Speaking for the Voiceless

Working 9 to 5 What the Schlesinger Reveals about Working Women

Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes What’s the Connection?

Historian Lizabeth Cohen Steps Up as Interim Dean

Fellow Abigail English ’71 tackles a global problem
Photograph by Jessica Scranton
A Decade of Discovery and Innovation

AS I REFLECT ON my 10 years at the Radcliffe Institute—and what a marvelous decade of discovery and innovation that has been—I am struck by the abundance and array of scholarly, scientific, and artistic accomplishments that Institute programs have engendered. Some were predictable, some unexpected, some purely serendipitous. Here are just a few examples that emerged from efforts the Institute launched and fostered within its dynamic, multidisciplinary environment.

This past spring, the feature documentary Raising Renee brought to theaters the result of a collaboration that began with a casual conversation between two fellows in 2002, filmmaker Jeanne Jordan BI ’93, RI ’03 and painter Beverly McIver RI ’03. This nuanced profile of making art, honoring family, and exploring race, class, and disability has been acclaimed by audiences and critics.

The reach of the Fellowship Program extends to changing the lives of Harvard students. Lahira Jayatilaka ’10 was a sophomore in 2008 when the Radcliffe Research Partnership program paired him with Thishantha Nanayakkara RI ’09, a mechanical engineer working on humanitarian land-mine clearance, whose fellowship was cosponsored by the Harvard University Committee on Human Rights Studies. Through that experience, Jayatilaka gained a new interest in applying his computer science expertise to help address humanitarian problems. He produced a Hoopes Prize–winning thesis on visual support devices for deminers, and his research led to an exciting new project at the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

This year, two workshops designed by the Schlesinger Library and Academic Ventures addressed timely issues in the rapidly changing world of libraries. In the first, representatives from libraries, foundations, government, and cultural and research organizations discussed the possible creation of a Digital Public Library of America. This gathering developed into a project at Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society that now involves the most extensive group ever assembled to pursue free and universal digital access to information. The second workshop explored how evolving technology can help process special collections and has already led to new collaborations.

More has happened in my time at Radcliffe than I imagined possible 10 years ago, and the future promises to be even brighter with ideas and ventures that will have an impact on the University and the world beyond. I am grateful to fellows, faculty and staff members, alumnae/i, and friends for all you have done to make my time at the Institute a truly amazing decade.

BARBARA J. GROSZ
Dean, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study
IN FIVE YEARS, John Tiffany and the National Theatre of Scotland have brought 135 new works to 600,000 people in 180 different venues across three continents.

When Theater Hits the Road

by Ivelisse Estrada

Three workers, cameras mounted atop helmets, rappelled on the side of an 18-story Scottish housing complex, filming in various windows. But rather than having them arrested for peeping, a thou- sand people looked on from a grassy amphitheater, watching the action inside each apartment projected on the side of a giant truck.

This was Home Glasgow, directed by John Tiffany and one of 10 site-specific productions that marked the launch of the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) five years ago. In February, Tiffany—the 2010–2011 Radcliffe Institute Fellow and associate director of the National Theatre of Scotland—delivered the Julia S. Phelps Annual Lecture in Art and the Humanities. In his talk, titled “Can We Keep Up? Theater’s Incredible Ability to Evolve,” he took the audience on a tour of his “theater without walls.”

The NTS is, quite literally, a theater without walls—and was conceived as such. Rather than spend millions of dollars on a state-of-the-art theater facility, the Scottish parliament, with input from citizens, established a touring company. “There’s something won- derfully democratic about a theater company that takes its work to the nation,” said Tiffany. In a delight-fully inventive example of upcy- cling, many NTS productions are held in unconventional—and often disused—venues.

For a production called Hunter, 150 high school students and townspeople worked alongside company members to make the entire seaside town of Caith- ness their stage. Of all his productions, Tiffany said he’s most proud of this one: a treasure hunt in which the prize was the narrative. The level of audience engagement, he said, “made the performance feel not just live, but alive.”

In only five years, this band of “art-istic travelers” (as Elizabeth Dyrud Lyman, assistant professor of English at Harvard and a former Radcliffe Institute fellow, described them in her introduction) have developed 135 new pieces of theater—some of which have traveled far beyond Scottish national borders.

In fact, more than half a million people on three continents have experienced an NTS production. This year alone, the production Black Watch has traveled to a dozen cities in the United Kingdom and the United States. And where Black Watch goes, critical acclaim follows. The play, based on interviews of soldiers serving in Iraq with the legendary Scottish regiment also known as the Black Watch, has won more than 20 awards and been called “one of the most richly human works of art to have emerged from this long-lived war” by the New York Times.

Part of the reason this production has been so successful since it premiered
in 2006 is its nontraditional nature: it incorporates pageantry, song, and choreography, although it is not a musical. Tiffany believes that many different art forms push theater forward, so divisions between them should be dissolved. His vision of the theater of the future is interdisciplinary, dynamic, diverse, culture-driven, and, above all, fun.

Answering his own question about whether theater can keep up with our rapidly changing world, Tiffany said, “Abso-bloody-lutely. But can you keep up with us?” A fair question—and if his track record is any indication, keeping up with him and his national theater could be a formidable task. ✫

MORE THAN JUST WORDS

Although he continued to work with the National Theatre of Scotland’s touring company during his fellowship year, John Tiffany also found new ways to energize the theater. At the Institute, he studied paralanguage—everything (other than words) that comes out of our mouths when we communicate. “We stutter and we stammer, and we um and ah and uh—and there’s a lyricism in that that we’ve only just begun to explore,” says Tiffany. He’s exploring these nuances in a project titled “I Speak, Therefore I Am.”

Tiffany concedes that paralanguage may not seem as extreme as turning an airplane hangar or a whole town into a venue, but in a theater world where dialogue has been refined to within an inch of its life, he says, “it’s just as radical and as powerful a tool in terms of the evolution of theater.”

Are you ready to listen differently?
Epigenetics

by Courtney Humphries

THE CELLS IN OUR BODIES carry the same genome, yet they express information in radically different ways. How is it that the same genes produce a hefty, fibrous muscle cell and a delicately branching neuron?

On February 22, the day that Harvard celebrated the 10th anniversary of mapping the human genome, a Dean’s Lecture at the Radcliffe Institute addressed this fundamental question, which the genetic code alone can’t answer. In a talk titled “Beyond the Double Helix: Varying the ‘Histone Code,’” C. David Allis, the Joy and Jack Fishman Professor at Rockefeller University, said a central puzzle of biology is that “one genome has to give rise to many cellular identities.” The problem has led to one of biology’s youngest and most exciting fields, epigenetics.

The field focuses on the way that DNA is physically packaged, wound up with proteins called histones into a complex called chromatin. The structure of chromatin in a given cell determines which genes are transformed into proteins and which lie dormant. Furthermore, “there’s some incredible way to inherit this,” Allis said. When a cell divides, its identity is passed along to its daughter cells by preserving its pattern of gene expression.

Allis’s work has focused on small chemical modifications to specific areas of histones—which, he and other scientists have proposed, serve as a kind of “histone code” determining which genes are expressed and which are silenced. Scientists are now uncovering the molecular machinery involved in creating the histone code, with different components serving as “writers,” “readers,” and “erasers” of chemical modifications. Recently, another layer of complexity has emerged: specific histone variants that also seem to help fine-tune the expression of genes. Collectively, this research reveals a stunning amount of complexity in how cells use their DNA. “This is probably how we had to evolve flexibility into the static DNA template,” Allis said.

He pointed out that the field has come a long way since the first discoveries, in the mid-1990s. Since then, scientists have shown that epigenetic modifications are important in many inherited diseases and in cancer. The first epigenetics-based drug was approved by the FDA in 2006, and the pharmaceutical industry is actively pursuing drugs that can alter histone modifications. All this suggests that understanding epigenetics may have practical benefits beyond the answers it provides to fundamental questions.

Courtney Humphries is a freelance writer whose articles have appeared in the Boston Globe, Harvard Magazine, and other publications.

HOW DNA PACKAGING LEADS TO GENE EXPRESSION

DNA is wound up with proteins called histones, creating chromatin. The structure of chromatin determines which genes are transformed into proteins and which lie dormant.
Lewis Carroll’s Alice books—Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and Through the Looking-Glass (1872)—have been popular for well over 100 years and are still, as Dame Gillian Beer pointed out at the Radcliffe Institute on March 24, inspiring ballets, art exhibitions, and scholarly investigations. The 150th anniversary of the first Alice book won’t occur for several more years, but “if people are getting primed already,” Beer said, “Lord knows what will happen in 2015.”

In the third Dean’s Lecture of the academic year, titled “Alice in Time,” Beer explored the way the Alice books have traveled through time and the way they’re embedded in time. She noted that when we first meet Alice, she has encountered a rabbit in a waistcoat who takes a watch out of his pocket. Time was a cultural preoccupation when Carroll was writing the Alice books, with railways only recently running on timetables, and new kinds of clocks being invented. Beer reported that one of Carroll’s neighbors in Oxford invented an alarm clock that woke the sleeper by tipping him out of his bed. “Space and time at the time that he was writing were coming to be understood more and more as being in intricate relations,” she said. One example was the new technology of photography, of which Carroll was an early advocate. The photograph, Beer said, “froze or made portable a moment and a place.”

One explanation for the amazing popularity of the Alice books, Beer said, is the way Carroll plays with time. “In Looking Glass, particularly, Alice becomes aware that our diurnal mode of living in time is just a peculiar set, not necessarily the only pattern available,” Beer said. She quoted from the end of Looking Glass, where the White Queen says, “We had such a thunderstorm last Tuesday—I mean one of the last set of Tuesdays, you know.” Alice replies, “In our country, there’s only one day at a time.” To which the Red Queen responds, “That’s a poor thin way of doing things. Now here, we mostly have days and nights two or three at a time, and sometimes in the winter we take as many as five nights together—for warmth, you know.”

Beer showed pictures from the Alice books, including illustrations by Salvador Dali that portray Alice leaping and dancing in what the lecturer called “the green time of Alice.”

In her introduction of Beer, Leah Price, senior advisor to the humanities program at the Radcliffe Institute, an English professor, and a Harvard College Professor, invoked the words that Alice utters as she falls down the rabbit hole: “We can see the mind of a critic becoming curioser and curioser over the years of her career.”

An intellectual with wide-ranging interests, Beer is the author or editor of more than 20 books, including works about Virginia Woolf, George Eliot, Sigmund Freud, and Charles Darwin. Price mentioned the immense impact of Beer’s 1983 book, Darwin’s Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction (Cambridge University Press), which casts Darwin as a scientist who was also a creative artist. Beer is the King Edward VII Professor of English Literature Emeritus at the University of Cambridge and has been a judge of new fiction for both the Orange Prize and the Booker Prize.

She was made a dame in 1998.
Driving Change, Shaping Lives:

Gender in the Developing World

by Deborah Blagg

Imagine waking up to a front-page New York Times article reporting the discovery of toxic airborne chemicals that are threatening the health of thousands of women and children in the United States every day. University of California at Berkeley professor Kirk R. Smith, a presenter at Radcliffe’s early March conference, “Driving Change, Shaping Lives: Gender in the Developing World,” suggested that the reaction might include widespread panic, government action, and round-the-clock news coverage. But in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia—where the daily act of cooking over indoor fires fueled by coal, wood, crop residues, or animal dung creates what Smith called “a toxic tsunami” of chemicals that disproportionately affects the health of women and children—there is little public outcry.

“Half of the people in the world—the poor half—cook with solid fuels,” noted Smith, a contributor to the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize–winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Ailments linked to cooking over indoor hearths kill some 1.6 million people each year, even though the remedy—improved stoves—seems straightforward. Smith, whose presentation was titled “The Hearth Kills More than the Sword,” said the ubiquity of the practice may be one reason why it has been so difficult to address. “One of the hardest things to measure, or even see,” he said, “is things that don’t change.”

Bringing to light issues that endanger the lives or hinder the progress of those at the bottom of the developing world’s economic and political pyramid was a key focus of the two-day conference,
which was coordinated by a multidisciplinary group of Harvard faculty members chaired by Brigitte Madrian, senior advisor to Radcliffe’s social sciences program. Panels were organized around specific topics—population shifts, technology, health, education, and politics—but as the sessions progressed, the search for solutions became the common discussion thread. Jacqueline Bhabha, a Harvard Law School lecturer and a distinguished authority on health and human rights, observed that societal change happens from both the top down and the bottom up. “The real agenda,” Bhabha told the gathering, “is how we can move things forward. How do we put knowledge in the service of change for women in the developing world?”

Case Studies: Pushing Women Forward

Joyce Banda, the vice president of Malawi, was among the distinguished scholars, physicians, scientists, government officials, activists, and journalists from five continents who assembled for the conference. A longtime advocate of economic and political empowerment for women and girls in Malawi, Banda has been dedicated to improving maternal health. Working for change both top-down, by raising awareness in her role as African Union goodwill ambassador for safe motherhood, and bottom-up, by stimulating community participation in reducing maternal deaths, she has made progress in a country with one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the world. “In Malawi, the [tribal] chief is the hub,” explained Banda, whose efforts have led some chiefs to establish laws that encourage women to receive maternal health care and birth support and discourage traditional practices—such as sexual initiation rites—that can lead not only to pain and disfigurement but also to exposure to HIV/AIDS. “If we can get the chief to sign on,” Banda said, “the community follows.”

In Rwanda, a country devastated by genocide in 1994, the empowerment of women has brought about remarkable reforms. Aloise Inyumba, a senator in the Rwandan parliament, proudly told the gathering, “Rwanda today is a changed country—stable and secure, with a growing economy. And behind this growth, women have been the anchor.” Inyumba stressed that the ascendance of women leaders in Rwanda,

**OFF-GRID Innovations and Health through Awareness**

During the conference, several speakers talked about the transformative power of technology in women’s lives. An initiative that made inexpensive solar-powered radios available to women in rural Africa, for example, has raised awareness about citizenship rights and opened new paths to education. New Ideas, Old Challenges, one of two exhibits that ran concurrently with the conference, featured an array of technological innovations—including off-grid sources of electricity and a vertical farming technology that facilitates gardening in crowded urban areas—that are improving or could one day improve the lives of women and men in the developing world.

A second exhibit celebrated the global impact of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the watershed guide to women’s health published over 40 years ago, which has sold more than 4 million copies in 35 languages. The women’s health exhibit will be on display at Radcliffe’s Schlesinger Library through October 12, 2011.

**ALEXIS KARLIN ’12** took this photo of a woman crushing argan nuts to make oil for cooking and beauty products. She works at the first women’s co-op in Afghanistan.

**LIFELINE ENERGY**’s Lifeplayer provides on-demand instruction to schoolchildren in rural areas that lack resources and trained teachers.

**OUR BODIES, OURSELVES**, which celebrated its 40th anniversary last year, has sold more than 4 million copies and been translated into more than 20 languages.

**THE SOCCKET**, now in development by four Harvard women graduates, may look like an ordinary soccer ball—but it’s also an eco-friendly portable generator.

**AN ARRAY OF** photographs taken by students in the developing world—and entered in the Our World Visual Art Competition—accompanied the exhibit New Ideas, Old Challenges.
where women now hold 56 percent of parliamentary seats and key positions in all branches of government, came about because of a constitution based on equality “and the basic concerns of our people.” Ninety-five percent of Rwandans—an astonishing statistic in a desperately poor country—now have government-supported health care coverage; primary school enrollment has grown by 13 percent; and 35 percent of women now attend universities. “The way forward for us now,” Inyumba stated, “is education, education!”

Education for women has been a critical change agent in Oman, where ancient Muslim traditions and modern civil laws exist side by side. Thuwayba Al Barwani, dean of the College of Education at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, said that since coming to power in 1970, the sultan of Oman has called on women “to be the companions of men in the development of the Omani society.” As a result of his enlightened policies, today more Omani women than men are enrolled in higher education, and other statistics that indicate progress for women—fertility rates, age at marriage, and life expectancy—have followed favorable trends.

In Search of Economic Empowerment
In contrast, Humaira Awais Shahid RJ ’10, a journalist and provincial parliamentarian in Pakistan, talked about the difficulty of separating religion from social values in her country, where education is just one of the rights that women struggle to attain. In Pakistan, Shahid said, poverty, deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes, and “a distorted, politicized form of Islamic law” are used to control and abuse women and to limit their advancement in society. She has worked to promote reconsideration of “moderation, tolerance, and humanistic ethics” as key tenets of traditional Islam and has advocated outreach efforts that provide women with training and raw materials to start their own microbusinesses. Economic empowerment, Shahid asserted, “would put women in a central role where they could make decisions for their families.”

A presentation by Jishnu Das, senior economist in the Development Research Group at the World Bank, underscored the closely entwined relationship of economic opportunity, health, and education. Das discussed a World Bank study that determined that poverty is a greater obstacle than gender in gaining access to education in the developing

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**Driving Change Through Economic Empowerment**

Africa is making progress in feeding its people and establishing democracies, but women’s empowerment remains painfully slow. That was the message conveyed by Joyce Banda, vice president of Malawi, in the Radcliffe Institute’s annual Rama S. Mehta Lecture, a few days before the early-March conference “Driving Change, Shaping Lives: Gender in the Developing World.”

Banda reported that Malawi has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality on the African continent: 807 deaths per 100,000 live births. Education is also in crisis, with girls accounting for two-thirds of the 40 million African children who don’t attend school. “Keeping girls in school is the only way we can secure Africa’s future,” Banda said. She established the Joyce Banda Secondary School in her home village and also provides scholarships for about 1,500 girls to attend secondary school. In Malawi, primary school is free but secondary school is not, and many young women drop out because they can’t afford the fees.

Banda has firsthand experience with economic servitude. She married at age 21 and had three children, but her husband was abusive. “I endured a lot of emotional and physical violence,” she said. “As expected of most Malawian women at that time, I stayed on in my marriage, but more so because I was economically dependent on my husband.” After she left the 10-year marriage, she started her own business and eventually established the largest garment business ever owned by a Malawian woman.

She also founded the Association of Business Women, which now has 50,000 members and is the largest microfinance institution for women in Malawi.

—PAT HARRISON
world. “We need to lift many barriers at the same time,” noted Das, who tied his remarks to research reported in a presentation by University of California professor Robert Jensen.

In his study, Jensen and colleagues reached out to families in rural northern India, an area with the very worst gender bias in the country. “Our goal was to make parents aware of opportunities for women in the future,” explained Jensen, whose team spread the word about jobs available to educated young women in India’s burgeoning call-center industry. Three years later, the researchers returned to the same villages and found striking gains in measures relating to the education, nutrition, and overall health of young girls. “Just by showing parents that there is value in investing in their daughters,” Jensen noted, “we saw a positive change in how they are treated.”

A Sobering Gender Ratio
Jensen’s research took place in Indian provinces where practices such as sex-selective abortion have created a birth rate differential of 1,000 boys for every 770 girls. Brigham Young University professor Valerie Hudson, a political scientist and a participant on the “Shifting Populations” panel, looked closely at the topic of gender ratios. In a conference filled with dramatic insights, Hudson’s presentation on male/female population balance in India and Asia was particularly sobering. Sharing statistics from a United Nations report, Hudson noted that “there were 163 million women missing from the population” across seven Asian countries in 2005—a sum greater than the 150 million deaths attributed to violent conflicts worldwide in the 20th century. Since 1985, when ultrasound technology made fetal gender determination widely available, the birthrate for girls in the world’s most populous developing countries has plummeted. “Because of what’s happening in Asia,” Hudson said, “women are no longer half of humanity.”

Projections indicate that by 2020, there will be 30 million surplus males in India and 40 million in China, prompting concerns about societal instability that have led China to loosen its one-child policy, and India to offer families in some provinces cash payments if their daughters reach certain educational benchmarks. But Hudson called these measures “very small steps.”

Organizing for Change
If there was a consensus at the conference on the way forward in addressing the myriad problems of gender inequity in the developing world, it may have been voiced best by Mirai Chatterjee ’82, an official with the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), a union of 1.3 million women workers in India’s informal economy. Chatterjee urged participants to “share, learn from each other, and build alliances.”

“We have a long way to go,” Chatterjee said, “but whatever gains we have made, we have made through women organizing. When women lead, something powerful happens in their communities.”

Deborah Blagg is a freelance writer.
The Landscape of **Slavery**

**UNSETTLING ACCOUNTS** of those in southern bondage echo across time

by Colleen Walsh

For 45 minutes, Harvard historian Walter Johnson RI '11 read from a chapter of his forthcoming book at the Radcliffe Gymnasium. An uneasy stillness filled the hall at the conclusion of his presentation.

It was Johnson's topic that prompted the crowd's strained reaction.

"It's going to get grim really fast," Harvard's Winthrop Professor of History and professor of African and African American studies warned early in his talk. Using the words of former slaves and slaveholders, Johnson painted a harsh and violent picture of the pre–Civil War Mississippi Valley region.

Johnson wove his inhumane tale using the narratives of people such as John Andrew Jackson, a slave from South Carolina who eventually escaped to freedom in Canada; Solomon Northup, a free man from New York who was kidnapped and sold into slavery; and John Parker, a former slave from Virginia who became part of the Underground Railroad, along with stories about slave owners.

"I soon heard the dogs with their frightful baying and the men howling at the top of their voices, 'Stop . . . or we will shoot you,' " Johnson read in the words of Jackson, who was pursued by slaveholders.

Johnson's research focuses on slavery, capitalism, and imperialism. His 2001 book *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Harvard University Press) explores the market’s day-to-day workings. As the Evelyn Green Davis Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute, he used his fellowship year to complete his book “River of Dark Dreams: Slavery, Capitalism, and Imperialism in the Mississippi Valley's Cotton Kingdom.”
Johnson also directs Harvard’s Project on Justice, Welfare, and Economics, an initiative begun in 2001 that aims to develop scholarly research by faculty members and graduate students on issues pertaining to economics and the other social sciences, and also law and ethics.

The chapter he read “tries to treat a cotton plantation as a way of organizing nature, as well as a way of organizing labor,” Johnson told the crowd. He said he wanted to explore the dynamic between the land and man, between freedom and slavery.

The actual physical layout of a cotton field became a type of prisonlike grid, he said, which allowed slave owners to keep watch over their slaves. A landscape once covered with forests had been replaced by rows of cotton that provided “a field of visual mastery” for slaveholders. Johnson said that Parker described how the disappearing forest and growing population “made it more difficult for the fugitives to pass through the country successfully, since there were many eyes and fewer hiding places to conceal.”

“The land, as Parker presented it,” Johnson said, “was not a backdrop to slavery. It was not some empty soundstage upon which the master-slave relationship could be immaterially transacted. The land was the thing itself, the determining parameter of his condition as a slave. . . . The labor of the slave made the land into an agro-capitalist landscape. The landscape made the human being into a visible and thus vulnerable slave.”

That landscape was made even more menacing by what Johnson called human/animal/ecological hybrids, such as a field of cotton watched over by an overseer on a horse. Horses afforded overseers a high vantage point and an easy means of overtaking a slave on foot, and added an element of terror.

“It is the unpredictable, uncontrolled character of horses that makes them especially terrifying to those against whom they are deployed,” read Johnson, offering accounts of slaves being tied by a noose to a horse, or tied directly onto its saddle.

Dogs also terrorized escaping slaves, he said. While horses struggled on the uneven terrain of a swamp, or in branch-laden forests, dogs had no such trouble. Trained from their earliest days to hunt slaves, dogs were “inexorable, implacable enemies.”

“Each moment, I expected that they would spring upon my back, expected to feel their long teeth sinking into my flesh,” said Solomon Northup. “There were so many of them I knew that they would tear me to pieces.”

Slave owners also cooperated to recapture their property, creating a landscape of common concern. “It often appears to me that the slaveholders and Southerners generally are much more regardful of their neighbors’ property and interests than the people of the North,” Jackson recounted. “I cannot account for it in any other supposition than the very peculiar character of the property. “If slaves were like money, simply transferrable by the owner, I presume it would be quite dif-

ferent. But inasmuch as it often takes legs and runs away, it becomes a matter of mutual interest for each to protect his neighbors’ rights in order to render his own more secure.”

Johnson also led listeners into the landscape of law. Slave owners would attend legal proceedings against their charges who were accused of violent crimes to determine if their confessions—usually obtained through torture—would stand in court. Though the slave owners could have carried out the ultimate punishment themselves, he said, only an execution “sanctioned by the state” would ensure that “the slave owner would be reimbursed for the value of [his] dead slave.”

An audience member told Johnson she was speechless for a number of moments following his talk, saying, “It’s so powerful and overwhelming, what you have written, and so extremely upsetting.”

Another thanked Johnson for his efforts to explore such a harrowing topic. “This kind of material, we continue to need to archive and work through,” she said, “and it’s difficult.”

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Colleen Walsh is a Staff Writer for the Harvard Gazette. This article is adapted from one that originally appeared in the Gazette.
Changing the World through Moving Pictures

by Ivelisse Estrada

A few years ago, the Sundance Institute’s Documentary Film Program saw an uptick in the number of grant proposals for films about mining. This thematic cluster of independent filmmakers around the world, each of whom was working alone, puzzled Cara Mertes, director of the program—until it became clear to her that these storytellers were offering a barometer for an emerging human rights issue. Before natural resources and climate change had been truly popularized by journalists, she said, she and her colleagues at the Sundance Institute “were able to make connections between industry, economy, political power, and human cost by seeing all of these films come together.”

In the last of the 2010–2011 Dean’s Lectures, titled “Sundance Institute Reports: Global Trends in Documentary and Human Rights,” Mertes took the audience on a breakneck tour of human rights issues, the stories that have emerged from them, and the positive impact of those narratives around the world.

Mertes has worked in documentary film “since the fall of the Berlin Wall,” according to one journalist. In those years, she has produced the Public Broadcasting System’s series P.O.V. and been recognized with multiple Emmy Awards, George Foster Peabody Awards, Alfred I. duPont–Columbia University Awards, and Academy Award nominations. With all of this experience under her belt, she’s in a position to proclaim that we are seeing a new golden age of documentary. “I’ve been working in this field for 20 years,” Mertes said, “and I believe we are witnessing a catalytic moment in the independent documentary field. Global awareness of pressing issues is rising, and, simultaneously, documentary storytelling is coming of age as an increasingly mature and mainstream form of cultural expression.”

But how, exactly, can documentary storytelling affect human rights? These films, claimed Mertes, “have underscored the corrosive effects of corruption; advocated for remedies to atrocities, such as ethnic cleansing and genocide; charted the emergence of truth-and-reconciliation processes globally; and motivated vast constituencies to action.” As an example, Mertes spoke of the legacy of the Sundance Award–winning film When the Mountains Tremble (1984), about the struggle between Guatemala’s military and its unarmed indigenous people, which made Rigoberta Menchú a public figure and, eventually, a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

But it’s the films themselves that speak most eloquently about their potential. Mertes showed clips of three Sundance-funded documentaries, from Iraq, China, and India: Laura Poitras’s My Country, My Country, Lixin Fan’s Last Train Home, and Maren

THE INSTITUTE’S FILMIC LEGACY

Since its inception, the Radcliffe Institute has promoted documentary storytelling. Seventeen filmmakers, most of them documentarians, have passed through the fellowship program, many supported by the Radcliffe-Harvard Film Study Center Fellowship. Past and present fellows in the audience during Cara Mertes’s presentation included Lucien Castaing-Taylor RI ’10, Jeanne Jordan Bi ’93, RI ’03, Irene Lusztig RI ’11, and David Redmon RI ’11. Redmon and his filmmaking partner, Ashley Sabin, have tackled contemporary human rights issues in their documentaries.

Next academic year, the legendary documentarian Frederick Wiseman RI ’12—who has been exposing American institutions through his work since 1963—will work on a film that captures the university experience at the University of California at Berkeley.
Documentary storytelling explores a variety of subjects and has the potential to inspire social change.

Granger-Monsen and Nicole Newnham’s *Revolutionary Optimists*, respectively. Each of these stories was told in its own style, and all of them presented a powerful message. *Revolutionary Optimists*, in particular—a film about a group of kids in a Calcutta slum working to eradicate polio in their community—elicited cheers from the audience.

In Mertes’s view, “documentary film storytelling provides an underutilized resource for stirring the human conscience, prompting action, providing a voice to otherwise marginalized people, and individualizing the often overwhelming process of reckoning with human rights abuses—by showing the face behind the story.”

Wiseman’s *Titicut Follies* brought to light the horrors endured by inmates at the State Hospital for the Criminally Insane in Bridgewater, Massachusetts.
Something in the Air

by Jonathan S. Shaw

WHAT CAN SCIENCE TELL US ABOUT Earth’s future climate? Dry places will become drier, wet places wetter. Mass human migrations are likely to ensue, and diseases will follow, in new patterns of risk. Faced with living for at least a thousand years with the consequences of what humanity has already done to alter the planet’s atmosphere, governments will struggle to formulate a response. They may be tempted to alter Earth’s radiation budget—to block the sun through geoengineering.

These are the implications of climate change that were pondered by distinguished scientists during a daylong symposium titled “Something in the Air,” on April 15 at the Radcliffe Institute. How scientific knowledge is translated into political action was a recurring theme of the discussion.

Many people know about the potential severity of climate change, said Dimitar Sasselov in his introductory remarks. Sasselov, a professor of astronomy who serves as senior advisor to the Institute’s science program, noted that in a risk-perception survey of leaders and decision makers across the world, conducted by the World Economic Forum, climate change ranked as one of the most important risks overall, with high likelihood and very high impact.

No Switch to Turn Off Heat

And yet it remains a challenging problem, as Susan Solomon, a senior scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), explained. What we have done since the Industrial Revolution is to raise the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from 270 parts per million (ppm) to 390 ppm. “The amount of energy this corresponds to is fairly easy to think about,” she said, because it is “equivalent to having about 1.7 one-watt Christmas tree lights on every square

Participants discussed new climate patterns; the possibility of mass human migrations; the relationship among weather, population density, and disease; the implications of geoengineering; and mankind’s collective responsibility for taking action before it’s too late.
What, then, can be done about climate change? Susan Solomon emphasized the power of individuals who make personal choices to fix environmental problems—it worked in the fight against CFCs, the chlorofluorocarbons that led to holes in the planet’s ozone layer, and talking about it is the first step, she said. There are lots of ideas for action, each of which could address a portion of the CO₂ emissions problem: driving only cars that get 60 miles per gallon; doubling nuclear power; improving the energy efficiency of buildings; reducing deforestation; increasing wind-power generation 50 times or solar power 700 times; and capturing and storing carbon emissions. To this list, add personal choices to fix the oceans, where salinity patterns are driven by precipitation and evaporation. Freshwater regions are getting fresher, while salty areas are becoming saltier.

**Climate Change and Human Health**

Even human health will be affected, as cholera expert Rita Colwell, a professor at the University of Maryland and the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, explained. Cholera is caused by a bacterium that can survive in the environment for as long as 25 years and is sensitive to temperature and rainfall. When it gets into a water supply, the effect is often fatal, because victims lose up to 18 liters of fluid a day. Colwell said that climate change will lead to longer cholera seasons. And it is likely to change the patterns of other diseases as well, such as malaria and encephalitis.

The question of how people will respond to the changes already under way was taken up first among the speakers by geologist Jennifer R. Smith ’96, an associate professor in the department of earth and planetary sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. Smith studies the archaeological record of human adaptation to climate change—the unsustainable human civilizations of the past. In work ranging from China and Southeast Asia to Africa and beyond, Smith found that the most resilient societies are those that have the capacity to transform themselves, often through technological innovation or strong social institutions.

Her key finding, with political implications for the current crisis, is that migration has “been a critical mechanism for coping with past climate disruptions,” she said. “There is less availability of that now,” and therefore “there is a warning coming out of this record.”

David Keith sounded a warning about a higher-order human response: the possibility that someone might decide to engineer Earth’s climate. In much the same way that a volcano cools the atmosphere by launching sulfur dioxide particles that reflect sunlight into space, so governments or even wealthy individuals could “inject” such particles into the atmosphere. While the idea sounds almost implausible, reducing the solar radiation that reaches Earth’s surface would be inexpensive, fast, and easy, explained Keith, the Canada Research Chair in Energy and the Environment in the department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering at the University of Calgary. The real policy challenge would be control. An island nation threatened by sea-level rise could act unilaterally, for example. But as Keith explained, it would mean “the end of nature” as we know it—humans would be regulating the planet’s thermostat. And such intervention would carry side effects and risks—such as masking the atmospheric buildup of CO₂ while doing nothing to prevent acidification of the world’s oceans.

The more palatable, but much messier, policy-based ways of addressing climate change were explained by Michael A. Levi, a senior fellow for energy and the environment and director of the program on energy security and climate change at the Council on Foreign Relations. Attempts to “make dirty energy expensive” have largely failed, he said, not least because the United States has not wanted to do it. But there is no good market mechanism to foster the alternative—“to make clean energy cheap.” Venture capital, with its three- to five-year investment window, works for the development of information technology and to an extent for biotechnology, said Levi, but not “in the energy space,” where investments...
... In the Air

must be far larger and longer-term. This kind of “market failure” domestically is even harder to manage internationally. Imagine saying “I am going to provide funds for an American idea to move to a Chinese factory,” he said. Any solution will be messy in the effort to harness market forces to social good through policy. “Be ready to screw a lot of things up,” said Levi.

In the concluding panel discussion, MIT professors Kerry Emanuel and Carl Wunsch raised the fallacy of predictability, noting that policy makers and the public look to scientists for answers about climate change. “We may find that the system is not predictable”—much like trying to forecast the weather a month in advance, Wunsch said. The climate system is extremely complicated, he continued, and uncertainty is likely to increase as scientists learn more.

We Are All Responsible

Summing up the day’s discussions, Daniel Schrag—director of the Harvard University Center for the Environment, the Hooper Professor of Geology, and professor of environmental science and engineering—emphasized that public knowledge about the climate problem is no barrier to action. “Surveys have shown that the public are actually familiar with the problem,” Schrag said. “They know what is going on—they are just not willing to make changes.” Schrag described a conversation he’d had with the outgoing chair of the Senate Energy Committee, Jeff Bingaman, a Democrat from New Mexico. “We were talking about the failure of action in Congress,” Schrag said. Bingaman told Schrag he would “love to see action on this” but described how a candidate for the Senate in Arizona had lost after attack ads asserted that he supported the Waxman-Markey bill, which became the Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. “When politics are such that supporting action on climate change is a recipe for getting voted out of office,” Schrag said, “we are not going to see change, and that is the bottom line: we are all responsible for the problem.”


Cohen to Serve as Interim Dean

In late April, President Drew Faust announced that Lizabeth Cohen RI ’02, the Howard Mumford Jones Professor of American Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), would serve as interim dean of the Radcliffe Institute beginning July 1, 2011. Barbara J. Grosz stepped down from the deanship at the end of the academic year.

“In I am very pleased that Professor Cohen has agreed to lead the Radcliffe Institute while the search for a permanent dean is under way,” said Faust. “She is a top scholar in her field, an active University citizen, and a former Radcliffe fellow whose broad intellectual interests and collaborative style will make her an excellent leader of Radcliffe during this transition year.”

“As a Radcliffe fellow and Harvard faculty member,” Cohen said, “I have watched the Institute over the past decade become a dynamic part of the University’s intellectual life. Radcliffe has established itself as a rarity among institutes of advanced study, for its strong connections to a university community and for its deep commitment to furthering scholarship on women, gender, and society. I consider Radcliffe a model of vibrant, boundary-crossing collaborations in the sciences, the social sciences, the arts, and the humanities. These are important times for the Institute, and I am eager to do my part during this next year to continue the progress made by Drew and Barbara.”

An expert on 20th-century American social and political history, Cohen is the author of Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939 (Cambridge University Press, 1990), which won the Bancroft Prize in American History and the Philip Taft Labor History Book Award, and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Her most recent book, A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (Knopf, 2003), explores how an economy of mass consumption shaped social life, culture, and politics following World War II. Cohen has published widely in top history and urban studies journals, winning numerous awards and distinctions. Her writings have appeared in edited collections and popular venues including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the American Prospect, and the Boston Herald. She is also a coauthor, with David Kennedy, of a widely used US history college textbook, The American Pageant.

Cohen’s current book project, “Saving America’s Cities: Ed Logue and the Struggle to Renew Urban America in the Suburban Age,” considers the benefits and costs of rebuilding American cities through the life and career of urban planner
Edward J. Logue, who contributed to major redevelopment projects across the Northeast, including the “New Boston” that emerged in the 1960s.

In addition to her scholarship, Cohen has made significant contributions to Harvard’s institutional life since arriving in 1997 from New York University. She has served as chair of the Department of History, director of the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, and cochair of the Harvard College Curricular Review’s working group on pedagogy, which released its final report in 2004. She also served as cochair, with Mohsen Mostafavi, dean of the Graduate School of Design, of the Common Spaces Steering Committee, and continues to serve on the Advisory Committee for Common Spaces Projects.

Cohen is a longtime member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Standing Committee on the Status of Women and served on the Harvard Task Force on Women in 2005. She has also been a member of the Tanner Lectures Committee, the Social Sciences Chairs Council, the History Department Planning Committee, the FAS Resources Committee and Faculty Council, and administrative committees for the Charles Warren Center, the History of American Civilization Program, the Center for History and Economics, and the joint PhD program of the Graduate School of Design and FAS, among other assignments.

Her many honors and awards include fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Council of Learned Societies, as well as the Radcliffe Institute. In 2001, Cohen served as president of the Urban History Association. During the 2007–2008 academic year, she taught at Oxford as the Harold Vyvyan Harmsworth Professor of American History.

Cohen received her undergraduate degree from Princeton University and her master’s and doctorate in American history from the University of California at Berkeley. *

“I consider Radcliffe a model of vibrant, boundary-crossing collaborations in the sciences, the social sciences, the arts, and the humanities.”

Photograph by kathleen dooher
Radcliffe Day 2011

Radcliffe’s annual celebration featured a “gentle revolutionary” who has helped improve the lives of more than 1 million poor women; a spirited panel discussion about how to make effective change in the world; a breakfast featuring two highly esteemed Radcliffe alumnae writers; and tours of Radcliffe’s Schlesinger Library.

It was also the last Radcliffe Day as dean for Barbara J. Grosz, who has concluded 10 years of service to the Institute and will soon return to teaching and research. During the luncheon, Harvard University President Drew Gilpin Faust thanked Grosz for her numerous achievements at the Institute and introduced the interim dean, Lizabeth Cohen RI ’02, the Howard Mumford Jones Professor of American Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Radcliffe Institute Medalist Ela Bhatt, above, founded the Self Employed Women’s Association of India—a trade union that includes street vendors, agricultural workers, rag pickers, and cart pullers.

The morning’s panelists, at left with Dean Barbara J. Grosz and Ela Bhatt, addressed the continuing need for social change.
RADCLIFFE DAY began with the Ann Radcliffe Society Breakfast for those who have included the Radcliffe Institute in their estate plans or made a planned gift.

Pulitzer Prize–winning writer Linda Greenhouse ’68 said she has made two planned gifts because she wanted to support the Institute’s programs and the gifts made good financial sense. “Making these kinds of gifts served my purposes in terms of tax and retirement planning,” she said.

For information about joining the Ann Radcliffe Society, contact Joan Moynaugh at Joan_Moynaugh@radcliffe.edu.

Esteemed writers Linda Greenhouse ’68 and Gish Jen ’77, BI ’87, RI ’02 spoke at the breakfast.
Embodying Change

The artist, in her own inimitable way, joins art and politics in her performance, often touching on gender and other high-stakes issues.

one-woman cast

Using voice and movement, Smith portrays different characters—and explores their truths.
In her one-woman plays, Anna Deavere Smith BI '92 portrays ordinary and famous people and illuminates public events so that we gain new understanding about them. On March 2, to launch the Radcliffe Institute’s conference “Driving Change, Shaping Lives: Gender in the Developing World,” Smith performed for an audience of supporters and friends of the Institute, joining art and politics in her unique style.

MORE Than 300 interviews on three continents

To produce her one-woman plays, Smith travels the world interviewing people. For Let Me Down Easy, a play that explores grace, she conducted 300 interviews, 20 of which made it into the final work. In October 2008, when she was performing the play at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Smith participated in a panel discussion about her work with Radcliffe fellows Susan Faludi ’81, RI ’09, Gwyneth Lewis RI ’09, and Linda Dairiki Shortliffe ’71, RI ’09.

In her return to Radcliffe this spring, Smith performed selections from Let Me Down Easy and other plays.
JUST AS HARVARD COLLEGE ACCEPTED only 6 percent of its applicants this year, so did the Radcliffe Institute. The Institute selected just 51 of the nearly 900 applicants for the 2011–2012 year. These fellows are award-winning artists, academics, and professionals—including musicians, mathematicians, filmmakers, anthropologists, biologists, and writers—who will convene for a full year to focus on individual projects and research while benefiting from a multidisciplinary community in the University setting. The fellows were chosen on the basis of prior accomplishments and the projects they plan to undertake during their fellowships, as well as the potential of their projects to have long-term impact. Fellows for next year include:

1. Author CHI-MANMADA ADICHE, from Nigeria, who was included in the New Yorker’s 20 Under 40 Fiction Issue in 2010, will be working on her next novel. Her books include Purple Hibiscus (Anchor, 2004) and Half of a Yellow Sun (Anchor, 2007).

2. University of Toronto Professor of Observational Astrophysics RAY JAYAWARDANA is a leader in the emerging field of exoplanetology. At the Institute, Jayawardhana will apply the principles of planetary science, atmospheric physics, geochemistry, and astrobiology to the study of close-in and far-out extrasolar planets.


4. The range of interests of Harvard Professor of Government ERIC NELSON—from political thought in early-modern Europe and America to Thomas Hobbes’s translations of Homer—make him especially well suited to the Institute’s multidisciplinary community, in which he will be working on a book about the political thought of the American Revolution.

5. Stanford University Professor of Philosophy TAMAR SCHAPIRO studies the nature of inclination—the form of human motivation that contrasts with reason and is commonly referred to as “desire,” “passion,” or “appetite.” She will develop a theory of human agency that explains the role inclination plays and ought to play in human life.

6. PAMELA SILVER, a professor at Harvard Medical School and the first director of the Harvard University PhD Program in Systems Biology, studies bioenergy, metabolic engineering, and sustainability. At the Institute, she will be exploring the potential of the emerging field of synthetic biology to address environmental concerns and global sustainability.

7. At the intersection of theory and practice is MARGARET WEIR, a professor of sociology and political science at the University of California at Berkeley who also chairs the MacArthur Foundation Network on Building Resilient Regions. She will bring her focus on politics and policy to the Institute with a project assessing the war on poverty.

8. In the decades since his groundbreaking documentary Titicut Follies was released, in 1967, FREDERICK WISEMAN has made more than three dozen documentaries—most recently La Danse. Each one is a powerful combination of minimalism and artistry. During his year at the Institute, he will work on a film about public higher education in the United States.
AROUND THE INSTITUTE

2010–2011 Radcliffe Institute Fellows

Chosen from an international pool of nearly 900 applicants

Chimamanda Adichie
PERRIN MOORHEAD AND BRUNS GRAYSON FELLOW AND RADCLIFFE AMERICAN STUDIES FELLOW
Independent Writer (Nigeria)
Fiction

John Aylward
REMAI AND BAKETEL FELLOW FOR MUSIC
Clark University
Music Composition (Canada)
A Work for Soprano and Chamber Ensemble

Elizabeth S. and Richard M. Cashin Fellow
Rochester Institute of Technology
Astronomy
Constrains on Heating and Cooling in the Intermediate-Metallicity: Implications for Galaxy Formation

Reginald Bets
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
Poetry
Near Shorn and Burden

David Bezmozgis
LISA GOLDBERG FELLOW
Independent Writer (Canada)
Fiction
The Betrayers

Lauren Bresson
THE CARL AND LILY PFOHREZHEIMER FOUNDATION FELLOW
McGill University
Anthropology
Female Labor and Foot-binding in Rural China, 1900–2010

Michael Brenner
SUZANNE YOUNG MURRAY FELLOW
Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Mathematics and Applied Mathematics
Science and Cooking, and Other Applied Mathematical Adventures

Melissa Brown
FRIEDA L. MILLER FELLOW
Stanford University
Anthropology
Female Labor and Foot-binding in Rural China, 1900–1950

Alessandra Buonanno
WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION FELLOW
University of Maryland
Physics
Modeling Gravitational Waves From Merging Black Holes

Annette Gordon-Reed
CAROL K. PFORZHEIMER PROFESSOR AT RADCLIFFE
Harvard University
Law
“The Most Blessed of Patriarchs”: The Thomas and the Empire of the Imagination

Maria Gough
SUSANNE YOUNG MURRAY FELLOW
Harvard University
Art History
Radical Tourists in Soviet Photographic Utopia

David and Roberta Logie Fellow and RADCLIFFE-HARVARD FELLOWSHIP STUDY CENTER FELLOW
University of Bergamo (Italy)
Anthropology
Skilled Visions: Critical Ecologies of Belonging

Tom Conley
WALTER JACKSON BATE FELLOW
Harvard University
Literature
Engineering, Poetry, Mapping: Baroque Literature and Cartography in Early Modern France

Paul Falkowski
GRASS FELLOW
Rutgers University
Evolutionary and Organismic Biology
From Star Dust to Life

Suzanne Freidberg
BURKHARDT FELLOW
Dartmouth College
Geography
Diet for a Warm Planet: charting the Future Map of Food

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson
MAURY GREEN FELLOW
Emory University
Cultural Studies
Habitable Worlds: Eugenic Spaces and Democratic Spaces

Amy Goldstein
KATHERINE HAMPSON BESSELL FELLOW
Washington Post
Journalism

Carole Gomes
Cornell University
Computer Science
Computational Sustainability: Methods for a Sustainable Environment, Economy, and Society

Jiang Jin
RADCLIFFE-HARVARD YENCHING INSTITUTE FELLOW
East China Normal University (China)
Modern Chinese History
The City and the Revolutions: Shanghai in the Long 1900s

Tayari Jones
Rutgers University
Fiction
Dear History

Gal Kaminka
Evelyn Green Davis Fellow
Bar Ilan University
(Israel)
Computer Science
Curing Robot Autism

Rebekah Lee
KITA E. HAEUSNER FELLOW
Goldsmiths College, University of London
(United Kingdom)
History
Managing Uncertainty: Independent Scholar in Southern Africa

Cristina Grasseni
DAVID AND ROBERTA LOGIE FELLOW AND RADCLIFFE-HARVARD FELLOWSHIP STUDY CENTER FELLOW
University of Bergamo (Italy)
Anthropology
Skilled Visions: Critical Ecologies of Belonging

Ralph Hanna
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
Systems of Creation: From Protocol Autonomy to Underwriting Life

Diane McWhorter
MILDRED LONDA WEIZMANN FELLOW
University of Birmingham
Musicology
Acoustic Orpheus: Opera and Early Sound Recording, 1877 to 1906

Ray Jayawardhana
WILLIAM BENNETC-SMITH FELLOW
University of Toronto (Canada)
Astronomy
Extreme Worlds: Close-In and Far-Out Extrasolar Planets

Toni Omon
HRYD FELLOW
Northwestern University
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
Low-Cost Diagnostic Tools for Resource-Poor Countries

Kara Oehler
RADCLIFFE-HARVARD FELLOWSHIP STUDY CENTER FELLOW

Tamar Schapiro
Stanford University
Philosophy
The Nature of Inclination and Its Role in Action

Benjamin Shill
RADCLIFFE-INSTITUTE FELLOW
Weizmann Institute of Science
Genetics
The Wonders of Embryonic Development: Conveying the Concepts through Visual Sensations from the Macro World

Pamela Silver
EDWARD, FRANCES, AND SHIRLEY B. DANIELS FELLOW
Harvard Medical School
Bioengineering
Integrating Biology for a Sustainable World

Daniel Small
JOY FOUNDATION FELLOW
Harvard University
History
Goods and Debts in Medieval Mediterranean Europe

David Stern
BACONIAN FELLOW
University of Pennsylvania
Literature
A History of the Jewish Book from Antiquity to the Present Day: The Biographies of 120 Books

Victor Valle
California State Polytechnic University
Nonfiction Writing
The Poetics of Fire: On The Art of Chile Eating

Emma Wasserman
MARY I. BUNTING INSTITUTE FELLOW
Rutgers University
Religion
Apocalypticism and Hierarchy in the Letters of Paul

Margaret Weir
Sara H. and John F. Nutter Endowed Chair in Women’s and Gender Studies
Women’s and Gender Studies

Frederick Wiseman
LILLIAN GOLLAY KNAFEL FELLOW AND RADCLIFFE-HARVARD FILM STUDY CENTER FELLOW
Ziiporah Films, Inc.
Film, Video, Sound, and New Media
Scenes from a University: The University of California at Berkeley

Summer 2011 RADCLIFFE MAGAZINE 23
**Why Has Obesity Increased?**

*An Exploratory Seminar on Obesity, sponsored by Academic Ventures, Leads to Strengthened Research*

by Pat Harrison

When Barbara Kahn RI ’11 received an invitation to participate in an Exploratory Seminar at the Radcliffe Institute in 2004, she was intrigued. The prominent endocrinologist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center holds the George R. Minot Professorship of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and speaks at many symposia and conferences—but usually the organizers and speakers are other biomedical researchers, not social scientists.

“Why Has Obesity Increased?” was the title of the one-day seminar, and it was led by David Cutler, then dean for the social sciences in Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics in the department of economics and at the Harvard Kennedy School, Cutler also served as the senior health care advisor to Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign.

Even though Cutler invited speakers who are not biomedical researchers, Kahn understood their use of data. “The data related to technological advances about how the obesity epidemic correlates with the use of plastic wrap and freezers and microwave ovens,” she says. In a 2003 working paper, also titled “Why Has Obesity Increased?” for the National Bureau of Economic Research, Cutler and Edward L. Glaeser, another seminar participant, who is now the Fred and Eleanor Glimp Professor of Economics at Harvard, used charts and graphs—pictures of data—to show that Americans have become considerably more obese over the past 25 years. They concluded that this trend is largely the result of consuming more meals rather than more calories per meal.
and correlates with the use of new food technologies and processed food.

In addition to Kahn, Cutler, and Glaeser, 14 scholars from Harvard and its affiliated hospitals participated in the obesity seminar, including two anthropologists, a psychologist, an epidemiologist, and a historian. Kahn described the experience as “eye-opening” in its multidisciplinary approach.

Every year since 2002, the Radcliffe Institute has sponsored these faculty-led seminars, in which scholars from Harvard and other universities convene in small groups for one- to three-day collaborations. The Institute hosted 14 Exploratory Seminars in 2010–2011.

“The seminar got me intrigued with Radcliffe,” Kahn says, “but at that point I wasn’t ready to take the time for a fellowship.” A few years later, though, she wanted to focus on her own multidisciplinary work, so she applied. She proposed a continuation and strengthening of her research on type 2 diabetes with Alan Saghatelian, of Harvard’s Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, and with researchers at the Harvard/MIT Broad Institute. She held the Edward, Frances, and Shirley B. Daniels Fellowship at Radcliffe.

**Molecular Origins of Obesity and Diabetes**

For the past 25 years, Kahn has been working to understand the molecular mechanisms underlying obesity and diabetes. “We know that obesity is a major risk factor for type 2 diabetes,” she says, “but why is that? How does obesity increase the risk for diabetes?” The other priority on her research agenda is to understand the mechanisms by which people become resistant to the action of insulin, the initiating event in developing diabetes. “If we can understand how insulin works and how people get resistant to it,” Kahn says, “then we can find new therapeutic approaches to prevent or treat diabetes.”

In collaboration with Saghatelian, Kahn discovered a novel family of lipids (fats) in tissues and blood of mice and humans that had never previously been identified. Her hypothesis is that these lipids may maintain or enhance insulin sensitivity and protect against diabetes, but she hasn’t yet proved that.

During her Radcliffe fellowship, Kahn and her colleagues showed that these lipids are physiologically regulated and identified the class of enzymes that metabolize them. This exciting development could make it possible to maintain high levels of the lipids and thereby decrease diabetes.

**Protection Against Obesity and Diabetes**

As a longtime physician at Beth Israel—named one of the “Top Doctors in Boston” by Boston magazine—Kahn has an interest in obesity and diabetes that goes beyond basic research. In summary, she says the best way to avoid obesity and diabetes is healthful eating and being physically active. But she knows that it’s often more complicated than that. She tells a story about a patient she treated for many years, who eventually lost weight on Weight Watchers at her workplace, but regained it when the program left the workplace. “I told her, don’t get discouraged about slipping, because every time you get motivated, that’s beneficial. Let’s remotivate and not dwell on the past.”

Kahn is encouraged by new treatments for people who already have type 2 diabetes. “It’s really phenomenal, the new diabetes drugs that have come out in the last decade,” she says. “Some of these agents also decrease appetite. None of them is completely approved for that purpose at the moment, but I think we’ll be seeing more medications that will be effective in some people to reduce appetite.”

The other major wave in clinical care of obesity and diabetes is bariatric surgery procedures. “They’re not without side effects, they’re not for everybody, and there are certain criteria to qualify,” Kahn says. “But we’re all very surprised at how effective the surgery is for diabetes.”

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**RADCLIFFE RESEARCH PARTNERS IN KAHN’S LAB**

Barbara Kahn’s laboratory is located in the Center for Life Science Boston, a modern glass building in the Longwood Medical Area that is home to researchers from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Children’s Hospital, the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and Harvard’s Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering.

Twelve Harvard undergraduates applied to work as research partners in Kahn’s laboratory, and she welcomed four of them to her 18-person lab: Eddie Grom ’12, a government concentrator who won a prize in the poster exhibit for Radcliffe Research Partners; Rachel Kay ’13, who’s studying human evolutionary biology; Ellen Rice ’12, concentrating in chemistry; and Ana Rivera ’13, whose concentration is human development and regenerative biology. All these students are planning to attend medical school.

Rachel Kay, who grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota, worked last summer at the Hennepin County Medical Center, in Minneapolis, where she saw a lot of patients with diabetes. She was taking a course in endocrinology, so she was drawn to the research opportunity in Kahn’s lab. Kay worked 8 to 10 hours a week counting adipocytes, or fat cells, using a special device that measures the number and size of those cells in mouse tissue. “You wouldn’t think that counting fat cells would be exciting,” Kay says, “but knowing that what I was doing is going to contribute to a form of treatment for diabetes kept me going.”
EVOLUTION of an
Abigail English ’71, RI ’11 has come a long way from philosophy concentrator to aspiring policy advisor on human trafficking—and yet it seems she’s been working toward this her whole life.

by Ivelisse Estrada

LISTENING TO SOFT-SPOKEN ABIGAIL English, one might never guess the fierceness of her lifelong fight for child and adolescent rights.

In a neat office on the second floor of Byerly Hall, English calmly details her journey from philosophy concentrator at Radcliffe College to health and “wholeness” advocate for girls, adolescents, and the youngest women. Now she’s poised to undertake a monumental challenge: increasing awareness of sexual exploitation and trafficking of the young and vulnerable and changing policy—first in the United States, and then around the world.

A Romantic Revolutionary

English is a member of the Harvard-Radcliffe Class of 1971—which then–University president Nathan Marsh Pusey proclaimed the “worst class ever,” but English has dubbed “romantic revolutionaries, all.” With social issues so much a part of the zeitgeist, she studied philosophy and government, focusing on ethics and political theory, equality, and power.

After graduation, she found a job on the research staff of a Cambridge nonprofit called The Sanctuary, a counseling center and overnight hostel for street youths. While on staff, in the winter of 1971–1972, English embarked on writing Got Me on the Run: A Study of Runaways (Beacon Press, 1973) with classmate Richard Bock ’71. English and Bock interviewed 60 runaways and 75 adults whose lives they had touched (including parents and counselors), and a two-part study ensued. Part one tells the story of 12 kids, and part two takes a close look at the institutions that failed these adolescents, whether families, schools, or the law. English has tried to understand such failures over the course of her ensuing career.

One of the book’s first narratives, involving a girl the authors call Nancy, throws into stark relief the system’s failure with runaways. Nancy would not return home for fear that she’d be locked up, and scoffed at English and Bock’s offer of legal advice. “In retrospect, after several months of hearing about kids’ experiences with the law and finding out just what ‘rights’
juveniles have, we realize why our offer of ‘legal advice’ was of no help to Nancy,” they write. “Her basic fear did not come from any misunderstanding of the law. She understood all too well what would happen to her.”

Laying down the Law
After Harvard–Radcliffe, English headed west, matriculating at Boalt Hall, the UC Berkeley School of Law. “I went with the intention of working in children’s rights and social justice, which wasn’t a common path in law school in those days,” she says.

Fortunately, Robert H. Mnookin ’64, LLB ’68 was beginning to put together a casebook on children and the law—laying down children’s law, so to speak. English joined Mnookin, now the Williston Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, director of the Harvard Negotiation Research Project, and chair of the Program on Negotiation’s steering committee, as a research assistant. After taking every course on offer related to children, families, education, or social welfare, she found her ideal position 11 months after graduation at what is now the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL), in San Francisco. Her first client was a teen, referred by Mnookin, looking to address the damage done to him in foster care.

Focusing on Adolescent Health
By the late 1970s, after meeting a few San Francisco Bay Area physicians who were early leaders in adolescent health, English became involved in the legal issues faced by their teenaged patients. “Some of the central issues had to do with consent and confidentiality,” she says. “But also with financial access—those physicians were often taking care of low-income adolescents, a vulnerable group for whom I felt similarly compelled to advocate.”

During her two decades at NCYL, English became increasingly interested in the legal and constitutional aspects of reproductive health care for young people. This led to her involvement in several precedent-setting cases on the reproductive health care rights of adolescents.

Ultimately, her interests led to a major personal and career move. “I thought it would be worthwhile to have a center focused entirely on the legal issues in adolescent health,” she says. “So I founded this very small but ambitious non-profit organization.”

English’s matter-of-fact statement belies a much larger risk. She moved across the country, to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to realize her dream of bringing the Center for Adolescent Health & the Law (CAHL) into being. The center opened in 1999. “Our mission is to support laws and policies that promote the health of adolescents and their access to comprehensive health care,” says English—by which she means the full spectrum of preventive, sexual, and mental health services.

A New Fight
On New Year’s Eve 2008, a new fight chose English: In that day’s New York Times, Nicholas D. Kristof ’82 published an op-ed disturbingly titled “The Evil Behind the Smiles,” which detailed the ugly underbelly of sexual tourism in Cambodia. English had a strong reaction to the story of Sina Vann—kidnapped at the age of 13, drugged, sold to a Western stranger for her virginity, and then raped and tortured. “My heart sped up, my palms got sweaty, the hair stood up on the back of my neck—I wanted to throw up,” she recalls. “This was vulnerability in a different universe, an assault on humanity of an entirely different order of magnitude.” By the time Kristof followed with “If This Isn’t Slavery, What Is?” three days later, English had resolved to do something transformational about this victimization—but what?

Since that cold winter day, English has immersed herself in the problem. Now she sees sexual exploitation and trafficking as an extension of the everyday abuse, neglect, injustice, and devaluation that children and adolescents experience.

BRINGING THE ARTS INTO HER PRACTICE
Drawing and poetry temper the sting

A firm believer in the power of art to put serious issues in sharp relief, Abigail English has experimented with poetry and drawing. Here is a poem she wrote after a visit five years ago to Las Vegas for an adolescent health conference—“which left me reeling from the sexualized environment and its effect on young people,” she says. The drawing above, Lost, complements the poem.

WHAT TERROR TENDERS
It’s alien, the land I’ve landed in—
slot machines, vertebrate, grasping for coins,
airport oddities astonishing as I stare,
already shrunk from lights.

MGM and Mandalay Bay, arrayed
and energy-lit by day, and night,
arise from a beckoning desert,
behemoths in their unearthly glitter.

“Vegas,” in truth, is neither fair nor lucky—
lose your shirt or win a fortune, here
everything is proffered on a dare ...
and I, a meeting-goer, only here by chance.

The youngest women strut and gallivant,
their strappy sandals and spaghetti straps
of sensuality on offer—with them
I walk the “streets” of fantasy hotels.

Their is a false, if amorous, bravado:
I hear them saying, once again,
we chose to do it so it’s not assault,
when really they were forced.

So who could possibly believe them?
too young, too psyched, and much too drugged,
these are the women-children who will learn
too soon the pain that glamour masks.

I’ve studied them of course, yet never
really seen them, nor walked in searing
footprints of the desert’s torn and left behind,
with whom I am both one, and other.

“LVNV” itself suggests what terror tenders
—bizarre and cruel mirage of purchased love—
often envied, never real, where gamers play
with shadowy instincts devouring our young.

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Photograph by Kathleen Dooher
English sees sexual exploitation and trafficking as an extension of the everyday abuse, neglect, injustice, and devaluation experienced by children and adolescents.
**The Path Ahead**

English has conducted research on law, human rights, health, and the arts with help from two undergraduate Radcliffe Research Partners, Sophie LeGros '12 and Emma Wang '12. “The resources available through the libraries here have been extraordinarily helpful in getting up to speed on multiple aspects of this hydra-headed problem,” says English.

The main thrust of her sexual exploitation and trafficking work from here forward will be to make it difficult, if not impossible, for the lay and professional public to ignore the problem.

Initially, English will develop recommendations about health, law, and human rights—outlining what lawyers, physicians, and other health care professionals can do. She’ll reach these professionals through written reports and articles, conferences, and Web sites, with information and tools to help them tackle the problem by working to improve and implement beneficial treaties, laws, and policies. Her familiarity with the US legal system means that she’ll start with US policy and work out from there.

She will also write a book to reach the broader public. Because denial appears to be at the heart of the tragedy, she will focus on increasing awareness so that others can become inspired to enact their own brand of change. Not a mother herself, she feels this idea will be her primary generative legacy. She’s keenly aware that money is central to the problem; current economic concerns could push the sexual exploitation of adolescents out of public view and sideline possible solutions.

“Young people don’t just stop in their tracks and wait for the economy to recover or solutions to be found,” English explains. “Those who are teenagers now are going to suffer, and that’s unconscionable.”

English has turned to art—her own and others’—to process this uneasy knowledge. She is working on a collection of drawings and poetry—now more than halfway complete—that chronicle her emotional reactions to the suffering of sexual exploitation, trafficking, and abuse. She employed a muse this year for inspiration to make sure she accomplishes her goal, but she’s not saying whether her muse is human or something out of her mythic South.

**Then and Now**

Asked to reflect on her personal and career path since she graduated from Radcliffe, English is thoughtful. “In a powerful way, I feel that I’ve come full circle,” she says. “A lot of the issues I thought about then, I’m thinking about now—although at a more intense, troubling, and challenging level.”

She recalls the optimism of that time, and the sense that there was no limit to what she could achieve for the rights of children.

Today, achieving justice for the “left out, left alone, and left behind” feels positively Sisyphean to her. “I have no less sense of commitment, no less strong intention to pursue ways of protecting young people's rights—but it feels like it’s more difficult now,” English says. “I might have been naive, but I truly thought it would get easier, not harder.”

It may yet get easier, in no small part owing to her efforts: In late April, English spoke to students at the College in a class titled Human Trafficking—the first time such a class has been offered to undergraduates at Harvard. She says she felt honored to be part of this groundbreaking event, even in a small way. Earlier in the year, she spoke to the adolescent medicine trainees at Boston Children’s Hospital, a forum full of responsive young physicians. Could she have inspired the romantic revolutionaries of the future? ✽

**INVALUABLE EXCHANGE**

During her fellowship year, English met with ORLANDO H. L. PATTerson ’71, the John Cowles Professor of Sociology, who is teaching the first course on human trafficking ever offered to undergraduates at Harvard. JACQUELINE BHABHA was also an invaluable resource—as were all her associated organizations: Bhabha is the Jeremiah Smith Jr. Lecturer in Law at Harvard Law School, director of research at the François Bagourd Xavier Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard, lecturer on public policy at Harvard Kennedy School, member of the faculty at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, and the University advisor on human rights education to the provost of Harvard University. AMBASSADOR SWANEE HUNT, Eleanor Roosevelt Lecturer in Public Policy at the Kennedy School and senior advisor to the Carr Center on Human Rights, provided inspiration as well. In December, the Carr Center even cosponsored “Human Rights and Sex Trafficking: A Film Forum,” which screened 12 documentaries—and which English found extraordinarily moving on a personal level, citing the forum’s tag line: “Film reaches the soul and creates lasting empathy.”

English’s fellow fellows provided much food for thought; she found kindred spirits in two in particular: ANN JONES RI ’11 and NICK TURSE RI ’11. “They’ve both been working on very troubling subjects that involve issues the public doesn’t want to think about—but should think about,” she says. “So they have a special understanding of how challenging it is to take this kind of material and present it to the world.”

Ann Jones has written extensively about violence against women and is working on a book about the domestic costs of America’s wars abroad, titled “When War Comes Home.” Nick Turse—an award-winning journalist, historian, and essayist—is compiling a history of US war crimes and Vietnamese civilian suffering during the Vietnam War.
IN AUGUST OF 1975, *Ms.* magazine published a one-page story called “Organizing to Organize.” It introduced several groups just forming in behalf of working women, who in those days earned an average of 57 cents for every dollar a man made. One of those groups was 9 to 5, a Boston organization that was founded in 1972. These few lines of national exposure unleashed a gush of letters from around the country—from Kansas and California and Louisiana and New York.

You can find those letters in Folder 614, Carton 11, of the 9 to 5 collection at Radcliffe’s Schlesinger Library. They summarize the tone of an age, when women were just beginning to grasp the ideas of second-wave feminism and to apply its message of gender equality to the workplace. And the letters are just a sliver of the library’s growing collections on working women—one facet of a vast women’s history collection that already draws scholars and others to many corners of history.

But collections on women at work offer something special, says Nancy F. Cott, the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the library and the Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History at Harvard. They offer a look at women whose lives are reflected in few historical collections. “Women of higher classes have generally better documented their lives,” she says. “These records give us a great level of insight into the lives of working women.”

**Consider the Salutations**

Some of that insight is subtle and surprising. In the letters from Folder 614, for example, the salutations alone are fascinating—a sign that second-wave feminism had not yet put its stamp on everyone. For
example, many of the letters are addressed to “Gentlemen,” or even “Dear Sirs.” At least one waffle (“Dear Sir or Madame”), while still others get right to the point with “Dear Sisters,” and end with “Yours in the struggle!” A few other 1974 salutations foreshadow a postmodern neutrality that often prevails in today’s cooler chapter of the gender wars. They begin, “Dear Persons.”

Time to Organize
A portion of the letters reveal more than a request for information. A single mother from New Orleans wrote that it was about time working women organized: She was making $6,040 a year for working 62 hours a week at two jobs. A Kansas correspondent feared that the women in her office would think she was a traitor for posting the Ms. story, and the men would call her an ingrate. “It is going to take a lot of nerve on my part to get things straightened out,” she wrote, “but I am ready!”

Many women were ready to straighten things out. Carton 11 contains numerous other folders—leaflets, fact sheets, and notes from campaigns (9 to 5 took on Boston banks and insurance companies), conventions, and general meetings. They are proof of the grinding, word-heavy work of organizing something so big (there were 250,000 pink-collar workers in Boston). But the thing-ness of the archive holds the interest of anyone used to the age of e-mail and the Internet. There are letters here, and manuscripts—wri-
kled, folded, colored, inked, penciled, and typed.

Thrilled in the Archives
“It’s a visceral experience,” says Harvard historian Karen Flood, who taught a course during the spring semester on gender and work. “You are looking at the actual paper they wrote on.” She and her class visited the Schlesinger to look at folders from the 9 to 5 collection—an experience that was tactile, intellectual, and even thrilling. “It puts them in the role of being a researcher,” says Flood, a lecturer in studies of women, gender, and sexuality, “and the excitement of discovery that involves.”

The epiphanic rush of archival work is something most historians share. “If I could bring a sleeping bag, I would live there,” says Katherine Tuck about the Schlesinger. The sixth-year history PhD student at the University of Chicago made four extended visits to pore over the 9 to 5 collection, and used what she gleaned in her dissertation on women in the workplace. (She graduated this year.) One of Tuck’s more lighthearted discoveries was some 9 to 5 nominations forms for the most-sexist boss.

There are other oddi-
ties of the age in the 9 to 5 collection (which now includes a newly accessioned Milwaukee-chapter version): photographs, contact sheets, and even negatives—pictures of long-ago street-corner leafletting, crowded meetings, group shots, and parties. One big, dog-eared print shows 9 to 5 organizers on a Chicago television set, being interviewed by a very young Phil Donahue.

The 9 to 5 collection is just one example of what the Schlesinger and its women-at-work collections offer: the only kind of time travel we have. But why not take a day trip to dial the years back? You don’t have to be a scholar or even a student. Look over a finding aid (the box-by-box description of a collection that archivists write), order it online, and then settle into the sunny, high-ceilinged reading room at the Schlesinger. Someone will trundle a cart stacked with cartons and flip-top archival boxes up to your table.

**A Country Visit to Fernside**

Dial back to 1946. You’ll see four young women in sailor costumes, saluting the camera. They’re on vacation at Fernside, a vacation spot in an old Federal-style mansion on Mountain Road in Princeton, Massachusetts, where, starting in 1889, young working women enjoyed weeklong vacations away from the city. (It was part of the Girls’ Vacation House Association.) In 1910, room and board for a week was $4; by 1924, it was all of $7. When the four smiling sailors were at Fernside, the cost was $15 a week—enough that a secretary, teller, or milliner had to save. But it was little enough to make respite possible.

**Anita Diamant’s Working-Class Heroines**

Or dial back to 1915. That’s what novelist Anita Diamant is doing. Her next book will follow several working-class Boston women from that year until 1930 or so. Her inspiration, in part, is the Schlesinger’s Rockport Lodge collection—boxes and files relating to a beach-side version of Fernside, the vacation house of the Massachusetts Association of Women Workers. Starting in 1906, working women in their teens and 20s could break out of the city for a week, sleep in their own beds, eat three meals a day, swim, hike, sail, and otherwise leave woe behind.

An archived *Boston Globe* story from 1928 included the best news right in the headline: “It costs only $10 a week for vacation.” Or maybe the very best news came later in the story—and hinted at the joy women were finding in their own company. “It is a manless world that the visitor at Rockport Lodge finds herself” the reporter wrote. “And she doesn’t care much either.”

Some of the Rockport Lodge records are in the papers of Marion H. Niles, acquired by the Schlesinger in 1960 and covering the years 1911 to 1946. The language of Niles’s discreet and tender fundraising letters drew Diamant’s novelist ear. The papers also illustrate the cross-class relationships that these vacation homes promoted in a proto-feminist era.

At both Fernside and Rockport Lodge, a nascent feminism is detectable, but more prominently on display is an innocence that now seems wrapped in the gauze of time. In Box 1 of the Fernside papers (MC 673), you will find copies of the handwritten (and sometimes typed) *Fernside Log*. There are jokes (“I left my watch upstairs today and it ran down”) and a Lost and Found column (“Found: Several healthy appetites”). The photographs, many of them from albums, reveal the same quaint innocence: outdoor shots of women in costume (vacationers staged plays at Fernside), women gathered on the grass in long skirts, radiant girls with arms draped around one another. Later pictures, from 1961, show the elderly veterans of these good days gone by gathered on the same porches they filled as smiling girls.

Diamant is using the Rockport Lodge collection to scout for language that will evoke the period. Girls had their seasonal affectations, she has noticed—“Cheerio” being one for a summer or two as World War I got under way. But the pictures are the most inspiring, she says; fashion changed so radically in just 15 years following 1915. “The change was liberating and profound,” says Diamant. Clothing was an outward sign of women’s being freed—in this case from the bonds of corsets and long dresses that impeded movement. “Once it went up,” she said of the leg-freeing hemline, “it never went down again.” Diamant, who lives in Newton, Massachusetts, writes historical fiction, a genre for which the Schlesinger’s collections come in handy. (She used Harvard collections to research her best-known book, *The Red Tent*, which retells the Old Testament story of Dinah.)

**Organizing at Harvard in ’74**

The Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) started as a gathering of workers, largely women, on the campus of Harvard Medical School in 1974. It took the group 14 years to get certified as a union. The struggle is chronicled in an HUCTW archive at the Schlesinger that has only recently become available to researchers. (One picture might say it all, though. It shows an early gathering of grinning, casual protesters in front of University Hall. Their banner reads, “We can’t eat prestige.”)

Karen Flood, for one, is eager to look more closely at the HUCTW archive as another way of introducing students to the thrill of primary documents. Without collections like that, she says, even the ‘70s “can seem like a long time ago.”

Corydon Ireland is a staff writer on the Harvard Gazette.

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Rockport Lodge, below, the vacation house of the Massachusetts Association of Women Workers, partly inspired an upcoming novel by Anita Diamant, above.
The Rise of Feminism

Christine Stansell's long-awaited chronicle of American women's history, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to the Present*, more than fulfills its pledge to demonstrate that "feminism is one of the great and substantial democratic movements, a tradition of thought and action spanning more than 200 years." In some ways Stansell's story is familiar. She marks the beginnings of the movement in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, a work inspired by arguments for the natural rights of man made in both the American and French Revolutions.

If feminism began in Europe, however, it took off in the United States, where "channels for popular politics" were more direct and plentiful, even if women didn't have the vote. Swept up in, and then separating from, abolitionist fervor, women found ways to be heard and, soon, to organize behind the cause of women's suffrage. Despite contention within the ranks and resistance from without, the 19th Amendment passed, only to have the larger cause of women's professional and personal enfranchisement slumber for decades—until Betty Friedan's 1963 wake-up call and the rise of second-wave feminism, with its own successes and setbacks, brought us today's ethos of "global feminism."

Too many readers don't know this history, and Stansell tells it more compellingly, more completely, than any other writer to date, often marking progress in unexpected ways. "One of the great achievements of feminism," she writes, "has been simply to compile a substantial body of truth about women's lives"—no mean feat, given the difficult task of documenting women's customarily domestic sphere.

Stansell writes with passion, echoing the "wild wishes" of early leaders like Wollstonecraft and Margaret Fuller. Explaining the unexpected popularity of Fuller's 1845 treatise on woman's social status, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, Stansell writes that Fuller "invited American women to take up a role in a magnificent historical narrative." Stansell does the same. Always frank and clear-eyed, she considers the question of whether abolitionist-turned-suffragist Sarah Grimke ever read Wollstonecraft and offers the appealing notion that the controversial book, "like other important feminist works since (Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, for instance)," may have "seemed more hospitable with its cover closed, evoking some undefined mental place where the key words of the title—*Women*—*Rights*—*Vindication*—signaled the need for change without having to get there by trudging through the text." *The Feminist Promise*, by contrast, is a book to delight in; one we all must open and read.

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**Pitch Uncertain:**
A Mid-Century Middle Daughter Finds Her Voice
by Maisie Houghton '62

Cambridge 02138 was a different place for a teenage girl in the 1950s. In fact, it wasn't even 02138 then—merely 38. The Cambridge that Maisie Kinnicut Houghton experienced as the middle of three sisters born during World War II to a charismatic Harvard administrator and his New York society bride was insular and confined, smaller in more ways than just postal codes. The benign neglect of her mismatched parents didn't help: "Their unhappiness cast me into a kind of mild imprisonment of yearning and tension," Houghton writes.

But Maisie was the sort of child who could absorb the best of her parents' quirky wisdom and turn it to her own purposes: make a habit of looking at pictures in museums, always have a book to rescue you wherever you are. And from her flighty father, this advice scrawled on a postcard when she finally left home for boarding school: "Have fun—be curious & then come home." The habit of seeing, a knowledge of literature's saving grace, curiosity, and abiding affection for her troubling family drive this quiet memoir of a dutiful yet restless daughter who indeed has found her voice as a writer.

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**Binocular Vision: New & Selected Short Stories**
by Edith Pearlman '57

"Before you came here—what did you do?" Mrs. Levenger asked during Sonya's first month in London.

"Books."

"Wrote?"

"Kept."

This is the kind of succinct, surprising, and succulent dialogue a reader is likely to encounter in any of the 34 tales collected in Edith Pearlman's *Binocular
Pearlman’s stories are the literary equivalent of heirloom tomatoes or artisanal cheeses.

Vision: New & Selected Stories, a compilation of work painstakingly crafted over many years—the literary equivalent of heirloom tomatoes or artisanal cheeses. We feel fortunate to be offered them, intensely satisfied upon consumption. As novelist Ann Patchett BI ’94 writes in a glowing introduction to the volume: “Put her stories beside those of John Updike and Alice Munro. That’s where they belong.”

In “If Love Were All,” Sonya, the former bookseller, begins to run into her upstairs neighbor, a German-Jewish refugee in war-torn London, on the street, at the news kiosk, at the greengrocer, “as if the clock previously governing their lives had been exchanged for a different timepiece.” To be governed by a brief interval by the “different timepiece” that keeps each one of Pearlman’s stories ticking is an experience no lover of short fiction should miss.

Gal Mazur’s Figures in a Landscape adds 30 significant new poems to a body of work that has received increasing recognition during the past decade, reinforcing Mazur’s place among the generation of poets she cultivated as founder of the Blacksmith House Poetry Center in Cambridge and as heir to a New England verse tradition that stretches back to Emily Dickinson and takes in Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop.

Alternately intimate and eloquent, confiding and exhorting, Mazur’s lyrics are always readable, always telling us something we would like to—need to—know. Slyly, she addresses one poem, “Dear Migraine,” to “the little death I will not stop for.” In another, “Wedding Album,” she points to “the mystery of art, of love, we can almost touch it.” The concluding lines of “Shipwreck,” inspired by a winter scene at Wellfleet in 2008, ask: “aren’t you also a singular secret/Nature burped up, hurled flailing into the air from the start/hungry for light, holding onto whatever buoyos you, alive, kicking, even when you know you’re going down?” Ever alert to “the dream-mind’s willful concoctions” and the waking mind’s vulnerability to loss, Mazur nevertheless offers the enduring hope of art: “Someday this sorrow may take another form.”

Billie Jean King had Zelig’s capacity to pop up as a lead player in many of the key mass-culture dramas of the 1970s and ’80s, episodes that paved the way for a 21st-century era of freedoms and opportunities she could barely have imagined while growing up as Billie Jean Moffitt in Long Beach, California, in the 1940s and ’50s. From her much-celebrated triumph in “The Battle of the Sexes”—the 1973 tennis match in which she vanquished Bobby Riggs in straight sets—to the public relations war touched off by the 1981 “galimony” suit filed by her ex-lover Marilyn Barnett, Billie Jean proved herself a winner on or in every kind of court she entered, not least the court of public opinion.

Veteran biographer Susan Ware, editor of the final volume of Notable American Women and author of the innovative Still Missing: Amelia Earhart and the Search for Modern Feminism, is the perfect writer to deconstruct—and reconstruct—these vivid scenes, the fractious times that provoked them, and the always appealing yet frequently enigmatic heroine King herself, whose mantra, “Pressure is a privilege,” never let her down. Interspersing historical chapters with biographical ones, Ware provides here an encyclopedic but always readable account of American women’s progress during the second half of the twentieth century through the lens of sport.

Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women’s Sports by Susan Ware AM ’73, PhD ’78 University of North Carolina Press, 296 pp.


Robin Fleming’s Britain After Rome: The Fall and Rise, 400–1070 covers the longest span of years in the Penguin History of Britain series: more than six centuries. The Dark Ages in popular imagination, these sparsely documented times have long challenged historians, especially those concerned with re-creating the “lived experience” of the anonymous people who populated them. But Fleming is among a crew of innovative historians who have crossed disciplinary lines, using archaeological evidence to sketch a “profoundly transformative” picture of Britain’s Middle Ages.

This new archaeology, Fleming writes, is “often eloquent, even moving,” and so is her narrative. Life for humans was “dire”: one of two babies survived to age 18, 9 of 10 baby girls were dead at 35, and most first-time mothers, at 17 or 18 years old, were themselves already motherless. Yet we learn that infant skeletons were nowhere to be found in cemeteries before the fifth century; their sudden appearance reflects a “sea change in attitudes towards babies, towards burial and perhaps even towards the very notion of what made a person a person.”
Shankar Raman

Shankar Raman RI ’11 is an associate professor on the literature faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but he has a background in the sciences, having earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in electrical engineering. Now he is combining his past and present, exploring early modern geometry, algebra, calculus, and probability as they relate to imaginative literature in 16th- and 17th-century Europe—for example, what Hamlet has to do with decision theory and probabilistic reasoning. Here, the Beatrice Shepherd Blane Fellow takes a few moments away from his project, “Before the Two Cultures: Literature and Mathematics in Early Modern Europe,” to explore a different subject: himself.

Aspiring to Master the Art of Losing

Which aspect of your work do you most enjoy? The moment when a text becomes a resonance chamber, each phrase and word triggering a series of echoes through the work.

Who are your heroes? I think I am more of Tina Turner’s school: We don’t need another hero.

Which trait do you most admire in yourself? Something like a structural intelligence—the ability often (or at least sometimes) to see the conceptual skeleton of whatever I am reading or listening to.

Who is your muse? Whoever I put on my turntable as I begin to write: sometimes the Rolling Stones, sometimes Bonobo. It keeps changing, depending on what I’m working on and what my mood is.

Tell us your favorite memory. An image or a memory, I’m no longer sure which: sitting on my grandmother’s tummy as she read Bengali children’s stories to me.

Describe yourself in six words or fewer. Energetic, impatient, perceptive, abstract, sociable, cosmic.

What is your most treasured possession? It’s hard to say, since I aspire (with only partial success) to master the art of losing. But, to name one, my cappuccino machine.

What inspires you? Intelligence combined with honesty.

Name a pet peeve. People not turning the lights off when they leave a room.

If your life became a motion picture, who would portray you? Tilda Swinton and Roshan Seth rolled into one.

Where in the world would you like to spend a month? Machu Picchu and the Amazon Basin.

What is your greatest triumph so far? Having been able to do what I want to do since the age of 17 or 18, while staying close to my friends and larger family and not burdening my parents financially.

Whose tunes do you enjoy? They change: at present, perhaps Gomez’s “78 Stone Wobble” (from their first album), Nick Drake’s “One of These Things First” and “Free Ride,” The Grateful Dead’s live renditions of “Scarlet Begonias” and “Fire on the Mountain.” And I’m always listening to Dylan and the Beatles.

What is your fantasy career? I would have loved to be truly musical, to have been able to play an instrument—perhaps the saxophone—with skill and grace.

What is the most challenging aspect of being a Radcliffe fellow? Justifying to myself the kind of work I do, surrounded as I am by people whose labors have a far more immediate, direct impact on the lives of others than mine probably ever will.

You have a background in science and engineering. What made you switch gears to pursue a PhD and a career in literature? Loving literature was, of course, a part of it. But what gradually became decisive was the growing conviction that I was likelier to do something original in the field of literary studies than in the scientific domains I also really enjoyed, quantum and statistical mechanics.
HOW IS MOTHERHOOD—as an identity and an ideology—manufactured?

Irene Lusztig, 2010–2011 David and Roberta Logie Fellow and Radcliffe-Harvard Film Study Center Fellow, is using how-to manuals and educational films on childbirth and child care to explore our changing values around ideal motherhood and birth practices.

With her fellowship project—The Motherhood Archives, an experimental documentary film paired with a participatory Web project—Lusztig simultaneously examines motherhood in the 20th century and creates an onscreen space where women describe their experiences learning to be mothers.

Working across old and new moving-image technologies, Lusztig is on her way to deconstructing modern motherhood.

“In my work, I’m interested in mining old images for new meanings as a way to explore how private experience is shaped by—and resists—official ideologies,” she says. “I hope my project can offer a unique space for thinking about motherhood in a way that is complicated, open-ended, and historically grounded.”
The Radcliffe College Archives—including photographs of students from the 1870s to the 1990s—are currently being digitized so that alumnae throughout the world can view them. A gift from the Radcliffe College Class of 1954 has funded the digitization of many College publications.

Now Online
Explore the history of Radcliffe College at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America.

To read past issues of the Radcliffe Quarterly online, visit http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/23062648.