that are undergoing dramatic changes in the 21st century—including cultural, political, academic, religious, economic, and so forth.

Friday, September 27, 2013
Cannon Schmitt (English, University of Toronto)
“Technical Maturity in Robert Louis Stevenson”

Cannon Schmitt used the work of Robert Louis Stevenson (Treasure Island, Kidnapped) to draw attention to how literary history has traditionally valorized figurative, nonliteral, and anti-technical texts. Because Stevenson’s protagonists, however, show a “technical maturity” that contradicts the valorization of the anti-technical, Schmitt asked whether we should indeed consider a different history of the novel—at the same time as we are being impelled to alter our own relation to the technical made necessary by such contemporary realities as fracking, shale oil extraction, and climate change.

Friday, October 11, 2013
José van Dijck (Comparative Media Studies, University of Amsterdam)
“Social Media and the Culture of Connectivity”

In this lecture, José van Dijck attended to the normalization of social media formats. What has become of the meaning of social activities such as “sharing,” “liking,” “following,” and “trending” in a world dominated by Facebook and Twitter? Facebook’s and Twitter’s algorithms do not simply reflect our behavior and habits, but actively steer and manipulate social activities.

Friday, October 18, 2013
Robert Markley (English, University of Illinois)
“Mapping the Great Lakes: Computational Analysis and Climate History, 1680–1850”

Robert Markley reported on a multi-disciplinary project to address broad questions about how humanists understand and write about the Little Ice Age (c. 1680–1850). Through examination of approximately 400 British and French maps of the Great Lakes Region published during this era, Markley and his team noted that seemingly erratic variations in the sizes and shapes of the lakes may actually encode both short-term meteorological and long-term climatological changes.
Friday, November 1, 2013
Irene Klaver (Philosophy, University of North Texas)
“Meander Model Meme: River as Bridge”

The 21st century sees more and more cities purposefully connecting their urban identities to their rivers. No longer trapped in a nineteenth-century utilitarian paradigm, today’s urban rivers are positioned uniquely to bridge nature and culture, and to facilitate sustainable development by tapping into their age-old deep cultural connections. Klaver used the mythical and geographical Meander River as a metaphor for how we should study the intricacies of rivers as they make their way through complex natural and cultural landscapes.

Thursday, November 7, 2013
Paul Edwards (School of Information, History, University of Michigan)
“Code, Community, and Trust in Climate Science”

Computer models of the earth system are our principal tool for understanding global climate change, but they are so exceedingly complex that no individual can fully understand an entire model. Earth system science is therefore organized as a “community of communities.” Paul Edwards noted that work organization among these modeling groups is changing to reflect the complexity of highly distributed, multidisciplinary work—yet traditional forms of trust remain significant as both barriers and facilitators of exchange.

Friday, February 7, 2014
Ian Baucom (English, Duke University)
“Postcolonial Method and Anthropocene Time”

Basing his talk upon Dipesh Chakrabarty’s conceptualizations of History 1 (Enlightenment historicism), History 2 (subaltern/postcolonial theories of history), and History 3 (historiography demanded by the Anthropocene), Ian Baucom noted that Chakrabarty’s work does not always leave room for the notion of the Anthropocene in Histories 1 and 2. Baucom’s project is to search for a method adequate to our current situation, one that knots together Histories 1, 2, and 3 into a time that he provisionally calls History 4°C.
Friday, March 7, 2014

Jonathan Freedman (English, University of Michigan)

“The Figural Jew and the Undecidability of Art: From Sartre to Proust to the Coen Brothers and Back Again”

Reminding us how the figure of the Jew was transformed into a figure of the alienated universal condition by Jean Paul Sartre, and then constructed as the bearer of a transcendent ethic into human history by Emmanuel Levinas, Jonathan Freedman’s talk went on to observe that the Coen brothers’ film *A Serious Man* (2009) juxtaposes these figural conceptions of Jewishness with the actual, day-to-day historical experience of Jews living in the Midwest of the 1960s.

Friday, April 4, 2014

Stefan Helmreich (Anthropology, MIT)

“The Water Next Time: Changing Wavescapes in the Anthropocene”

Do ocean waves have a history? In this talk, Stefan Helmreich looked toward a future in which waves are not only known differently (through new kinds of computer modeling, for example) but also become differently composed material phenomena than they once were. Today’s wave scientists and modelers are predicting that climate change may not only transform the global distribution of significant wave heights, but may also amplify the frequency of rogue or freak waves, changing the world’s wavescapes in novel ways.

Thursday, April 24, 2014

Christopher Newfield (English, UC-Santa Barbara)

“The Humanities in the Post-Capitalist University”

The humanities disciplines have been asked to defend their value yet again, and various projects have risen to the task. Many of these defenses take the form of showing that the humanities have positive economic impacts. In this talk, Christopher Newfield argued that these defenses are futile and misguided, in large part because they are claiming to have adapted to a capitalist economy in the very moment in which it has reached a historical limit.
Cosponsored Events

C21 also supports public lectures and discussions arranged by other UWM departments and external organizations, as well as benefitting from the support of others. Among the events that we supported over the 2013-14 academic year were the following:

Saturday, September 7, 2013
INOVA Presents: An Artist Talk with Steve Rowell
Responding: Richard Grusin (C21 director) and Jennifer Johung (2013-14 C21 fellow, Art History)
INOVA Institute of Visual Arts, Peck School of the Arts

Saturday, September 28, 2013
MFF 2013: State of Cinema Keynote Address
With staff members of The Dissolve
Milwaukee Film Festival

Saturday, October 19, 2013
Film Screening: Valencia
2013 Milwaukee LGBT Film/Video Festival

Tuesday, November 12, 2013
Josefine Ørum Fokdal (Architecture, Berlin University of Technology)
“From Local Action to Global Networks: Changing Power Relations in Housing Processes in the Global South”
School of Architecture and Urban Planning (SARUP)

Tuesday, November 12, 2013
Peggy Ahwesh (Film, Bard College)
Film Screening and Discussion
Art History Department, Film Department, Film Studies Program

Monday, December 9, 2013
Film screening: My Perestroika (2010)
With a talk by director Robin Hessman
Sam & Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies, School of Information Studies (SOIS)

Thursday, February 6, 2014
Ian Baucom (English, Duke University)
“History 4°C: Search for a Method”
English Department’s Program in Literature and Cultural Theory

February 14-15, 2014
Racial Formation, Racial Blindness
Conference on Racial History
Alliance of History Graduate Students

Thursday, February 27, 2014
Elena Gorfinkel (2013-14 C21 Fellow, Art History)
“Unacting: Notes on the Performing Body in Moving Image History”
INOVA Institute of Visual Arts, Peck School of the Arts

Thursday, March 6, 2014
Jonathan Freedman (English, University of Michigan)
“Transformations of a Jewish Princess: Salomé and the Remaking of the Jewish Female Body”
Sam & Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies

April 2-4, 2014
Mendi + Keith Obadike
Artists Now! Guest Lecture Series, BodyLock (performance), and American Cypher (art exhibit)
Peck School of the Arts

April 4-10, 2014
36th Annual Latin American Film Series
Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS)

Friday, April 18, 2014
Kia Ng
“Human/Technology: Interface for Performing Arts”
Digital Arts and Culture (DAC) Program

Wednesday, April 23, 2014
Portugal and the World: On the 40th Anniversary of the Carnation Revolution
A colloquium
Department of Spanish and Portuguese

May 2-3, 2014
(Re)Mapping Galician Studies in North America: A Breakthrough Symposium
Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference

February 20-22, 2014

The Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference (MIGC) is organized, hosted, and staged by graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, with support from the Center for 21st Century Studies. The conference serves as a venue for graduate students—from a diverse array of disciplines and from around the country—to share their research in a supportive and critical environment. This year’s theme was “Animacy.”

Keynote speaker
Mel Y. Chen (Gender and Women’s Studies, UC-Berkeley)
“Temporal Politics, Scholarship, and the Protean ‘Posthuman’”

Papers delivered at MIGC 2014 engaged with the notion of “animacy” in culture and theory. Derived from linguistics, “animacy” is the condition of being alive or animate, and serves in grammar as a way to classify or rank words. Yet the rich and overlapping senses of “animacy”—e.g., animate, animation, animus, and animal—reveal the term to encompass more broadly notions of agency, expressivity, sentience, cognizance, and mobility.

These notions are often categorized hierarchically, and are saturated with social, cultural, and political implications. Animacy is being increasingly invoked in contemporary discourses of posthumanist and nonhumanist theory, critical ethnic studies, affect theory, object-oriented ontology, queer theory, disability studies, animal studies, eco-criticism, and others. Animacy is a way of troubling the binary of animate vs. inanimate, and instead suggests a more complex system of inter-relatedness between things.

As keynote Mel Chen observes in her book, Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect (Duke, 2012), the “fragile division between animate and inanimate—that is, beyond human and animal—is relentlessly produced and policed.” MIGC 2014 then worked to expose the complex political, social, even personal consequences of this division.

Because of an illness, Professor Chen was unable to attend MIGC in person, but her paper was read by UWM Distinguished Professor of English, Jane Gallop. Chen joined in, however, for a robust and exhilarating question-and-answer session over Skype, for which the audience was quite appreciative.
The Center for 21st Century Studies (C21) is honored to have been selected to participate in a major new grant awarded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI), of which C21 is a founding member. The $1.35 million grant is awarded for the second phase of Integrating the Humanities across National Boundaries, an initiative designed to foster new forms of collaborative research and partnerships among CHCI's international members via two pilot projects.

C21 is one of four CHCI member institutions that will lead the research through 2016 on a pilot project, Integrative Graduate Humanities Education Research and Training (IGHERT). The project brings together doctoral students and faculty in a series of structured events to undertake jointly mentored, internationally collaborative research. The other three CHCI members are the Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, Canberra; the Institute for Humanities Research, University of California, Santa Cruz; and the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture, Justus Liebig University in Giessen. Focusing on the interdisciplinary theme of indigeneity, the four humanities centers together are engaging graduate students in a series of collaborative training and research activities, and are testing, refining, and assessing a scalable model of skill training and digital archiving that can be applied in multiple contexts and to multiple themes.

C21 is supporting two doctoral researchers and two faculty mentors for this three-year project. Doctoral students receive two years of twelve-month dissertation fellowship support plus three years of travel expenses to participate in the IGHERT sessions to be held at each of the participating centers. Faculty mentors receive an annual research stipend for the first two years, plus three years of travel expenses to the IGHERT sessions. In summer 2016, C21 will host a summer workshop for all of the project’s international participants, which will focus on the question of human and nonhuman belonging. The workshop will feature several public presentations which will be open to the UWM and local community.

The two UWM doctoral students awarded IGHERT grants are

Lara Ghisleni (Anthropology)

“Shifting Ground: Landscape and Mobility in Late Iron Age and Early Roman Southern England”

Ashkan Rezvani Naraghi (Urban Studies)


The two UWM faculty awarded mentoring and research grants are Aneesh Aneesh (Sociology) and Kennan Ferguson (Political Science).
In Spring 2014, the Center for 21st Century Studies awarded two research project grants and sponsored ten UWM faculty to participate in a Fall semester seminar on Language. Our thanks to former Chancellor Michael Lovell and The Graduate School for supporting this initiative.

2014 Research Projects

Catalyzing Transdisciplinarity: Cancer-Obesity Comorbidity as a Wicked Problem in Urban Milwaukee
S. Scott Graham (English), Amy Harley (Public Health), Sang-Yeon Kim (Communication), Joan Neuner (Medical College of Wisconsin)
$100,000 in total funding, over one year

RESEARCH TOPIC: It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the coincidence and comorbidity of cancer and obesity. For example, being overweight and obese leads to approximately 14 percent of all cancer deaths in men and 20 percent of cancer deaths in women. Moreover, there is a disproportionate prevalence of both cancer and obesity in low socioeconomic status (SES) and minority communities. Despite this obesity-cancer link, as well as evidence of SES-related causes, little research has been conducted to document the exact manner in which SES factors combine to increase the risks and prevalence of both conditions, or how to intervene on these factors.

For this project, the research team will observe, interview, and survey obesity and cancer healthcare professionals across Milwaukee to arrive at a consensus-based set of best practices recommendations for addressing obesity-cancer comorbidity. It is hoped that these best practices will have a demonstrable positive impact on obesity-cancer comorbidity in Milwaukee, and can be replicated in other similar communities.

Transforming Justice: Rethinking the Politics of Security, Mass Incarceration, and Community Health
Anne Bonds (Geography), Lorraine Halinka Malcoe (Public Health), Jenna Loyd (Public Health), Jenny Plevin (Film), Robert S. Smith (History)
$85,000 in total funding, over one year

RESEARCH TOPIC: Mass incarceration—predominantly of poor men and women of color—has emerged as the United States’ central human rights issue for the 21st century. Policymakers tend to frame questions of justice and incarceration as a delicate balance between community security and economics—“We must get tough on crime!”—one that must simultaneously achieve safety at the lowest cost. Unfortunately, this framing simply emphasizes one-dimensional metrics of crime and victim incidence and tends to posit metrics of criminal activity based on individualistic, rational choice models of behavior occurring within crime-producing neighborhoods.

These conventional methods of addressing security, however, are ill-equipped to handle today’s crisis of mass incarceration. And while recent shifts to understanding mass incarceration through a lens of public health is a marked improvement, it has only been recently that the discipline has begun to move from narrow approaches of measuring the physical and mental health of prisoners to identifying the contribution that imprisonment makes to racial health inequities.

The Transforming Justice project focuses its research and public engagement efforts on reframing public and academic debates about security and health. The project aims not only to document and “give voice” to these issues, but also to help develop strategies for redefining security and health from the perspectives of individuals and communities most directly impacted by mass incarceration.
2014 Fellows Seminar

SEMINAR TOPIC: The seminar theme for Fall 2014 is Language. The seminar is meant to bring together researchers from different disciplines and different methodological perspectives working on a common topic or problem in order to further transdisciplinary knowledge of that topic, and to promote transdisciplinary collaboration and research across UWM. Faculty seminarians receive a one-course buyout to support their participation in the seminar.

Marcus Bullock (English, emeritus)
Nicholas Fleischer (Linguistics)
Sabine Heuer (Communication Sciences and Disorders)
Michael Liston (Philosophy)
Margaret Noodin (English, American Indian Studies)
Bernard Perley (Anthropology)
Anne Pycha (Linguistics)
Amanda Schoofs (Music)
Robert Schwartz (Philosophy)
Jae Yung Song (Communication Sciences and Disorders, Linguistics)

Past Awards

2012 Transdisciplinary Challenge Award: Completed

Intention and Attention: Transmodernism and Integration in Human Movement Studies

Wendy Huddleston (Kinesiology)
Luc Vanier (Dance)

$50,000 in total funding, over two years

The disparate fields of dance and physical therapy, although both emphasizing movement of the human body, have tended to narrow their focus to physical function only: a dancer learns a series of steps or someone undergoing physical therapy may repeat a set of exercises to strengthen a specific part of the body. Both fields, however, need to transform themselves by reconsidering the human body in a more integrated, holistic light.

Toward this end, the project team has been investigating a therapeutic movement technique known as the Alexander Technique. A 100-year old method, the Alexander Technique focuses one’s intention and attention during movement. During the first year of the project, data were collected on both dance and physical therapy students who were working with the technique. These data were used to help develop a common language for both physical therapists and dancers. For the second year, a sports psychologist with expertise in qualitative experimental approaches was added to the team. In March 2014, they hosted the symposium, Transmodernism: Integrating the Art and Science of Movement, for Alexander Technique practitioners, dance instructors, and physical therapists to continue to facilitate discussions among the professions. In June, they presented at the American Society of the Alexander Technique annual conference. Through the success of these two public events, they have been able to put together an expanded study team, including researchers from other institutions. The team is now writing up their findings for publication, and is putting together grant proposals for continued research.
2012 Transdisciplinary Challenge Award: In Process
21st Century Voices: Synthesized Speech in the Third Millennium
Yi Hu (Electrical Engineering and Computer Design)
Shelley Lund (Communication Sciences and Disorders)
Patricia Mayes (English)
Heather Warren-Crow (Texas Tech, Interdisciplinary Arts)
$200,000 in total funding, over two years

For this project, the research team is building an iPhone/iPad touchscreen application for synthesized voice, a technology that plays a prominent role in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices for people with communication disorders. Before making the application, the team needed to compile ethnographic data on the use of AAC devices to better understand the relation between these devices and the users’ identities. With the ethnographic data in hand, the team could then design the app and use it as a basis for a live public sound art performance which will also serve as a testing ground for the app.

During the first year of the project, the team expanded their data collection methods, from just face-to-face encounters with a Milwaukee community to online focus groups that include people from around the country. This expanded scope would allow for their final results to be more generalizable and to be analyzed from different perspectives. The team devoted the bulk of the second year to collecting and analyzing the data under this newly expanded scope. With some preliminary data in hand, the team started analyzing software applications that adjust prosody in synthetic voices and also started reviewing the scholarly literature on representations of identities and emotions through prosodic and intonational patterning. Additionally, they began tracking on the growing interest in vocal aesthetics within the visual art world and the invocation of communication disability by sound art. In Spring 2015, the team will present its work in a live performance open to the public.
In 2014 the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) held its annual conference in Hong Kong, June 5–8. Hosted by the Research Institute for the Humanities at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the conference took up the concept of Performative Humanities. In addition to scholarly presentations, the conference also featured opera, film, and multimedia performances throughout its run, culminating in a half-day visit to Macau. Director Richard Grusin represented C21 both at the annual meeting and at the accompanying meetings of CHCI’s International Advisory Board. Moreover, he was one of nine advisory board members who participated in a three-day emissarial visit to universities in Shenzhen and Guangzhou (formerly Canton), a trip that offered a unique opportunity both to learn about humanities education in China and to represent UWM to a variety of Chinese faculty, administrators, and students.

The conference commenced on June 5 with a Cantonese Opera performance and seminar. June 6 included a panel on “Narcotics and Empires: The Opium War in Literature, History, and Film,” a workshop on “Digital Archive, Digital Humanities, and Performance,” and a rambling but fascinating talk by Taiwanese film director Tsai Ming-liang. June 7 began with a capacious and elegant plenary lecture called “The Way We Perform Now,” by Shannon Jackson (Arts Research Center, University of California, Berkeley), followed by a panel on “The Concept of Performance in New Media Art” by three scholar-practitioners from Hong Kong. The final day began with reports from two Mellon-funded CHCI projects and concluded with a tour of Macau and an open discussion with University of Macau faculty and administrators.

The most unusual, and ultimately the most rewarding, aspect of this year’s conference was the opportunity for board members to participate in a three-day bus trip to Shenzhen and Guangzhou, where the group met with administrators, faculty, and students from five programs at three very different universities. On the first day, CHCI was hosted by the director of the Executive MBA program of CUHK-Shenzhen, located in the center of Shenzhen. Next was a tour of Shenzhen University, where board members had a frank discussion with faculty and administrators from the College of the Arts. The final stop of the day was a tour of the brand new CUHK-Shenzhen campus, located on the outskirts of the city in an area that will host branch campuses of a dozen international universities over the next decade. The next day saw a two-hour bus ride from Shenzhen to Guangzhou, where members had a lunch meeting hosted by Sun Yat-sen University at the T.I.T. Creative Industry Zone, a former Communist textile factory renovated for the creative industry. After lunch the group headed to the Sun Yat-sen campus for back-to-back discussion sessions with faculty and students on “Humanities Education” and “Medical Humanities.”
C21 fellows are integral to the life of the Center during the academic year. Fellows receive reductions in their teaching loads, office space, and some monetary assistance so that they can focus on their own research, as it applies to the Center’s annual theme. Fellows participate in bi-weekly seminars as a group, as well as our public events; they also present the results of their research in public fora. Listed below are our 2013-14 fellows, their seminar topics, and public presentations. We thank them all for such an intellectually engaging year!

**Marcus Filippello** (History)
Seminar: Drafts of the prologue and introduction to his current book project, “Crossing the Black Earth”
Presentation: Fall 2014 Fellows Presentation

**Elena Gorfinkel** (Art History)
Seminar: In progress essay “Willing to Wait: Desire for Duration” on the durational elements of two digital moving image works by James Benning and Sharon Lockhart
Presentation: “Unacting: Notes on the Performing Body in Moving Image History,” a lecture at UWM’s INOVA Gallery

**Dehlia Hannah** (PhD, Philosophy, Columbia University)
Seminar: “Framing Natural Experiments,” a chapter of her dissertation-to-book project that she worked on during her fellowship year
Presentation: An art exhibition to be shown at UWM’s INOVA Gallery, Spring 2015

**Tracey Heatherington** (Anthropology)
Seminar: Working copy of her essay on “Delinquent Zones: Insecurities, Moralities, Natures”
Presentation: Fall 2014 Fellows Presentation

**Jennifer Johung** (Art History)
Seminar: Drafts of the first two chapters of her current book project “Vital Dependencies: Biological Art, Architecture, and Life”
Presentation: Respondent at INOVA Presents: An Artist Talk with Steve Rowell

**Jenny Kehl** (Center for Water Policy)
Seminar: Working copy of her paper on “Transboundary River Systems as a Catalyst for Cooperation v. Conflict”
Presentation: A talk at Milwaukee’s City Hall for UN International Human Rights Day

**Annie McClanahan** (English)
Seminar: “Bad Credit: The Character of Credit Scoring,” an essay that will be reworked into the penultimate chapter of her book manuscript
Presentation: Fall 2014 Fellows Presentation

**Michael Oldani** (Sociology, UW-Whitewater)
Seminar: Drafts of an article, “Deep Pharma” and early chapters from his similarly titled book project
Presentation: Paper presented at the “Contamination” panel of the Anthropocene Feminism conference

**Arijit Sen** (Architecture)
Seminar: Working copy of his presentation for a conference on Transnational Cities and a chapter titled “Conclusions: Social Aesthetics of Mimicry” from his current book project
Presentation: Organized and presented at the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Field School program on Milwaukee’s Washington Park neighborhood

Additionally, for the Spring 2014 semester we housed visiting scholar **Angela Maiello** (Philosophy, Università degli Studi di Palermo, Italia), who conducted research with C21 director Richard Grusin in pursuit of her doctorate in Aesthetics and Theory of Arts. She also took a seminar with Professor Stuart Moulthrop (English) on Gaming and Interactivity, and translated a couple of Grusin’s articles into Italian.
C21 increased graduate student involvement this year with both formal and informal programs. Along with encouraging students to take advantage of existing opportunities at the Center—such as attending brown bags with visiting scholars, participating in the annual conference, and contributing posts to our blog, “Thinking C21”—the Center inaugurated a weekly Bagel Hour for graduate students. Bagel Hour took place every Friday morning in the C21 conference room and provided a space for graduate students from across UWM to meet and get to know, both socially and professionally, colleagues from their own departments but also from other departments, while noshing on bagels and coffee provided by C21.

This year also saw the first of C21’s research workshops to be organized and run solely by graduate students, the Violence Against Women Interdisciplinary Research Group. Formed by students in Social Work and Clinical Psychology, the group provides a venue for a collaborative, team approach, grounded in positive, constructive work driven by members of the group who represented multiple disciplines and multiple methodological approaches. The group held student discussion groups throughout the year and in April hosted a Networking Symposium for Milwaukee Area Interpersonal Violence Research, which was attended by faculty and grad students from universities throughout Milwaukee.

In the Spring, C21 project assistant Audrey Jacobs and English PhD student E. J. Basa presented the C21 Graduate Student Professionalization Workshop Series, which they designed to support grad students from all disciplines in their academic professional development. Working with both the Graduate School and the Digital Humanities Lab, the series included very popular workshops on such topics as identifying and applying for fellowships, building a CV, and writing conference abstracts. The series ended with a Transdisciplinary Social, where UWM professors working across the disciplines shared advice with grad students from a wide range of departments.
As part of our support for interdisciplinary research, C21 has published a long running book series, 21st Century Studies (formerly Theories of Contemporary Culture), with Indiana University Press. Over this past year, we published our final book with Indiana, *Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City*, and have started a new series with the University of Minnesota Press. The books from our series with Indiana are still available through their website (www.iupress.indiana.edu/) or your favorite bookseller. We’re looking forward to working with Minnesota as we continue publishing cutting-edge scholarly work!

*Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City*
Edited by Arijit Sen (Architecture) and Lisa Silverman (History)
Published January 2014

Space and place have become central to analysis of culture and history in the humanities and social sciences. *Making Place* examines how people engage the material and social worlds of the urban environment via the rhythms of everyday life and how bodily responses are implicated in the making and experiencing of place. The contributors introduce the concept of spatial ethnography, a new methodological approach that incorporates both material and abstract perspectives in the study of people and place, and encourages consideration of the various levels—from the personal to the planetary—at which spatial change occurs.

In addition to editors Arijit Sen and Lisa Silverman, who each contributed an essay, authors include Swati Chattopadhyay, Jennifer A. Cousineau, Emanuela Guano, Setha Low, and Karen E. Till

The volume emerges from our two 2010-11 symposia, Embodied Placemaking in Urban Public Spaces, organized by the volume editors.

**University of Minnesota Press**
Center for 21st Century Studies series

Established in 1925, the University of Minnesota Press is recognized internationally for its innovative, boundary-breaking editorial program in the humanities and social sciences. In the 1980s, for example, Minnesota emerged as the first university press to define its editorial program by critical method and perspective—social and cultural theory and interdisciplinary inquiry—rather than by traditional scholarly discipline.

In addition to our book series, Minnesota has several other series that complement the work that C21 is doing: Theory Out of Bounds, Posthumanities, Globalization and Community, Electronic Mediations, and more. Additionally, many of the authors in our first book with Minnesota—“The Nonhuman Turn”—have already been published through the Press: Ian Bogost, Erin Manning, Brian Massumi, Timothy Morton, Steven Shaviro, and Rebekah Sheldon (forthcoming).

Forthcoming, Spring 2015
2014-15 Calendar of Events

Fall 2014
Friday, September 12
C21 Fellows Presentations and Open House

Friday, September 26
Paul Jay (English, Loyola University Chicago)

Monday, October 20
Counting DH Scholarship
A Digital Humanities symposium with Jon McKenzie (English, UW-Madison), Cheryl Ball (English, West Virginia), and T. Mills Kelly (History, George Mason)

Friday, October 24
Wendy Brown (Political Science, UC-Berkeley)

Friday, November 7
D. Fox Harrell (Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, MIT)

Friday, November 14
Eleana Kim (Anthropology, UC-Irvine)

Friday, November 21
MLA Subconference Organizing Committee Presentation

Friday, December 5
Tom Gunning (Cinema and Media Studies, University of Chicago)

Spring 2015
Friday, February 6
Jake Kosek (Geography, UC-Berkeley)

Friday, February 13
Janice Radway (Communication, Northwestern)

Friday, February 20
Keynote: Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference (MIGC)

Friday, March 6
Kavita Philip (History, Women’s Studies, UC-Irvine)

Friday, March 27
Etienne Benson (History and Sociology of Science, University of Pennsylvania)

Friday, April 3
Alva Noë (Philosophy, UC-Berkeley)

Friday, April 17
Matthew Kirschenbaum (English, University of Maryland)

April 30–May 2
C21 annual conference

Calendar listings are tentative. Please check our website (C21.uwm.edu) for the most up-to-date information.
Ivan Ascher (Political Science)
“The Capitalist Mode of Prediction” and “The Future of the Algorithm”

Ivan Ascher’s first project argues that the traditional capitalist attention to production should now be refocused onto prediction. As new technologies are introduced—credit scoring, big data—control over the means of prediction becomes increasingly important, both as a determining factor of economic success and as a factor in the transformation of social relations. His second project looks not only at what algorithms might look like in the future, but also tries to understand what kind of future is presupposed by the algorithm. In the context of finance, the increasing reliance on credit scoring and the development of high-speed trading both depend on and produce a novel conception of the future—one in which uncertainty is grasped as a risk that can be both quantified and contained.

Joe Austin (History)
Analysis of Post-War Youth Culture via Digital Methods

Joe Austin’s book project contributes to the social and cultural history of the American teenager, 1940–1970. The project addresses a number of gaps in the existing literature on U.S. youth culture, including the unexplored contributions of daily newspapers and the social sciences in constructing “the teenager.” Additionally, the project seeks to position the historical experiences of African American teenagers in relation to the historical trajectories of “generic [white, middle class] teenagers,” and to investigate the criminalization of African American teenagers. The project is unique in that it employs digital (non-humanistic) methods to accomplish more traditional humanities interpretations. For example, archival newspaper database inquiries, text mining, and critical discourse analysis software are being deployed to gain systematic insights into approximately 60,000 front-page newspaper articles from this time period.

Elana Levine (Journalism, Advertising and Media Studies)
“Her Stories: Daytime Television Soap Opera and Histories of the Feminine”

Traditional scholarship has studied the soap opera genre to understand its feminized pleasures and the ways it functions as a site of negotiation for women’s place in patriarchal society. Unfortunately, such scholarship has often tended to critique the genre synchronically, not diachronically. Elana Levine’s book project approaches the genre in historically contextual ways. By looking at ways the genre has both changed and remained the same over sixty years, Levine addresses how soaps construct and address a historically specific form of femininity. Acknowledging the current “end of the daytime soap,” she looks to understand not only the economic environment for this “death,” but more so the changing conceptions of femininity leading up to our postfeminist era.

Visiting Scholar

Andrew W. Kahrl (ACLS Fellow)
History, African American and African Studies, University of Virginia
Charles A. Ryskamp Research Fellowship through the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS)
“Lien on Me: Race, Power, and the Property Tax in Twentieth-Century America”
Stuart Moulthrop (English)
MLS Fellow
“Better Doors: Game Study in Remediation”

Instead of writing another academic piece on video games, Stuart Moulthrop is creating a textual game as a basis for critical consideration of a well-known video game. His text-based game is being written in Inform 7, an authoring platform for writers of interactive fiction. The subject of his analysis is the acclaimed Portal 2, noted for its non-Euclidean architecture (warped space) and narrative discontinuities. With this project, Moulthrop hopes to better understand the rhetorical possibilities of text-based gaming for critical writing, to demonstrate that game-based criticism has scholarly merit, and to establish a precedent for innovative scholarly practice.

As Masters of Liberal Studies (MLS) fellow, Moulthrop will be teaching a graduate class on “Scholarship by Other Means,” which considers avenues for scholarly discourse beyond the confines of the monograph and the printed page.

Tasha Oren (English)
“Spectrum Culture: Neuroscience, Media, and the Autistic Aesthetic”

No neurological category has captured public fascination quite like Asperger’s Disorder. The classification has spawned a rich subculture of self-identified communities; the term functions as shorthand for nerd culture, and is a commonplace marker for lovable fictional eccentrics. Asperger’s has also gained currency through the emerging political and sociocultural notion of neurodiversity and its attendant rejection of cognitive difference as disability. Tasha Oren’s book project accounts for these developments within the larger framework of a cultural history of autism and its surprisingly broad impression on media, neuroscience, and digital culture. Shifting scientific and medical understandings of autism, in combination with digital technologies of both imaging and expression, have had profound implications for popular understandings of empathy, sociability, intelligence, and human affect.

Jason Puskar (English)
“Hot Buttons: Liberalism and the Politics of Interface Design”

Jason Puskar’s project is a cultural history of the most ubiquitous mechanical interface of the modern world: the pushbutton. The pushbutton has come to function as a material means of reproducing core liberal values, especially those associated with individual agency. How does a liberal political system fundamentally based on faith in free will maintain confidence in even the most rudimentary forms of agency? The answer this book proposes is that the mechanical world, especially the binaristic switch-based interfaces of the late-nineteenth century, models a relationship between discrete causes and effects that liberal subjects subsequently (and disingenuously) internalize as fully human. Human agency, Puskar argues, is not so human after all, and would be better seen as a particular pattern of action that shows up most starkly in our machines.
Nigel Rothfels (Office of Undergraduate Research)
“The Reintroduction of a ‘Wild’ Horse”

Nigel Rothfels’ project looks at the contemporary reintroduction of Przewalski’s Horse into China. Discovered in Mongolia at the end of the nineteenth century and then brought to Europe, these horses were noteworthy because they closely resembled the images of prehistoric horses being discovered in the caves of France at the time. For geneticists, the Przewalski horses being reintroduced today are simply direct descendants of those horses brought to Europe. Yet these horses are also very different from the original horses: they are as much the creation of a group of horse aficionados and prehistory buffs as anything else. These horses have been bred to conform to late nineteenth century ideas of primitivity: while they are the genetic heirs of the original horses, they have become something else through human culture.

Mark Vareschi (English, UW-Madison)
UW System Fellow
“Everywhere and Nowhere: The Anonymous Text, 1660-1790”

Mark Vareschi’s book project examines the widespread phenomenon of anonymous publication and performance in eighteenth-century Britain. The project argues that the concept of anonymity in literary production was not self-evident to eighteenth-century readers and audiences. Rather, over the course of the period, anonymous literary texts went from being familiar and unremarkable to being a curious species of literature. One of the central features of Vareschi’s study is its reliance on quantitative data of publication and attribution to reveal patterns of thought and networks of textual circulation, patterns that had previously passed unnoticed via other modes of analysis.

Gloria Chan-Sook Kim (PhD, Visual and Cultural Studies, University of Rochester)
Provost Postdoctoral Fellow

Gloria Kim’s project homes in on how the invention of a new disease concept transformed both the visualization of disease and its forms of mediation. Her project begins with a key transformation in visual representation and mediation that took place in 1989 when U.S. government scientists invented the concept of Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID). EID describes diseases hitherto unknown to humankind, or which have resurfaced after a period of eradication. And the EID concept fundamentally changed the practices of global public health: in addition to expanding the scale of biological governance (from state-bound to biospheric), a move from strategies of prevention (addressing present threats) to those of pre-emptive biopreparedness (acting on potential pandemics) came to dominate U.S. approaches to global health.

Visiting Scholar

José Carlos Messias Santos Franco (Fulbright Fellow)
Graduate School of Communication, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Fulbright Scholarship
“Greetings from the Third World: Customized Games, Cognitive Skills, and Power Relations in Cyberculture”
Former Fellows

Michelle Bolduc (07-08) received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for her project, “Rendezvous with Rhetoric: New Translations and Commentary on the Writings of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca.”


Tracey Heatherington (13-14) won the Australian Anthropology Society’s Best Article Prize for 2013 given by the editors of Anthropological Forum, for her paper “Remodelling the Fortress of Conservation? Living Landscapes and New Technologies of Environmental Governance.”

Jennifer Johung curated the art exhibition Weather Patterns: The Smell of Red, featuring Nathaniel Stern (C21 fellow, 11-12) and Erin Manning (author in our forthcoming “Nonhuman Turn” book) at Brooklyn’s Glasshouse Gallery. Stern also had a duo exhibition at the Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa; his contribution will be on display in October 2014 at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD) in another duo exhibition.

Blain Neufeld (12-13) is a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Ethics at the University of Toronto for the 2014-15 academic year.

C21 Staff (Current and Former)

C21 director Richard Grusin spent August 2013 in Brazil as an invited visiting professor in two graduate seminars of Professor Lucia Santaella at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. Grusin’s visit was supported by the Foundation for Research Support of the State of São Paulo (FAPESP). While in Brazil he also delivered a series of invited lectures—at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Belo Horizonte, the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRGS) in Porto Alegre, the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), and the Superior School of Advertising and Marketing (ESPM) in Sao Paulo.

C21’s former editor Ruud van Dijk (03-08), now assistant professor of history at the University of Amsterdam, received a fellowship as a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. His research project is “The Euromissile Crisis, the Dutch, and Changing Perceptions of Nuclear Weapons.”

C21 deputy director Emily Clark headed the book selection committee for UWM’s 2014 Common Read for incoming freshmen. All freshmen receive free copies of Sherman Alexie’s award-winning young-adult novel, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, which will be read for group discussions during UWM’s Fall Welcome.

Books by Former Fellows

Arijit Sen (07-08, 13-14) and Jennifer Johung (09-10, 13-14), editors, Landscapes of Mobility: Culture, Politics and Placemaking (Ashgate Press, 2013).


Anika Wilson (12-13), Folklore, Gender, and AIDS in Malawi (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

In Memoriam

Michael Fountain

Father Michael Fountain (Comparative Literature) passed away on May 6, 2014 following a long battle with cancer. He began teaching at UWM in 1982 and retired in 2013. He specialized in Holocaust literature and oversaw the Holocaust Resource and Information Project. Michael shared the ninth floor of Curtin Hall with us for many years, and C21 staff were frequently the recipients of his kindness, his sharp wit, and his accomplished culinary skills.
UWM Year of the Humanities

2014-15

The Year of the Humanities at UWM is a celebration of the work of humanities faculty, departments, students, and research units across the campus and throughout the community. It showcases the vitality of the humanities disciplines and their role in building critically needed knowledge for the twenty-first century. The humanities are at the heart of a research university: they teach fundamentally important skills to our students and provide us all with the knowledge that we need to flourish in an increasingly complex world.

Our thanks to the Year of Humanities committee for putting together this yearlong celebration! Nigel Rothfels (Chair, Office of Undergraduate Research), Jasmine Alinder (History), Emily Clark (C21), Deanna Ding (Assistant Dean, L&S), Kyla Esguerra (Office of Undergraduate Research), Kennan Ferguson (Political Science), Rebecca Grassl (UWM Union), Michael Liston (Graduate School), Jason Puskar (English), Robert Smith (History), Rodney Swain (Dean, L&S), Jennifer Watson (former Associate Dean, Humanities, L&S).

Faculty Advisory Committee: 2013-14

Aneesh Aneesh (Sociology)
Margaret Atherton (Philosophy)
Sandra Braman (Communications/Global Studies)
Rachel Buff (History)
Tim Ehlinger (Biology)
Kennan Ferguson (Political Science)
Jane Gallop (English)
Thomas Malaby (Anthropology)
Gillian Rodger (Music)
Kumkum Sangari (English)
Lisa Silverman (History/Jewish Studies)
Michael Zimmer (SOIS).

Ex officio:
Richard Grusin (English, C21)
Jennifer Watson (L&S)
Kristie Hamilton (English, MLS)
Emily Clark (C21)
John Blum (C21)
C21 Information

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