The 2009-2010 academic year was an extremely successful one for the Society of Fellows. In addition to the Society’s regular bi-weekly meetings, the Weissbourd Co-Chairs, Andrew Dilts and Jennifer Palmer, organized a new series of events under the umbrella title, “Peculiar Institutions: Borders, Boundaries, Identities and Genres.” Inaugurated with a symposium in Fall 2009, the series included text seminars throughout the year with Chicago-area artists and scholars and culminated in a 2-day conference in April with a keynote address by Amy Kaminsky (University of Minnesota) and wide participation by both junior and senior fellows. Complete conference information is available in the Weissbourd Conference Annual Report as well as at: 
http://societyoffellows.uchicago.edu/peculiar_institutions.html

We are pleased to bring you, on page seven of this newsletter, “Report from Haiti,” a glimpse into the research of current junior fellow, Greg Beckett. Greg’s 2008 dissertation, “The End of Haiti: History Under Conditions of Impossibility,” is an ethnographic and historical analysis of the constellation of environmental, urban, and political crises in Port-au-Prince. In addition to his academic research, Greg has worked for several years with Haitian and American environmentalists to develop and promote a forest preserve (now a national park) in Haiti. He is currently working on a book manuscript entitled Another Haiti: Crisis and Renewal. Earlier this spring, Greg returned to Port-au-Prince for the first time after the devastating January 12th earthquake. Included here are images and a brief text about the situation in Martissant, a large slum or “popular quarter” in Haiti’s capital city.

Publications & Activities of Current and Recent Fellows

NATHAN BAUER

GREG BECKETT

ANITA CHARI
Hired at the University of Oregon as Assistant Professor of Political Theory—position begins September 2011.

"Toward a Political Critique of Reification," Philosophy and Social Criticism (June 2010).

Cast in the role of the "Third Lady" for the Bay Area Summer Opera Theater Institute's 2010 production of "The Magic Flute" by Mozart. Will also appear in staged scenes from Carmen, L'Italiana in Algeri, and La Clemenza de Tito.

ANDREW DILTS
"Incurable Blackness: Collateral Consequences to Incarceration and Mental Disability" in Social Text (forthcoming in 2010).


DORIT GEVA


JUDITH GOLDMAN
Awarded a fellowship for an artist residency at the Millay Colony in Austerlitz, NY.

Guest lecturer at the Iowa Writer’s Workshop where her book, Death Star/Rico-chet, was being taught.

"l.b.; or, catenaries" (San Francisco, CA (Krupskaya, 2010) Forthcoming.

DINA GUSEJNOVA

Geoff Oppenheimer
Public Sculptures (edit), 2009-2010, detail

Public Sculptures (edit), 2009-2010 is a series of eight slip cast ceramic microphones on stands, recalling those typically found in press conferences and on speaker podiums. By casting the microphones in ceramic they become formally elegant, but ultimately un-functional, underscoring the finely crafted, but ultimately fragile, conditions that now surround public discourse.
DINA GUSEJNOVA

AARON JOHNSON


SPENCER LEONARD
Presentation of “Marx, India, and the ‘Non-Historical Peoples’” at the Left Forum in New York.

Presentation of “Marx’s Views on Empire in the Age of Bonapartism” at the Historical Materialism Conference in Toronto.

Presentation of “C. Wright Mills, Theodor Adorno and the Militant Turn of the Late Sixties New Left” at the Platypus Convention in Chicago.

TIMOTHY MICHAEL
Presentation of “The Coleridge-Johnson Agon” for the Coleridge Summer Conference in Cannington.

Presentation of “Wordsworth’s Boswellian Life(-Writing)” for the Wordsworth Summer Conference in Grasmere.

GEOF OPPEMEIER
Biannual Exhibition, LAX><ART, Los Angeles, CA

Objects of Civil Society, Publication Project, The Point Magazine (forward by Craig Carson).

Artist Project Grant, Illinois Arts Council


JENNIFER PALMER
The Edouard Morot-Sir Fellowship from the Institut Français d’Amérique.

The Society for French Historical Studies/Western Society for French History Travel and Research Grant.

The Robert R. Palmer Travel Research Award, from the American Society for 18th Century Studies.

CHRISTOPHER WARREN
Incoming Junior Fellows

This year’s search for new Harper and Schmidt Fellows drew the largest number of applications in the history of the Society of Fellows. There were over 1500 applications total: 1000 candidates for Humanities, 420 candidates for Social Sciences and 160 candidates for European Civilizations. The hard work of the search committees resulted in the hire of 5 new fellows in the Humanities and 3 new fellows in the Social Sciences.

NICOLAS GASKILL  Humanities

Nicholas Gaskill received his Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2010. His dissertation, “Vibrant Environments: The Feel of Color from the White Whale to the Red Wheelbarrow,” examines the proliferation of color theories and technologies that radically altered the visual landscape of the U.S. at the turn of the twentieth century and argues that writers engaged modern discourses of color to investigate the subtle and often unconscious ways in which we interact with our surroundings. He contends that these literary experiments not only dramatized late-nineteenth-century concerns with how individual subjects emerge from their cultural environments but also fashioned an aesthetic style attuned to the sensory effects of language that opened the door to American modernism. Alongside nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century U.S. literature and culture, Nicholas’s wider interests include pragmatism, the history of science and technology, and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze; in addition to revising his dissertation for publication, he is also writing a series of essays on the concept of experience in the history of literary criticism.

MARKUS HARDTMANN  Humanities

Markus Hardtmann received his Ph.D. in German Literature and Critical Thought from Northwestern University. His dissertation, “Placeholders: Robert Musil’s Logic of Literature,” explores the ways in which Musil’s writing, in its very conception of literature, responds to contemporaneous debates surrounding the foundations of mathematics. Recasting well-known passages in The Man without Qualities in light of various texts in logic and mathematics, including path-breaking works by Cantor and Husserl, Frege and Russell, and Peano and Dedekind, the dissertation circumscribes the singular, and therefore exemplary, place Musil occupies within modernity. Plans for future research include an article on the digital photographer Andreas Gursky and an extended essay on the politics of mediacy in the thought of Friedrich Kittler, Niklas Luhmann and Peter Sloterdijk.

STEFAN KLUSEMAN  Social Sciences

Stefan received his PhD in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. Before coming to the US, Stefan studied sociology, law, and economics at the Free University of Berlin. He works on sociological theory, violence, armed groups, and historical sociology of political and cultural change. His dissertation “After State-Breakdown: Dynamics of Multi-Party conflict, violence, and paramilitary mobilization in Japan 1853-1877, Russia 1904-1920, and Germany 1918-1934 — A relational, micro-sociological approach” presents a micro-theory of the dynamics and patterns of power struggles during revolutionary state breakdown. It shows that revolutionary conflict is driven and shaped by micro-situational, emotional dynamics. Stefan’s approach advances the literature on social movements and contentious politics plus state-breakdown theory by combining it with Durkheimian sociology of emotions. In a separate research project, Stefan has spelled out a micro-sociological theory of civil war atrocities. He shows that local emotional dynamics flowing over time are crucial to explain where and when atrocities do or do not occur and which forms they take on the micro-level; part of this work has been published in ‘Sociological Forum’. His research at the University of Chicago will continue and extend his work in the field of paramilitary organizations and violence, moving towards a macro-historical comparative ‘Sociology of Paramilitaries’.

Lauren Montanaro is a political theorist who is working on democratic theory in the area of non-electoral representation. Her research focuses on two broad and related questions. How might democratic representation develop outside of electoral institutions, not only within established democracies, but also in those places where representative democracy is underdeveloped or entirely absent, including the global arena? And how should we theorize and normatively assess various forms of non-electoral representation? Her dissertation on “The Democratic Legitimacy of ‘Self-Appointed’ Representatives” considers representatives who might credibly claim democratic credentials, though not as a consequence of formal elections. Laura is currently revising her dissertation for publication as a monograph, as well as preparing articles on the constitutive effects of representation, and the legitimacy of citizen representatives. Laura received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of British Columbia in 2010.

BENJAMIN McKEAN  Social Sciences

Benjamin McKean is a political theorist whose dissertation seeks to understand what the obligation to achieve global justice requires of individuals. In part by demonstrating the surprising extent to which John Rawls’s theory of justice relies on elements of Hegel at key junctures, the project shows how citizens must shape their own dispositions in order for political society to function fairly. The dissertation then develops a criterion of solidarity to help individuals understand their political obligations in a social world that forces them to cooperate internationally with others whom shared institutions and practices fail to treat as free and equal. In doing so, the project also advances a methodology for better linking ideal and non-ideal theory. His other research projects include work on questions of theory and practice, the relationship between aesthetics and power, and the attitudes of resentment and friendship in democracies. He expects to receive his PhD from the Princeton University Department of Politics this summer.
LAUREN SILVERS  Humanities
Lauren Silvers received her Ph.D. from The University of Chicago in Comparative Literature in 2010. Her areas of specialization are nineteenth-century French poetry and the history of science and psychology. Her work focuses on revising the ideas of modernity that typically inform literary studies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her dissertation, “Psychological Subjectivity and the Aesthetics of Reading in the Symbolist Literary Era (1880-1905) examines the psycho-physiological underpinnings of French poets’ and hypnotists’ ideas about language and argues for their mutual influence in the emergence of literary modernism. In charting a shift in fin-de-siècle literary production from a poetics of communication to an aesthetics of communicability, this study offers an alternative account of literary modernity—not as voicing the traumas of urban experience, but as productive of knowledge and innovative ideas about the self, society, and the body. In addition to preparing her dissertation for publication, Lauren is currently working on several articles: one on physiological reading and performance at the fin-de-siècle, and another on the philosophy of habit in France and England in the nineteenth century. Lauren has taught for several years in the Media Aesthetics sequence of the College Core at the University of Chicago and has edited several books for fine artists to accompany exhibitions in New York. In her spare time she loves the state of Vermont from afar.

NEIL VERMA  Humanities
Neil Verma received his Ph.D. from the Committee on the History of Culture at the University of Chicago in 2008. He has taught a range of subjects including media aesthetics, film, art history, literature, and intellectual history. His current research explores the idea of interiority in classic American radio drama, and recent publications include an article on sound effects in the plays of Lucille Fletcher. His first book, Theater of the Mind: American Radio Plays, 1937-1955, is forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press. Some areas of ongoing research include: aesthetics and history; film noir and radio drama; the prose of James Agee; the rhetoric of the unforeseeable; and the role of mediation in the construction of intimacy.

AUDREY WASSER  Humanities
Audrey Wasser earned her doctorate in Comparative Literature at Cornell University in 2010. Her research focuses on French and English modernism, theories of the literary object, and continental philosophy. Tentatively titled “The Work of Difference: Form and Formation in Twentieth-Century Literature and Theory,” her book project traces the origin of modern and contemporary conceptions of literary form back to German Romanticism in order to examine some of their metaphysical assumptions. Drawing on the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Benedict de Spinoza, this book argues for a notion of form that departs from the unity of self-reflection as well as from the closure implied in literature’s supposed autonomy from other creative processes. Audrey’s writings and translations have appeared or are forthcoming in Angelaki, diacritics, and Modern Philology.

Outgoing Junior Fellows

CRAIG CARSON  Humanities 2007-2010
Assistant Professor of English
Adelphi University

Samantha Fenno  Humanities 2006-2010
Masters of Social Work Program
School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago; Lecturer, Humanities Collegiate Division, University of Chicago

SARAH GRAFF  Social Sciences 2006-2010
2010-2011 American Postdoctoral Fellowship from the American Association of University Women (AAUW); Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology
University of Chicago

AARON JOHNSON  Humanities 2007-2010
Assistant Professor in Classics and Humanities
Lee University

SHALINI SATKUNANANDAN  Social Sciences 2007-2010
Full-time Lecturer in Political Theory
Department of Political Science
University of California, Davis

NITZAN SHOSHAN  Social Sciences 2007-2010
Professor-Investigator
Centro de Estudios Sociológicos
Colegio de México

CHRISTOPHER WARREN  Humanities 2007-2010
Assistant Professor
English and Literary and Cultural Studies
Carnegie Mellon University

RICHARD WESTERMAN  Social Sciences 2006-2010
Lecturer
Social Sciences Collegiate Division
University of Chicago
Alumni Fellow News

MARK ANDERSON (Social Sciences 2001-2005)
Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, UC-Santa Cruz

Black and Indigenous: Garifuna Activism and Consumer Culture in Honduras (University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

STEPHEN ARATA (Humanities 1989-1990)
Mayo Distinguished Teaching Professor, Department of English University of Virginia


PAUL CHENEY (Social Sciences 2002-2006)
Assistant Professor of Modern European History, Department of History University of Chicago


GREG EGHIGIAN (Social Sciences 1993-1996)
Associate Professor, Modern History and Science, Technology, and Society, Department of History, Penn State University

Editor, From Madness to Mental Health: Psychiatric Disorder and Its Treatment in Western Civilization (Rutgers University Press, 2009).

DIANA FRID (Humanities 2003 - 2006)
Assistant Professor University of Illinois-Chicago School of Art and Design

"skylight and spectra," a site-specific installation / floor drawing made for the neues kunstforum in Cologne, Germany (2010). Accompanied by "Dianna Frid, skylight and spectra," an unpublished text written and presented by Sabine Muller at the opening of the eponymous exhibition.

MICHAEL GILLESPIE (Social Sciences 1981-1983)
Professor of Political Science and Philosophy & Director of the Duke Program in American Values and Institutions, Duke University


PETER MILLER (Social Sciences 1993-1996)
Dean and Chair of Academic Programs and Professor Bard Graduate Center

Editor, with Deborah Krohn, Dutch New York Between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick. (Yale University Press, 2009).

ETHAN PUTTERMAN (Social Sciences 1999-2002)
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science National University of Singapore

Rousseau, Law and the Sovereignty of the People (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

ANDREWS REATH (Humanities 1983-1985)
Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of California-Riverside


ELAINE THOMAS (Social Sciences 1998-2001)
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Bard College

"Islamic Headscarves in Public Schools: Explaining France’s Legal Restrictions” in Marc Ross, ed., Culture and Belonging: Symbolic Landscapes and Contested Identities in Divided Societies (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

Please keep us informed of your publications and other professional accomplishments. We will make every attempt to include this information in future Society of Fellows newsletters.
I have been studying Haiti for over a decade. My work there has been situated in the popular quarters, or what are often just called slums. These neighbourhoods symbolize how Port-au-Prince has developed over the past few decades -- in an unplanned, ad-hoc, chaotic fashion.

One such area, Martissant, was once a verdant suburb, well outside the capital city. It is now fully engulfed by urban sprawl. Beginning in the 1970s, thousands of migrants, seeking to escape the crushing poverty of the countryside, came to the area, where they squatted on state-owned land or on vacant private estates. Poor infrastructure, lack of enforcement of zoning or building codes, low-quality concrete and building materials, and the degradation of the local geography all combine to make living in this, and similar areas, a risky proposition. This extreme vulnerability is the key factor in determining the nature and extent of "unnatural" disasters, and it is no surprise that the popular quarters have sustained much of the damage, and loss of life, wrought by the January 12th earthquake.

But vulnerability and risk are terms that too often conceal the real historical relations involved. Residents of Martissant did not choose to take on these risks, or at least they made choices within severe constraints. Vulnerability is not something that just happens to people, nor is it a natural feature of a landscape, or a country. Martissant, like Port-au-Prince, or Haiti for that matter, is too often thought of as a place that is irreducibly crisis-prone. But the chronic crises that people experience in such areas are the outward effects of deep contradictions in a system that is global in scale and scope. The earthquake and its aftermath might be the most current occasion for suffering in Haiti, but it is hardly the cause.
Looking forward to 2010-2011

Schedule of Events 2010-2011

**Autumn 2010**
- Orientation: Friday, September 24
- Quarter begins: Monday, September 27
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, October 6
- Fall Reception: Friday, October 15
- Fall Symposium: Wednesday, October 13, 6-9pm
- SoF Meeting: Thursday, October 27
- Profession Workshop: Wednesday, October 20
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, November 3
- Text Seminar: TBD
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, November 17
- Holiday Party: TBD
- Quarter ends: Saturday, December 11

**Winter 2011**
- Quarter begins: Monday, January 3
- Junior Fellows Dinner: TBD
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, January 12
- Text Seminar: TBD
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, January 26
- Profession Workshop: Wednesday, February 2
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, February 9
- Text Seminar: TBD
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, February 23
- SoF Elections: February 28-March 4
- Text Seminar: TBD
- Quarter ends: Saturday, March 19

**Spring 2011**
- Quarter begins: Monday, March 28
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, April 6
- Weissbourd Conference: TBD
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, April 20
- Profession Workshop: Wednesday, April 27
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, May 4
- Text Seminar: TBD
- SoF Meeting: Wednesday, May 18
- Spring Party: TBD
- Quarter ends: Saturday, June 11

News from the College Dean's Office:
Funding has been made available for six current junior fellows to employ undergraduate students as research assistants over the summer. There are 3 assistantships of $500 each available at this time.

Thanks to a generous offer by Dean Boyer, there will be further opportunities available for fellows to employ undergraduate research assistants during the 2010-2011 academic year.

2010-2011
Harper-Schmidt Representatives

**Social Sciences Collegiate Faculty Co-Chair:** Andrew Dilts

**Humanities Collegiate Faculty Co-Chair:** Katie Chenoweth

**Weissbourd Representatives in Social Sciences:** Dina Gusejnova

**Weissbourd Representatives in Humanities:** Emily Steinlight

**Social Science Search Committee Representative:** Max Whyte

**Humanities Search Committee Representative:** Leigh Claire La Berge

We invite alumni fellows who live in Chicago or who may be visiting to attend any of the text seminars and/or the conference.

We would be grateful if you could let us know in advance if you plan to attend.