

# TABLEAU

A large-scale artwork made of white and orange sticks on a wooden floor. The sticks are arranged in wavy, horizontal bands of color, creating a landscape-like effect. The white sticks form the background, while the orange sticks create the foreground and midground. The artwork is set on a light-colored wooden floor with a visible grain.

THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | SPRING 2020

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ON THE COVER

Xu Bing's piece *1st Class* was on display in *The Allure of Matter: Material Art from China* at the Smart Museum this spring. Art © Xu Bing Studio. Photography © Museum Associates/LACMA; Courtesy Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



*Beaded bag by Elias Not Afraid, part of Apsáalooke Women and Warriors, an exhibition jointly organized by the Field Museum and the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society. The exhibition opened at the Collegium on March 12.*



## Dear Alumni and Friends,

The University of Chicago Campaign: Inquiry and Impact, which ended on December 31, 2019, exceeded all expectations. We thank you, our generous friends. The Division of the Humanities raised \$148.1 million, surpassing its original goal of \$130 million, as well as its revised and expanded goal of \$140 million.

Your support has provided our community with opportunities that have immeasurably enriched the division, including professorships, increased funds for teaching and research, high-profile lectures, and exciting additions to our arts offerings. Because of the campaign, the Randy L. and Melvin R. Berlin Family Lectures are able to bring distinguished artists, writers, and scholars to campus, elucidating fascinating contemporary literature, artwork, and architecture. The Joyce Z. and Jacob Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies continues the legacy of the University's first president, Hebrew bible specialist William Rainey Harper, by underwriting visiting scholars and lectures on Jewish history and culture.

Likewise, the Wilhelm von Humboldt Performance Fund promises intriguing annual concerts to rival this year's inaugural recital by piano duo Yaara Tal and Andreas Groethuysen. The Humanities Teaching Fellows program gives our new PhDs time to emerge from their dissertations, launch their initial publications, and burnish their teaching credentials.

The Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition (CCCC), the Center for the Art of East Asia, and the Franke Institute for the Humanities continue as indispensable crucibles for critical scholarly interaction, and our research funds have sent students and faculty worldwide to pursue their primary scholarship.

A few examples will put a face to the impact of your philanthropy. While familiar accounts of the Dreyfus Affair have focused on the political and anti-Semitic aspects of the case, **Orit Bashkin** (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) is rewriting the story to take into consideration a broader range of religious perspectives—Muslim and Christian, as



Anne Walters Robertson

well as Jewish. Similarly, **Alain Bresson** (Classics) is employing digital technologies in his study of currencies in the ancient world. Through a database that connects early texts on trade to ideas about how coins circulated, Bresson uses 3D modeling to illuminate the oldest economies, connecting the humanities and the social sciences.

Our graduate students have likewise benefited enormously from the campaign. The marvelous Grossman Ensemble of the CCCC performed the works of student composers **David "Clay" Mettens** and **Will Myers**. Through its commitment to high-caliber performances, the ensemble provides our students with multiple rehearsals and sustained interaction with performers. These features of the CCCC, so essential to helping our young composers establish themselves, are rare in the performing arts world.

I hope illustrating the variety and scope of research and creative work of my colleagues will explain why we are so grateful for your support. As we enter the post-campaign period, I want to ensure that we preserve our distinctive brand of inquiry and impact in the Division of the Humanities. I count myself fortunate to collaborate with you in this effort.

*Anne W. Robertson*

Anne Walters Robertson  
Dean, Division of the Humanities  
Claire Dux Swift Distinguished Service Professor  
Department of Music

P.S. As this issue was going to press, the coronavirus was creating uncertainty in many aspects of our lives and work. I hope that you and your family are safe and healthy.



# A PHILOSOPHER AT THE BALLET

BY LUCAS MCGRANAHAN

Kristin Boyce traces an ancient tradition to the modern stage.

The story of a philosopher’s residency at New York University’s Center for Ballet and the Arts begins at a drinking party in ancient Greece. **Kristin Boyce**, AM’94, PhD’10, an assistant professor of philosophy at Mississippi State University, is one of seven scholars spending part of this academic year at the center pursuing scholarship on the history, practice, and performance of ballet.

For Boyce, academic philosophy—focused on technical problems in epistemology, metaphysics, and metaethics—has largely ceded the ground of character-formation to the arts. Or one could say that the arts, including performing arts such as ballet, have retained something philosophical about them, in an ancient sense.

Her touchstone is Plato’s *Symposium*, which describes a wine-fueled speechmaking contest paying tribute to the god of love Eros. She reads the work as

embodying a certain view of conversation, not as mere transmission of information, but as formative.

The heart of the dialogue is Socrates’s speech, an account of an edifying conversation about love he once had with a priestess named Diotima of Mantinea. One of the few female figures in Plato’s dialogues, Diotima fascinates Boyce because she is credited with introducing a profound idea to the Western philosophical tradition: that of conversation as an elevated form of love with knowledge as its object.

“In our contemporary moment, what does that kind of soul-shaping conversation look like?” Boyce asks. “And is there any sense in which philosophy shares responsibility for that kind of conversation with different arts?”

These are the questions she is exploring in her NYU fellowship, which runs from January to May

this year. She is using the time to make progress on a book, tentatively titled “Diotima at the Ballet: Re-inventing Modernism in Philosophy and the Arts.” Being located at NYU allows her to focus on the chapters on New York–based choreographer Alexei Ratmansky, who in her view has reinvigorated ballet as an art form, in part by perpetuating a form of artistic conversation in the Socratic (or Diotimic) sense. Indeed, one goal of her residency is to attend as many Ratmansky performances as possible. “Anything I’m trying to think about,” she says, “I think about it better if I’m thinking about it in the company of his choreography.”

Boyce herself dances “almost every day,” considering it a matter of due diligence—as well as enjoyment—to both consume and participate in the art form she is writing about.

Along with a philosopher-priestess and a cutting-

A scene from *Serenade* after Plato's "Symposium" choreographed by Alexei Ratmansky, one of Boyce's inspirations and scholarly subjects.

In our contemporary moment,  
what does that kind of soul-  
shaping conversation look like?

”

—Kristin Boyce, AM'94, PhD'10



edge choreographer, the eclectic cast of Boyce's book manuscript includes American novelist Henry James, who was a focus of her UChicago dissertation, and Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen.

Boyce always had broad interests. Growing up, she was passionate about theater and mathematics, and as an undergraduate at Hobart and William Smith Colleges she double majored in mathematics and religious studies. She was drawn to the latter subject because of the papers she could write tying together religious and literary themes. She decided to attend UChicago's Divinity School on the advice of **Mary Gerhart**, AM'70, PhD'73, one of her undergraduate religious studies professors.

"I had a lot of freedom in the Divinity School," Boyce says, noting that this is where she was first formally introduced to philosophy—a disci-

pline that seemed to offer the conceptual resources and synthetic viewpoint necessary to think through the relationship between knowledge and artistic practice.

Recognizing that her interests lay less in religious traditions than in a certain set of philosophical questions, she pivoted from her doctoral work in the Divinity School to a clean slate in the Department of Philosophy within the Division of the Humanities. Although she was new to the field and her focus on the arts was somewhat unorthodox, Boyce says she felt greatly supported during her time in the department. "UChicago is a place where there is a very deep and active interest in interdisciplinary work. And I'm grateful for that."

Boyce is now teaching philosophy courses—Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Logic—

that she never took as a student. But it would be hard to tell: she was awarded Mississippi State's Humanities Teacher of the Year in 2018. At the start of college, students "think that class is about learning a particular set of information and showing that they have mastered that," she says. "In my teaching in philosophy, I try to work against that basic way of understanding what it means to become an educated person."

Unsurprisingly, in the classroom Boyce focuses on conversation, including critical Socratic questioning about the meaning and purpose of enduring texts. Why would Plato bother to capture a certain symposium in writing, and why are we still reading it today? Perhaps, she suggests, this question is not so different from that of why ballet companies continue to find meaning in staging and reinterpreting the same core repertoire. ■

LEARN MORE ABOUT BOYCE AND DIOTIMA at [tableau.uchicago.edu/boyce](http://tableau.uchicago.edu/boyce).



*Bridges to Prosperity, where Alissa Davis is director of business development, helps build bridges in remote areas like this one in Bolivia.*

# MISSION DRIVEN

BY SUSIE ALLEN, AB'09

Three alumni discuss their careers in the nonprofit sector.





Alissa Davis



John Glier



Jennifer Harris

**Alissa Davis, AM'12**, participated in volunteer work all her life but never knew do-gooding could become a career until her time in MAPH, when she started working with an organization called Jumpstart for Young Children. Now, she's director of business development at Denver-based Bridges to Prosperity, which builds footbridges in isolated communities, connecting them to markets, schools, and health care. "There isn't a typical day, but that's what's most exciting," she says.

**John Glier, AM'74**, is chief executive officer of Grenzebach Glier and Associates (GG+A), a global consulting firm that provides strategic direction and philanthropic counsel to many leading universities, academic health care institutions, and cultural and human service organizations. While working on his PhD in comparative literature, he was hired as the administrative director of the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis. He joined GG+A in 1981.

**Jennifer Harris, AM'02**, always knew she would either work in academia or in service of organizations designed to do good. After a stint at the Chicago Humanities Festival and several years of teaching, she took a job with the University of California, San Diego's health sciences advancement team. In 2011 she founded JH Collective, a consultancy that provides nonprofit leaders and boards a holistic approach to fundraising, communications, and strategy.

*How has your humanities training helped your career?*

**AD:** My philosophy degree is the thing on my résumé that has made me the most valuable in NGO work. I think it's because that training gives me an ability to logically reason and see different paths to a given destination. I'm also our in-house writer. The ability to form a narrative with words is critical and largely undervalued by folks pursuing roles in this arena.

**JG:** What you learn most in the humanities is how to read, how to make thoughtful, balanced judgments, and how to edit not only what you write but what you think. That gives you what you need to be successful in this business: the skill of listening to other human beings, the ability to be thoughtful about different perspectives and points of view, and a sense of empathy. Empathy makes a difference in the nonprofit world, when what you're working for, and on behalf of, is a mission.

**JH:** Sharpening my ability to distill massive and often complex ideas in MAPH particularly positioned me to work in academia, especially fundraising. Fundraising leaders are stewards of big visions, connectors and conduits of social change. This requires deep curiosity, communication skills, and rigor—three things I fundamentally honed at U of C.

*What qualities help people succeed in nonprofit work?*

**JH:** I often say fundraising success is contingent on mindset and methods. When nonprofit leaders embody their call to purpose, there is no limit to what they can achieve. Today, I see a tremendous opportunity to reimagine the "nonprofit toolkit," especially in light of recent trends in turnover and burnout.

**AD:** I think you have to have an innate inability to sit with social injustice. This is hard work, and you aren't going to be paid lots of money to do it, so you have to be driven by something. You have to be driven by moral rage when you see people or places that you love hurt.

*Many entry-level nonprofit jobs involve fundraising, which makes some job seekers anxious or uncomfortable. What guidance would you give them?*

**JH:** When I work with nonprofit leaders and boards, I discover that the barriers to financial sustainability

are tied to individual and collective belief systems. Many of us carry limited beliefs around money ("there's not enough," for example). Pair this with the long-held belief that fundraising is icky or a form of begging, and people often get stuck in their own story. I work with organizations to destabilize those stories.

**JG:** You're probably aware of surveys about what people fear most in life, or what causes the most pain. And right up there with the death of a loved one is asking somebody for money. It's viewed as this awful thing. But when you put it in the right terms, it's really inviting somebody to invest in something that matters to them and aligns with their values and what they want to accomplish in life. Talking about it that way takes a lot of fear out of it. It's me saying, "Let me help facilitate you giving to something that matters to you."

*What's the best part about working in the nonprofit sector?*

**JG:** The beauty of the sector is there are so many interesting facets to it. Our firm is advising at least three environmental initiatives; we've done work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as local Boys & Girls Clubs and YMCAs in cities across America. What is fascinating about our business is the extraordinary range of opportunity we have to make a difference in different places.

**JH:** The best part of this work is the people: the visionaries, the passionate and purpose-driven individuals, and the communities we work together to serve. It's a true privilege to share space with them, to guide them, and to carry their aspirations into reality.

**AD:** The direct connection to impact. I think that's why most people wind up in nonprofit work. I get to go home knowing that what I did helps to impact the world for the better in some way. A lot of people don't get to say that in their day-to-day jobs. ■

DAVIS, GLIER, AND HARRIS SHARE MORE at [tableau.uchicago.edu/nonprofits](http://tableau.uchicago.edu/nonprofits).

OPPOSITE: PHOTOGRAPHY BY COLLIN HUGHES; ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: PHOTO COURTESY GRENZEBACH GLIER AND ASSOCIATES; PHOTO COURTESY ALISSA DAVIS; PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELANIE EINZIG



R. Howard Courtney's collection of jazz posters spans nearly a century.

# WHAT THEY FOUND IN **THE LIBRARY**

BY JEANIE CHUNG

Hanna Holborn Gray Graduate Student  
Fellows develop their scholarship, teaching.





## INTO THE ARCHIVES

“It’s really easy to treat an archive as fixed,” says **Hannah Judd**, AM’19, “and the maker of it as impartial in a way that is not true.”

Judd, a third-year graduate student in ethnomusicology, had the opportunity to think about the nature of archiving and “the very active role that people take in collecting and then distributing materials” as a Hanna Holborn Gray Graduate Student Fellow. Launched in 2019 with the support of University President Emeritus Gray, the fellowships aim to build graduate students’ skills and knowledge in new areas of scholarship, as well as give them opportunities to explore alternative scholarly careers.

**Brenda Johnson**, Library director and University librarian, has been grateful for Gray’s support, saying that in addition to the benefits the fellows have gotten, “The Library has gained the expertise and contemporary perspectives of some of the University of Chicago’s most talented graduate students.”

Gray Fellows work in multiple areas of the University of Chicago Library, from instruction to digital scholarship. As a University Archives Fellow, Judd went to work on a collection of more than 3,000 jazz posters, donated to the University by local collector R. Howard Courtney. Judd’s work involved cataloging and storing the posters and sorting them by size, performer or festival name, location, and date. She also read through and archived Courtney’s often copious notes about each poster: when and how he acquired it, how much he paid for it if he bought it, whether it was signed or not, and if so, the story behind the autograph. His notes sometimes included details about the performance itself: if it didn’t end up happening exactly as billed, or, occasionally, if it didn’t happen at all.

With a strong background in jazz studies, Judd found the work aligned with her research interests

“in this really serendipitous, exciting way.” After her summer 2019 fellowship, she continued work with the collection as a part-time staffer.

It’s also made her think more about a career in a library or archive. Given her strong interest in public-facing scholarship, Judd likes the idea of “clarifying something for somebody else to be able to use. I really find that meaningful and fulfilling work.”

## OUT OF THE PAST

As one of the inaugural Gray Fellows, **Carlos Cisneros**, was “ecstatic” to learn about the Metadata Fellowship for the Digital Media Archive (DMA) in winter 2019.

Cisneros, AM’18, is currently finishing his dissertation in Linguistics: a semantic analysis of an indefinite pronoun called the indiscriminative as used in English and the Mesoamerican language Mixtec.

For his fellowship he reviewed the metadata describing the content of the DMA’s extensive Mesoamerican language collection, ensuring that the descriptive categories assigned to each recording were consistent with the recording’s contents. He mainly relied on textual descriptions of the recordings to determine the appropriate classifications, but often took the opportunity to listen for himself.

“It was a chance for me to indulge in Mesoamerican studies,” he says of the fellowship, “as well as put my areal linguistics knowledge to good use.”

Although none of the recordings were Mixtec, studying them helped Cisneros understand Mesoamerica more broadly as a cultural and linguistic region. For example, recordings of prayers, chants, and music illustrated the extent to which

indigenous religious and musical practices have stayed intact since the introduction of Christianity.

Moreover, as a scholar who wants to help preserve knowledge of Mesoamerican languages, “whether it be through revitalization among communities or storing records in archives,” Cisneros said the fellowship was valuable as he accumulates his own recordings.

“It ultimately taught me about how archives operate, how to maximize my own organizational benefit from using information science tools,” he says, “and how I can contribute to more efficient utility of those tools for archives.”

## A NEW PERSPECTIVE

**Tynan Kelly**, a fifth-year PhD candidate in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, knows plenty about students in the College. He was one (AB’09), has taught them—and currently lives with them as a resident head in Jannotta House in Renee Granville-Grossman Residential Commons. But his Library Instruction Support Services Fellowship provided him with a new perspective on both undergraduate research and teaching.

“You engage academic scholarship very early on in your college career,” Kelly says, “but kind of at a surface level.”

His fellowship, spanning summer and fall 2019, gave him insight into how he might change that for today’s students. After reviewing the Library’s research guides and leading workshops for high school and college students, he developed and taught a workshop of his own during Autumn Quarter on building and maintaining a bibliography. The workshop took a holistic approach, focusing not on “how to find sources and throw them in a list at the end of your project, but rather how to search for sources in a way that helps you build your project, formulate your thesis, and contribute to your field.”

When Kelly was a teaching assistant in Islamic Thought and Literature during his fourth year as a graduate student, he found that undergraduates’ papers relied mostly on sources they’d found by searching online. Informed by his fellowship work, if he were to teach the course again he would set aside some time in discussion section to talk about research. Even 30 minutes could make a huge difference, he says: “Here’s where to go for further reading. Your textbook is not going to be sufficient.” ■

LEARN MORE ABOUT CISNEROS’S WORK at [tableau.uchicago.edu/cisneros](http://tableau.uchicago.edu/cisneros).





*Angels Unaware, a sculpture by Timothy Schmalz depicting migrants throughout history, was unveiled in St. Peter's Square in September 2019.*

# TWO PERSPECTIVES ON **MIGRATION**

AS TOLD TO CARRIE GOLUS, AB'91, AM'93

What does it mean to bear witness to the hopes and fears of migrants around the world?

**Rachel Cohen** and **Philip V. Bohlman** explore the stories—and sounds—of diverse people on the move.





**Rachel Cohen**, professor of practice in the arts in the Program in Creative Writing in the Department of English Language and Literature, is cofounder of the Migration Stories Project. Its publications include *Migration Stories: A Community Anthology* (2017) and a series of five chapbooks (2019).



**Philip V. Bohlman**, the Ludwig Rosenberger Distinguished Service Professor in Jewish History in the Department of Music, has published numerous books and articles on migration. During Autumn Quarter, he taught the course *Music and the Global Migration Crisis* for the first time.

When **Rachel DeWoskin** and I started the Migration Stories Project in 2016, we were concerned about the way public figures were referring to immigrants in a pejorative way. We wanted to shift the emphasis away from a label for a group of people and toward the process. Migration is such a deep part of human experience. It's part of everybody's story, every family's story.

This winter I'm teaching a class called Migration Essays for the first time. Some of my students are creative writing majors who have personal or family stories to tell. Others want to write broader historical narratives. Some are studying history or political theory and want to learn to write in a more open way for a wide audience.

The course is a part of a new cluster of study between English and Creative Writing. We're working with two people in English: **Sarah Johnson**, who studies archives, narrative forms, and the transatlantic slave trade, and **Josephine McDonagh**, who studies migration and British literature. In Creative Writing, Rachel DeWoskin taught Historical Fiction/Migration Stories in the fall, and some of her students are taking my course. There's also a Migration Poetics working group. There's really a lot happening, not just in English and Creative Writing, but all over the University.

I'm a product of migration, but I haven't written about it much. My grandparents and mother came from Europe after World War II, so my mother was born abroad and wasn't an American citizen for a long time. Different parts of my family came from Ireland, Poland, and Ukraine. I have one cousin from the part of the family that remained in Warsaw and ended up in the concentration camps during World War II. She survived and came here. I did some oral history work with her and wrote a short piece that was in *Poetry* magazine.

Writing about migration can offer solace, but that's not its only, or even main, purpose—it's more about bearing witness. For example, one of the Migration Stories chapbooks grew out of an oral history project with a man named José who was a survivor of the Guatemalan civil war. He's a wonderful storyteller but not a writer. I was able to link him up with **Felipe Bomeny** [AB'19], a History and Creative Writing major from a Latin American background, who was familiar with a lot of specifics of the language and history. They met for months, and the student wrote this beautiful piece, *Leaving Xelajú*. It was important to José [who preferred not to use his last name in the chapbook] because there were people in the story who had died, and he felt he owed them a record of their existence.

Some of the best work that's happening right now nationally in literature is paying attention to migration. I want the University of Chicago to be part of that, for human reasons, but also for literary reasons. ■

I come from a generation of humanists and social scientists that was very interested in immigration and ethnicity. My book *The Land Where Two Streams Flow* [University of Illinois Press, 1989] is a study of Israel as a place formed by migration and multiple identities. Those are the two streams of the title. Migration challenges your ethnic identity; sometimes it creates ethnic identity.

In the 1990s, there was increasing academic interest in migration and mobility. Mobility studies, which began around this time, is connected more with Marxist studies and studies of labor. There was also a shift in the studies of cultures in which mobility and migration were historically part of their identity—Jewish history, which I study, and what used to be called Gypsy studies. This began to take a radically new form: not so much studying the treasure of Roma culture and music, but looking at the way the Roma continue to be oppressed and forced to move.

The students in *Music and the Global Migration Crisis* produced some wonderful papers. There was a paper on a particular genre of music and prayer that unifies the Rohingya. A paper on sound across the Korean demilitarized zone. A study on Japanese indentured laborers in Hawaii and their repertory of music about the migration experience.

This spring I'm teaching a course, which I've taught before, on the Eurovision Song Contest. It's a highly political event that began in 1956, partly as a response to the Soviet invasion of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Questions of migration come up a great deal—for example, whether Algerians or Francophone Africans perform for France, whether Roma are performing. Last year, when it took place in Israel, there was a lack of Palestinian representation, which was very controversial.

In addition to my teaching and academic work, I serve as artistic director of the New Budapest Orpheum Society, ensemble in residence for the Division of the Humanities. Our second CD, *Jewish Cabaret in Exile* (2009), focused on different repertoires that formed around ideas of exile. Our current project, which we'll record this year, is on the question of return and migration. Since the worldwide migration crisis, these themes have become intensified in our work.

In some fields of music scholarship, there's sometimes the attitude that the music of migration isn't important. This is not a music that's being played at Symphony Center or in the big festivals. But there's a refugee opera company in Germany now, for example. I think the most commonly misunderstood aspect of migration is that it's not our concern, that it doesn't belong in our world: *Why can't I just listen to the Beethoven piano sonatas? Why do I have to listen to this stuff when it makes me uncomfortable?* There's nothing wrong with music of great beauty making you uncomfortable. ■

OPPOSITE: PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIMOTHY SCHMALZ; ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHY © VIDURA JANG BAHADUR; PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ZICH

GET A FREE COPY OF *MIGRATION STORIES: A COMMUNITY ANTHOLOGY* at [knowledge.uchicago.edu/record/1236](https://knowledge.uchicago.edu/record/1236).



## YOUNG FACULTY FOCUS

*English junior faculty members  
Timothy Harrison, Sonali  
Thakkar, Zachary Samalin,  
Julie Orlemanski, Benjamin  
Saltzman, and Edgar Garcia.*



# TEAM SPIRIT

BY COURTNEY C. W. GUERRA, AB'05

Assistant professors in English collaborate  
across diverse subfields.



From day one, you're very involved in the life of the department, so you feel like a full member as opposed to someone on the periphery.

—Timothy Harrison

English Language and Literature is the largest department in the Division of the Humanities. Such a big program could get unwieldy, or lopsided, but **Deborah Nelson**, the Helen B. and Frank L. Sulzberger Professor in English and department chair, has kept a balance, in seniority and rank as well as disciplinary specialization. Her efforts have given UChicago arguably “the most diverse English department in the country, not just in terms of our demographics, but also our field interests—preserving the traditional fields and expanding into new ones.”

English's disciplinary breadth has allowed the department's junior scholars to follow a variety of paths before settling in to specialized subfields that span centuries. **Sonali Thakkar**, one of six assistant professors interviewed for this piece, came to the discipline through a parallel interest in international relations, when she realized “many questions of transitional justice—memory and memorialization, reparation and redistribution, the re-telling of history—were issues of narration and storytelling.” She began studying postcolonial literature, “which often takes up issues of how to reconstitute politics and society after violence and conflict.” She's now completing a book on postwar conceptions of race and their influence on anticolonial and postcolonial thought.

**Benjamin Saltzman**—having just completed a book on secrecy in the early Middle Ages—has begun a new project that also examines violence, particularly the physical act of “looking away,” from antiquity through the late Middle Ages. “It's remarkable as a gesture because it can mean all these different things—shame, grief, mourning, disgust, and even the irrepresentability of emotion itself” in literature and visual art. The project began with a narrow focus on early medieval England, but

his colleagues within and beyond English inspired him to expand to other regions and eras.

The concept of disgust is key to **Zachary Samalin's** scholarship as well. His book, near completion, traces the history of disgust throughout the Victorian nineteenth century. He feels fortunate that the “department has a remarkable group of faculty whose work focuses on the nature of emotion and affect,” saying that even if he were appointed elsewhere, “these are the people whose work I would be drawing on.”

**Julie Orlemanski's** recent book explores medical understandings of the body in the Middle Ages, which evolved into a new project on “fictional bodies—bodies that are emerging from voices and text.” She's also fascinated by the development of fiction as a concept: “What does it mean to theorize fiction for earlier time periods, or for literary cultures that don't necessarily have the same categories as ours?”

An influx of junior faculty over the past five years has helped cultivate a “real intellectual community,” notes Samalin. “I'm continually amazed, not only by how talented and creative my junior colleagues are, but by how warm and supportive they are.” Saltzman describes a rare environment “where everyone's invested in each other's success,” defined by what Orlemanski calls “an essence of shared conversation and shared intellectual stakes.”

Integrating assistant professors into the department requires thoughtful mentorship, Nelson notes. “I try to titrate their involvement, but at the same time they're really full-fledged colleagues.” While assistant professors need time to develop their own research and teaching, Nelson explains, it's crucial to consult them regarding faculty appointments and graduate admissions: “When you hire someone for their particular insight and ability

to navigate their field, you want their input! They are the experts, and you don't have the option of not using their expertise.”

**Timothy Harrison** agrees: “It's very collaborative, not competitive. And from day one, you're very involved in the life of the department, so you feel like a full member as opposed to someone on the periphery.”

Harrison's forthcoming book is on poetry's influence on the nascent understanding of consciousness in the late seventeenth century. His follow-up project considers how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets engaged with the emerging modern concept of life by using it to structure their characters' first-person experience of expending effort—“animating” the concept in a particular time and place.

Like his first book, this next one will be developed in response to his colleagues' critiques on early drafts. “One of the things that I really appreciate about this place,” he explains, “is the generosity and the rigor of engagement.”

**Edgar Garcia** observes, “Our department has so much intellectual heterogeneity—doing different kinds of things from different angles. I'm always learning from my colleagues for that reason.” A poet as well as a scholar, Garcia embodies that heterogeneity. He just completed his first book, on the contemporary legacy of indigenous sign systems, and his next project is on the relationship between divination and human migration.

He says that the entire department is “committed to the project of intellectual conversation.” The collaborative ethos transcends subfields, flourishing, as Orlemanski puts it, “no matter what period or archive people are working on.”

“That all sounds very ‘school spirit,’” says Garcia with a laugh, “but it's true.” ■



# A JESUIT'S JOURNEY

*Michael Czerny joins the ranks of Catholic cardinals in a ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica in October 2019.*

## Michael Czerny continues a lifetime of social justice work as a cardinal.

Jesuit priest **Michael Czerny**, PhD'78, was at a landless workers' center on the outskirts of São Paulo when he learned that he would be made a cardinal. His service in South America dates to his cofounding of the Toronto-based Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice—later relaunched as the Jesuit Forum—in 1979 when he was fresh out of an interdisciplinary humanities doctoral program at the University of Chicago.

Pope Francis officially elevated Czerny to his new role on October 5, 2019. Today, donning a cardinal's distinctive crimson garments and large pectoral cross, Czerny is among those responsible for electing the next pope.

Czerny's choice of cross says much about him: fashioned out of the remains of a migrant boat, it represents his work as undersecretary of the church's Migrants and Refugees Section, a position he has held since 2017. It also symbolizes his family history. After surviving the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia—his mother was imprisoned in a concentration camp for having Jewish grandparents—his parents fled to Canada by ship with Michael, then a toddler, and his newborn brother in 1948 as Soviet influence grew.

Since his ordination in 1973, Czerny has worked steadily on issues of social justice, focusing on the most vulnerable populations. In addition to his

work with the Jesuit Centre and with migrants, he served as founding director of the African Jesuit AIDS Network from 2002 to 2010. Probably his most recognized humanitarian intervention, however, came in response to a much-publicized crisis in Central America.

In 1990 Czerny came to El Salvador's University of Central America to help lead the Jesuit school's administration in the wake of the brutal murders of six priests—including social psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró, AM'77, PhD'79—along with their housekeeper and her daughter, by a government battalion in 1989 during the country's protracted civil war. Since the Jesuits had encouraged dialogue between the military junta government and leftist guerillas, they were viewed as potential subversives.

For two years Czerny served as the university's vice rector and director of its Institute for Human Rights. "Both an effect and cause of the war was the violation of human rights," he says. His role was to provide a "reliable public way of knowing what was going on." Czerny returned to El Salvador in November 2019 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the slayings.

His lifelong humanitarian work has roots in his studies at UChicago. His dissertation, a study in Marxist-Christian dialogue, attempted to think across geopolitical divides at a time when many

more people worldwide were living under explicitly Marxist rule. He earned his PhD in the Committee on the Analysis of Ideas and Study of Methods, which, though now disbanded, had an interdisciplinary mission that is still close to the heart of the Division of the Humanities today. This experience "ended up giving me a kind of flexibility and ability to think on my feet in different contexts that has proven indispensable," he says.

"They cared about us," Czerny says, referring to the program's founder Richard McKeon—whose work with UNESCO helped inspire the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights—and to other faculty in the Division of the Humanities and the Divinity School, which he described as a second home. "And they also cared passionately about their fields of inquiry and communicated that passion."

There is no shortage of work to which Czerny can turn his own passion and critical acumen as a cardinal. Here he cites the climate crisis, referencing Pope Francis's call to address global poverty and environmental devastation simultaneously. That these two moral struggles are deeply intertwined is, Czerny says, "a basic Christian truth and a basic human truth, which world leadership is having a hard time getting into focus—what Pope Francis calls caring for our common home." —L. M. ■

LEARN MORE ABOUT CZERNY'S EXPERIENCE IN EL SALVADOR at [tableau.uchicago.edu/czerny](http://tableau.uchicago.edu/czerny).



# EXCERPT: ***THIS WIDE AND UNIVERSAL THEATER***

BY DAVID BEVINGTON

*In memory of award-winning Shakespeare scholar and beloved UChicago professor David Bevington (1931–2019), Tableau presents a selection from his book *This Wide and Universal Theater: Shakespeare in Performance, Then and Now* (University of Chicago Press, 2007). In this excerpt, Bevington discusses how less can be more on stage.*

When William Poel started his Elizabethan Stage Society in 1901 with an intent of restoring something closer to original Shakespearean staging, then, he was doing something revolutionary. His undertaking was both a historical restoration and a bold break with tradition. By abandoning expensive verisimilitude in favor of simpler sets nearly devoid of scenic representation, Poel revisited what he perceived as the essential idiom of the Shakespeare script, moving rapidly from scene to scene without a shift in sets, relying on the audience's imagination to create the desired illusory effect. At the same time, by doing so he also aligned himself with a movement toward theatrical self-awareness that was to be further developed in the twentieth century by avant-garde playwrights like Samuel Beckett and by experimental directors like Peter Brook. The stage was now capable of being presentational rather than representational, that is, descriptively and persuasively aware of its own artifices of illusion rather than wedded to a literalist notion of showing what the scene appears to call for in representational terms. What seemed so new in this movement was also perceived as a recapitulation of the moving spirit of Shakespeare's theatrical world.



At the heart of this discovery was the revelation of a paradox to which a great deal of modern theater is still committed: namely, that the more the theater eschews a literalist kind of realism, the more it invites the imaginative participation of the audience and thereby fosters a more active involvement of that audience. The result can be an intensifying of experience that increases rather than decreases a sense of what is “real.” The traditional proscenium arch theater, when compared with this experimental model, seems

inert, relegated to a self-contained illusion of reality separated from the audience by the “fourth wall” of proscenium arch and curtain.

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*From This Wide and Universal Theater: Shakespeare in Performance, Then and Now by David Bevington. © 2007 by the University of Chicago. Reproduced by the publisher. All rights reserved. [press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo4176278.html](http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo4176278.html). ■*

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**WATCH BEVINGTON EXPLORE THE THEME OF LOVE IN *HAMLET*** at [alumni.uchicago.edu/bevington](http://alumni.uchicago.edu/bevington).



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SAVE THE DATE

**HUMANITIES DAY 2020**

Saturday, October 17

Mark your calendar for **UChicago's annual Humanities Day** celebration featuring faculty members from the Division of the Humanities. All events—lectures, tours, and exhibits—are free and open to the public. Registration opens in mid-August. Visit [humanitiesday.uchicago.edu](http://humanitiesday.uchicago.edu) to sign up for email alerts and program updates.

*We are carefully monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in locations where the University has scheduled events and programs. Information will be made available should any changes become necessary.*