

[FEATURES | SPECIAL ISSUE]

**Radcliffe Reads and Writes**
Profiles, excerpts, and must-reads

18  **What If?**
BY LYNN WEISS
Writer David Bezmozgis thinks about what might have been.

22  **Listening to Tayari**
BY PAT HARRISON
Leaning in close to hear novelist Tayari Jones.

26  **Writing Is Like Doing Push-ups**
BY JULIA HANNA
Reginald Dwayne Betts’s lyrical calisthenics.

[DEPARTMENTS]

1  From the Dean
2  Around the Institute
16  Institute Exploration
30  New Books
32  Development News
35  Newsmakers
40  Quick Study

[ONLINE]

The Radcliffe Institute is fully social. Keep up with us by joining our communities on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+.

[www.radcliffe.harvard.edu](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu)

facebook.com/RadcliffeInstitute
twitter.com/RadInstitute
FROM THE DEAN

Sharing the Institute’s Transformative Thinking

I AM DELIGHTED TO WRITE TO YOU for the first time as the new dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Since arriving as interim dean last July, I have been continually amazed by the Institute’s deep engagement with audiences at Harvard and beyond and its potential for growth. I look forward to sharing with you, for years to come, our people, programs, and collections, to use the language of our newly renovated website.

Much of the Institute’s first decade focused on transitioning Radcliffe from a college to an institute for advanced study. In our next 10 years, we will continue to develop our role as a convener of faculty members, students, and the interested public and a promoter of important intellectual and artistic initiatives.

This Radcliffe Magazine gives you a taste of the many subjects that scholars and fellows have explored in their research and in conferences and seminars. Our commitment to the arts is evident in many ways—one of them being that we opened our “Women Making Democracy” conference with the staged reading of a play that drew the audience experientially into our topic (see page 10). This is just the kind of engaging, multifaceted programming that the Institute aims to foster going forward.

Now we can share our work more broadly. Radcliffe has an enormous potential global audience, and with the launch of our new website, we can expand the reach of the knowledge being created here every day. This year’s Radcliffe Day celebration was the first ever to be webcast live, and I hope some of you were able to “tune in” to hear Margaret H. Marshall, former chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, and others explore the crucial role of the judiciary in making social change (page 9). If you missed it then, you can watch it now, along with many more public programs we are making available online so that you can experience firsthand the transformative thinking Radcliffe supports.

I encourage you to take a moment to explore our new site, www.radcliffe.harvard.edu. In addition to video of many of our events, you will find Radcliffe news, profiles of our fellows and their projects, and digital access to many of the Schlesinger Library’s collections.

I hope you can attend one of our upcoming conferences—on campus or online—when we will convene experts to explore several subjects: September’s conference is about Julia Child (back cover), October’s conference, “Cloudy with a Chance of Solutions,” focuses on water (page 3), and, in November, we take note of note-taking (page 2). In addition, there will be lectures by our fellows and visiting scholars and artists throughout the fall. Please join us.

LIZABETH COHEN
Dean, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study
Studying **BOOKS, Taking NOTES**

Peter McDonald has opened debate between book historians and literary theorists, according to Leah Price, director of the humanities program at the Radcliffe Institute.

The history of the book as a discipline like art history or the history of science dates to 1982, Peter D. McDonald said in a spring lecture at the Radcliffe Institute. That was the year Robert Darnton ’60, the Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and director of the Harvard University Library, published an influential essay on the subject, “What Is the History of Books?” (*Daedalus*, Summer 1982).

A professor of English and related literature and a tutorial fellow at St. Hugh’s College at the University of Oxford, McDonald lauded what he called “Darnton’s ambitious holism”—viewing book production from writing through reading and criticism—as especially important right now for understanding the rapidly changing history of books.

McDonald cautioned against book historians’ taking a narrow view and “looking like art historians who have abandoned any interest in pictures in order to concentrate on the history of frames, or historians of science who are more eager to study the sociology of laboratories than the meaning of scientific discovery.”

The Radcliffe Institute will host a related event on November 1–2, titled “Take Note,” a conference that will survey the range of forms that notes have taken across different media, times, and places. In the digital age, note-taking continues in classrooms and offices, though the ways of storing this information change constantly.

From Henry James’s 1914 Date Book in Harvard’s Houghton Library
Many of the 1.6 million deaths a year of children with diarrheal disease could be prevented by effective water treatment. In a spring lecture at the Radcliffe Institute, Michael Kremer, the Gates Professor of Developing Societies in Harvard’s Department of Economics, said governments could provide safe, clean water for people, but that the prospect seems years away. He is among those working on alternative solutions—collaborating, for example, with nongovernmental organizations to design and distribute free chlorination systems in Kenya.

At another lecture in Radcliffe’s water series, John Briscoe stressed the importance of water security—ensuring supplies in the face of floods, droughts, and climate change and sustaining the resource. Briscoe—who holds faculty appointments at the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the School of Public Health—directs the University’s Water Security Initiative.

Briscoe told the Radcliffe audience that 90 percent of people in the world have access to an adequate supply of drinking water. “Economic growth has solved a large part of the service problem,” he said.

Capping the Institute’s spring lectures on water was an April conference on water federalism that brought academics together with practitioners, policy makers, and students. In a two-day program, attendees discussed river management in Australia, Brazil, Pakistan, and the United States.

Water Worldwide

- 70 percent of the global supply is used by agriculture.
- 20 percent is used by industry.
- 10 percent is used by households.

The institute’s science symposium on October 12 will focus on water. Visit www.radcliffe.harvard.edu for more information about “Cloudy with a Chance of Solutions.”
The Complicated History of Women at Harvard

ONCE WORKERS, donors, and helpmeets, women have come...
cliffe’s Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. The Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the library and Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History, Cott recalled how important it had been for her to be able to turn to the Schlesinger in 1970, when she was a graduate student preparing to teach one of the earliest courses in women’s history. Influenced by the women’s movement, she distrusted previous historians’ accounts, assuming they were full of stereotyped assumptions about women. “I was able to look on the shelves of the Schlesinger and find one primary source after another” for students to read, she said, since the library (originally the Women’s Archives) had been collecting for more than 25 years by then.

Crediting the mid-1940s vision of Radcliffe College in intending to establish “a national center for research in the historical role and cultural contributions of the women in the United States,” Cott noted the essential role played by historian Mary Ritter Beard (1876–1958) in enabling the library’s first contacts and collections. Cott quoted her mantra: “No documents, no history. Papers. Records. These we must have.”

**IN THE EARLY 1950s, Radcliffe College shared only course instruction with Harvard—a lingering economy measure from wartime. Here, Nancy Fisher, a member of the Class of 1954, sits in a lecture with Harvard men.**

**ELIZABETH CARY AGASSIZ, shown here circa 1885–1890, founded the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women in 1879.**

**IN 1893, more than half of the Harvard Library staff members were women. By Commencement in 1971 (above right), women were still protesting for equal access to Harvard.**

---

*Summer 2012 Radcliffe Magazine*
She didn’t expect to stay in the job. In April 2011, when Lizabeth Cohen accepted Harvard University President Drew Faust’s invitation to become interim dean of the Radcliffe Institute, she was being a good citizen, fulfilling what she saw as her responsibility. “I came in wanting to do the best job I could,” she says, “expecting to return to my department and my research and writing.”

But the Radcliffe deanship grew on her. For one thing, she enjoyed the intense collaboration. “That does not generally come with your standard academic job,” Cohen says. “We work very independently, especially in a field like history.” She was also surprised at how much she enjoyed the fundraising. “I found it interesting to talk to smart people who care about ideas, who stay connected with their university because they value it and find it a continual stimulation.”

Still, before she was appointed dean, in March 2012, Cohen agonized about whether she wanted the job. How would she find the time to do her scholarly work? “That will be my challenge,” she says. “I want to find a way to do this job while remaining an active scholar.”

Cohen will not be teaching during the 2012–2013 academic year, but she makes it a priority to continue advising graduate students and to work on her next book, *Saving America’s Cities: Ed Logue and the Struggle to Renew Urban America in the Suburban Age*, under contract with Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

**Howcome?**

Cohen traces her interest in history back to her mother, a lawyer who led family expeditions to historic houses and museums. “She understood the world in historical terms,” Cohen says. “When I would ask questions about why things were the way they were, she would offer up historical explanations, and that made sense to me.” She asked so many questions, Cohen admits, that her family nickname became “Howcome.”

Several teachers influenced Cohen’s career, including Paula Fass, her advisor in graduate school and the first woman full professor she knew well. But the strongest propeller no doubt came from within. The spirited woman who enrolled at Princeton in 1969—with the first class that included women—charted her own course, discovering through experience what path she would take.

**Student Activism**

Like many of her fellow Baby Boomers, Cohen was called to activism by the era’s tumultuous events. During the spring of her freshman year, in 1970, af-
ter the United States bombed Cambodia, she joined the Princeton Strike movement. It was during this time that she got to know Herrick Chapman, a junior, whom she married in 1977.

In 1972, during her junior year, Cohen decided to work in an accredited field study on Shirley Chisholm’s campaign for the US presidency. She moved to Washington and threw herself into the cause. At the Democratic National Convention in Miami, where Chisholm gave her support to Hubert Humphrey instead of George McGovern, Cohen was disappointed, believing that McGovern shared more of Chisholm’s values than Humphrey did. Cohen decided that a career in politics was not for her.

She graduated with a history degree and certification to teach at the secondary level. Wanting to move to Boston, where Chapman lived and was an administrator at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, Cohen landed a job at a suburban junior high. She also got involved with a project at Old Sturbridge Village, where she worked the following year as an intern in museum studies.

After two years in Massachusetts, the couple moved to California, where Chapman attended graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley. Cohen continued her work in museums before deciding to go to graduate school at UC Berkeley to get credentialed in history. To her amazement, she loved graduate school. “I loved waking up in the morning and reading all day and writing. I never would have appreciated that right out of undergraduate school. It took all of those other experiences to make me realize what I wanted.”

Combining Work and Family
When Cohen earned her PhD, in 1986, she and Chapman both went on the job market and were hired to share a position at Carnegie Mellon—he taught the history of modern France and she taught American history. Their schedule accommodated the births of Julia Cohen Chapman in 1986 and Natalie Cohen Chapman ’11 in 1989.

Chapman was recruited by New York University in the early ’90s. “The Institute for French Studies at NYU was looking for a historian,” Cohen says, “and they knew about Herrick’s work. Then they learned that I was married to him and had just won the Bancroft Prize.” She won the prestigious award for her first book, Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939 (Cambridge University Press, 1990), which became a classic.

The family moved to New York in 1992. Cohen taught at NYU for five years, until Harvard offered her a tenured position in 1997, and Chapman continues to teach there. The family has lived in Belmont, Massachusetts, since Cohen began working at Harvard. “Herrick goes down to New York on Tuesday morning and comes back on Thursday night,” she explains. “We knew we would not be happy if we weren’t both doing work that we loved.”

Cohen first came to the Radcliffe Institute as a fellow in 2001, when she completed her book A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (Knopf, 2003), dedicated to Julia and Natalie.

Julia is pursuing a master’s in architecture at Princeton, and Natalie lives in Washington, DC, where she’s training to teach underserved students.

Cohen and Chapman are planning to move into Greenleaf, the dean’s residence across from Radcliffe Yard. “Living so close to campus,” Cohen says, “should help me combine my work as dean with writing and teaching.”

INTENSE COLLABORATION, not a standard feature of academic jobs, drew Cohen to the Radcliffe deanship.
From Ancient Games to Young Planets

The Radcliffe Research Partnership program gives undergraduate students a chance to learn from some of the world’s best minds—and puts money in their pockets in the process.

by Pat Harrison

Rome in 1960 was the first host city to use a large-scale Olympic complex as part of an urban redevelopment strategy. Thereafter, the Olympic complex—including stadiums, gymnasiuems, swimming pools, and athletes’ living quarters, as well as new highways, airports, and other types of infrastructure—was a mainstay. But not all Olympic complexes have been successful as long-term urban redevelopment. Most experts agree, according to Judith Grant Long RI ’12—the Joy Foundation Fellow at Radcliffe and an associate professor of urban planning in Harvard’s Graduate School of Design—that Barcelona in 1992 was an urban development success, while Montreal in 1976 was a failure.

Experts agree that the revolution that’s occurred in the past 15 to 20 years in astronomy, with the discovery of more than 750 new planets beyond our solar system. He said when he started working on his PhD at Harvard in 1994, “we only knew of one planetary system, our own, and there were nine planets. Remember that?” NASA’s 2009 launch of the Kepler Space Telescope dramatically accelerated the discovery of extrasolar planets, or exoplanets. Data from Kepler has indicated the possibility of more than 2,300 planets, in addition to the 750. “It’s an incredible time in terms of discovery,” Jayawardhana said, “comparable to the time 400 years ago when Galileo turned his telescope to the heavens.” An award-winning science writer, Jayawardhana is the author of Strange New Worlds: The Search for Alien Planets and Life Beyond Our Solar System (Princeton University Press, 2011).

Jayawardhana’s Radcliffe Research Partner, Natania Wolansky ’14, has worked with him on his next book, about neutrino hunters, to be published in 2013. Tiny particles that carry huge amounts of energy, neutrinos have been observed since the 1980s. “They hold the key to a lot of the big mysteries in the universe,” she said. “For example, if there’s a difference between the energy in a neutrino and an antineutrino it can explain why there’s so much matter in the universe, why the universe exists as matter.”
Radcliffe Day 2012

CONCEIVED AS A TRIBUTE TO MARGARET H. MARSHALL’S DECADES OF working to advance social justice—in private practice and as the 24th chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court—Radcliffe Day 2012 brought together some of the brightest minds in the legal profession to discuss the role of law in making social change. “On the one hand, law is a tool for social change. . . . On the other hand, law is the tool of the status quo, the tool of the state,” said Martha Minow EdM ’76, the dean of Harvard Law School and the Jeremiah Smith, Jr. Professor of Law.

MORE THAN 700 guests attended the annual luncheon in Radcliffe Yard.

Care for a Radcliffe magnet? Guests helped themselves to logo souvenirs outside the tent in Radcliffe Yard.

The morning panelists discussed social issues such as gay rights and health care.

Radcliffe medalist Marshall said she has deep concerns about the attack on the “foundational notion that judges should decide cases on the facts and law alone.”

Dean Cohen; Marilyn Dunn, executive director of the Schlesinger Library; and Marlene Rehkamp O’Brien ’82 spoke at the Ann Radcliffe Society Breakfast, attended by those who have included the Institute in their estate plans or made a planned gift.

Margaret Marshall’s remarks and a video of her speech are available at www.radcliffe.harvard.edu.
Women Making Democracy in the Arab World and Elsewhere

Speakers from around the globe explored the worldwide struggle to build governments that reflect women’s ideals and hopes for the future.

Several of the speakers at “Women Making Democracy” pointed out that elections have not necessarily ushered in a new era of democratic rule—or an advancement of women’s rights, despite women’s significant participation in several countries.
by Deborah Blagg

A DRAMATIC READING OF IBRAHIM
EL-HUSSEINI’s play Commedia Al-Ahzaan
(A Comedy of Sorrows) opened Radcliffe’s 2012 gender conference, “Women
Making Democracy,” highlighting the widening gap between the hopes of protesters who put their lives on the line during the heady days of “Arab Spring” and the realities of establishing a democracy that incorporates their inspirational ideals.

Written in the midst of the revolution and first performed in Egypt in July 2011, the play follows a young, university-educated woman through chance meetings with diverse members of Egyptian society, including a soldier who encountered his own son in a military torture room and a young man so degraded by his economic and social circumstances that he walks on all fours like a dog. Egypt is often represented as a woman in Egyptian art, and in the play, the young woman’s growing awareness of the misery around her symbolizes the country’s coming to terms with the deeply engrained effects of years of oppression.

The lack of a sense of resolution in the play underscores the reality that “the revolution is incomplete,” as the playwright noted in a post-performance discussion. “When the revolution took place in Egypt, we felt the whole world was ours,” El-Husseini elaborated through an interpreter. “But the military council is still in control, and power is being taken by the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists.” Although he is encouraged that “the wall of fear has come tumbling down,” allowing artists and others to speak out, El-Husseini believes “it will be years until we can achieve true democracy.”

Women Making Democracy

Noting the play’s prominent place in the late-March conference, Radcliffe Dean Lizabeth Cohen said, “Artistic expression does critical work in a political struggle like ‘Arab Spring.’” In welcoming a capacity crowd to the Radcliffe Gym and a global audience via online streaming, Cohen highlighted the broad significance of “Arab Spring,” saying, “The way in which these events have unfolded has great significance for women, with ramifications for decades to come.” Jennifer Hochschild RI ’01, chair of the conference planning committee and Harvard’s Henry LaBarre Jayne Professor of Government, said the gathering was intended to explore “Arab Spring” protests as both “a unique phenomenon” and “a variant of a much broader category” of spontaneous uprisings led by people committed to democratic change. Panelists included activists, observers, and scholars whose discussions turned frequently to recent headline events: the military’s tightened grip on power in Egypt since Hosni Mubarak’s ouster; the ascendance of the Muslim Brotherhood and others who want Islamic beliefs to prevail in governance; the erosion of quotas that guaranteed women’s representation in parliament; the recent public “virginity inspections” and brutal beatings of women activists; and threats to revoke existing statutes that protect women’s basic rights. With those issues as a backdrop, the speakers pushed beyond women’s roles in the protests to explore the complicated, worldwide struggle to build governments that reflect women’s ideals and hopes for the future.

Advances and Setbacks

In her keynote address, the Egyptian freelance journalist Shahira Amin offered a nuanced assessment of developments in post-“Arab Spring” Egypt. A veteran television reporter, Amin resigned her position as deputy head of the state-run Nile TV in January 2011 to protest the government’s official coverage of the Tahrir Square uprising. She was a leading force in focusing international attention on the virginity checks women protesters were subjected to by the police after their arrest during a March 2011 protest aimed at gaining a say in the new Egyptian constitution.

Although sexual harassment of women in Egypt was not uncommon in the past, Amin said, the fact that Samira Ibrahim, one of the women subjected to a virginity test, filed a lawsuit against the police “would have been unthinkable in the old Egypt.” Ibrahim lost the suit, but Amin called the massive protests following that decision and a subsequent court-issued order banning virginity tests signs “that the old impunity has gone.”

Less encouraging, said Amin, has been a disconnect between women’s significant participation in “Egypt’s first free, almost-fair election” and the advancement of women’s rights. Quotas for women serving in parliament have been abandoned, she noted, and women are bearing the brunt of “growing public anger against unrealized expectations” in the wake of the revolution. She said there has been a backlash against the so-called Suzanne’s Laws—property, divorce, and custody rights women gained with the backing of Egypt’s former first lady Suzanne Mubarak. Measures that discouraged the widespread traditional practice of female genital mutilation are among the gains that may be eroded with the resurgence of political Islam.

Photographs by Jessica Scranton
Other Democracies, Other Eras
Many of the Egyptian issues Amin raised resurfaced throughout the conference in discussions of women’s involvement in movements for democracy in other countries and in past eras. In a panel titled “Women, Rights, and Power,” Dalia Mogahed, executive director and senior analyst at the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, shared the results of surveys that compare the attitudes of men and women in Egypt and Tunisia, the country with the most liberal gender legislation in the Arab world.

Presenting findings that may give Western feminists pause, Mogahed noted that “there was no gender consensus on the role of Shariah law in legislation” in either country. Rather, Tunisians of both sexes are less likely to favor Shariah-influenced lawmaking than their counterparts in Islamist-leaning Egypt. Neither country embraces a Western-style separation of church and state: just 10 percent of Tunisians in the Gallup survey favored a purely secular government, and only one percent of Egyptians did.

Mogahed said the polls suggest that even those who champion expanded roles for women in those two countries—and, encouragingly, there are many—“have negotiated within themselves a compromise where women’s rights coexist with Shariah laws.”

That brand of hopeful idealism does not exist for women living in post-revolution Iraq, according to Nadje al-Ali, a faculty member at the University of London. Describing women’s rights in Iraq as “yesterday’s story,” al-Ali said that women fought hard to gain a guarantee of 25 percent representation in parliament because “we knew we wouldn’t have our rights handed to us.” Yet in the social, political, and economic chaos that has followed the US invasion, having an official voice in government has not markedly improved women’s daily lives.

In widespread sectarian strife since 2005, “there has been a lot of violence against women during house checks, encounters at checkpoints, and in random shootings,” al-Ali said. “Militia linked to government parties and militia linked to insurgent groups use the same patterns and ways to terrorize women in the streets,” often targeting professional women and activists who are not wearing traditional Islamic clothing.

“One lesson Iraq has taught me,” al-Ali stressed, “is that elections are not to be equated with democracy. When people don’t have access to political programs,” she elaborated, “they end up voting on primordial beliefs, and the result is institutionalized sectarianism. We need to be careful in just focusing on...
elections and voting when we are speaking about democracy.”

Amplifying al-Alī’s caution, two participants offered perspectives on the role of women in the aftermath of revolutions outside the Middle East. Shireen Hassim, a professor of politics at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, said she sees parallels between the demands for representation that women are making in Arab countries and the rights fought for and gained by South African women in the early 1990s. But Hassim said those rights turned out to be “paper gains” in South Africa and “have not translated into significant advances in terms of advances for women on the ground.”

One problem, Hassim noted, is that representation for women “became a depoliticized demand, without content.” She described “a recent tendency for politics in the party sphere to become elitist,” stating that “women who have dominated in those spheres have become hostages to the agendas of the political parties,” and offering as examples a female foreign minister who kept silent about abuses against women in Zimbabwe, a woman health minister who lashed out against people with AIDS/HIV, and a woman minister of agriculture and development who failed to take measures to improve women’s rights to land.

Turning the focus to women’s experience after the fall of communism in eastern Europe, Ann Snitow, a scholar and activist who directs the Gender Studies Program at the New School for Liberal Arts, ventured, “Patriarchy was the heart and soul of anticommunism. I suspect a similar dynamic haunts the ‘Arab Spring,’ where traditional patriarchy is seen as a bulwark against Western influence.”

Along with others at the conference, Snitow underscored the difficulty of making women’s rights a foundation of any new order. At the height of revolutionary activities in Gdansk, “to say change was gendered would have been to break solidarity,” she said. “You seemed ridiculous if you brought up gender, and being ridiculous was harder to fight than being hit over the head.”

Powerful Images
Snitow said she believed that violence against women during the “Arab Spring” could play a particularly strong role in intensifying feminism in the Middle East. Harvard Kennedy School professor Jane Mansbridge AM ’66, PhD ’71, RI ’05, who moderated the panel “Women, Rights, and Power,” said that “far more than in the American, French, and Russian revolutions, the current uprisings in the Middle East have brought women into the public eye.”

Referring to the images flooding cyberspace and other media of “the Blue Bra girl”—the Tahrir Square protester who was stripped to her bra and brutally beaten by militia members in December 2011—Mansbridge observed that in the flood of public outrage that followed, “gender actually became the center of one significant part of the waves of protest.”

The immediacy of communication in the digital age motivates “individual decisions to go out and protest, face tear gas or bullets,” said Philip N. Howard, a University of Washington expert on communication, information, and international studies. “Dictators have no counterinsurgency strategy for images of friends and family who have been harassed by regime security forces.”

While optimism was not a predominant theme at the conference, participants had a chance to consider many vivid symbols of the advances women activists have made across a landscape of daunting political, economic, and cultural barriers. Examples include the young, highly educated woman who served as a metaphor for modern Egypt in A Comedy of Sorrows; film footage of Khaoula Rashidi, the Tunisian coed who bravely confronted an Islamist activist who had replaced a Tunisian flag with a jihadists’ flag at Manouba University; and the image of a hijab-clad woman with hands raised in victory that was featured on the conference’s promotional poster.

Cohen closed the proceedings with an inspirational footnote about the woman featured on the conference poster, former Afghan national assembly member Malalai Joya. Banished from the government after she spoke out against the rule of “criminals and warlords,” Joya has continued to work for change in Afghanistan, surviving four assassination attempts to date. “When asked how she continues,” Cohen related, “Joya responded, ‘You can cut the flower, but you cannot stop the coming of spring.’”

Deborah Blagg is a freelance writer.

DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE PLANNERS

JENNIFER HOCHSCHILD Chair, Henry LaBarre Jayne Professor of Government, Professor of African and African American Studies, and Harvard College Professor, Department of Government, Harvard University

LEILAT AHMED Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity, Harvard Divinity School

LIZA COHEN Dean, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and Howard Mumford Jones Professor of American Studies, Department of History, Harvard University

NANCY F. COTT Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and Jonathan Trumbull Professor of History, Department of History, Harvard University

JANE J. MANSBRIDGE Adams Professor of Political Leadership and Democratic Values, Harvard Kennedy School

NANCY L. ROSENBLOOM Senator Joseph Clark Professor of Ethics in Politics and Government, Department of Government, Harvard University

HASHIM SARKIS Aga Khan Professor of Landscape Architecture and Urbanism in Muslim Societies, Department of Urban Planning and Design, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

MALIKA ZEGHAL Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University

Powerful Images
Snitow said she believed that violence against women during the “Arab Spring” could play a particularly strong role in intensifying feminism in the Middle East. Harvard Kennedy School professor Jane Mansbridge AM ’66, PhD ’71, RI ’05, who moderated the panel “Women, Rights, and Power,” said that “far more than in the American, French, and Russian revolutions, the current uprisings in the Middle East have brought women into the public eye.”

Referring to the images flooding cyberspace and other media of “the Blue Bra girl”—the Tahrir Square protester who was stripped to her bra and brutally beaten by militia members in December 2011—Mansbridge observed that in the flood of public outrage that followed, “gender actually became the center of one significant part of the waves of protest.”

The immediacy of communication in the digital age motivates “individual decisions to go out and protest, face tear gas or bullets,” said Philip N. Howard, a University of Washington expert on communication, information, and international studies. “Dictators have no counterinsurgency strategy for images of friends and family who have been harassed by regime security forces.”

While optimism was not a predominant theme at the conference, participants had a chance to consider many vivid symbols of the advances women activists have made across a landscape of daunting political, economic, and cultural barriers. Examples include the young, highly educated woman who served as a metaphor for modern Egypt in A Comedy of Sorrows; film footage of Khaoula Rashidi, the Tunisian coed who bravely confronted an Islamist activist who had replaced a Tunisian flag with a jihadists’ flag at Manouba University; and the image of a hijab-clad woman with hands raised in victory that was featured on the conference’s promotional poster.

Cohen closed the proceedings with an inspirational footnote about the woman featured on the conference poster, former Afghan national assembly member Malalai Joya. Banished from the government after she spoke out against the rule of “criminals and warlords,” Joya has continued to work for change in Afghanistan, surviving four assassination attempts to date. “When asked how she continues,” Cohen related, “Joya responded, ‘You can cut the flower, but you cannot stop the coming of spring.’”

Deborah Blagg is a freelance writer.
After a highly competitive peer-review process, 5 percent of applicants were accepted to the Radcliffe Institute Fellowship Program for 2012–2013. These 51 fellows create a diverse incoming class that ranges from A to V: anthropologists, chemical engineers, linguists, literature professors, molecular biologists, musicologists, and visual artists. Incoming fellows include:

Fellows were chosen from a field of applicants from 41 countries.

1. Political scientist Andrea Campbell, an associate professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will be exploring the various ways the states responded to the Great Recession. Her study will be not only of programs cut and taxes raised, but also of concurrent political factors such as party control of state government, voter inequality, and direct democracy.

2. Medical tourism will be the area of focus for Glenn Cohen, an assistant professor of law at Harvard Law School and codirector of the Petrie-Flom Center for Health Law Policy, Biotechnology, and Bioethics. His focus will be the legal and ethical issues related to patients who travel from their country of residence to another country for medical treatment.

3. Playwright Lydia Diamond, who has written adaptations from the works of Nikki Giovanni, Harriet Jacobs, and Toni Morrison and whose play Stick Fly was on Broadway in 2011, will be researching and completing a play about a West African princess raised in Queen Victoria’s court. She will also be revising the first draft of a play about a neuroscientist studying perceptions of race.

4. Israeli mathematician Irit Dinur is a professor of computer science at the Weizmann Institute of Science whose area of focus includes probabilistically checkable proofs and the difficulty of approximation. At the Radcliffe Institute, she will explore theorems that allow people to understand global behavior through observations of local and approximate behavior.

5. Romuald Karmakar, a film director and screenwriter from Germany who is acclaimed for his work in both fiction and documentary films, will work on a feature film about the former German SS officer Walther Rauff, who developed gas vans during World War II.

6. Novelist Margot Livesey—whose books include Eva Moves the Furniture (2001), The House on Fortune Street (2008), and this year’s The Flight of Gemma Hardy—will be at the Radcliffe Institute working on her next novel.

7. Radhika Nagpal is a professor of computer science at Harvard’s School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and a faculty member of the Harvard Wyss Institute of Biologically Inspired Engineering.

8. Paul J. Steinhardt is the Albert Einstein Professor in Science and director of the Princeton Center for Theoretical Science at Princeton University, where he is also on the faculty of both the Department of Physics and the Department of Astrophysical Sciences. He will pursue various projects as a fellow, including the development of the cyclic theory of the universe, which is a radical alternative to the big bang theory.
2012–2013 Radcliffe Institute Fellows

From novel scientists to novel writers

Tayebeh (Leila) Asadi
Law
Independent Scholar (Iran)

Transitional Justice and Criminal Prosecution of Sex Crimes in Libya

Anna Bacigalupo
Social/Cultural Anthropology
State University of New York at Buffalo

The Lives of Francesca Koliti: Mapuche Shaucu inhabitants in Southern Chile

Zoe Beloff
Visual Arts
Queens College

Sprung in Paradise

Andrea Campbell
Katherine H. Sampson
Bessell Fellow
Political Science

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Dire States: Fiscal Effects and Policy Choices during the Great Recession

Hector Carrillo
MAURIE YOUNG MURRAY FELLOWSHIP
Sociology

Northwestern University

Social Context, Sexual Migration, and the Mexican Gay Diaspora

I. Glenn Cohen
Law
Harvard Law School

Patients with Passports: Medical Tourism, Law, and Ethics

Michael Cuthbert
RIEMAN AND BASKETEL FELLOWSHIP
Musicology

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Digital musicology of Late-Medieval Polyphony

Lydia Diamond
Playwriting
Boston University

Victoria's Sarah (An Original Play), Completion of Smart People's Imagination

Tamar Diesendruck
Music Composition

Vermont College of Fine Arts

Variant Scenarios

Katherine Ibbett
RADCLIFFE INSTITUTE FELLOWSHIP

Romeo Languages

University College London

Compulsion in Common: Narratives of Fellow Feeling in Early Modern France

Tetsi Iaji

MARY J. BUNTING INSTITUTE FELLOWSHIP

Comparative Literature

University of Pennsylvania

Africa in Stereo: Music, Literature, and Film of Transnational Black Solidarity

Gazmend Kaplanli

Baker-Kauper Fellow

Creative Writing

To Vima (Greece)

Tales of Extreme

Ronald Karmarkar

DAVID AND ROBERTA LOGIE FELLOW AND RADCLIFFE-HARVARD FILM STUDY CENTER FELLOW

Film, Video, Sound, and New Media

Independent Filmmaker

Maybe Rauff

Angelika Kratzer

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Mapping Possibilities

Jose Nathan Kutz

MATHIUSSEN FELLOWSHIP

Mathematics and Applied Mathematics

University of Washington


Jonathan Lazar

SHUTZER FELLOW

Computer Science

Towson University

Locked Out: Investigating Societal Discrimination against People with Disabilities Due to Inaccessible Websites

David Levine

Visual Arts

ECLA of Bard, a Liberal Arts University (Germany)

Character Analysis

Margot Livesey

EVELYN GREEN DAVIS FELLOW

Fiction

Emerson College

A New Novel

Nancy Lynch

Computer Science

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Biologically Inspired Distributed Algorithms

Lisa Meijer

ACLS FELLOW

BURKHARDT FELLOW

Harvard University

Prohibition and the Making of Modern America

Matina S. Horner

Women's and Gender Studies

City University of New York

Gender and Labor in the Economic Crisis: Comparing the Great Depression and the Great Recession

Kristen Monroe

Political Science

University of California at Irvine

APPRODITE IN ACADEMIA

Benjamin Podbilewicz

GRASS FELLOW

Molecular and Cellular Biology

Technion–Israel Institute of Technology (Israel)

Mechanisms of Biological Membrane Sculpting

Renée Poznanski

LISA GOLDBERG FELLOW

European History

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Israel)

Jewish Resistance in France during World War II

Jane Rhodes

JOY FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

American Studies

Macalester College

Transatlantic Blackness Race and Gender in the Life of an African American Empatriciate

Sarah Richardson

HRDY FELLOW

History of Science, Technology, or Medicine

Harvard University

The Maternal Imprint: Understanding How the Body Remembers

Véronique E. E. Daniels Fellowship

History

University of California (United Kingdom)

Tracing the Edge of the Known

Douglas Rogers

Elisabeth S. and Richard M. Cashin Fellow

Social Cultural Anthropology

Yale University

Oil Culture: Producing the New Russia

Kurt Rohde

Music Composition

University of California at Davis

Queen Kristina of Sweden: A Full-Length Work

Hilary Schor

British Isles Literature and Culture

Reading the Law: Jews, Women, and Other Victorian Legal Fictions

Kate Soper

THE CARL AND LILY PFOHRZEMER FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

Music Composition

Columbia University

Here Be Strions and Other Works

Paul J. Steinhardt

LILLIAN GOLAY KNAPFEL FELLOWSHIP

Physics

Princeton University

Three Directions in Theoretical Physics

Andrew Strominger

WILLIAM AND FLORA HEBBELL FELLOWSHIP

Physics

Harvard University

Exploring the Edge of the Visible Universe

Justin Torres

FELLOWSHIP II

Stanford University

Untitled Novel

Awards

ACLS FELLOW

BURKHARDT FELLOW

British Isles Literature and Culture

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

The Corporate Commonwealth: Economy, Technology, and Political Community in Early Modern English Writing

Rebecca Walkowitz

WATTS JACOBSON FELLOWSHIP

World Literature

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature
Imagine the world as a roadway. At the next exit, as we speed along, is a city. The first road sign we see will surely read: Warning. Disaster Ahead.

Worldwide, cities are growing rapidly, especially those that are very poor, and their infrastructures—for clean water, public health, security, and transportation—are being overwhelmed. Now add the cloud already looming over that world roadway: global climate change. Next, brace yourself for an epic collision of cities and climate.

The world’s cities, beset by poverty in the present and threatened by climate strains in the future, compose a “unique space where two problems are coming together,” said Ronak B. Patel, a clinical instructor in emergency medicine at Harvard Medical School and a faculty member of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, at a Radcliffe Exploratory Seminar he organized last year to puzzle out ways of avoiding the coming collision of urban poverty and climate uncertainty.

“Climate Change and Rapid Urbanization: Crossroads of a Disaster” included experts in public health, engineering, demography, disaster-relief, economics, climate science, and other pertinent fields. They came from Harvard, from across the United States, and from Italy, India, and the UK.

Since 2003, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study has sponsored such small-group explorations of a single issue. This seminar broadened an investigation that Patel had already started. In a New England Journal of Medicine editorial in August 2009, he had written of an “emerging humanitarian disaster” in the world’s cities that, among other outcomes, could prompt disease pandemics worldwide—flaring outward like fire at the far edges of a bomb. Central to the problem, he said, is demographics.

By 2008, for the first time in human history, half of all humans—some 3.4 billion—lived in cities. By 2030, urban areas will have swelled by 1.6 billion more, and rural populations will have shrunk by 28 million. The most rapidly growing cities are in the developing world; 60 percent of urban growth is from expanding slums. And in the face of climate change, urban slums are highly vulnerable to drought, floods, sea
level rise, and population displacements. Participants discussed the recent catastrophic flooding in Brazil and the 2010 floods that put one-fifth of Pakistan under water, but the seminar was about more than case studies. Experts turned to their experiences in Manila, Dar es Salaam, Mumbai, and Nairobi.

Cities in Kenya

Nairobi is an example of how cities in the developing world—even without climate change—struggle with shaken and strained systems for water, sanitation, housing, security, and public health. Look at just one measure, said Patel: infant mortality rates. In Kenya, 74 infants per 100,000 die before the age of one. It’s about the same in rural areas (76), though greater than in Nairobi as a whole (57). But in urban slums like Nairobi’s Kibera, the mortality rate is 91 infants per 100,000. Among slum dwellers age five and under, the mortality rate shoots up to 151. Patel called the number “grotesque.”

Kibera, a warren of chaotic housing one mile square, is an emblem of rapid, dysfunctional urbanization in the developing world. A recent census placed the population around 170,000, but given the pace of unplanned growth, no one really knows, and the true number could be over a million. Half the residents are 15 or younger. Income is $1.25 a day. Houses are 10 by 10 feet and have tin roofs and walls of wattle or recycled wood. There is no public water, no police force, little electricity, and no sewers. Open ditches run down the middle of the alleys. Human waste is discarded in plastic bags. Kiberans call them “flying toilets.”

This informal settlement, the second largest in Africa, shows how many of the world’s cities grow: haphazardly, and from the bottom up. Add climate change, said Patel, and those slums are doubly vulnerable. Housing is fragile. Some settlements teeter on hillsides, threatened by mudslides; others hover above earthquake faults; still others occupy floodplains. Kibera is in a valley-like depression above a landfill; flooding is frequent.

Complex Solutions

Cities and climate change are already colliding in the developing world. Now is the time for mitigation and adaptation. Any solution will be complex. “Trying to say it’s boxed into one area or owned by one group is really not the way we’re going to succeed,” said Patel. Radcliffe’s ethic of inclusion helped explore the complexities of the issue, he said. “The space they created to do this was very valuable. This collection of people was very different.” Around the time the seminar convened, other meetings—in Hong Kong, San Francisco, and Johannesburg—grappled with climate change. But Patel said none of those investigated local-level responses to climate change and rapid urbanization.

The Radcliffe seminar emphasized the importance of collecting street-by-street data in vulnerable cities.

Seminar Results

The seminar has already produced results. For one, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) established a formal partnership with the Brookings Institution to develop an online network of experts. A second collaboration, between HHI and the Department of Emergency Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, plans to measure public health vulnerabilities using remote sensing and city-level maps. Its partners are the Center for International Earth Science Information Network at Columbia University and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

The seminar also set in motion interfaculty collaboration at Harvard, bringing together HHI, the Graduate School of Design, and the Harvard University Center for the Environment. “This is a pressing issue,” said Patel. “The Harvard community has a responsibility to engage with it. We can bring a lot to the table.”

He and others have drafted a summary article on the seminar, along with an editorial on the urgent challenges of climate change and rapid urbanization. Both will be published in the fall.

In addition, the seminar has inspired a Harvard Humanitarian Climate Summit scheduled for 2013. “The same general mix” of world experts will be invited, said Patel, but in far greater numbers: up to 100. *
What

David Bezmozgis in the Harvard Map Collection, where he traced the 1919 routes of the Canadian railroad system.
David Bezmozgis RI ’12, the Lisa Goldberg Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute, likes to think about “what ifs.” Just a few days before we spoke in his tidy office in a corner of Byerly Hall, he had attended a talk at Harvard’s Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies featuring writers who were finalists for Russia’s Debut Prize. “They all aspire to have their work translated into English,” he said, noting that had his family not immigrated to Canada when he was six, his situation as a writer might have been much like theirs: talented, young, little known outside Russia.

As it is, Bezmozgis writes in English, is widely published, and has won recognition in Canada and the United States. In 2010, he was included in the New Yorker’s 20 under 40 Summer Fiction issue.

BY LYNNE WEISS
Photograph by Kathleen Dooher
His first novel, *The Free World* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), was described as “self-assured, elegant, and perceptive” by the *New York Times*. “And now here I am at Radcliffe on a stipend,” he said. His tone was one of mild awe at his good fortune.

The “what ifs” are not limited to Bezmozgis’s own life. During his time at Radcliffe, he wrote a short screenplay that postulates the survival of Alexei Romanov, the youngest son of Czar Nicholas. The screenplay, which Bezmozgis describes as “part Wild West adventure story and part alternative history,” portrays the young prince being pursued by Bolshevik hit men as he flees across Canada in 1919. Bezmozgis wanted to know the exact routes of the Canadian railroad system in that era. “I was able to go to the Harvard Map Collection,” he said, as he unrolled a tube of paper with near-reverent excitement to reveal a map of 1919 Canada some two feet wide. He traced the red and yellow lines showing the rail routes with his finger and said, “This shows it all—where they would have gone, the towns where they stopped.”

Another exciting find was a treasure trove of Soviet magazines from the 1940s and 1950s. Davis Center Collection librarian Hugh Truslow helped Bezmozgis find these in the archives, and he used them to write a profile of the Soviet weightlifter Grigory Novak for an anthology on great Jewish athletes. “I don’t know of anyplace else that would have had those resources,” Bezmozgis said.

The novel that has been the focus of his time at Radcliffe is another “what if”: “The Betrayers” centers on an imagined encounter between a prominent Soviet Jewish dissident and the man who denounced him some 30 years earlier. Conversations with Institute fellows Emma Wasserman, the Mary I. Bunting Institute Fellow this year, and Jesse Rainbow, a graduate fellow, both biblical scholars, have enriched Bezmozgis’s thinking about martyrdom and uncompromising moral positions.

His fascination with “what if” doesn’t mean Bezmozgis isn’t grateful for what is. “I’ve felt very fortunate to have this time,” he said of his fellowship. The wry smile behind his neatly trimmed beard widened briefly. “I plan to milk it for all it’s worth.”

*Lynne Weiss is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in The Common, the Boston Sunday Globe, and elsewhere.*

---

**Excerpt FROM *The Free World***

**BY DAVID BEZMOZGIS**

**ON HER FIRST DAY AT WORK.** Giovanni and Carla, his wife, gave Polina posterboard and multicolored markers and gestured at the assorted merchandise. She composed signs in Russian and posted them in the window display. That same afternoon she made her first sale to a young man from Mogilev. He and his wife came into the shop and wandered cautiously between the narrow aisles.

—His whole life he’s had one dream, the wife said.

—A brown suede blazer, he said.

Polina barely knew her way around the store, but she found a rack of suede blazers, some of which were brown, and one of which fit the man from Mogilev. They went through the motions of haggling; Polina conferred with Giovanni and Carla; the Italians wrote a figure on a piece of paper; and the man from Mogilev realized his life’s ambition.

—that’s it, now he can die, his wife said.

—if I die, bury me in it, he said.

She made her second sale not long after to an older Italian man, squarely built, dressed like a laborer. Carla greeted him familiarly and Giovanni saluted him from behind the cash register, but the man explained that he wished to speak with Polina. Polina didn’t immediately understand what was being asked of her. There was an awkward moment when everyone seemed ill at ease, but then the man addressed Polina in Russian and relieved the tension. He apologized for imposing upon her, and for his shaky Russian. Twenty-five years earlier he had been a university student in Leningrad. Since then, he’d had few opportunities to practice the language. Polina told him that he managed remarkably well considering.

—I was there a long time ago, the man said. I was there when Stalin died.

He recalled the ranks of people in the street, old women and schoolchildren in tears. For the modest privilege of speaking to her in Russian, the man bought a belt and a pair of sandals.

Before he left, the man shook hands firmly with Giovanni, and Polina noticed two things that had previously escaped her. One was the collage of photographs and newspaper clippings that Giovanni had tacked onto the wall behind the cash register: a posed photo of a soccer team, above a small maroon and orange banner; newspaper clippings showing the faces of smiling men, whom Polina took to be politicians; other clippings showing grainy snapshots of younger men, whom Polina took to be either criminals or victims; and framed portraits of historical eminences. Of all these, Polina recognized only MarxEngels, the stern two-headed deity of her girlhood imagination.

The other thing Polina noticed was that the outer three fingers on Giovanni’s right hand were misshapen, as from an industrial accident.

Back at the apartment, when she mentioned these things to Lyova, he explained that Giovanni and Carla were active in the Italian Communist Party. Communists and merchants—in Italy, the two were not mutually exclusive.

About his fingers, Giovanni told her himself. After she had worked at the store for several weeks, he saw her looking at his hand; he lifted it, turned it back to palm, and declared, Fascisti.

There was no other talk of politics. The Russian signs in the window drew people; others came from word of mouth. Polina and her employers settled into a comfortable rhythm. The hours blended together. Walking to and from work, she seemed for the first time to see the city. Details came to her peripherally, when she wasn’t looking. Now when she came home she told Alec about a marble hand incorporated into the brickwork of a wall in San Lorenzo, or the statue of a king tucked under a palm tree in the Giardini Quirinale, or the grafitti on the store facing theirs that read Hitler Per Mille Anni.

Excerpted from *The Free World: A Novel*, by David Bezmozgis, published in paperback by Picador USA. Copyright © 2011 by David Bezmozgis. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC. All rights reserved.
It wasn’t so long ago that Uzodinma Iweala ’04, RI ’12 walked the streets of Cambridge as a Harvard undergraduate. In fact, while strolling through Harvard Square last fall, this time as a Radcliffe Institute fellow, he was offered help by a stranger who assumed he was a freshman in need of direction. Iweala recalls thinking, “Yeah, 11 years ago.” And what productive years they’ve been.

Iweala, who was an English and American literature and language concentrator as an undergraduate, began writing a novel for his thesis, under the tutelage of the celebrated Caribbean novelist Jamaica Kincaid. “I would go to her house and work on my book,” he says. “You couldn't have asked for a better and more dedicated advisor.” That thesis—which would become the novel *Beasts of No Nation* (HarperCollins, 2005)—garnered him a Hoopes Prize and the Dorothy Hicks Lee Prize for most outstanding thesis concerning African or African American literature. They would be the first in a long string of impressive awards for the novel.

But Iweala has accomplished much more than writing a book in the eight years since his graduation. Originally from Nigeria, he has volunteered for a refugee office in the country’s Bauchi State; worked on public health issues in sub-Saharan Africa; advised the likes of Kofi Annan, Jimmy Carter, and Nelson Mandela as part of Virgin Unite’s Elders initiative; served as executive editor of Nigeria-based *Farafina Magazine*; and cofounded TSG Biofuels, a Nigerian alternative-energy company. He also earned a medical degree at Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons and wrote a nonfiction book about Nigeria’s HIV/AIDS crisis, *Our Kind of People: A Continent’s Challenge, A Country’s Hope* (HarperCollins, 2012).

With his uncle, Iweala will soon launch *Ventures*, the first pan-African business magazine. For right now, though, Iweala is consumed with creative writing and ways of adapting it for a new media age. To that end, he is working on his next novel—set in Washington, DC, in the months leading up to a terrorist attack—and on two multimedia projects, one about Timbuktu and one about narratives of violence in post-conflict sub-Saharan Africa. “The way people approach information and the creative narrative is changing,” he says. “So the challenge for me became how to create narratives that appeal to people in this new paradigm.”

He is also still pushing his nonfiction writing, playing with a style he likes to call “aggressively subjective nonfiction,” which emphasizes perspective or plays with time and memory. “As long as you’re clear about the subjectivity in your telling,” he says, “I think it gives more leeway to move the writing.”

Asked what drives him to do so much at once, Iweala good-naturedly jokes, “It’s all procrastination. I should be finishing the book.” Of course, if the writing thing doesn’t work out, he has that medicine gig as a fallback. *—Ivelisse Estrada*
Listening

Lean in and listen to the tale of one writer’s long and

to Tayari Jones
She speaks in an intimate voice that makes people want to lean in close and listen to every word. And they do. They listen hard. When Tayari Jones RI ’12 read from her first novel, Leaving Atlanta (Warner Books, 2002), at the Radcliffe Institute’s black history celebration, even the notoriously creaky floor in the Radcliffe Gym kept quiet during a haunting passage about a fifth grader living through the Atlanta child murders that occurred from 1979 to 1981, when Jones herself was growing up in Atlanta.

Later in the year, when Jones gave her fellow’s presentation—the debut reading from her novel-in-progress, “Dear History”—the Radcliffe Gym was once again hushed as she read about what happens when a man is exonerated and released from prison after seven years and returns home to his wife, Celestial, who thought he was gone forever. Tayari Jones knows how to hook an audience, not unlike the great Toni Morrison, her favorite writer, who also reads in a let-me-tell-you-a-secret voice.

Jones has been on a roll lately, with the success of her third novel, Silver Sparrow, a story about two young girls who have the same father but different mothers. It was widely and well reviewed—the Village Voice, for example, wrote that Jones is “fast defining middle-class black Atlanta the way Cheever did Westchester.” And Silver Sparrow was named one of the best books of 2011 by Slate, O: The Oprah Magazine, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, and Library Journal. But it wasn’t always thus. Jones has traveled a long, sometimes bumpy road to get where she is today.

After publishing her second novel, The Untelling (Warner Books, 2005), Jones wrote a partial manuscript of Silver Sparrow, which her agent sent around to publishers in hopes of landing a contract. “It was rejected all over town,” Jones says. “Not so much because anyone hated the book, but because I was not seen to have a big enough name. The third book is the hardest to publish. On your first book, you’re a creature of your publisher’s imagination. They think you could be the next whatever they need another one of. When it turns out you’re not, they say, well, we’ll do the next one and recoup what we put out for the first one. Then, on the third one, you often find yourself looking for a new publishing home.”

Jones was so disheartened that she didn’t work on the book for a year. “It’s unusual for me not to work on a book for

sometimes bumpy road to success.

She writes her first drafts on a typewriter from the small fleet she owns.
a month, let alone a year, because I love working on a book,” she says. An associate professor in the MFA program at Rutgers—where she was hired by Radcliffe’s Bunting Institute alumna Jayne Anne Phillips BI ’81, director of the program—Jones realized that she was telling her students one thing and living another. “If one of my students were to say, ‘I believe in this story, but I’ve been told that it’s not publishable so I’m not going to finish it,’ I would say, ‘Is that why you’re an artist? Do you let the market tell you what to do?’ I had to give myself my own tough love. Also, I felt like something of a fraud because I blog to emerging writers, and here I was being cowed by the market. So I started writing the story again.”

With support from an unexpected grant, she took time off from her job at Rutgers and stayed in a friend’s house on Martha’s Vineyard, where she finished Silver Sparrow. “I wrote not thinking of my career, but to see what kind of writer and person I was. I felt like my integrity and who I am as an artist were on the line.”

Silver Sparrow didn’t find a publisher until Jones attended a writers’ conference where she read an excerpt from it. A woman came up to her afterward and said she’d heard that Jones didn’t have a publisher. The woman said she knew someone who could help, and she led Jones through the crowd to the publisher of Algonquin Books before promptly vanishing. The Algonquin publisher said she’d like to see Jones's manuscript and asked how she knew Judy. “Judy?” Jones said. “I don’t know anyone named Judy.” Her fairy godmother, as Jones calls her, turned out to be the novelist Judy Blume.

Perhaps surprisingly for someone who has such a strong positive effect on listeners, Jones isn’t immune to nervousness. After she gave her fellow’s reading at Radcliffe, she blogged about the experience. “I had butterflies because ‘Dear History’ is not yet finished and I wasn’t quite sure if it was ready for the public. . . . But part of the Radcliffe fellowship is that each person should show how she (or he) has been using her time here. This year at Radcliffe has been such a gift, and this seemed like so little to ask. So I did it. And it went so well.” —Pat Harrison

www.tayarijones.com
“Nothing Is Sacred”

“This is a book I had to write at some point,” says TOVA REICH RI ’12. The novel in question is “One Hundred Philistine Foreskins,” a reference to the bride-price demanded by King Saul for the hand of his daughter. The title is startling but not surprising for readers familiar with Reich’s earlier works, which include a hilarious satirical indictment of those who would use the Holocaust for personal and financial gain (My Holocaust: A Novel, HarperCollins, 2007). “As a writer, I don’t consider anything off-limits or sacred,” she says.

A charismatic female rabbi is at the center of her newest work. “Temima is a brilliant leader who insists on living the life of a woman, a sage, and a spiritual guru—with shattering consequences,” says Reich. Her protagonist is a fictional creation inspired in part by the Maiden of Ludmir, a 19th-century Hasidic female rabbi, and by Anne Hutchinson, the Puritan Bible teacher and dissident.

During her fellowship year, Reich also wrote a novella, drawing from time spent living in the Indian holy city of Varanasi. “I’ve written a great deal about Jerusalem, and I see a connection between the two places,” she says. “I’ve always been interested in spiritual places and any sort of extreme religious devotion.”

As for the hard work of writing, Reich observes that the “pressure comes from within; it doesn’t matter to the world if you do it,” making her appreciate the combination of “community and solitude” found at Radcliffe all the more. —Julia Hanna

A Novel About Love, Hair, and Race

BORN IN NIGERIA, CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE RI ’12 IS A FREQUENT fl íer between Lagos, London, and the United States—all settings portrayed in her forthcoming novel, Americanah. “It’s a half-mocking expression for Nigerians who have become Americanized,” she says of the title. “The novel is a love story, but it’s also about hair, and race.”

Adichie’s own relationship with America is “a very complicated affection,” she says. “America represents possibility, but Nigeria is really home. My heart is locked up in a house in Abba, the town where my grandfather grew up.” The author of two earlier novels, Purple Hibiscus (Algonquin Books, 2003) and Half a Yellow Sun (Knopf, 2006), both of which won the Orange Prize for Fiction, and the short-story collection The Thing Around Your Neck (Knopf, 2009), Adichie was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2008.

“I feel ridiculously lucky to have the freedom to write and travel right now,” she says. “There’s this wonderful ability to see a place more clearly when you’re away from it.” Adichie, the Perrin Moorhead Grayson and Bruns Grayson Fellow and Radcliffe-African Studies Fellow at Radcliffe, plans to finish her novel and see more of sub-Saharan Africa after leaving the Institute. “I became African in the United States,” she says, “although I never thought of myself that way.”

Intrigued by the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, Adichie is interested in the advantages and difficulties of each. “In some instances I find that fiction is limiting—there’s always the burden that it needs to seem to be true,” she says. “On the other hand, I find that memoir can be dishonest. I think my next book might be somewhere between the two.”

—Julia Hanna

JULIA HANNA is associate editor of the Harvard Business School Bulletin.
Growing up, Reginald Dwayne Betts ’12 loved to read—everything from biographies of basketball players to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* to Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. The urge to write, however, didn’t come until he was serving a nine-year sentence for carjacking. Although it was Betts’s first offense, Virginia categorizes carjacking as a “certifiable” crime, meaning that he was treated as an adult at the age of 16 and served time in some of the state’s toughest prisons.

A couple of years into his prison term, Betts came across a copy of *The Black Poets*, edited by Dudley Randall, and lived with it for the next two months, copying poems by Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, and others onto any scrap of paper he could find. “That book crystallized for me that poetry was a way to articulate something I wanted to say in a short amount of space,” he says.

Released in 2005 at the age of 25, Betts attended community college and earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland and an MFA in poetry from Warren Wilson College in just five years. In 2009, he published *A Question of Freedom: A Memoir of Learning, Survival, and Coming of Age in Prison* (Avery) and a year later, the poetry collection *Shahid Reads His Own Palm* (Alice James Books, 2010).

Betts’s current project is tentatively titled “Bastards of the Reagan Era.” “It’s set in the Washington, DC, area, but it’s also global,” he says, describing a book of poetry that pulls in Nicaragua, the Contras, Len Bias, Tip O’Neill, and the scourge of crack cocaine. “I was born in 1980, and people my age speak of that decade as if we know it, but we really don’t,” Betts says. “The popular history that has been passed down isn’t nuanced. As a result, we have this black-and-white context of villains and heroes, which doesn’t work.” Anchored by two epic-length poems, the collection incorporates a diversity of voices that highlight the differences and complications each of us brings to telling our personal narratives.

The solitary work of writing is something that Betts understands and likens to the thousands of push-ups and pull-ups he did in prison. “Nobody is there to help you get from one set to the next,” he says. “I’ve taken little bits and ideas from other fellows’ presentations, but the actual work of writing happens in my own mind, in my own little office. I can get lost in it in the same way that I could get lost in physical exercise.”

Married with two young sons, Betts reflects on what it means to be a father and the lessons he would most want his children to learn. Interestingly, one comes from his fellowship year. “At Radcliffe I saw people who devote a considerable amount of time and passion to their work, regardless of the market that exists for it,” he says. “Poetry doesn’t sell a lot of books, but it’s still a vocation. I would like my sons to understand the importance of following their passion and not be influenced by whether or not it can be made into a commodity.” —Julia Hanna

---

**Excerpt**

*From Shahid Reads His Own Palm*  
by Reginald Dwayne Betts

**THE DAY CARLOS JUMPED FROM THE TOP TIER**

A bloodied white shirt, the body of a life  
Sentence half hidden by the icebox. Everything  
Darksens. A dozen or so wild eyes over  
It. Steam from the shower over it. Rehabilitation  
A lit Newport. This is what we talk about.  
The body below the tier, the small gasps  
Without a story, with no words for this story.  
It is a man. He is someone’s son. A heartsore.  
When he screams, our eyes open. Again.  
A bid’s honesty: time staring at time.  
Whatever smell is there lies low, won’t step  
Up. A sock kicks out & the sigh that follows  
Follows a stray cat’s yowl. It is always raining.  
From the outside, everything in here inspires  
Screams. If you stand on the top tier, the drop  
Is from hell to hell. It is many falls. Someone  
Pretends to know something worth knowing.  
The body is fifteen feet past knowledge. People  
Say he bodied himself. Stretched himself out.  
If he rises, who will he turn to? Or turn into?  

Reginald Dwayne Betts, “The Day Carlos Jumped From the Top Tier,” from *Shahid Reads His Own Palm*. Copyright © 2010 by Reginald Dwayne Betts. Reprinted with the permission of The Permissions Company, Inc., on behalf of Alice James Books, www.alicejamesbooks.org. All rights reserved.
the solitary work of writing is a kind of lyrical calisthenics.

THE URGE to write poetry came to Betts while in prison. He saw the form as a way to articulate his thoughts in a small amount of space.
Must Reads

Looking for something to read this summer? Radcliffe’s literary minds have some recommendations.

TAYARI JONES

For me, **TAR BABY**, BY TONI MORRISON. It combines all of heft-and-gravitas Toni Morrison (whom I call ToMo in an alternate universe where we are best friends) with soapy plot twists. I first read this excellent novel 20 years ago, and the characters have haunted me since. Every few years, I read it again, and it challenges (and excites) me in a new way every time.

LEAH PRICE

**SHERRY TURKLE’S ALONE TOGETHER: WHY WE EXPECT MORE FROM TECHNOLOGY AND LESS FROM EACH OTHER** and **SIVA VAIDHYANATHAN’S THE GOOGLIZATION OF EVERYTHING (AND WHY WE SHOULD WORRY)**. Many nonfiction prose books are good magazine articles padded out to make the spine of the book wide enough to fit the book’s title, but these are both meaty, fact-packed, and ultimately very personal reflections on our current technological predicament. I read one in print form and the other on my phone; both are well worth picking up on some device or other.

TOVA REICH

**THE BIBLE**—a “must-read” and a “must-reread,” because, as the sage Ben Bag-Bag said, “Everything is in it.”

ANN BLAIR

I recommend **CARTOGRAPHIES OF TIME: A HISTORY OF THE TIMELINE**, BY DANIEL ROSENBERG AND ANTHONY GRAFTON (Princeton Architectural Press, 2010). It sounds abstruse, but it has been a top seller on Amazon. It’s a must-see—a beautifully illustrated book that shows the long history of visualizations of time, from late antiquity to the modern period. It starts with Eusebius, a fourth-century bishop who used a tabular arrangement to match up the biblical account of time with events in ancient history. In the Middle Ages, genealogies were often displayed on parchment scrolls, following a tree theme. The table and the tree appeared in varied forms in early printed books. But the timeline as we think of it owes a lot to the 18th century and to Joseph Priestley, the chemist. Priestley made a biographical chart in 1765 using a bar to indicate the life spans of some 2,000 famous people from antiquity to his own time. Nineteenth-century charts were incredibly detailed and colorful; they were feats of printing in addition to being feats of knowledge organization. Now we have digital timeline tools to experiment with, and they can make us aware of connections in new ways, but they’re often indebted to the long history of visualizations of time that preceded the digital age.

UZODINMA IWEALA

**TWO THOUSAND SEASONS**, BY AYI KWEI ARMAH—a beautiful book by a Ghanaian author. The language is just amazing. The prose is very thick and layered and theatrical. It’s almost
a novel that should be performed rather than read.

**THES WAVES, BY VIRGINIA WOOLF.** Who doesn’t love Woolf? I love the intertwined consciousnesses in this book and the disembodied nature of her narrative voices.

**REGINALD DWAYNE BETTS**

**CATTLE KILLING, BY JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN.** Can you adore a book for one exquisite idea? Wideman does a masterly job of creating distinct voices, blending those voices into each other, and all the while teasing out a really good story. But the thing that stays with me is the admonition “Do not fall asleep in your enemy’s dream.” This book has been with me for more than a decade.

**BEFORE YOU SUCCOATE YOUR OWN FOOL SELF, BY DANIELLE EVANS.** It’s dope. One of those books that stop you cold because they capture you with story and teach you something about your own life. In this case, these short stories take me back to my childhood. “Virgins” is heartbreaking and truly cold as ice in a way that makes you rethink so much of what it means to be a young man.

**DAVID BEZMOZGIS**

I have long admired the Russian writer **SERGEI DOVLATOV**, who emigrated from Leningrad to the United States in the late 1970s and died prematurely in 1990. He was a satirist of both Soviet and émigré life and, to my mind, the funniest writer on these subjects. For a period in the 1980s, his stories appeared in the *New Yorker*—a very rare, if not singular, accomplishment for a man who wrote exclusively in Russian. After his death, his books went out of print and he fell into obscurity. When I was introduced to his work, about 10 years ago, it was because a friend sent me an old copy of a book called **OURS**. I fell in love with it and then sought out other Dovlatov titles from used-book stores. Fortunately, this past year, two Dovlatov titles, **THE ZONE** and **THE SUITCASE**, were reissued by Counterpoint Press. Dovlatov wrote always about a character based closely on himself. In **The Zone**, he details his experiences as a guard in the Soviet prison system, and in **The Suitcase**, he tells the story of his emigration from Russia through objects he discovers in an old suitcase. The books are an excellent introduction to Dovlatov’s work and possess his signature blend of the comic, the absurd, and the humane.

**CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE**

**THE DARK CHILD, BY CAMARA LAYE.** A beautifully written, moving, and absorbing autobiographical novel about a young man coming of age under French colonialism in Guinea.

**NANCY F. COTT**

**THE COOKBOOK COLLECTOR, BY ALLEGRA GOODMAN ’89, RI ’07.** This is a book to savor. Inspired in part by the Schlesinger Library’s culinary riches, Goodman’s novel is peopled with memorable characters whose paths in digital technology and in rare books intertwine in unexpected ways.

Nancy F. Cott is the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America and the Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.
Always Defiant

Scott Fitzgerald and Lillian Hellman were born less than a decade apart, Fitzgerald just four years before the new century began, Hellman five years after. Fitzgerald’s novels ushered in and defined the Jazz Age that Hellman entered belatedly as a teenaged “flapper,” her biographer, the historian Alice Kessler-Harris writes, joining “a cohort of young women who lived for pleasure, disdaining ideals of self-sacrifice and service held by the Victorian generations of women” who preceded them. Fitzgerald’s star rose and set along with that radiant burst of between-the-wars hedonism, leading to his famous pronouncement: “There are no second acts in American lives.” Hellman, the latecomer, took up the ideals of the age and used them to prove its instigator wrong—reinventing herself in a series of high-visibility contests that make the story of her long life (she outlived Fitzgerald by more than 40 years) nothing less than a five-act Shakespearean drama.

Surely it was her spirit—“always defiant,” Kessler-Harris writes, derived from her upbringing in a family of prosperous southern Jews, “outsiders within,” and nourished on antagonism toward the “obedient and submissive creature” who was her strikingly beautiful mother (whom she did not resemble)—that brought Hellman to prominence in the New York literary world as an opinionated young manuscript reader at Boni and Liveright, and kept her there. Her marriage at 20 to screenwriter Arthur Kober of the Liveright crew was an open one from the start, and ended in divorce soon after Hellman met Dashiell Hammett, whom she would not marry but continued to love for the next 30 years. She remained friends with Kober for the rest of her life. The very public affair with Hammett might be seen as the first act of Hellman’s drama.

The curtain rises on Act Two with Hellman making her way as a playwright when Hammett’s literary gifts desert him. But it is Acts Three through Five that interest her biographer the most: Hellman’s ingenious mix of bravery and diffidence when called byHUAC to testify about membership in the Communist Party, her late-in-life rise to renewed fame with the publication of her memoirs, and finally her fall from grace after longtime rival Mary McCarthy charged that she had lied in all of them. Kessler-Harris has reinvented herself as an extraordinary biographer, her sympathies always alive to the subject she treats with a historian’s frank appraisal, deftly situating Hellman in her tumultuous century. There is no lying here, of course, and plenty of truth that tells.

White Papers
by Martha Collins
BI ’83
University of Pittsburgh Press,
69 pp.

If Peggy McIn-tosh’s much-cited Working Paper #189, “White Privilege: Unpack ing the Invisible Knap sack,” were to be written as poetry, it might come out something like Martha Collins's daring new collection White Papers. In nearly four dozen lyrics that take a variety of forms, from spare and almost cryptic quatrains that recall Emily Dickinson to inventive concrete poems whose shapes express their subjects—and with plenty of variation in between—Collins subjects herself to an unrelenting inquisition on the subject of race.

Collins gives didactic poetry a good name here, teaching readers as she learns that no aspect of her upbringing in a seemingly placid Iowa town in which, as a white girl, she had given little thought to residents of the “colored section” could be separated from the American story of slavery and post-emancipation oppression of black people. Not even daily piano practice: “an African slave could have carried a tusk/that was cut into white keys I played.” As thoroughly researched as a textbook, yet as gripping as the best of memoirs, White Papers will leave readers pondering their own experiences, culpability, and opportunities to work toward reconciliation.

Into Dust and Fire: Five Young Americans Who Went First to Fight the Nazi Army
by Rachel S. Cox ’74

At the outbreak of World War II, students on many Ivy League campuses were better known for objecting to American intervention, whether out of pacifism or isolationist principle, than for supporting their country’s eventual allies across the Atlantic. But six months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor...
changed almost everyone’s mind, five classmates from St. Paul’s School who had taken places at Dartmouth and Harvard quit their college courses to join the King’s Royal Rifle Corps and throw in their lot with the British.

Journalist Rachel Cox tells the story of the five, one of whom was her uncle Robert, in a thoroughly researched narrative that reads like a novel. Robert Cox was a paragon of prep school virtues, “a perfect son,” in his mother’s view, “my dearest and best”—and he would be one of two in the self-appointed troop who did not return from battle in North Africa. But a photo of Robert outfitted in a British Tommy’s helmet—“a head shot in rich, tauepy hues that seemed to embody the very essence of heroism”—which Rachel studied on visits to her grandmother’s house, drew the niece to investigate and recount a chapter in history that significantly expands our understanding of “the Greatest Generation.”


The incisive theoretical writing Nancy Chodorow has done since the 1978 publication of her first book, The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (University of California Press), has tended to be overshadowed by the popular success of her early work, which so ably answered the need of a new generation of feminist women eager for a post-Freudian view of female development. Yet Chodorow’s four subsequent books have been every bit as original, as she continues to ponder “taken-for-granted” facts (why did news coverage of the Al-Qaeda terrorists after 9/11 never note that all were men?) and “unabashedly invent theory.” Her most recent volume gathers 10 carefully crafted essays written over the past decade, all of which reward reading and rereading many times over.

Trained in anthropology, sociology, and psychoanalysis—and a veteran practitioner of the latter—Chodorow brings a unique perspective to hot-button issues of gender and sexuality. She is not anti-Freud but, rather, a prime reinterpreter; she is not a “self-in-relation theorist,” even though she originated the “idea that feminine personality is founded on relation and connection.” Although one essay considers her changing views since the appearance of her 1978 classic, Chodorow retains a reassuring conviction that “the theoretical [is] personal” and an overriding commitment to probing the complex choices we make as individuals.


Leah Price has borrowed the title of Walter Benjamin’s famous essay on book collecting, “Unpacking My Library,” for her enticing volume of interviews with eminent authors about their significant others: the cherished books that inspire them to write their own. A baker’s dozen of libraries are represented here, several of them the collections of Radcliffe fellows (Claire Messud RI ’05, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein RI ’07, Junot Díaz RI ’04).

Unpacking My Library may be the tiniest of coffee table books (measuring just 5⅜ by 8 inches), but it is amply illustrated with photos of authors in their hallowed rooms and, most deliciously, close-up shots of the books themselves. On these shelves, Edward Gorey’s The Gilded Bat may share space with Perry Miller’s The American Puritans (Alison Bechdel), or Crockett Johnson’s Barnaby cartoons with Koppett’s Concise History of Major League Baseball (Jonathan Lethem). Anecdotes—such as Steven Pinker’s recollection that a $10 gift certificate to a local bookstore, awarded at high school graduation, set him on a lifetime of book collecting—attach these images to particular lives of the mind. While some of these writers confess to reading e-books, all testify to the enduring satisfaction of bound volumes. *
This spring, the Radcliffe Institute showcased the array of work being done by present and past fellows in science and the arts, hosting four major events for alumnae/i and supporters in California and New York City.

New York City Learns How “Radcliffe Writes”

ON FEBRUARY 28, three Institute fellows gathered to present their work to a group of Radcliffe alumnae/i at the Harvard Club of New York City. A historian, a journalist, and a fiction writer each represented a different approach to the written word in an event titled “Radcliffe Writes.”

ANNETTE GORDON-REED ’12, a professor of law at Harvard Law School and a professor of history in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, spoke about her longtime research interest in Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, race, and slavery. In January, she began the first of four research semesters provided by her appointment as the Carol K. Pforzheimer Professor at the Radcliffe Institute. She currently spends each Monday morning in her Byerly Hall office, Skyping with Peter S. Onuf of the University of Virginia, with whom she is collaborating on a new book about Thomas Jefferson’s intellectual development.

DIANE MC-WHORTER RI ’12, the Mildred Londa Weisman Fellow and a writer of narrative nonfiction, delivered what she called “the speed-dating version” of her fellow’s presentation. She’s working on a book about a surprising connection between the Third Reich and the segregated American South: Tranquility Base, Apollo 11’s landing site on the moon. (See our Winter 2012 issue.)

TAYARI JONES RI ’12—a novelist, short-story writer, and essayist whose work explores the African American experience in Atlanta—gave a heartfelt and poetic testimonial to what the Radcliffe Institute has meant for her career. An associate professor of English at Rutgers University, Jones says she was able to take a break from her “unsustainable professional life” to focus solely on starting a new novel. (See page 23.)
**Radcliffe fellows’ research is the future of science**

“Radcliffe at the Cutting Edge of Science” featured Stefi Baum RI ’12, the Elizabeth S. and Richard M. Cashin Fellow and an astronomer, and Pamela Silver RI ’12, the Edward, Frances, and Shirley B. Daniels Fellow and a systems biologist. Baum’s research focuses on activity in galaxies and its relation to galaxy and cluster evolution; image processing and statistical algorithms applied to functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) for mental health diagnosis; and science and engineering education. Silver focuses on the predictable and facile engineering of biological systems with applications in both human health and global sustainability. The lunchtime presentation was held at the Harvard Club of New York on May 9.

---

**Out of the lab and onto the canvas**

“Radcliffe at the Crossroads of Science and Art” featured the art and science of four former and current Institute fellows. Bevil Conway PhD ’01, RI ’11 is a neuroscientist who examines the mechanisms the brain uses to transform sensory information into behavior and a visual artist whose work is held in private and public collections. Anne Pringle RI ’12, a mycologist, has been investigating lichen on the tombstones of a New England cemetery for the past seven years. Her photographs of lichen are scientifically important and aesthetically remarkable. Lisa Randall ’84, PhD ’87, RI ’03 is a theoretical physicist who has worked to improve public understanding of science through her writing. She has also written an opera libretto and cocurated an art exhibit. Benny Shilo RI ’12 is fascinated by the processes of embryonic development, which are mediated and dictated by molecular communication between cells. Also a photographer, he uses images from the larger human world to convey the underlying principles of embryonic development in an illuminating way. This remarkable program traveled to California for lunchtime presentations on April 4 in San Francisco and April 5 in Menlo Park.

---

Showcasing filmmaker Jeanne Jordan BI ’93, RI ’03 and painter Beverly McIver RI ’03—who became collaborators on the film *Raising Renee*, about McIver’s complex and changing relationship with her mentally disabled sister—this evening program on January 25 at the Harvard Club of New York featured a discussion about the making of the film, along with film clips. As a bonus, each attendee received a colorful woven potholder—handmade by Renee McIver. *Raising Renee* was broadcast on HBO in February.

---

| Dean Lizabeth Cohen mingled with 2009 alumnae at the Harvard Club event | Astronomer Stefi Baum and systems biologist Pamela Silver |

---

|Mycologist Anne Pringle and theoretical physicist Lisa Randall spoke to California crowds about art and science. | A guest listens intently to the presentation |
**Approaching Midnight: Taking Midnight’s Children from Book to Film**

Filmmaker Deepa Mehta spoke about the sometimes dangerous work of creating her films *Fire*, *Earth*, and *Water* and about collaborating with Salman Rushdie on the script for *Midnight’s Children*.

To watch the video, visit: [http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2012mehta](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2012mehta).

---

**Constructing the Head and Brain of Vertebrates: How the Study of Development Sheds Light on Evolution**

Nicole Le Douarin, a pioneer of modern developmental biology, discussed how studying embryonic development sheds light on a key innovation in vertebrate evolution: the emergence of a head and a brain.

To watch the video, visit: [http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2012ledouarin](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2012ledouarin).

---

**How Jesus Celebrated Passover: Early Modern Views of the Last Supper**

Anthony Grafton, a leading cultural and intellectual historian of Renaissance Europe, suggests that it was the 16th-century scholar Joseph Scaliger who contended that the Last Supper was in fact a Passover seder.

To watch the video, visit: [http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2012grafton](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2012grafton).

---

**Women Making Democracy**

This conference, including the staged reading, examined the role of women and gender in movements for democratic change.

To watch the videos, visit: [http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2012women-making-democracy](http://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2012women-making-democracy).
Radcliffe Affiliates Making their Mark

HONOR ROLL

NANCY HOPKINS ’64, PHD ’71, the Amgen, Inc. Professor of Biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a pioneering molecular biologist, was honored by the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences with its Centennial Medal, which recognizes alumni who have made notable contributions to society that emerged from their graduate study at Harvard. It is the school’s highest honor.

REGINALD DWAYNE BETTS RI ’12 received a phone call from President Barack Obama in late April alerting him to his presidential appointment as a member of the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Betts, an award-winning writer and poet who spent more than eight years in prison (see story on page 26), is the first directly affected person appointed to the council.

In March, the faculty at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at New York University and an honorary committee of alumni selected “the 100 Outstanding Journalists in the United States in the Last 100 Years.” Among NYU’s journalistic stars are FRANCES FITZGERALD ’62, LINDA GREENHOUSE ’68, and ADRIAN NICOLE LEBLANC 81 ’95.

MILDRED SPIEWAK DRESELHAUS AM ’53, SD ’95, an Institute Professor Emerita of Physics and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has earned one of America’s highest scientific honors: the Enrico Fermi Award. The award is administered on behalf of the White House by the US Department of Energy.

We’re proud to be able to claim some of Newsweek’s 150 Fearless Women as our own: JILL ABRAMSON ’76, CHIMANDA NGOZI ADICHE RI ’12, SHERYL SANDBERG ’91, MBA ’95, and ELIZABETH WARREN AM ’93, RI ’02.

Quiet Americans (Last Light Studios, 2011), a short-story collection by ERIKA DREIFUS ’91, EDM ’93, AM ’95, PHD ’99, recently received honorable mention for the American Library Association’s Sophie Brody Award (for outstanding achievement in Jewish literature). Quiet Americans also received notable-book and top-10-book nods for 2011 from the Jewish Journal and Shelf Unbound magazine, respectively.
INKLINGS

In a June 16 New York Times opinion piece, “The Strange Career of Juan Crow,” DIANE MCHWORTER RI ’12 reflected on what Alabama’s H.B. 56—the “attrition through enforcement” or “self-deportation” law—has meant for the state.

Writer JUNOT DÍAZ RI ’04 recently published a couple of short stories in the New Yorker; “Monstro” appeared in the June 4 special science fiction issue, while “Miss Lora” appeared in April 23 issue. His second collection of short stories, This Is How You Lose Her (Riverhead, 2012), forthcoming in the fall, has been praised by Publishers Weekly—“Raw and honest, these stories pulsate with raspy, ghetto hip-hop and the subtler yet more vital echo of the human heart.”


I Am an Executioner: Love Stories (Knopf, 2012), the debut collection of short fiction by incoming fellow RAJESH PARAMESWARAN RI ’13, was reviewed in the May 11 issue of the New York Times Sunday Book Review. “Parameswaran’s stories combine narrative brio, ringing voices and beguilingly looped plots,” said Chandrahas Choudhury in his review.

Bunting alumna JILL LEPORE BI ’00, AM ’03 gave her take on Time magazine’s controversial breastfeeding cover in “Overexposed: Breastfeeding in America,” which appeared in the May 11 New Yorker. She chose a daguerreotype from the Schlesinger Library’s collections to lend some historical perspective.

ALICE RANDALL ’84, PHD ’87, RI ’03, author of Ada’s Rules: A Sexy Skinny Novel (Bloomsbury, 2012), tackled the relationship between black women and fat in a New York Times opinion piece on May 5. Her recent novel follows a determined heroine as she struggles to lose weight and to love herself again. Booklist praised Randall’s “keen obser-

vations of black culture and the human condition.”

An interview with TAYARI JONES RI ’12, “Tayari Jones Knows Why She Sings,” which appeared in the Huffington Post on May 9, revealed details about the author’s work, life, and plans.

“Other Ways to Use a Book,” in the Boston Globe’s Ideas section on May 6, looked at the creative work done by LEAH PRICE ’91, RI ’07 about books as objects. Price is the director of our humanities program as well as a professor of English and the chair of the history and literature program at Harvard.

In a Slate article from June 6, “Did Ray Bradbury Even Write Science Fiction?” JOHN PLOTZ ’89, PHD ’97, RI ’12 reflected on the significance of Ray Bradbury’s body of work. In another article, from May 8, “What Do Where the Wild Things Are and Lincoln’s ‘Gettysburg Address’ Have in Common?” he expressed admiration for the recently deceased author Maurice Sendak, calling him a “crazed worldmaker.”

The innovative 1,000-square-foot-home of ANNE GRISWOLD TYNG ’42, MAR ’44—the groundbreaking architectural theorist, inventor of the Tyng Toy, and “Kahn’s geometrical strategist,” who died on December 27, 2011—was featured in “Small Wonder,” a slide show on the New York Times website, on May 1.

ELIZABETH S. SPELKE ’71, a Harvard cognitive psychologist, talked to the New York Times about what babies know in the April 30 article “Insights from the Youngest Minds.” The newspaper characterized her as “a pioneer in the use of the infant gaze as a key to the infant mind.”

“It Takes Two to Fight Over a Documentary,” published on April 27 in the New York Times, profiled the filmmaking pair DAVID REDMON RI ’11 and Ashley Sabin, who married in June. (See more about their recent films in On Stage and Screen, page 39.)

In a Newsweek cover story from April 16, “Spanking Goes Mainstream,” KATIE...
ROIPHE ’90 looked at the implications for feminism of working women’s submission fantasies, as represented by the mega-seller Fifty Shades of Grey and the HBO series Girls.

In “And the Winner Isn’t . . .” ANN PATCHETT B1 ’94 weighed in on the lack of a fiction prize in this year’s Pulitzers with the opinion that Binocular Vision, by EDITH PEARLMAN ’57, would’ve made a fine winner. The article appeared in the New York Times on April 17. Meanwhile, in “The Great Pulitzer Do-Over,” from the New York Times Magazine on May 7, other experts chose books by Tayari Jones and Ann Patchett herself as possible winners of the “lost Pulitzer.”

The article “Chasing Ghosts of Poets Past,” which appeared in the New York Times on March 30, featured “Passing Stranger,” a poetry tour that guides visitors through the East Village’s literary history. The website for the site-specific audio tour, eastvillage-poetrywalk.org, is powered by Zeega, the storytelling platform cofounded by KARA GEHLER RI ’12.

BARBARA KAHN AM ’00, RI ’11 is the senior author of a new study showing that fat cells protect against diabetes. The study, which challenges popular notions of body fat and health, was published online in the journal Nature on April 1.

KAYLA LASERSON ’87, SM ’92, SD ’97 has traveled to far-flung places in an attempt to solve some of our greatest global health issues. On March 6, she published “What I Learned Far Away From Public Health School,” a post about what she’s learned along the way, for WBUR’s CommonHealth blog.

In an article that appeared on allAfrica.com on February 17, “Africa: Women Filmmakers Tell Their Stories,” SALEM MEKURIA B1 ’91, RI ’06 reflected on her journey in independent filmmaking—it’s taken her from Africa to the United States and back again.

BEVERLY McIVER RI ’03 was featured in two profiles upon the release of Raising Renee, her film collaboration with JEANNE JORDAN B1 ’93, RI ’03 and STEVEN ASCHER ’82. ARTINFO published “Painter Beverly McIver Balances Art and Family, Barely,” in the HBO Documentary “Raising Renee” on February 22, and the New York Times published “Painting on a New Canvas” on February 8. HBO debuted the documentary on February 22.

CLAIRE MESSUD RI ’05 contributed a short memoir piece, “The Road to Damascus,” to Granta 118: Exit Strategies. In the piece, she recounts her attempt to connect to her father through the city where he spent a portion of his childhood. The same issue also included poetry from ADRIENNE RICH ’51, “Endpapers,” and SOPHIE CABOT BLACK B1 ’95, “Pay Attention.”


A New York Times Arts Beat blog post revealed the surprising literary mind involved in editing the books of physicist LISA RANDALL ’84, PHD ’87, RI ’03. “Cormac McCarthy, Quantum Copy Editor,” published on February 20, revealed how the celebrated author lent his know-how for both Warped Passages: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Universe’s Hidden Dimensions and Knocking on Heaven’s Door: How Physics and Scientific Thinking Illuminate the Universe and the Modern World.

ELIZABETH WURTZEL ’89, best known for her memoirs about depression and addiction, looked for meaning in pop singer Whitney Houston’s unfortunate death in a February 14 article, “The Strange Lessons of Whitney Houston’s Addiction,” for the Atlantic.com.

What did College alumnus KATHA POLDLITT ’71 think of the Komen Foundation’s Parenthood debacle? She shared her perspective for the Nation in an article titled “The Komen Foundation Pink-washes Anti-choicers, Punks Planned Parenthood,” published on February 1.

The February 2012 issue of Scientific American featured a profile of JOANNA AIZENBERG AM ’07, RI ’09–11, the director of our science program and the Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor. “Designers of Exotic Materials Learn New Tricks from Animals” reveals what Aizenberg knows about nature’s design secrets.

On January 11, the day after Mitt Romney carried the New Hampshire Republican primary, ELLEN FITZPATRICK RI ’09 contributed her perspective to a live Q&A, “What History Tells Us about the New Hampshire Primary Winner,” for the Washington Post’s website.

SHELF LIFE

KIRI MILLER PHD ’05, RI ’11 has published Playing Along: Digital Games, YouTube, and Virtual Performance (Oxford University Press, 2012). The book, which Miller researched at Radcliffe, looks at how video games and social media bring together virtual and visceral experience.

The Red Book (Voice, 2012) is the second novel from DEBORAH COPAKEN KOGAN ’88. Publishers Weekly called it a “smart, funny, engrossing, and action-packed meditation on women’s lives.”

In April, ANNE FADMAN ’74 celebrated the publication of the 15th anniversary edition (Farrar, Straus and Giroux Paperbacks, 2012) of her book The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctor, and the Collision of Two Cultures, which won the 1997 National Book Critics Circle Award for general non-fiction. It includes a new afterword by the author.

LEAH PRICE ’91, RI ’07 examines all the ways in which Britons of the 19th century used books—yes, other than for reading—in How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain (Princeton University Press, 2012).

The Secrets of Mary Bowser (William Morrow, 2012), by LOIS LEVEEN ’90, is based on the true story of a former slave who became a spy for the Union during the Civil War by posing as a slave in the Confederate White House. “I never thought I’d write a spy novel, or a Civil War novel,” says Leveen. “But there was a footnote in my PhD dissertation about Bowser, and it grew into this wonderful story.”

Anne Morrow Lindbergh’s Against Wind and Tide: Letters and Journals, 1947–1986 (Pantheon, 2012)—edited by her youngest daughter, REEVE LIND-
Imperfect Bliss (Atria, 2012) is the latest novel by Susan Fales-Hill ’84. Publishers Weekly says, “Fales-Hill whips an old-fashioned comedy of manners into a stylish, sharp-edged satire.”

In Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War (University of Georgia Press, 2012), Megan Kate Nelson ’94 brings together environmental and cultural histories to look at the power of the “dead heaps of ruins”—of cities and of soldiers’ bodies—that resulted from the Civil War.

Vivian Gornick Ri ’08 contributes the latest volume to the Jewish Lives series, Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life (Yale University Press, 2012), her biography of the noted political theorist and anarchist.


Debra Spark Bi ’93 has a new book out called The Pretty Girl (Four Way, 2012). Most of the book’s novella and stories circle around the theme of art and deception.

The Psychotherapy of Hope: The Legacy of Persuasion and Healing (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), edited by Julia Frank ’73 and Renato Alarcon, has just been published. In it, 20 distinguished psychiatrists and psychotherapy researchers critically evaluate the interplay between demoralization and hope at the center of all effective psychotherapies.

Margo Taft Stever ’72, EdM ’74 has published her third collection of poetry, The Hudson Line (Main Street Rag, 2012), and coauthored Looking East: William Howard Taft and the 1905 US Diplomatic Trip to Asia (Zhejiang University Press, 2012) with James Taft Stever and Hong Shen. She is the founding editor of Slapering Hol Press.

In No Citizen Left Behind (Harvard University Press, 2012), Meira Levinson Ri ’03 advocates closing the empowerment gap by bringing back civic education. Levinson, who has taught in an Atlanta public middle school, is now an associate professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Jennifer Goodman Wollock ’74, AM ’77, PhD ’81, a professor of English at Texas A&M University, has published Rethinking Chivalry and Courtly Love (Prager, 2011). The book explores the interaction of these two ideals from medieval times to the present day in global popular culture, in the arts, and in society. Two podcast interviews—in which the author discusses aspects of this book—can be found on the website Chivalry Today.

Susan M. Seidman ’50 has published her second book about pets, Cat Companions: A Memoir of Loving and Learning (CreateSpace, 2011), in which she relates how living with 21 felines over the course of five decades has enriched her life.

The Lives of Machines: The Industrial Imaginary in Victorian Literature and Culture (University of Michigan Press, 2011), by Tamara Ketabgian ’92, explores the emergence of a modern and more mechanical view of human nature in Victorian literature and culture—and why, even today, we still commonly describe ourselves as machines that “let off steam” or feel “under pressure.”

Natalie Wexler ’76 has published her second novel, The Mother Daughter Show (Fuze Publishing, 2011), a satire about mother-daughter relationships and private school culture, inspired by her experience as a parent at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC.

When People Wrote Letters: A Family Chronicle, by Martha Tuck Rozett ’68, is a tale told through letters, photographs, and other primary and secondary sources. The book’s central narrative concerns the relationship between Betty and Edith Stedman, two eloquent and adventurous women who happen to be the author’s mother and great-aunt, respectively.

Viola Canales ’79, JD ’89 has published El Gusano de Tequila (KingCake Press, 2012), the Spanish translation of her young adult novel The Tequila Worm (Wendy Lamb Books, 2005), which won the 2006 Pura Belpre Award and a PEN Center USA Literary Award and has sold more than 50,000 copies.


Forthcoming in September is a chapbook of poems by Nadine France Martine Pinede ’86 that evoke her origins, identity, and hope, An Invisible Geography (Finishing Line Press, 2012).

Art Aware

Fluxus artist Alison Knowles Ri ’10 tossed a bounty of vegetables at the High Line park in New York City on April 22. Her piece Make a Salad was performed in celebration of Earth Day.

Taylor Davis Ri ’11 and Mary Lum Ri ’05 were both included in the 2012 deCordova Biennial. The survey exhibition, which ran from January 22 to April 22, highlighted artists from across New England.

The Asia Society Museum in New York City recently mounted a solo exhibition of the work of Sarah Sze Ri ’06. Infinite Line, which was on view from December 13 to March 25, featured a new series of installations.

The Brooklyn gallery Pierogi presented an exhibition of paintings by Jane Fine ’79, Formulas for Now, from March 23 to April 22. For this series, Fine set aside the saturated colors she has been known for and replaced them with a limited, neutral, predominantly dark palette.

Anne Seelbach Bi ’90 had a solo exhibition, Troubled Waters, at the PMW Gallery in Stamford, Connecticut, from May 20 to July 1. In the paintings, she explores the effects of pollution on fish and the marine environment. Seelbach was also accepted to NYFA’s MARK11 Woodstock, which included an associ-
ON STAGE AND SCREEN
Two documentaries by the filmmaking team of Ashley Sabin and David Redmon (Downeast and Girl Model) have been making the festival rounds, appearing at the likes of the Independent Film Festival Boston, SXSW, and the Tribeca Film Festival. Pulitzer Prize-winning critic Wesley Morris singled out Downeast as a must-see, saying, “The entire movie is an elegy.” Girl Model, meanwhile, has been picked up for distribution by First Run Features and will air on PBS’s POV in the fall.

Bel Canto, a novel by Ann Patchett, will soon be an opera, thanks to soprano and creative consultant Renee Fleming.

Caridad Svich ’03 continues her steady takeover of the theater world: There have been dozens of readings of her play The Way of Water in venues across the United States and internationally. In Your Arms/En Tus Brazos also received readings, in both its English- and Spanish-language versions. Guapa played as part of Teatro Vivo’s Austin Latino New Play Festival in Austin, Texas, in April. Svich was also cocurator and organizer of “Dreaming the Americas,” the 6th annual NoPassport Theatre Conference, which took place at Arizona State University at Tempe in April. Meanwhile, her play In the Time of the Butterflies/En los Tiempos de las Mariposas continues performances, now in its second year, at Repertorio Español in New York.

Victor Valle ’12 appears in Departures, an online documentary series produced by KCET-TV that maps Los Angeles neighborhoods through interactive portraits. His interview is part of a larger cultural history of Highland Park—in particular his role in Chisme Arte, a journal that for 11 years documented the creative endeavors of California Chicano artists. His appearance led to an invitation to become a contributing editor and curator for ARC, a forthcoming KCET-TV online series focusing on southern and central California arts and culture.

GRACE NOTES
Released on June 18, the Variations for Judith project includes a songbook (Chester, 2012) and an audio recording (NMC Recordings, 2012) of 11 new piano variations—including one, “Diomedes,” by composer Tarik O’Regan ’05.

Best-selling author Mary Karr ’91 has teamed up with singer-songwriter Rodney Crowell to create Kin: Songs by Mary Karr and Rodney Crowell (Vanguard, 2012). “I called out to her in the darkness because she was a bona fide poet I knew could write songs,” says Crowell of the collaboration. “And despite her professor’s pedigree, she’d ridden a bike in a mosquito truck’s fog.” The album, released on June 5, features vocalists Norah Jones, Vince Gill, Emmylou Harris, Rosanne Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Lucinda Williams, and Lee Ann Womack.

Pianist Donald Berman ’11 appeared in May at the Beijing Modern Music Festival, performing Asian premieres of works by established and emerging composers. He organized a night of classical music, “From the Lower East Side to Carnegie Hall,” for the Boston Jewish Music Festival. It took place on March 7 at MIT. Berman also traveled to Nassau in February to accompany violinist Gilad Karni in a well-received classical program.

PUBLIC LIFE
On June 2, Elizabeth Warren ’93, RI ’02 secured enough delegate votes at the Massachusetts Democratic Convention—more than 95 percent—to run against the incumbent Republican junior senator, Scott Brown, this coming November.

Next year, Claudia Goldin ’80, RI ’06 will become president of the American Economic Association—only the third woman to do so.

Radcliffe Day panelist Linda Greenhouse ’68 delivered a lecture titled “A Very Short Introduction to the Supreme Court” at the Boston Public Library’s Allston-Honan Branch on May 22 as part of the John Harvard Book Celebration.

Mark Robbins RI ’03 assumed his new position as executive director of the International Center of Photography on July 1. Robbins, dean of the School of Architecture and a senior advisor on architecture and urban initiatives at Syracuse University, has focused on broadening awareness of and support for contemporary art and design in his roles as curator, national arts administrator, professor, and dean.

Celebrated writer Ishi Jen ’77, RI ’87, RI ’02 delivered the William E. Massey, Sr., Lectures in the History of American Civilization at Harvard from April 30 to May 1. The three lectures, a series titled Tiger Writing: Art, Culture, and the Interdependent Self, were “The Lure of Narrative,” “My Father Writes His Story,” and “What Comes of All That.”

We bid a fond farewell to poet Adrienne Rich ’51, longtime friend, who died at the age of 82 on March 27. In her obituary, the New York Times called her “a poet of towering reputation and towering rage.” Rich’s papers are housed at the Schlesinger Library. In November, Later Poems Selected and New: 1971–2012 (Norton), her final volume of poems, will be published.

On March 20, Tayari Jones RI ’12 appeared on NPR’s All Things Considered with her story “Trayvon Martin: The Lingering Memory of Dead Boys,” a personal reflection on the Florida case. July 22–27, Jones will be on the faculty at the Napa Valley Writers’ Conference, along with Lan Samantha Chang MPA ’91, RI ’01.

Jill Abramson ’76, executive editor of the New York Times, appeared at SXSW Interactive on March 12 talking about the paper’s future in the digital age. Poynter.org live-blogged the talk, and the resulting post, “Jill Abramson on the NYT as local vs. international paper: ‘We can have it all,’” is online.

Sheryl Sandberg ’91, MBA ’95 was the only woman cochair at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January. The Guardian published a profile of the Facebook chief operating officer, “Sheryl Sandberg: The First Lady of Facebook Takes the World Stage,” on January 24.

HAVE YOU DONE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY?
SHARE IT: e-mail us at magazine@radcliffe.edu.
Benny Shilo

Since Benny Shilo RI ‘12, a professor of molecular genetics at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, arrived at the Radcliffe Institute, last September, he has had his eye up to a camera rather than to a microscope lens. Wanting to combine his scientific background with his personal interests, Shilo conceived a new way to convey the underlying principles of embryonic development to a lay audience: juxtaposing laboratory images of cellular settings during embryogenesis with photos he’s taken in the larger world.

Pushing Creativity—In and Out of the Lab

Which aspect of your scientific work do you most enjoy? Addressing an open scientific question and finding the solution that provides a novel and unexpected insight into an important biological mechanism. The freedom to choose the questions I explore, which is often daunting. What is particularly enjoyable is that this is a group effort, and the journey is traversed with students and colleagues, such that the end result reflects the combination of personalities of the people involved.

Who are your heroes? Professor Robert Weinberg from MIT, with whom I carried out my postdoctoral research. His consistent interest and focus on important scientific questions, his ability to present problems and solutions in a crystal-clear manner, and his capacity to recognize colleagues as individuals beyond the lab are inspiring and have guided me throughout my own career.

Which trait do you most admire in yourself? The ability to endure trying scientific challenges—which include consistent failures—in a balanced manner and to enjoy the process of the work no less than the final outcome.

Tell us your favorite memory. My late father, Moshe Shilo, was a professor of microbiology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Many of my childhood memories are linked to my first introduction to science and biology, through his work and enthusiasm. I vividly remember plates with luminescent bacteria that he brought home and going with him to the lab in the evenings to inject rabbits.

Describe yourself in six words or fewer. Balanced, original, mindful, artistic.

What is your most treasured possession? An oil painting of me holding my then two-year-old son, painted by and given to me as a surprise present by my good friend Cliff Tabin upon completion of my postdoc in 1981. Cliff was my bench mate at MIT and is now head of the genetics department at Harvard Medical School.

What inspires you? I am fascinated by the mechanisms that shape the early embryo, which rely on very limited initial asymmetry cues yet give rise to such reproducible patterns. The challenge of figuring out how such a limited number of components creates pattern inspires me.

Name a pet peeve. People chewing gum.

Were your life to become a motion picture, who would portray you? Gregory Peck.

Where in the world would you like to spend a month? India, always. On a terrace in Varanasi overlooking the holy Ganges River.

What is your greatest triumph so far? Scientifically, my 1981 discovery that human cancer-causing genes are conserved in the fly genome. This finding changed the scientific perspective on the origin and function of these genes, indicating that they control the signaling pathways that are the essence of multicellularlarity.


What is your fantasy career? Becoming a field photographer in exotic countries.

What do you hope viewers take away from your photographs? A new, intuitive understanding of embryonic development that is both accurate and aesthetically enjoyable.

What has been most surprising about stepping away from laboratory science for a year? Pushing my creativity in new directions, inspired by encounters with scientists and artists at Radcliffe, Harvard, and Cambridge at large.
In the two decades between the two world wars, Soviet Russia and Central Asia saw more than 100,000 foreign visitors from all walks of life, many of them drawn there by the crash industrialization and forced agricultural collectivization drive of Stalin’s First Five-Year Plan.

Maria Gough, the Suzanne Young Murray Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute, spent her fellowship year studying the ways in which these foreign visitors used the photographic image to document their travels. In the process of visitors’ engaging photographically with “the Plan,” the Soviet experiment became what she calls, somewhat paradoxically, a “photographic Utopia”—an ideal place for photographing the future.

Gough is exploring prints, contact sheets, and negatives—thousands, in all—from four visitors, both professional and amateur photographers: Margaret Bourke-White, John Heartfield, Langston Hughes, and Lotte Jacobi. She hopes to reconstruct their travels, determine their aesthetic and political motivations, and gauge the importance of their Soviet experiences for their later artistic production.

Ultimately, though, says Gough, “I’m interested in telling stories . . . in the specificity of an individual’s historical experience.”
September 21, 2012 | 9:30 AM–5 PM

A JULIA CHILD CENTENARY SYMPOSIUM

SITING JULIA

At this daylong event, distinguished speakers will focus on three “sites” that Julia Child inhabited, learned from, and influenced:

Post–World War II Paris
Cambridge, Massachusetts
National Television

The Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, which houses Julia Child’s extensive papers, is sponsoring this symposium to mark the centenary of her birth.

WWW.RADCLIFFE.HARVARD.EDU