

center for 21st century studies

a newsletter from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee ■ fall 2009

RE(CON)FIGURING THE NEW & THE OLD Center unveils new research theme, expands online initiatives

The Center welcomes the academic year by introducing our new biennial research theme and by expanding some of our online initiatives. Over the next two years, the Center will be exploring the theme “Figuring Place and Time,” during which our guest speakers, faculty fellows, graduate students, and symposium attendees will focus their attentions not only on global and local notions of place and time, but also on their negations. Central to this project will be inquiries into hegemonic and alternative temporalities and spatialities, as figured in cultural and social theory, the social and physical sciences, literary and historical analyses, and creative production.

figuring PLACE & TIME

Recent scholarship, for example, has characterized as “non-places” the interstitial spaces full of comings and goings between “places” as these have been defined traditionally in anthropology and geography, that is, as locations with a clear and complex historical and social context. Increasingly we find ourselves spending longer periods in such “non-places”—airport terminals, fast food restaurants, highways—thus existing in a “non-time” that contributes to a sense of temporal as well as spatial discontinuity and transience. Through their ubiquity, electronic media contribute to and enhance this sense of placelessness and atemporality at the very moment that—and perhaps because—they offer all the world, all the time. This world outside of “real” places and “real” times is often portrayed as a rootless, hurried place, with people situated unhappily and languishing in a sort of place/time discontinuum.

Interstitial places and times-without-time, however, have also been viewed in more positive ways. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the notion of alternative temporalities has emerged in the work of artists, composers, musicians, and writers who have offered and explored non-linear temporalities as alternatives to the more linear temporality of majoritarian culture. Timelessness is a state sought as well as decried, through meditation or other religious practices, or via drones and other forms of musical minimalism. Both place and time and their negations figure prominently in contemporary studies of “outsider” and ver-

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FALL 2009

From the Director

Along with colleagues throughout the University of Wisconsin System and at many other colleges and universities across the country, we at the Center have had to reduce our budget significantly. Finding ways to cut expenditures is difficult for everyone, but particularly so for a small academic unit, in which the vast majority of the budget is salary, over which we have no authority. (Salaries are being cut through decisions made at a much higher pay grade, of course.) Some decisions were easy to make: out went the land-line phones in the offices of our faculty fellows, for no one much used them any more. Out went considerations of replacing the carpeting in the main office; we'll live with the pink a bit longer. And we'll live with computers, projectors, and software a bit longer as well. We'll take some of our own pictures, shop only at Costco and Trader Joe's for receptions after lectures, use less expensive paper for this newsletter and other publications. Some things were more painful to cut: as we thought about speakers for this year's lecture program and conference, we paid careful attention to likely travel costs, and limited the number coming from abroad. We reduced the budget for our own travel.

Certain things were never on the table, however. We continue to offer fellowships to UWM faculty, and also to faculty in the UW-System. In fact, the group of faculty who will meet regularly together this year is the largest that it has ever been, thanks to the addition of a Masters in Liberal Studies fellow, who will work on her own research as she develops a new graduate course. (The projects of this year's fellows are highlighted on pages 8 and 9.) We will hold our regular annual conference that will, we anticipate, result in a volume in the Center's book series published by Indiana University Press. Other volumes in that series are in various stages of production, and we are able to provide modest support to ensure their high quality. We continue to offer an extensive array of lectures and symposia, bringing scholars from a variety of disciplines to campus to reflect on this year's theme. In fact, the budget woes may have made us even more interdisciplinary than we have ever been, as we have sought to collaborate with an even wider array of units across campus and institutions across town. One could view the fact that each of our events this year that brings a guest to campus is co-sponsored as a sign of desperation, but we choose to view these opportunities to work together with new partners through glasses as rose-colored as our vintage carpet.

—Merry Wiesner-Hanks

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Audience at Paul Arthur's lecture "Database History: New Designs on the Past," Friday May 1, 2009 in Curtin Hall 118

Re(con)figuring the new and the old

continued from front cover

nacular art, literature, and media, and in productions that address boundaries, migration, temporariness, and displacement. What has been described as the “spatial turn” has led philosophers and literary scholars to use geographical concepts and metaphors to think about their subjects. Historians and natural scientists are increasingly challenging the different notions of time that divide their disciplines, contemplating the natural and human worlds on a range of temporal scales.

Since the Center’s remit is to foster crossdisciplinary work in the humanities, arts, and social sciences, broadly construed, our public programming during the first year of “Figuring Place and Time” will traverse several disciplines, including art, history, geography, architecture, English, anthropology, and film, and will bring in speakers from as far as Australia. (See calendar of events at the back of this newsletter.) The year will culminate with the Center’s spring conference on “Debt.” Debt, in its many manifestations—modern capitalism, traditional societies and honor systems, environmental and artistic indebtedness, theological remissions of sins—establishes a link across time, connecting past, present, and future. How does debt continue to shape cultural, political, economic, and even artistic life? Programming for the second year of “Figuring Place and Time” will emerge from discussions held during the theme’s first year.

Under interim director Merry Wiesner-Hanks, the Center continues its tradition of opening up new paths of inquiry. We look to redouble our online efforts this year, starting with a streamlined new departmental web site at www.21st.uwm.edu. We are also building upon last year’s initiatory forays into Web 2.0 by expanding student blogging of Center events (21stcenturystudies.wordpress.com) and by posting more videos of speakers on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/21stcenturystudies). Moreover, we’re also delving into the possibilities of 140-character transmissions via Twitter (@center21), so be sure to start “following” us. In many ways, the Center was built upon an interest in the merging of culture and technology, and we look forward to making

more use of these emerging technologies to further the Center’s mission. We anticipate that these new forms of transmission will extend the Center’s sense of place, rather than having them inculcate a sense of placelessness.

Although the aforementioned suggests that the Center is skewing toward the new generation of “screen readers,” we would never forget all our devoted old-school “page readers”: Stemming from last year’s 40th anniversary celebrations, we’ve scoured the university’s archives to create a pamphlet on the lively history of the Center. Please feel free to stop by the Center’s offices on the ninth floor of Curtin Hall to pick up a copy . . . though, of course, it is also available from our web site as a PDF.



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A brown bag discussion about Irish writer, dramatist, and poet Samuel Beckett with UWM professor Andrew Kincaid, his students, and Herbert Blau, Byron W. and Alice L. Lockwood Professor of Humanities at University of Washington. Please visit 21stcenturystudies.wordpress.com for student blogs about this and other Center events.

REPORT

CHCI Annual Meeting, 2009

The International Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) held its annual conference entitled “Dialogues of Enlightenment” in Edinburgh, Scotland, June 11 – 13. Hosted by the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh, the majority of the conference took place in the historic Playfair Library, Old College, a building noted for bringing classical exterior architecture into the interior. Around 140 conference attendees participated in workshops and lectures throughout the conference, reflecting on enlightenment as a dialogic, historical, and philosophical concept. Deputy director Kate Kramer represented the Center at this meeting.

In Plenary I, “Making Reason Public,” Baroness Onora O’Neill (President, The British Academy) focused on the idea of public reason by investigating its limitations and conceptions. She called upon humanities centers to produce action knowledge that can extend to larger publics, to consider public and private not as a dichotomy but as dimensions, and to open up internal conversations within publics.

The writer, poet, playwright, and Nobel Laureate in Literature, Wole Soyinka, presented “Enthusiasms: Religion and Nationalism” for Plenary II. In his self-described “cautionary tale of enthusiasms,” Soyinka discussed his concern that ultranationalism leads to xenophobia, citing the US “shock and awe” mentality as a dangerous enthusi-

asm and President Bush’s “bring it on” posture as hubris. This public lecture took place at the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, contemporary buildings designed by the Barcelona architectural firm EMBT and its lead architect Enric Miralles. In addition to the conference participants seated in the Debating Chamber, community members filled the public gallery for Wole Soyinka’s presentation. The conversations between the audience and speakers that occurred after each panel and during the workshops were particularly valuable. The first workshop, Trans-Regional Conditions of the Humanities, highlighted interdisciplinarity and new models of transnational humanities. The panelists offered a pragmatic approach to the value of the humanities and discussed how humanities can contribute to a knowledge economy. During the second workshop, Creating Dialogue, panelists and audience members alike addressed the importance of creating real communication and/or exchange across disciplines, within university administrations/structures, and in collaborations outside of the university. Discussion ranged from dialogic classroom to humanities advocacy in the public domain.

For more information about the CHCI and its initiatives, please visit www.chcinetwork.org.



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CHCI participants at Playfair Library Hall, Old College, University of Edinburgh, Thursday, June 10

“We appear to live in an age of tragic uncertainty” — Wole Soyinka



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Paul Arthur presents “Database History: New Designs on the Past”

On May 1 the Center welcomed back Paul Longley Arthur to present a lecture, “Database History: New Designs on the Past,” which examined the impact of new media technologies on the study of history.

The presentation built on the work Arthur completed as a Research Associate at the Center in conjunction with a Helen and John S. Best Research Fellowship at UWM’s American Geographical Society Library in Fall 2004. Originally from Australia, Arthur is a Research Fellow in the Humanities at Curtin University of Technology in Western Australia and a 2008-09 Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for Cultural Analysis at Rutgers University.

In his talk, Arthur explored how computer technology started to revolutionize the discipline of history more than three decades ago, and yet genres and formats for recording and presenting history using digital media are not well established. Drawing on a wide range of online projects, Arthur posited that digital histories can come in different sizes, from large institutional projects aimed at giving world-wide access to resources for the study of history, right down to personal histories, self-published on YouTube. As Arthur argued, it may no longer be possible to simply call these texts; these digital histories will be composite and shifting information resources that are defined by their very distributed nature rather than by their location within a particular institution, discipline, or domain. And yet, these disparate sources have the potential to “provide a much more rich and complex view of the past,” and to cross disciplinary boundaries as “the digital environment has become a common denominator for academic research” across fields, said Arthur.

The presentation, which was attended by more than 30 UWM faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates, was followed by a lively question and answer session during which Arthur addressed the issues of sustainability, the erosion of academic authority, and the replacement of narration with navigation in many digital history projects.

Congratulations

The Center would like to congratulate its deputy director **Kate Kramer** for being promoted to indefinite appointment status and the following former fellows who were promoted to associate professor during the 2008-09 academic year . . .

Jasmine Alinder (History, 2005-06)

Luca Ferrero (Philosophy, 2008-09)

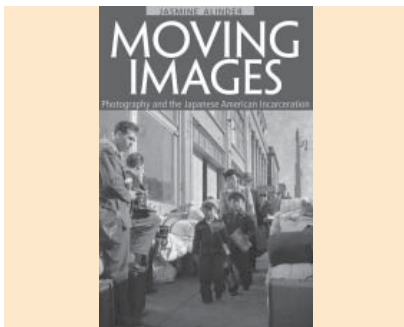
Bernard Perley (Anthropology, 2007-08)

and the following who were promoted to full professor . . .

Bettina Arnold (Anthropology, 1998-99)

Former Fellows and Staff

Jasmine Alinder (History, 2005-06) had her book, *Moving Images: Photography and the Japanese American Incarceration*, published by the University of Illinois Press in January, 2009. The book explores how the control of the means of representation, via photography, played out during the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.



Anne Davis Basting (UWM Center on Age and Community, 1999-2000) had her book, *Forget Memory: Creating Better Lives for People with Dementia*, published by The Johns Hopkins University Press in May, 2009. She will be reading excerpts from her book at Milwaukee's Boswell Books, 2559 N. Downer Ave., October 14, 7 p.m.

The Chamber ensemble NOISE presented four instrumental compositions by **Christopher Burns** (Music, 2008-2009) at the soundON Festival of Modern Music, June 18-20, 2009, at the Athenaeum Library in La Jolla, California. The group performed pieces for flute and guitar, solo per-

ussion, khaen (Thai mouth organ), and quintet. Chris's piece "Sawtooth" for audio-visual performance, which he composed during his fellowship year, can now be seen on YouTube.

Former Center editor **Michelle Caswell** was named the first recipient of the Archival Education and Research Doctoral Fellowship by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in order to complete her PhD in information studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her duties at the Center have been taken up by former Center associate director of advancement and planning, **John Blum**.

Barbara Ley (Journalism and Mass Communication, 2006-07) had her book, *From Pink to Green: Disease Prevention and the Environmental Breast Cancer Movement*, published by Rutgers University Press in July, 2009.

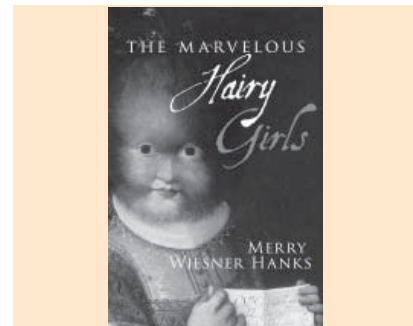
Michael Oldani (Anthropology, UW-Whitewater, 2008-09) and **Kalman Applbaum** (Anthropology, 2001-02), are guest co-editing the August 2010 special issue of *Anthropology & Medicine* entitled, "New Anthropologies of Medical Compliance."

Kristin Pitt (French, Italian and Comparative Literature, 2006-07) published "Denaturalizing the Plantation: Sexuality and (Re)production in the Fiction of Reinaldo Arenas" in *Forces of Nature: Natural(-izing) Gender and Gender(-ing) Nature in the Discourses of Western Culture* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009), edited by Bernadette H. Hyner and Precious McKenzie Stearns.

Current Fellows and Staff

Jason Puskar (English, 2009-10) published his article, "Risking Ralph Ellison" in *Daedalus* (Spring, 2009), a special issue devoted to "Emerging Voices" that showcased early-career scholars.

Center interim director, **Merry Wiesner-Hanks**, had her book, *The Marvelous Hairy Girls: The Gonzales Sisters and Their Worlds*, published by Yale University Press in May, 2009. This book tells the story of three sixteenth-century sisters who, along with their father and brothers, were afflicted with an extremely rare genetic condition that made them unusually hairy. Amazingly, the Gonzales sisters were not mocked or shunned, but were welcomed in the courts of Europe.



To date, the book has already garnered notice with *Guardian* (May 16, 2009) and *The New Yorker* (July 27, 2009). Merry also read selections of her book to a packed house at Milwaukee's Boswell Books in July.

FELLOWS



David S. Allen, Associate Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at UWM, is the author of *Democracy, Inc.: The Press and Law in the Corporate Rationalization of the Public Sphere* (University of Illinois Press, 2005). His project at the Center concerns the role of time and place in managing dissent, as reflected in the recent proliferation of government-designated free speech zones. This research will develop into a book that argues that time and space designations for dissent limit discourse to the detriment of a discursive public sphere.



Erica Bornstein is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at UWM and the author of *The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality, and Economics in Zimbabwe* (Stanford, 2005). Her project at the Center concerns the temporal and atemporal aspects of humanitarian relief efforts, commonly described as both an urgent response to crises and a “timeless” impulse. She anticipates that this work will contribute to a monograph that builds on ethnographic research on philanthropists, volunteers, and humanitarian workers conducted in New Delhi.



Multimedia artist **Bruce Charlesworth** is Assistant Professor of Film, Video, and New Genres in UWM’s Film Department. During his fellowship at the Center, he will develop *Retraction*, a new multimedia narrative environment that explores anticipation and the passage of time through several successive video and sound-equipped rooms connected by closed doors. The project will grant viewers the opportunity to engage with fictional characters and builds on earlier work concerning the psychology of anticipation.



Jennifer Johung, the Center’s first Masters in Liberal Studies (MLS) Fellow, is Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art in the Art History Department and Director of the Art History Gallery at UWM. Her research at the Center will examine the concept of home as re-imagined in the intersections between contemporary art and architecture. The project proposes that, while place may no longer be a sustainable category, being in place is nonetheless possible, as home is always in the process of being resituated. She will also teach a graduate seminar in the MLS program.



Nan Kim, Assistant Professor of History at UWM, will explore the temporality and geopolitical landscape of the residual Cold War with a focus on the ongoing division between North and South Korea. Her work examines how, in this period of continuing uncertainty on the Korean Peninsula, the disruptions caused by national division are being remembered, challenged, and reconfigured. At the Center, she will work on a book that builds upon previous research about separated families, the war bereaved, and reconciliation in divided Korea.

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Jason Puskar is Assistant Professor of English at UWM and has published articles in such journals as *Daedalus* and *American Literary History*. His research at the Center will explore the cultural history of the push button, modernity's most common interface with the mechanical world. His work will examine the button as a juncture in history, a tiny place that collapses distance into proximity, and in turn condenses duration into instantaneity. He is contemplating a book on this topic and expects to publish at least one scholarly article on the button while at the Center.



Manu Sobti, Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at UWM, will focus on Central Asia's Oxus River boundary to explore medieval cultural encounters between Persians and Arabs. His work examines how physical borders and boundaries delineate the nature of cultural interactions. He is writing a book that unravels how conflict, reconciliation and interaction between medieval Persian and Arab communities created urban forms alongside this geographically significant and politically critical divide.



Deborah J. Wilk is Assistant Professor of Art History in the Department of Art at UW-Whitewater. Her project examines the way architecture was used to structure and narrate visual and textual investigations of immigration, focusing on the architecture of Castle Garden and Ellis Island. Additionally, she will explore how images of breastfeeding immigrant mothers brought to the forefront issues of ethnicity, citizenship, and eugenics. This research will take the form of two peer-reviewed articles and a book proposal.



Robert P. Wolensky, Professor of Sociology at UW-Stevens Point, will be working on a book tentatively titled *Anthracite Stories: The Shifting Ground of Narrative and Memory in the Anthracite Coal Region of the United States, 1830-2000*, the sixth book he has written on the area. His research at the Center addresses the complex relationships between narrative, memory, place and time in a specific American cultural landscape, namely the anthracite coal region of Northeastern Pennsylvania.



SAVE THE DATE

FRI-SAT APR 30—MAY 1

DEBT, the Center's spring 2010 conference organized by UWM faculty Peter Y. Paik (French, Italian, and Comparative Literature) and Merry Wiesner-Hanks (History, and Center director) For more information, please visit www.21st.uwm.edu



Correction:

In our last newsletter (Spring/Summer 2009), we incorrectly stated that Margo Anderson (History, Urban Studies, UWM) queried guest speaker Herbert Blau (Byron W. and Alice L. Lockwood Professor of the Humanities, University of Washington) regarding his take on the nature of reality. In fact, the query came from Margaret Atherton (Philosophy, UWM). Our apologies to both Professors Anderson and Atherton.

FALL 2009 CALENDAR

WED SEP 16

Robert S. Mattison (Art History, Lafayette College)

"Whatever Is There Is a Truth: Robert Rauschenberg's Prints," a lecture co-sponsored by the Haggerty Museum of Art and UWM Department of Art History

6:00 pm Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University

THUR SEP 24

Glenn Hendler (English, Fordham University)

"Riot Acts," a lecture co-sponsored by UWM College of Letters & Science, Cultures & Communities Program, and Department of English

2:00 pm CRT 368

FRI SEP 25

2008-09 Fellows Presentations by **Thomas Haigh** (SOIS), **Lisa Silverman** (History), and **Florence Vatan** (FICL)

Introduction of Incoming Modern Studies Students

2:30 pm CRT 118

followed by **C21 OPEN HOUSE**

4:00 pm CRT 939

FRI OCT 16

OPEN FORUM

2:30 pm CRT 118

Whitney Davis (Art History, Berkeley)

"Virtuality and Metaopticality," a lecture co-sponsored by UWM Department of Art History

3:30 pm CRT 118

FRI OCT 30

David Christian (Modern History, Macquarie University)

"World History & Big History," a lecture co-sponsored by Cambridge University Press and UWM Department of History

3:30 pm CRT 175

FRI NOV 13

Dell Upton (Architectural History & Art History, UCLA)

"Defining a Public Realm: Conflict, Imagination, and Demeanor in the Antebellum American City," a lecture co-sponsored by UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning and Department of Art History

4:30 pm AUP 170

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FALL 2009 CALENDAR CONTINUED

FRI NOV 20

Space, Power, and Fear in Modern America, a symposium

“Sovereignty, Law and the Spatial Architecture of Rights” by **Bruce d’Arcus** (Geography, Miami of Ohio) and “The American Enemy” by **Joseph Masco** (Anthropology, University of Chicago)

co-sponsored by UWM Department of Anthropology
3:00 pm CRT 118

FRI DEC 4

Fall 2009 Humanities Dissertator Presentations by **Kate Haffey** (Literary Studies), **Susan Kerns** (English, Modern Studies), and **Brice Smith** (History, Modern Studies)
3:00 pm CRT 118

FRI DEC 11

Timelessness, a symposium

Featuring UWM faculty **Margaret Atherton** and **Robert Schwartz** (Philosophy), **Mitch Brauner** (Music), and **Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho** (History)

3:00 pm CRT 118



2009 Tennesen Graduate Research Fellow

The Center congratulates Kate Haffey, the fifth Tennesen Graduate Research Fellow, for being the recipient of a UWM Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship, 2009-2010. As a Tennesen fellow this past summer, Kate worked on her dissertation, “Eddies in Time: The Narrative Dimension of Queer Temporality,” using insights drawn from queer theory to examine the treatment of narra-

tive time in 20th century literature. She writes: “This project has allowed me to bring narrative theory and queer theory into conversation with one another. In my dissertation, I locate moments where queer temporality is functioning and argue that such moments allow us to rethink notions of narrative time.”

Besides drafting the fourth chapter of her dissertation, she was also able to complete the final revisions of an article to be published in May 2010 issue of the journal *Narrative*. “The funds and the facilities provided to me [at the Center],” writes Kate, “allowed me to make much progress this summer. . . . This sort of advancement would not have been possible had I not received the Tennesen Fellowship.”

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*Paul Arthur, "Database History: New Designs on the Past," May 1,
Curtin Hall 118*