

Fall 2009

Kahn Chronicle: Fall 2009

Smith College, Kahn Liberal Arts Institute

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LOST IN TIME

Exploring the fate—and the future—
of Smith's missing sundial

Every time someone on campus learns that the Kahn Institute's 2009-2010 project *Telling Time: Its Meaning and Measurement* has started looking into the fate (and future) of Smith College's missing sundial, the response is always the same.

"I wondered what happened to that thing. Where is it?"

Bosiljka Glumac, Associate Professor of Geosciences and one of the Organizing Fellows of the *Telling Time* project, was one of many people on campus who wondered what had become of the sundial, and she thought that investigating its fate and possibly contributing to its restoration was an interesting and appropriate project for a group of faculty and students conducting research on various aspects of time. Her co-Organizing Fellow, History Professor Richard Lim, agreed.

Until a couple of years ago, the sundial stood in front of the semicircular concrete bench on the lawn near Lawrence and Morris Houses, just across Green Street from Ford Hall. But a few years ago it vanished, leaving behind only a broken marble base and a lot of curious faculty, staff and students.

It was originally given to the College in the name of the Class of 1883 by Mary H.A. Mather, one of its 49 members, and Alice P. Smyth, who has been identified as "a member of the class by adoption." Their gift was officially presented on Saturday, June 16, 1923 during the celebration of the class's fortieth reunion, and it was intended to complement the bench, which had been given by the entire Class of '83 at their reunion in 1920.

The now-broken pedestal of the sundial was originally sculpted from marble quarried in Proctor, Vermont. It was topped with a bronze dial plate engraved with the class motto in Greek. (That motto, taken from the writings of the Greek lyric poet Pindar, translates as "opportunity has short measure.") The design for the dial, which was created by Faith Leavens of the Class of 1900 and artist Mabel Webb of Norwich,

Connecticut, also included peacocks, the Byzantine emblem of immortality, a symbol embraced by a class that had reached its fortieth anniversary without losing a single member (a peacock is also engraved on the concrete bench). The Andrew J. Lloyd Company of Boston engraved and installed the original dial plate.

The gift was received with considerable pomp and ceremony by then-president William Allan Neilson (for whom Neilson Library is named) and former president L. Clark Seelye (the College's first president and the namesake of Seelye Hall). Elizabeth Lawrence Clark, the president of the Class of '83 and the College's first alumna trustee (for whom Lawrence House is named) gave a portion of the presentation speech.

Class members decided to make the gift of the bench and sundial to replace the towering elm they had adopted at their graduation. That tree, which stood opposite the Lanning Fountain at the other end of the walkway that runs in front of Burton Hall, fell victim to Dutch Elm Disease around 1915.

The bench and sundial were originally installed directly over the tree's old root system; the pair were later moved to their present location to make way for the construction of Bass Hall in the 1980s, and there both remained until the sundial's untimely disappearance a few years ago. Little documentation is available about what caused the sundial to topple, but it appears its supporting structures were weakened by the rusting of steel reinforcing rods inside the pedestal.

The missing upper portion of the pedestal was found in a storage area of the Facilities Management building. It was obvious from the outset that it had seen its share of rough handling over the years. In a letter dated November 7, 1932, a member of the Class of 1883 wrote to the A.J. Lloyd company asking about repairs needed then: "The dial has been badly treated, more than once, by unknown persons. The last time was early this

fall, before the beginning of the year's session. The marble pedestal was overthrown and broken, the gnomon wrenched off and taken away." Evidence of this past damage can be seen in concrete patches on the pedestal. The original bronze dial has been replaced with a smaller, less ornate one. Old repairs are also visible on the broken base that remains near the bench.

Professors Glumac and Lim turned to David Dempsey, Associate Director of Museum Services at the Museum of Art and a Fellow in the *Telling Time* project, for guidance on how to proceed. He, in turn, contacted Monica Berry, an independent art conservator from New York who specializes in sculpture and objects like the sundial. They arranged for her to come to the College in September to examine the sundial and prepare a report on what would be required to restore it.

While she is on campus, Ms. Berry will meet with Fellows in the *Telling Time* project to discuss issues associated with art conservation in general and the restoration of the sundial in particular. Her input will provide project Fellows with a valuable starting point in their research and will give College officials critical information about what must be done to preserve this small piece of Smith's history.

Until more questions are answered, the fate of the sundial remains still unclear, but for now, at least *Time* is on its side.

In This Issue

The Fate & Future of Smith's Sundial	1
2009-2010 Student Fellowships	2
Information Session: Why Educate Women?	2
Faculty Fellowship Opportunities	3
Neilson-Kahn Seminar	4
Fall 2009 Lectures	6
Student Spotlight	8
Festival of Disorder Project Final Report	10
Deceit Project Final Report	11
A Note from the Director.....	12

Who's Who at the Kahn Institute

Director & Staff 2009-2010

Rick Fantasia

Director and Advisory Committee Chair,
Barbara Richmond 1940 Professor in the
Social Sciences, and Professor of Sociology

Chrissie Bell

Administrative Coordinator

Kara Noble

Project and Publicity Administrator



From left to right, Kara Noble, Chrissie Bell,
and Rick Fantasia.

Advisory Committee 2009-2010

Pau Atela, Professor of Mathematics & Statistics

Nalini Bhushan, Professor of Philosophy

Judith Cardell, Associate Professor of
Computer Science

Dawn Fulton, Associate Professor of
French Studies

Christopher Loring, Director of Libraries

William Oram, Helen Means Professor,
English Language & Literature

Andrew Rotman, Associate Professor
of Religion

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KAHN INSTITUTE STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED FOR 2009-2010

The following Smith students have been awarded Fellowships in connection with the two yearlong Kahn Institute projects for the 2009-2010 academic year. Fellows in the project *Telling Time: Its Meaning and Measurement* will explore the effect of time on things and the implications of the temporal dimension on our ways of seeing the world and interpreting our place in it. Fellows in the project *Wellness and Disease* will consider the presence of illness and health in our history, culture, social arrangements and mental constructions.



Organizing Fellows:

Bosiljka Glumac, *Geosciences*

Richard Lim, *History*

Maggie Dethloff '10, *Art History*

Brigid Fitzgerald '10, *Anthropology*

Catharina Gress-Wright '11, *English*

Lonicera Lyttle '10, *Economics & Spanish*

Marla Maccia '10, *Biological Sciences*

Kalen Wheeler '10, *Sociology*

Christine Woodbury '10, *Music*

Katherine Zubko '11, *Philosophy*

Student Fellows in the *Telling Time* project will join their faculty colleagues in exploring the definition, determination, meaning and significance of time, and in examining the ways that the temporal and temporality shape materials, events and processes. The general aim of the project will be to understand both the effects of time on things and the implications of the temporal dimension for our ways of seeing the world and our place in it.

FACULTY INFORMATION SESSION FOR 2010-2011 LONG-TERM PROJECT

Faculty Fellowship applications are now being accepted for the Kahn Institute's 2010-2011 year-long project titled *Why Educate Women? Global Perspectives on Equal Opportunity*. More information about this project will be available at an open meeting for interested faculty on **Tuesday, September 29, 2009 at 12:00 Noon** at the Kahn Liberal Arts Institute, located on Level 3 South in Neilson Library. Lunch will be provided. A description of the project can be found on the Kahn Institute's Web site at www.smith.edu/kahninstitute.

All Faculty Fellows who participate in this project will receive research grants of \$3,000 and, if they wish, a student assistant for their project year. Junior faculty (only) have the option of choosing either a research grant or one course release during the project year.

The deadline to apply for a Faculty Fellowship in the *Why Educate Women?* project is Friday, **October 16, 2009**. Faculty interested in applying should email an explanation of their interest in the project to the Kahn Institute's Director, Rick Fantasia (rfantasi@smith.edu) by that date.



Organizing Fellows:

Mary Harrington, *Psychology*

Benita Jackson, *Psychology*

Emily Earl-Royal '10, *Comparative Literature*

Liora O'Donnell Goldensher '10, *Sociology*

Lori Harris AC '10, *American Studies*

Shannon Houlihan MS '10, *Exercise &
Sports Studies*

Kiran Jandu '10, *Economics*

Jessica Magyar '10, *Studio Art & Psychology*

Meenakshi Menon '10, *Anthropology*

Sarah C. Miller '10, *Anthropology &
French Studies*

Margaret Mongare '10, *Biochemistry*

Maria-Fatima Santos '10, *Philosophy*

In the *Wellness & Disease* project, Student and Faculty Fellows will consider the presence of illness and disease in our history, culture, and social arrangements as well as in our mental constructions. Disease will be viewed not only in epidemiological terms, but also in the ways it insinuates itself into our psyche, our cultural imagination, and our institutions.

FACULTY FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Openings for Faculty Fellowships available in three short-term projects for 2009-2010

Calls for Faculty Fellows for the following 2009-2010 short-term projects will be mailed to faculty during the fall of 2009 and early spring of 2010. Brief descriptions about the three projects for this year appear below; more detail about these project can be found on the Kahn Institute's Web site at www.smith.edu/kahninstitute/current.php. Faculty who are interested in applying for Fellowships for any of these three projects should email the Kahn Institute's Director, Rick Fantasia (rfantasi@smith.edu). In your email, please indicate the title of the project and include a brief explanation of why you would be interested in participating in it.

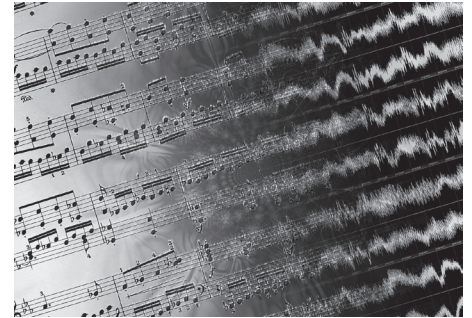
Music and Science: From *The Creation* to *The Origin*

Organizing Fellow: Lale Burk, Chemistry • October 30 & 31, 2009

Sergei Rachmaninoff made his U.S. debut at Smith in 1909. His cousin, Sophie Satin, conducted botanical research at the College with geneticist Albert Blakeslee. This project commemorates both of them through an examination of the relationships between music and the sciences. Discussions may encompass topics including advances in recording and broadcasting; new electronic and computer technologies and their influence on the composition, performance, and distribution of music; recent research into how people respond to music; and studies of the various influences

on our ability to learn, perform and memorize it. Richard Einhorn, composer of the 2009 opera/oratorio *The Origin*, which is based on the life and work of Charles Darwin, will give a public lecture on the love-hate relationship between music and science for composers, performers, and listeners alike, and will join Fellows for the colloquium discussion sessions.

Applications for Fellowship in this project are now being accepted. All applications must be emailed to Rick Fantasia (rfantasi@smith.edu) no later than Friday, September 25, 2009.



Liquid Worlds

Organizing Fellows: Anna Botta, Comparative Literature & Italian;
Estela Maria Harretche, Spanish & Portuguese • January 19-21, 2010

Mobility and fluidity. Both of these qualities typify elements that facilitate the passage and, ultimately, the survival of human culture, art, or even cells, as they pass from their original state to a new one. Dynamic systems tend to focus our analytical attentions at one end or the other of a stage of transformation, but what if we fix our analytical lens on the process and the context of flow itself? What is the nature of the transformative process? What occurs when mobility and fluidity are interrupted; or when a cell resists transformation; or when an individual in exile refuses to be assim-

ilated into a new reality? How do cultures mutate as their borders become more porous? This short-term project will consider mobility and fluidity as they are manifest in such fields as border and identity studies, history, and sociology, as well as in the natural and hard sciences, where new work on brain chemistry and artificial intelligence are challenging and rendering more fluid traditional ideas about self and identity.

The call for Faculty Fellows for this project will be issued in October 2009.



Immigration, Nativism and the Limits of Tolerance

Organizing Fellow: Peter Rose, Sociology • April 9 & 10, 2010

In Europe today, one of the biggest topics of dispute is the influx of "outsiders." While many newcomers are political refugees seeking asylum, many more are economic migrants hoping to improve their life chances and those of their children and to support families with remittances sent back to their home countries. Can we identify the underlying causes of the mounting tensions over migration in today's Europe? What are outcomes for "host" societies, for their citizens, for petitioners for admission and, especially for those who are citizens but who share the racial, religious, or ethnic background

of new arrivals who are "suspect"? Participants in this short-term Kahn colloquium and several visitors will address these issues in two or three preliminary meetings preceding a symposium. Papers prepared by participants relating to these matters will be discussed. For those interested, finished papers will be considered for inclusion in a special issue of the social science journal, *Society*, to be published in 2010.

The call for Faculty Fellows for this project will be issued in February 2010.



The Kahn Institute is about to enter into an innovative partnership that promises to make a truly significant contribution to the intellectual life of the College. Since 1927, the William Allan Neilson Chair of Research has brought to Smith College some of the most distinguished scholars in the world. It is a remarkable list that includes poet W.H. Auden, writer Eudora Welty, historian Romila Thapar, and anthropologist Victor Turner, among many others. Working with the Neilson Committee (the faculty committee charged with recommending to the President names of potential scholars for this award) the Kahn Institute is mounting a joint Neilson-Kahn faculty seminar in the Spring 2010 semester. This exciting new project is being developed on a trial basis to furnish the Neilson Professor with a welcoming and stimulating intellectual community and to create special time and space for Smith scholars whose work and teaching would most benefit from systematic interaction with him or her.

This year's *Neilson-Kahn Seminar* will involve a three-way collaboration among the Kahn Institute, the 2010 Neilson Professor, **Randolph Hester** from UC Berkeley, and the Landscape Studies Program. Professor **Ann Leone** (French Studies and Landscape Studies), is the Organizing Fellow for this project, and she has been working closely with Professor Hester to coordinate a rich schedule of intellectual activities that will benefit the entire college community. The cornerstone of the collaboration will be a lecture series that will bring some of the top scholars and practitioners in the field of Landscape Studies to Smith during the spring of 2010.

The *Neilson-Kahn Seminar* will involve eight public events, including seven lectures and a panel discussion, that will be embedded within the course *LSS 100: Issues in Landscape Studies*. In addition to the three Neilson Professor lectures that will be delivered by Professor Randolph Hester, the *Seminar* will feature four presentations by



2009-2010 Neilson-Kahn Seminar

Ecological Democracy

a remarkable group of thinkers and practitioners (profiles of the speakers can be found on page 5 of this newsletter and on the Kahn Institute Web site). After each of the *Neilson-Kahn Seminar* events, Project Fellows will join Professors Hester and Leone and the other visiting scholars at the Kahn Institute for a more extended discussion of the issues that have been raised in the presentations.

Both the *Seminar* and the *LSS 100* course will draw upon themes developed by Professor Hester in his 2006 book *Design for Ecological Democracy*. In that volume, he explores emerging principles of urban design that allow people to forge connections to their fellow citizens and to the natural environment by unleashing the combined forces of ecology and democracy. *Seminar* participants will discuss and debate how the responsible freedom generated by a dynamic combination of ecology and democracy can allow for the implementation of these new design principles, which are based on three fundamental elements identified by Professor Hester: enabling form, resilient form, and impelling design. Professor Hester and the other visiting scholars will discuss

how applying these principles can make it possible to develop genuine urban communities that are adaptable to their surrounding ecologies and that have the potential to provide safe, comfortable, and enriching environments for residents. Professor Hester and the other speakers will present examples and case studies from actual projects in which they have successfully applied these principles throughout the U.S. and overseas.

The *Seminar* and *LSS 100* course will conclude with a panel discussion in which Professor Hester and Faculty Fellows in the *Seminar* examine issues raised in the lectures throughout the semester.

All of the lectures and the panel discussion will take place on Monday afternoons in Weinstein Auditorium in Wright Hall (see the next page for a more detailed schedule). All will be free and open to the public.

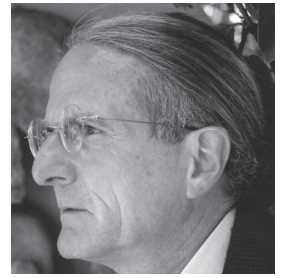
The *Neilson-Kahn Seminar* and the series of public events generated by it promise a vibrant intellectual experience for *Seminar* participants and for the entire Smith community.

Randolph Hester • 2009-2010 Neilson Professor

Randolph Hester is a Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, and a partner in the firm Community Development by Design. He holds degrees in Landscape Architecture from Harvard University and in Landscape Architecture and Sociology from North Carolina State University. He is an award-winning landscape architect, internationally acclaimed for his designs in complex public environments, from wetlands, river corridors and chaparral canyons to central cities and economically depressed communities.

In Raleigh, North Carolina, he established a citywide citizen participation program that became the basis for the city's comprehensive plan. He organized a grassroots alternative, a low-cost transportation plan for the city and stopped freeways from being built through poorer neighborhoods and worked for ten years to realize a rehabilitation plan for the low-income Chavis Heights neighborhood. His plan prevented the scheduled urban renewal clearance and set a precedent by creating a uniquely African-American landscape designed to rectify past class and racial discrimination in the provision of public facilities. His community plan for Manteo, North Carolina, which features a mile-long civic "front

porch" and open-space system that utilizes underused waterfront spaces with hands-on exhibits to teach visitors about the environment and the area's history, has attracted cultural tourism and provided needed jobs while preserving the community's sacred structure. For the past two decades, Hester has worked on an urban wilderness greenbelt around and into Los Angeles, California. The project has included the acquisition and restoration of thousands of acres for wildlife habitat and the design of a series of gateway parks. He also works with National Taiwan University and SAVE International, an organization he co-founded in 1997 in a rural fishing district of Tainan County to create viable economic alternatives to the building of a proposed petrochemical plant that threatens both a centuries-old way of life and the habitat of the endangered black-faced spoonbill, one of the rarest birds in the world.



Hester has written numerous books and articles on community participation and design. His most recent book, *Design for Ecological Democracy*, will provide a framework for this year's *Neilson-Kahn Seminar* and for the Landscape Studies course *LSS 100: Issues in Landscape Studies*.

Marcia McNally

Marcia McNally is an Associate Adjunct Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning. Her work has centered on three issues: the form of the ecological city; actions the public sector, individuals, and organized constituencies can take to achieve sustainable planning and design outcomes; and the tools that enable participants to make informed decisions.

Setha Low

Setha Low is a Professor of Environmental Psychology at City University of New York. Her recent research has focused on the anthropology of space and place, cultural aspects of design, housing and community development, gated communities and landscapes of fear, security post 9/11, cultural conservation and historic preservation, public space, medical anthropology, social distress and illness, qualitative research methods and ethnography.

Frances Moore Lappé

Frances Moore Lappé is a democracy advocate and world food and hunger expert who has authored or co-authored 16 books. She is the co-founder of three organizations, including *Food First: The Institute for Food and Development Policy* and, more recently, the *Small Planet Institute*, which she leads with her daughter Anna Lappé. She has received 17 honorary doctorates from distinguished institutions including The University of Michigan and was a visiting scholar at MIT in 2000-2001.

Anne Whiston Spirn

Anne Whiston Spirn is an award-winning author and distinguished landscape architect, photographer, teacher, and scholar. Her work is devoted to promoting life-sustaining communities: places that are functional, sustainable, meaningful, and artful, places that help people feel and understand the relationship of the natural and built worlds. She is a Professor of Landscape Architecture and Planning at MIT.

Neilson-Kahn Seminar Schedule of Lectures

During Spring 2010, the Neilson-Kahn Seminar will co-present eight public events, including seven lectures and a panel discussion. All eight events will be embedded within the two-credit Landscape Studies course LSS 100: Issues in Landscape Studies. All of these events will take place in Weinstein Auditorium in Wright Hall beginning at 4:30 p.m. and each will be followed by a question and answer session with the presenter. All are free and open to the public. Please note that the following lecture dates and topics are subject to change.

February 1: Design for Ecological Democracy

Speaker: Randolph Hester, Neilson Professor

February 15: Geometry and Activist Ecology

Speaker: Randolph Hester, Neilson Professor

March 1: From Flyway to Shophouse: Neighborhood Landscapes in the Global World

Speaker: Marcia McNally, Professor, Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, University of California, Berkeley

March 22: Rethinking Urban Parks, Social Justice, and Cultural Diversity

Speaker: Setha Low, Professor, Environmental Psychology, Geography, Women's Studies and Anthropology
City University of New York

March 29: Sex, Lies & Real Estate

Speaker: Randolph Hester, Neilson Professor

April 12: Ecological Democracy In Action: West Philadelphia, Oregon, and North Carolina

Speaker: Anne Whiston Spirn, Professor of Landscape Architecture and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

April 19: Design for Ecological Democracy

Speaker: Frances Moore Lappé, Founder, Small Planet Institute

April 26: Panel Discussion

Randolph Hester, Marcia McNally, and Neilson-Kahn Seminar Faculty Fellows

FALL 2009 KAHN INSTITUTE LECTURES



Anthony Aveni
September 24

**The End of Time:
The Maya Mystery of 2012**

Does the ancient Maya calendar forecast a cataclysmic alignment with the center of the Milky Way in 2012? Or will the much anticipated end of the longest of all timekeeping cycles in the Maya repertoire issue a global renewal of human consciousness? These are some of the predictions flooding the internet, print media, and movie story lines as the end of the ancient Maya "Baktun 13" approaches. Modern "Y12" prophets who lay out such head-turning scenarios tell us that ancient Maya wisemen were well aware of how and when the world would end—and possibly begin anew.

In this lecture Anthony Aveni will explore the major theories of 2012 end-of-the-world predictions and measure them objectively against evidence unearthed by archaeologists, iconographers, and epigraphers. He will also attempt to place American pop culture's current fascination with ideas about World Ages in historical context.

Anthony F. Aveni is the Russell Colgate Professor of Astronomy and Anthropology, serving appointments in both Departments of Physics & Astronomy and Sociology and Anthropology at Colgate University.



Charles Raison
October 1

**Meditation, Inflammation and
Consternation: Applying Buddhist
Wisdom to the Search for Health
and Well-Being**

We instinctively gravitate toward people who make us feel good and toward social situations in which we feel cared for and understood. Research has demonstrated that warm, supportive interpersonal relationships are powerful in protecting against illness and extending the lifespan. What would happen if we trained ourselves to promote our sense of closeness with others and extinguish feelings of fear or alienation? Tibetan Buddhist tradition has made the practice of compassion meditation a central part of spiritual practice. In recent years, researchers have become interested in the possibility that this technique might actually retrain people's instinctive sense of psychosocial connectivity in ways likely to promote health and well-being. Charles Raison explains how compassion meditation might benefit health by reducing deleterious emotional and inflammatory responses to stress that are known to promote disease development.

Dr. Charles Raison is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Emory University School of Medicine where he serves as Clinical Director of the Mind-Body program and Co-Director of the Collaborative for Contemplative Studies.



Rob McClung
October 15

**Timing Is Everything: Genetic
Analysis of Plant Circadian Rhythms**

Most organisms have an endogenous circadian clock that lets them measure time and to use it to regulate their biology. As humans, we are most familiar with circadian rhythms in the context of sleep-wake cycles and their disruption in jet lag, but we also are aware of plant rhythms in flower opening and fragrance emission. Indeed, much of a plant's biology cycles daily. An underlying premise to the study of circadian rhythms has been that the coordination of an organism's biology with its temporal environment enhances fitness. This premise has now been experimentally verified in several organisms, including cyanobacteria, fruitflies, chipmunks and the model plant, *Arabidopsis thaliana*.

Rob McClung will illustrate the logic that a geneticist uses to understand something as fundamental and mysterious as biological timekeeping. Most of what is known about the plant clock has been learned in *Arabidopsis*. A number of labs, including his own, are now investigating whether the model of the clock developed through research on *Arabidopsis* will apply to plants in general with a goal of being able to provide breeders with tools to enhance crop productivity.

Rob McClung is Professor of Biological Sciences at Dartmouth College.

Kahn Institute projects will present lectures by six distinguished visiting scholars during Fall 2009. All of the following lectures are free and open to the public. Please visit the Kahn Institute Web site at www.smith.edu/kahninstitute for more information about these speakers and their lectures.

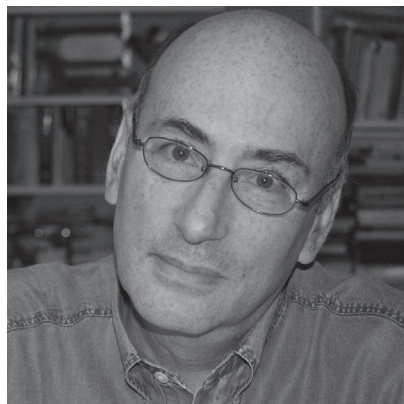


Ichiro Kawachi
October 30

**The Paradox of U.S. Health Status
(Or Why Is Life in America Nasty,
Brutish, and Short?)**

A fundamental paradox in population health is why Americans rank near the bottom of the life expectancy league table among industrialized nations. Despite being the wealthiest country in the world (in terms of per capita GDP), and despite spending twice as much on health care compared to the rest of rich nations, Americans are sicker and die sooner compared to citizens of much poorer societies. Dr. Kawachi will explore some of the “usual suspects” that are trotted out in public discourse about the lagging health performance of Americans, including racial/ethnic diversity (and by extension, innate biological or genetic predisposition to poor health status), unequal access to health care, and “lifestyle” habits. He argues that none of them can adequately account for the paradox of the health status of Americans. Instead, he asserts that the dismal state of American health is a reflection of the mal-distribution of resources—financial capital, human capital, as well as access to power/authority in labor relations—that characterize American society.

Dr. Ichiro Kawachi is Professor of Social Epidemiology, and Chair of the Department of Society, Human Development and Health at the Harvard School of Public Health.



Richard Einhorn
October 30

**Music and Science: Same Thing,
Only Different**

There has always been an intimate connection between music and the science and technology of the times. Nearly every complex musical culture has developed elaborate music theories based as much upon prevailing science as on aesthetic concerns. Today, music seems almost dismayingly connected with technology, especially digital signal processing and mass production. But despite the increasing use of electronic instruments, and the ideology of an influential branch of 20th-century composition, the central concerns of nearly all music depend upon a perspective very different from the one typically thought of as scientific. Or perhaps not? Richard Einhorn will discuss his 40-year love/hate relationship with music technologies. His perspective will be that of a working composer, a perspective that combines experimentation, a considerable amount of research, much thought, and—equally important—a healthy dose (hopefully) of creative misunderstanding.

Richard Einhorn has written opera, orchestral and chamber music, song cycles, film music, and dance scores. He is one of a handful of living composers who not only reaches a large worldwide audience but whose music receives widespread critical praise for its integrity, emotional depth, and craft.



Tracey Revenson
November 5

**Interpersonal Dynamics in Health
and Adjustment to Illness**

Tracey A. Revenson is a Professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where she is appointed to the Health Psychology Concentration, Developmental Psychology subprogram and Women's Studies Certificate program in addition to her primary appointment in Social-Personality Psychology.

Her primary research interests include stress and coping processes among individuals, couples, and families facing chronic physical illnesses; the influence of supportive and non-supportive interpersonal relationships on health; psychosocial issues of breast cancer survivorship; and the interplay of gender and racism on health, particularly mental health, cardiovascular reactivity and smoking. She is the co-editor or co-author of six books, including the *Handbook of Health Psychology*, *Couples Coping with Illness*, and *Ecological Research to Promote Social Change*. She was the founding Editor-in-Chief of the journal, *Women's Health: Research on Gender, Behavior and Policy*. She was elected President of the Division of Health Psychology of the American Psychological Association from 2004-2005, and currently serves as an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Five Student Fellows from the Kahn Institute's 2008-2009 long-term projects reflect on their year as independent researchers and offer some advice for students who are considering applying for Kahn Fellowships in the future.

For Student Fellows, Kahn Institute projects represent a major departure from their typical classroom work. In Kahn long-term projects, Student Fellows work as peers with faculty, and for many it is their first time conducting significant independent research. Five recent Student Fellows—Meredith Byers '10 (English & Government), Christa Daly '09 (Government), and Samaiya Ewing AC '09 (Philosophy), who participated in the project, *Deceit: The Uses of Transparency and Concealment*, organized by Mlada Bukovansky (Government); and Molly Hamer '10 (English), and Naho Hashimoto '10J (Psychology & Anthropology), who were Fellows in the project *A Festival of Disorder*, organized by Marjorie Senechal (Mathematics & Statistics, and the History of Science) and Elisabeth Armstrong (Study of Women and Gender)—share their thoughts on their year at the Kahn.

KAHN INSTITUTE: How closely did your experience participating in a Kahn project match your expectations of what it would be like?

MEREDITH BYERS: At first, it was quite intimidating. The Kahn Institute sincerely believes in treating Student and Faculty Fellows as equals, which is an honor, but can be a bit startling, especially given that all of the Faculty Fellows have Ph.D.s and have been teaching and researching for many years. I began to feel more at ease after the research “boot camp” we had right before classes started. During those sessions, we worked in small groups with graduate students and concentrated on refining our topics and making lists of books we needed to read. I was also impressed with the resources available to the Fellows. At the beginning of the year, we were asked to submit a wish list of speakers we would like to see come to campus. My project was able to invite several renowned speakers from a wide range of disciplines and it was fascinating to meet scholars with such an array of passions.

SAMAIYA EWING: My experience with the Kahn was relatively close to my expectations with one exception. I was very surprised, pleasantly so, by the investment of faculty members both in their own projects and in the student projects. The willingness of faculty members to engage the students as intellectual equals was a valuable bonus. I was never made to feel that my project was any more or less important than theirs and it was always made very clear by all of the faculty that the Student Fellows' research, opinions and ideas carried the same weight as those of their faculty colleagues. This attitude helped to build and solidify a sense of intellectual community within the Kahn.

MOLLY HAMER: In many ways my Kahn experience tallied closely with my expectations. What surprised me, however, was the sense of camaraderie I felt immediately with my fellow students and eventually with the participating professors. It was truly a privilege to be around so many amazing people studying such interesting things and have a window into their way of looking at the world.

KAHN: How did participating in a Kahn project affect you personally (e.g., studies, extracurricular activities, attitudes about yourself)?

CHRISTA DALY: It was challenging to fit my research for the Kahn Institute project into my busy schedule, but I managed by setting a specific day and time to do research each week and doing my best to stick to that scheduled time.

MOLLY: It made me think that maybe I was capable of discussing ideas with professors and that I might have something valuable to contribute to the conversation. It made me less afraid to speak up. It was definitely a time crunch, an added pressure to normal schoolwork and extracurriculars, but at the end of the year I felt happy that I completed it.

NAHO HASHIMOTO: I became more open to new ideas and perspectives. As a psychology and anthropology major, I was already interested in others' perspectives and beliefs, but after the Kahn experience, I became more passionate about learning about and understanding them.

KAHN: How did participation in a Kahn project influence your attitude about the role of interdisciplinary perspectives in scholarly work?

NAHO: At first, to be honest, I was little bit skeptical of the usefulness of interdisciplinary perspectives. I was thinking, “How can we understand each other when we come from such a different background where completely different rules and theories exist in an almost different language?” But by the end of the year, I became a believer in the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to almost anything. Throughout the year, our group discussions made me realize again and again that there is nothing in the world that is simple enough to be understood by a single perspective. Also, I realized that learning other perspectives is part of the process of understanding my own.

MOLLY: I think an interdisciplinary perspective is absolutely necessary—if you're determined to stay strictly within the “boundaries” of your own discipline, you're cutting yourself off from a lot of insights. However, for me this experience also illustrated the difficulties of interdisciplinary conversation—there were quite a few tense moments and intractable differences. I found the different perspectives valuable to my research.

MEREDITH: This experience made it possible for me to see how students and faculty from so many different backgrounds can come together and enrich each other's research. This was particularly evident during the presentations. I was amazed at how everyone was able to suggest books, articles, and even movies that might help the presenter. It wasn't done in a way to demonstrate intellectual superiority; it seemed as if everyone genuinely wanted to help each other improve their projects.

SAMAIYA: My participation in the Kahn has solidified my belief that interdisciplinary perspectives are essential to the nurturing and growth of ideas. There truly are connections that can be found between all things.



Naho Hashimoto '10J



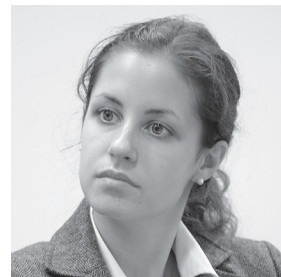
Christa Daly '09



Samaiya Ewing AC '09



Molly Hamer '10



Meredith Byers '10

These perspectives enable ideas from different subject areas and ideologies to come together, a union that strengthens each idea by highlighting its best aspects and shoring up weaker premises. Now, more than ever, I find myself seeking out disparate opinions from those whose academic background is different from mine and I find myself pleasantly surprised at the growth that can be achieved on both ends by simply allowing room for different ideas from a variety of subject areas to breathe and be heard.

KAHN: What is the primary value of involving Student Fellows in Kahn projects?

MEREDITH: I think the students bring a fresh perspective to the Kahn. Involving students shows that the Kahn is dedicated to providing both students and faculty with a platform for research. I also think it adds diversity. It's neat to meet people with varying levels of experience in academic research.

CHRISTA: Involving Student Fellows benefits the project by adding new perspectives and simultaneously benefits the students by allowing them to participate in the kind of collaboration with faculty that is not usually seen at the undergraduate level.

SAMAIYA: It allows students unprecedented access to faculty members. If I had done the Kahn during my second year at Smith (as opposed to my senior year), I think it would have dramatically altered my Smith experience. The Kahn removes a great deal of the uncertainty that some students feel about the possibility of one-on-one interaction with faculty members. It makes it easy to access faculty in a safe and welcoming environment and definitely helps to lay the foundation for increased interaction outside of the Kahn.

KAHN: How do you think your experiences as a Student Fellow will affect your future projects and education?

NAHO: I realized how much I love research! Before the Kahn, pursuing a career in research was one of the options I had in mind, but now

I think I really would love to be involved in some sort of research project throughout my life. I am currently conducting another research project in a different topic for my honors thesis in psychology, but all the research skills I learned from Kahn have been most helpful.

SAMAIYA: The confidence and focus I developed during the Kahn are already impacting my post-Smith interactions in academic and professional settings. I am continuing my work on my research project, and my ability to continue to do so arises primarily from the fact that my work during the year significantly altered the way I pursue and process information. The Kahn granted me the ability to say, honestly and openly, "I don't know" while simultaneously pursuing the information necessary to begin to form rational conclusions.

MEREDITH: The Kahn has given me tremendous confidence to pursue independent projects. I have a great sense of how to refine a topic, and how to use a variety of resources to gather information about it. I feel as if I can approach a long paper or a thesis with great ease. I'm also not afraid of asking questions or of seeking out advice from others.

MOLLY: It certainly taught me a lot about time management (or, perhaps, the dangers of procrastination)! Most importantly, it taught me to be more open-minded, even to things that might really feel like a stretch for me. It encouraged me to think critically about ideas.

KAHN: What advice would you give to students who are considering applying for Kahn fellowships in the future?

MOLLY: If you can handle the time commitment, go for it, absolutely. Actually, just make time for it—the food, company, and stipend are amazing. If you care enough about something to seriously study it, it can only help you.

SAMAIYA: Plan. Plan everything. Make a schedule and stick to it. Commit to doing a certain amount of research/work on your project every week. Don't be afraid to ask for help, start

early and ask often. Listen to the projects of the other Fellows and ask yourself, what are the similarities/differences between my project and theirs? Are there research methods or ideas that others are using that might be applicable to my project? Last, if there is something about the format or structure of your meetings or sessions that you think could be altered or changed, speak up. Everything is open to discussion and there's a lot more flexibility than you think.

NAHO: Definitely go for it! I also want to encourage international students like myself to participate because they will be able to contribute their unique perspectives to a project.

MEREDITH: Choose a project you absolutely love. In most cases, you will be doing your Kahn project on top of your regular course load, which means you really need to have tremendous enthusiasm for your project.

KAHN: What do you consider the Kahn Institute's most significant contribution to Smith College and especially to its students?

CHRISTA: The Kahn offers students a unique chance to get a glimpse into academia that is rarely offered to undergraduates. Smith College is lucky to have such a program—the Kahn Institute's collaborative projects demonstrate Smith's commitment and dedication to its undergraduates.

MOLLY: By having this program, Smith tells its students that what they think can actually matter, that they can have valuable insights.

MEREDITH: The Kahn Institute encourages intellectual passions to thrive by bringing together students and faculty from different backgrounds and allowing them to devote a year to researching projects of interest.

SAMAIYA: The ability of students to access the resources of the Kahn to develop and expand their own ideas and research creates stronger students, which cannot help but positively impact Smith. Student Fellows take their enhanced research capabilities back to the classroom and to the world beyond the college.

FINAL THOUGHTS

A FESTIVAL OF DiSoRdEr

By **Elisabeth Armstrong**
Study of Women & Gender
Organizing Fellow

When our Kahn project, *A Festival of Disorder*, resumed for the second semester at the end of January, we were confronted with the tragic news that one of our Faculty Fellows, Professor Michael Albertson of the Mathematics Department, had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Throughout the spring, we celebrated the vision he had brought to our fall semester discussions, both through his own research on symmetry in graphs and the ways he inspired our projects. "I'm here to ask new questions," he had said at our opening colloquium; now as we talked, rethought, and wrote, we began asking what new questions were emerging from our own projects as we continued our research together. We mourned Mike's passing in March, and dedicated our concluding event, a two-day Festival of Disorder, to his memory.

Our spring semester activities began with the opening reception for an exhibition by three photographers: *Festival of Disorder* Faculty Fellow Sandra Matthews (Hampshire College), Chester Michalik (Smith Professor of Art Emeritus and a Faculty Fellow in the Kahn's *Deceit* project), and independent Northampton photographer and printmaker Stan Sherer. Many of Sandra's portraits were montages of mothers and their daughters from different time periods. The backdrop for many of these photographs was newspaper print, too small to read, yet suggesting the passing of time and events. Chester captured the enthusiasm of audiences at military exhibitions and the underlying contradictions of enjoying such weaponry. Stan Sherer's images were fusions of his own nature photographs with scientific lantern

slides from the 1930s that *Festival of Disorder* Organizing Fellow Marjorie Senechal was using in her research. Together, these seemingly disparate works showed that the passing of time is an unexpected thread linking order and disorder in the arts, the social sciences, and the sciences.

Our first visitor of the spring semester was Evelyn Fox Keller, mathematical biologist, historian of science, biographer of Barbara McClintock, and Professor Emerita of the History & Philosophy of Science at MIT. Evelyn's lecture concerned her forthcoming book, *The Mirage of a Space Between Nature and Nurture*. Our colloquium session with her the next day led us back to themes we had discussed in the fall: disciplinary systems of knowledge and interdisciplinary challenges to them. We are delighted that she will return to Smith in 2012 as the Neilson Professor.

We spent the following three weeks revisiting our own research projects, each of us ad-



Fellows in the Festival of Disorder deconstruct their human graph as part of their two-day celebration of the order-disorder spectrum in April 2009

dressing the same question: what have you learned that surprised you the most? This allowed us to shift the lenses of our own analyses and debate new ways of pursuing our projects. Many fellows had honed their foci considerably, some had changed them entirely, and we all began to see new connections between them. As we discussed the overlaps, we noted islands of order emerging from the sea of chaos, and tried to imagine ways of configuring these "orders" in disorderly ways. Our Purim festival, led by Gillian Kendall, subverted Kahn paradigms and concluded with parodies of our own research.

After Spring break, we had visitors for two successive weeks. Rachel Zaslow and Chioke l'Anson, both graduate students, discussed their work in northern Uganda supporting traditional birth attendants. Their presentation, "Social Change and Traditional Birth Attendants in Post Colonial Africa," concerned their organization, Earth Birth, which is devoted to providing peaceful births for war-affected women. In their view, the government and religious-funded hospitals in the area hampered appropriate obstetrical care, while Earth Birth drew on local knowledge embodied in tradition. Their remarks sparked fierce debate among us over questions of care, Western intervention, and charitable aid in formerly colonized areas of the world.

The next week, acclaimed poet, musician, and essayist Joy Harjo, who is a member of the Mvskoke (Creek) Nation, combined her many talents in a public performance, and then joined our colloquium the following day to discuss her book of poems and stories, *A Map to the Next World*. "What are the systems that make certain forms of knowledge powerful?" she asked.

Joy concluded our yearlong series of visiting artists, activists, philosophers, and scientists, all of whom shook up our notions of order and disorder (not always gently!) and prompted us to reframe them.

The Collaborations Day presentations by Student Fellows Emma Ensign '10, Molly Hamer '10, Hannah Leung '09, and Anna White-Nockleby '09 were thought-provoking and well received. We capped the semester with a zany-yet-serious Festival of Disorder that began with a parade across campus to a maypole-like crepe-streamer graph showing the many

relations among our projects, and continued with paper-making, streaming film clips, an improv workshop, imaginative classifications of donated books, an upside-down meal, and improvisational jazz.

And in our last colloquium of the year, we celebrated our year of interactions. Our presentations and arguments had brought our individual projects—books, essays, papers—to new levels. As we continue to work on them independently next year, we plan to stay in touch through the Web.

YEAR-END SUMMARIES

Throughout the year, the *Deceit* project explored how the practices of deceit and concealment can produce both social corrosion and social cohesion. The project gave participants the opportunity not only to investigate the varieties of deceit present in social life, but also to probe the many different functions of deception. This took us beyond any self-satisfied moral smugness that may come from treating deceit as something that others do, and allowed us to explore the more subtle forms of deception and concealment that form part of the fabric of our own lives.

The first semester of the project year focused on exploring common readings and themes centered around issues of deceit and truthfulness, transparency and concealment. We also hosted several distinguished visiting lecturers during that first semester. Our visitors helped Project Fellows to stretch both within and outside of their own areas of expertise, and to explore and develop different perspectives on our research questions. The second semester was primarily devoted to presentations and discussions of individual Project Fellows' work in progress.

These discussions of individual research projects revealed the evolution of a number of common themes, puzzles, and concerns, including the deception and concealment involved in constructing the narrative of an individual life, whether as biography, autobiography, or diary; the complexities of viewing the deployment of religious symbols as a form of deceit; the exercise and concealment of political power through rhetoric and symbol; the problem of self-deception, gullibility, and vulnerability to deception; the problem of theatricality as deception, and what it reveals about social and personal identity; the ways in which deceit can occur in non-verbal communication; and the specific problems posed by machines seeking to simulate humans. We also explored questions about art and authenticity; the importance of asymmetries of knowledge in the exercise of power; and the human willingness to be deceived, not just to deceive others. We delved into the interesting distinction between benign or pleasurable deceit on the one hand, and corrosive or harmful deceit on the other. The question of whether intention made a difference in the nature and interpretation of deceit certainly haunted our discussions, as did fundamental issues of trust, integrity, and truthfulness.

Our spring semester also included a number of special events. The *Deceit* and *Disorder*

projects jointly contributed to the Northampton Arts Council's *Four Sundays in February* series by helping to develop and sponsor the program *Being Harry Houdini*, a performance by three magicians/illusionists whose work reflected the uses of deceit and disorder to entertain. The *Deceit* project also helped to sponsor a theater performance of *Milosevic at The Hague*, a new play by Milan Dragicevich, Assistant Professor of Theater at UMass, Amherst, which was presented by the Serious Play! ensemble. Project Fellows and their guests were invited to a special performance followed by a discussion with the playwright, director, and performers. The play explored the deceptions and self-deceptions permeating Slobodan Milosevic's reign as leader of Serbia, viewed through the prism of the preparations for his trial for war crimes at The Hague.

During the spring semester, the *Deceit* project also hosted a lecture by Peter Andreas of Brown University. His talk, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, was based on his book of the same title. Andreas's work traces the interaction between "front-stage" humanitarian intervention activities and the "backstage" informal black market and criminal activities in the siege of Sarajevo, the longest city siege in modern history. Andreas's presentation and the colloquium discussion that followed allowed us to continue exploring themes of deceit, truthfulness, transparency, and concealment in wartime, and specifically to take a critical look at the politics and deceptions involved in the complex process of humanitarian interventions in modern war zones.

While the *Deceit* project was in session, Neilson Library's Book Arts Gallery hosted an exhibition just outside the Kahn Institute entitled *From Weimar to War: Popular Propaganda in Germany 1928-1941*, curated by Professor Joseph McVeigh and his students in the German Department. The location just up the hall from our meeting room offered the perfect opportunity for Project Fellows to view the exhibit, and the theme resonated with our previous explorations of Russian propaganda of the early Bolshevik period during the first semester. Professor McVeigh met with Project Fellows to



By Mlada Bukovansky, *Government*
Organizing Fellow

discuss the exhibit, and how the use of collectors' cards in cigarette packages for propaganda purposes evolved over the course of the inter-war period in Germany.

Several Student Fellows participated in Smith College's annual event, *Celebrating Collaborations: Students and Faculty Working Together*. Meredith Byers '10, Samaiya Ewing AC '09, Dara Kaye '09, Mikaela Mroczynski '09, and Elizabeth Pusack '09 each contributed a lively and engaging presentation of the work she had engaged in over the course of the year under the auspices of the Kahn Institute's *Deceit* project.

As the semester wound to a close, the majority of Project Fellows expressed the sense that we had just begun to scratch the surface of a very rich line of inquiry. Many of us will continue to work on and develop ideas that emerged over the course of the project year. At least nine Project Fellows are committed to continued collaboration, with the aim of producing an edited volume under the still-appropriate title *Deceit: The Uses of Transparency and Concealment*. All who participated expressed a strong sense of gratitude for the opportunities afforded by the Kahn Institute; our experiences with the project show how productive and rewarding true interdisciplinary collaboration can be.



Deceit Fellows at a weekly colloquium meeting. Photo by Jon Crispin

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

NUDGING THE ACADEMIC CULTURE

I wrote on this page a few years ago that I thought that we tend to suffer from an excess of intellectual civility at Smith. I wasn't referring to institutional questions so much, for we are often fully prepared to disagree about matters connected to budget allocation, tenure and promotion decisions, organizational issues, etc. I meant ideas. Academic culture, and not only at Smith, seems curiously averse to situations that invite an open clash of ideas. Structured debate is rare, and even though we host a great many visiting speakers they tend to mainly attract either like-minded audiences or audiences that are timid about criticizing the ideas that are presented.

The problem is that intellectual *politesse* isn't the best exercise for the mind, and I think it actually shows a certain disrespect for ideas when we engage them too gently, as if they were breakable objects. Ideas can become tired and anemic when allowed to languish too long in a warm bath of intellectual harmony. Conversely, ideas tend to thrive when they are challenged, struggled over, and even when they are treated a bit roughly. And when ideas are set against and forced to stand up to opposing perspectives we are better able to discern their true properties than when they are left uncontested.

The Kahn Institute seems particularly well-situated to play a role in encouraging intellectual debate at Smith, and as its Director I figure I should either put up or shut up about it. So I'd like to share an idea about one way that this might be done. All fields of scholarship have their intellectual schisms and differences, more or less acute, whether or not they are explicitly acknowledged, discussed, and debated. These points of scholarly contention mostly simmer under the surface of academic life, manifesting themselves in various kinds of intra-departmental tensions, often including intergenerational and interpersonal ones. If these intellectual differences were able to be brought out into the open, in a controlled, intentional and mutually respectful way, they could have substantial pedagogical value. Our colleagues and students alike could be brought into discussions over the key theoretical or methodological differences in our fields, in debates that could be engaged entirely by those from Smith or that could also include scholars from the outside who represent varying and opposing perspectives on the designated subject.

The Kahn Institute could work with department chairs or program directors, active faculty scholars, and maybe even with students from within particular fields to facilitate these collective interactions. This would mean identifying an important and vexing intellectual conflict within the field and figuring out the best format for bringing a given department or program together to engage it. Such discussions/debates might be framed by having a strong proponent of each position make a brief presentation to the group or to provide a written statement for circulation beforehand. However it might be done, the format should be as flexible as possible, with the emphasis resting on the importance of clear expression, on the art of listening to the other side, on the openness of discussion, and on respect for different viewpoints. The goal would

be to foster vibrant, reasoned debate that would more resemble an expression of Socratic Method than a form of intellectual pugilism. In this way, we will be engaging and learning from our intellectual differences rather than eliding them.



Photo by Jim Gipe

Similar concerns led to the formation of the "Difficult Dialogues"

Rick Fantasia, Director

initiative of the Higgins School of Humanities at Clark University, where courses, symposia, and public lectures are organized to open just such a creative and significant dialogue among faculty, staff and students. The themes of the Clark program tend to focus on big public issues, with the aim of facilitating dialogue over controversial questions. While this undoubtedly makes for interesting and important events, it is somewhat different than what I am proposing. The kind of project I am advocating is more modest and more targeted because it focuses on what are identified as the thorniest and most divisive intellectual issues *within* specific academic fields (and I think it is important that the topics or issues for debate emerge organically from within a field rather than being imposed from without). Such an enterprise will create a forum for meaningful exploration of the important ideas and concepts that produce sharply divisive views and practices within a field.

Over the coming months I will begin to approach colleagues from various disciplines who would be likely to know the difficult issues that cross-cut their field. I'll want to hear their thoughts about the feasibility of this kind of interaction and begin to gather ideas about possible themes. I will also take the idea to the savants who sit on the Kahn Advisory Committee (and who are not at all reticent about voicing their disagreement, especially with the committee Chair) and we'll run it around in our meeting. I would like to hear from others too, for or against, so please let me know what you think. This is not some dramatic initiative, but just a small idea for a program that will create a series of events that are somewhat different than what we're used to. We'll do it on a pilot basis. If it's successful, we'll do more of it and, over time, perhaps it will nudge the academic culture at Smith to a more vibrant and engaging expression of our intellectual differences.