Never-ending Stories
Anne Harrington on the Cultural Power of Mind-Body Medicine

Engineering and Applied Sciences Gets Social

A Conversation with Leo Beranek

New Writing by Harvard Faculty: Drew Faust, Stephen Marglin, and Ruth Wisse
Never-ending Stories
Historian of science Anne Harrington talks about her new book, The Cure Within, and the cultural power of mind-body medicine.

Engineering and Applied Sciences Gets Social
Inside the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and how its scientists and researchers are reaching across the University to work on I-commerce, global health, and climate change.

A Conversation with Leo Beranek
The sound-engineering icon discusses his boyhood, career highlights, and future technology on the occasion of his newly published memoir.

New Writing by Harvard Faculty

Alumni Books
This time, the scholarly riches include volumes on corruption in the European Union, “terrorromics,” and the language of illness.
from the dean

The Indispensable Role of the Mentor

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences draws together a remarkable range of disciplines, fields, and approaches to knowledge. Among the some 55 departments and programs constituting GSAS is the widest range of scholarly orientations, methods, and epistemologies. Even within fields, there are ongoing and newly arising controversies and disagreements about how best to proceed with our academic inquiries. This intellectual heterogeneity defines our work.

Nonetheless, certain common values and commitments draw us together. Perhaps none is more important than our desire to mentor the next generation of scholars, researchers, and teachers who will go on to make their own important contributions to new knowledge. Mentoring is at the very core of any great academic institution, and it certainly is at Harvard. That said, we continue to search for an adequate definition of what in practice constitutes great mentoring.

Certainly mentoring is related to what we know as academic advising. But the term “mentor” implies a deeper and more intensive, longitudinal relationship. Mentors are often thought of as role models and, though this seems appropriate, this perception inadequately captures the dynamic qualities that characterize great mentoring. Some observers liken mentoring to an apprenticeship. But this too underestimates the close, reciprocal nature of mentoring that seeks to produce independent and critical contributors to knowledge.

Any of us who have had the benefit of great mentoring understand at least some of its essential qualities and characteristics. The relationship, like others of similar importance, is built of mutual trust and respect. But in its attempt to serve the goals of work, attain knowledge, and encourage independence, it seeks to transcend that very relationship. So, although mentors seek to nurture students, the goal of the relationship is the autonomy of the mentee.

Further, the mentoring relationship must be able to sustain intense criticism and evaluation, so it requires fundamental support and confidence in the constructive nature of the exchange. As a result, we must set a strong institutional context to build and sustain these critical relationships that stand at the core of graduate education. Superb graduate mentoring must be an accepted standard at an institution such as Harvard.

Over a career, few of us will find all the help we seek in a single mentor. As a result, it makes sense for mentees to seek advice and help broadly and from those best able to provide it in a particular context (around research, teaching, and professional goals). One role of the mentor is to help assure that our students find the help they need.

Each March, Harvard’s Graduate Student Council confers the Everett Mendelsohn Awards for Excellence in Mentoring. The award, now in its tenth year, is named for one of my longtime colleagues in the History of Science Department who always has embodied great mentoring: kind, patient, critical, probing, and caring. It recognizes our steadfast commitment to the values inherent in great mentoring: supporting, encouraging, and promoting graduate students’ research, education, professional and personal development, and career plans.

This year’s award recipients included faculty in Slavic languages and literatures, the history of science and civilizations, health policy, visual and environmental studies, and psychology.
Never-ending Stories

THE CULTURAL POWER OF MIND-BODY MEDICINE

Pierre André Brouillet's painting Une leçon Clinique à la Salpêtrière (1887) depicts the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893) administering to a woman experiencing “major hysteria.”

In this article, published a few years ago in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, “Linda” consults her physician about symptoms suggestive of a degenerative neuromuscular disorder—fatigue, myalgia, joint pain. Yet a series of doctors, including two neurologists, can find nothing medically wrong with the woman. She is advised to see a psychiatrist but balks—vehemently—at the suggestion. Patients like “Linda,” writes Harrington, are not taken very seriously by their doctors or by their insurance companies, yet they suffer physical debilitation.

Meanwhile, there are patients unlike “Linda,” who present detectable symptoms of a disease but are told nothing can be done to cure them. These individuals can be left feeling betrayed, angered, or abandoned. All such patients—“the legions of Lindas” and otherwise—may find themselves asking, Why me? Why this disease?

When medicine or surgery is ineffective, when doctors cannot cure or find medical explanations for illness, the dissatisfied, skeptical, searching, or desperate patient has long turned to mind-body medicine.

“Western cultures,” Harrington writes, “have provided people with a great stockpile of religious, moral, and social stories to help them answer the great ‘why’ questions of their suffering…” But modern medicine largely falls short in answering those questions, or denies their importance.

Mind-body medicine, in contrast, says that these kinds of questions are not only morally and socially significant; they are also scientifically and clinically valid. Mind-body medicine comprises a wide-ranging and ever-changing collection of healing rituals, psychological interventions, and behavior modifications. Going back a few centuries it has included hypnosis, meditation, placebos, positive thinking, and therapy groups.

In her book, Harrington, professor and chair of the Department of the History of Science, traverses the history of mind-body medicine by discerning that its many stories fall into six core narratives: from the old days when “The Power of Suggestion” held sway to the modern “Eastward Journey,” in which meditation is adapted for Western seekers and Asian spiritual leaders are admired as a counterpoint to mainstream medical practitioners.

For six years, Harrington co-directed Harvard’s Mind, Brain, and Behavior Initiative, and she was also a consultant for the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Mind-Body Interactions. In the course of her research, however, she began to find the stuff of mind-body medicine, taken as a whole, “more and more incoherent.” Researchers, journalists, laypeople, scientists, and others looking into alternative medicine, she writes, “are confronted not with an integrated vision or program but with a patchwork of approaches and understandings that pull in many different directions.”

Harrington turned quite naturally to her own discipline for resolution. “For me, history … can be a very powerful way of making sense of our own time,” she says. “I hope that what readers get out of the book is an ability to look with fresh eyes at our present world of beliefs about the ways in which our minds can heal our bodies and make us sick or well, and the practices we use.”
“SOMETIMES I THINK WE MAY HAVE DONE TOO GOOD OF A JOB PUSHING THE THEME OF COLLABORATION,” jokes Julie Holbrook as she glances at a wall of boxes containing some 1,300 graduate applications to the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS). Holbrook, director of graduate admissions at SEAS, says that students are attracted to SEAS precisely because of the School’s notable role as a connector with the rest of the Harvard campus.

That collaboration is king is no accident. At the September 2007 launch of SEAS (formerly a “Division”), Harvard President Drew Faust affirmed the power of engineering “to connect, to bridge, and therefore to enliven and strengthen a great many parts of our University …”

Venkatesh “Venky” Narayanamurti, who will step down in September 2008 after serving a decade as dean of SEAS, arrived, in fact, with the goal of building bridges. Today SEAS has active ties to nearly a dozen FAS departments, from physics to biology, and to entire schools, from business to medicine.

“The most common question I get from new grad students is: ‘Okay, so now that I am here, how do I collaborate?’” says Holbrook. After a friendly reminder about keeping their dreams in line with basic requirements (“No, you cannot sanction your own PhD program to build a fleet of evil robots”), she suggests students do what engineers do best, emulate and adapt collaborations that have already worked well (see following pages.)

Even in the realm of research, however, many of the most productive partnerships are surprisingly informal—resulting from an unexpected encounter in the Yard or stemming from a shared passion for, say, Formula One racing. Consummate collaborator L. Mahadevan, the Lola England de Valpine professor of applied mathematics, who has investigated everything from Venus flytraps to magic carpets, adds that, in addition to being social, “there’s no reason good science can’t be fun.”
Collaboration at Work

PEERING INTO ECONOMICS

For Sven Seuken, one humble hyphen has become a highway. The PhD candidate’s investigations of e-commerce have put computer science, economics, ethics, and even Internet television all on the same route.

Working with his advisor David Parkes, the John L. Loeb associate professor of the natural sciences, Seuken collaborated with colleagues from the Netherlands in applying a novel peer-to-peer (P2P) video-sharing application called Tribler (imagine combining YouTube with BitTorrent) to explore a model for electronic commerce (see http://tv.seas.harvard.edu).

It all started in early 2007, when Johan Pouwelse, the technical director of the Tribler project, visited Parkes’s EconCS group to present research on P2P video sharing. “Over dinner, we discussed how to provide better incentives for users to share their files,” says Seuken. “Such questions are at the heart of our research on computational game theory.”

Three months later, by combining their expertise in electronic market design with Pouwelse’s knowledge of P2P systems, the team came upon the idea of turning a P2P video-file-sharing system into a full electronic marketplace. Instead of the usual cash or credit, the team imagines a way to calculate and share value.

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Social

BY MICHAEL RUTTER

Collaboration at Work

alumni notes

Cellular and Developmental Biology/Medical Sciences

In January 2008, Louis Myers, PhD ’85, cellular and developmental biology, and Diana Collazo, PhD ’94, medical sciences, were named partners at Lowrie, Lando & Anastasi (LL&A), an intellectual property law firm based in Cambridge, Mass. They are two of six respected biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and chemical science practitioners from the large international firm of Fish & Richardson, PC, who joined LL&A to establish a biotechnology and pharmaceutical practice at the firm.

Chemistry

John Katzenellenbogen, AB ’66, PhD ’69, won the 2008 Gustavus John Esselen Award for Chemistry in the Public Interest by the Northeastern Section, American Chemical Society, it was announced in March. He will be honored at a ceremony held at Harvard’s Mallinckrodt Chemistry Laboratories in April. The award honors Katzenellenbogen for his pioneering work in applying his studies of estrogen receptor structure to the diagnosis and treatment of certain cancers. Following the award ceremony, he will discuss “Estrogens and Estrogen Receptors as a Nexus of Chemistry and Biology in Health and Disease.”

Katzenellenbogen is currently the Swanlund professor of chemistry at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

History


John C. Greene, PhD ’52, published The Wonderful Adventures of Nat Selleck and Eva Lou Shinn in Sci Fi Land: A Spoof on Evolution and Natural Selection by A. Nonimous (2007, The Paige Press) in which, he writes, the reader is “challenged to decide whether the author...

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SOUND THINKING

Acoustical Pioneer Leo Beranek Reflects on His Life and Career

BY SUSAN LUMENELLO
after the Port Authority decision, writes Beranek, he and his company were “vilified by the industry.”

Aircraft manufacturers have long since accepted these standards, but for several years after the Port Authority decision, writes Beranek, he and his company were “vilified by the industry.”

IN HIS LONG LIFE, Leo Beranek has never really stopped working. As a boy, he fixed radios for his family and in high school and college for pay, a talent he parlayed into an engineering scholarship to Harvard’s Graduate School of Engineering in the 1930s.

After receiving his doctor of science degree in 1940, Beranek stepped into the war effort and used his burgeoning talent in acoustics to run Harvard’s Electro-Acoustic Laboratory (and later its Systems Research Laboratory). In the former he played a major role in improving voice communications and reducing noise in combat aircraft, and in the latter fending off the Kamikaze threat, work for which he was later honored by President Truman.

Beranek left Harvard for MIT to teach communications engineering and run their noted Acoustics Laboratory. His business demands grew so much, however, that he left his tenured position to run a consulting firm full-time with physicist Dick Bolt and architect Robert Newman, in Cambridge.

The project that cemented the reputation of Bolt Beranek & Newman (BBN) as arguably the world’s foremost acoustical engineering firm took place in 1950 at the Lewis Flight Propulsion Laboratory (now part of NASA) in Cleveland. Beranek and colleagues developed the “world’s biggest muffler,” which enabled government testing of supersonic jets to proceed without noise and vibrations in the surrounding communities.

Under Beranek’s management, BBN projects over the years helped define the modern history of engineering: from creating ARPANET (the immediate antecedent of the Internet) and e-mail, to crafting sound design for the United Nations General Assembly Building and helping curb noise pollution from commercial aircraft. Along the way, Beranek published several textbooks on acoustical engineering that have become foundational works in the field.

Beranek also became known as the man to see about the sound design of outstanding concert halls and opera houses around the world. One of his most recent projects was delivered about ten years ago, the multipurpose complex in Japan called Tokyo Opera City. It was, writes Beranek, the most successful collaboration of his career.

Risk-taking seemed to be part of Beranek’s business pattern: In the 1970s, he put up his life savings in an FCC contest to obtain a license to operate Channel 5, WCBV-TV in Boston. The New York Times praised the station as “probably the country’s best,” says Beranek. WCBV was sold in 1982 at the highest price then ever paid for a broadcasting station.

The Iowa farm boy had become a technological pioneer and an entrepreneurial icon. The awards that have come his way attest to his brilliance and influence: gold medals from the Acoustical Society of America and the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, a Distinguished Service Award from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the President’s National Medal of Science.

He spoke recently to Colloquy on the occasion of the publication of his autobiography, Riding the Waves: A Life in Sound, Science, and Industry (MIT Press).

One of the things that stands out in the book is how hard-working you’ve been your entire life and how dedicated to education. Did you ever think back when you were taking a horse-drawn wagon to grammar school that you’d end up where you are today?

LB: I didn’t envision much during those horse-drawn days because I hadn’t any knowledge of how people elsewhere lived. I lived at home and went to school and that’s essentially it. But when I was about nine years old, my mother started emphasizing that I get a college education. She did that because she had gone two years to the Iowa State Teachers College, and indeed she taught school before she was married. This gave her a feeling for advanced education, so she thought I should do the same thing.
THE TRAGEDY OF WAR, THE ECONOMICS OF COMMUNITY, AND THE LOSS OF SOVEREIGNTY

Colloquy regularly presents excerpts from new books written by Harvard faculty in the arts and sciences. In this issue, we feature recent work by historian Drew Faust, economist Stephen Marglin, and literary scholar Ruth Wisse. —The editor

“The Work of Death”
By Drew Gilpin Faust
Faust is president of Harvard University and the Lincoln professor of history.

BODIES WERE IN IMPORTANT WAYS the measure of the war—of its achievements and its impact; and indeed, bodies became highly visible in Civil War America. Commanders compared their own and enemy casualties as evidence of military success or failure. Soldiers struggled for the words to describe mangled corpses strewn across battlefields; families contemplated the significance of newspaper lists of wounds: “slightly, in the shoulder,” “severely, in the groin,” “mortal, in the breast.” They nursed the dying and buried their remains. Letters and reports from the front rendered the physicality of injuries and death all but unavoidable. For the first time civilians directly confronted the reality of battlefield death rendered by the new art of photography. They found themselves transfixed by the paradoxically lifelike renderings of the slain of Antietam that Mathew Brady exhibited in his studio on Broadway. If Brady “has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it,” wrote the New York Times.

This new prominence of bodies overwhelmingly depicted their destruction and deformation, inevitably raising the question of how they related to the persons who had once inhabited them. In the aftermath of battle survivors often shoveled corpses into pits as they would dispose of animals—“in bunches, just like dead chickens,” one observer noted—dehumanizing both the living and the dead through their disregard. In Civil War death the distinction between men and animals threatened to disappear, just as it was simultaneously eroding in the doctrines of 19th-century science.

The Civil War confronted Americans with an enormous task, one quite different from saving or dividing the nation, ending or maintaining slavery, or winning the military conflict—the demands we customarily understand to have been made of the Civil War generation. Americans North and South would be compelled to confront—and resist—the war’s assault on their conceptions of how life should end, an assault that challenged their most fundamental assumptions about life’s value and meaning. As they faced horrors that forced them to question their ability to cope, their commitment to the war, even their faith in a righteous God, soldiers and civilians alike struggled to retain their most cherished beliefs, to make them work in the dramatically altered world that war had introduced. Americans had to identify—find, invent, create—the means and mechanisms to manage more than half a million dead: their deaths, their bodies, their loss. How they accomplished this task reshaped their individual lives—and deaths—at the same time that it redefined their nation and their culture. The work of death was Civil War America’s most fundamental and most demanding undertaking.

“Economics, the Market, and Community”
By Stephen A. Marglin
Marglin (PhD ’65) is the Walter Barker professor of economics.

In 1990, a boy with adenosine deaminase (ADA) deficiency was born into an Amish community. ADA deficiency compromises the body’s immune system so...
drastically that survival beyond the age of three used to be quite rare. A related immune deficiency compelled another boy, David Vetter, born almost twenty years earlier, to spend the entire twelve years of his life in a confined environment specially designed to keep out chance infections. David, the subject of the John Travolta movie *The Boy in the Plastic Bubble*, succumbed when a bone-marrow transplant designed to supply the missing enzyme went awry, but for the Amish boy a drug was available to compensate for his body's immune deficiency. Taking this drug, he could hope for a fairly normal life, not unlike the life led by diabetics on insulin. And because the family income was sufficiently low, Medicaid would pay the costs, staggering though these were. The drug alone cost $114,000 per year, and additional costs would bring the annual total up to $190,000.

Happy ending? Not so fast. On principle, most Amish do not participate in government programs like Medicaid. If this money was to be spent on the boy, it would have to come from the community. But medication was not a short-term fix. The expenditure would go on indefinitely, and there was too little experience with the drug to predict its long-term consequences. Even with the drug, the boy might or might not make it into adulthood.

Anguished, his parents consulted the bishop and elders of their congregation. The newspaper reports ... are ambiguous, but my reading is that the congregation would provide counsel, and, having done so, would leave the decision to the parents.

The alternatives were clear: once Medicaid was eliminated from the menu of options, the choice boiled down to almost certain death for the child or economic stress, maybe even disaster, for the community.

The couple did not treat their baby. Three months later he was dead.

A local (non-Amish) physician who was asked by the congregation to evaluate treatment options offered this commentary: “What is at stake is the ability to maintain an independent culture.” When asked why he would not accept Medicaid, the boy’s father put it like this: “If we take money from the government, then we are not Amish.”

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**“The Great Experiment”**

By Ruth R. Wisse

Wisse is the Martin Peretz professor of Yiddish literature and professor of comparative literature.

[Image of Ruth R. Wisse]


**THE LOSS OF JEWISH SOVEREIGNTY** was the defining political event in the life of the Jewish people. Before then, Judea with its capital Jerusalem had been a province of the Roman Empire, paying heavy tribute to Rome yet conducting its affairs with perceived, if not complete, autonomy. Despite intense discord among Judea’s religious and political factions, King Herod had restored the splendor of the Temple, which served as the center of legislative and religious activity. But the capriciousness of Roman rule angered many Jews and provoked them to armed revolt. In 70 CE, following a three-year siege, Titus crushed the Jewish uprising and burned the Temple, leveling the city—as Josephus describes, so that “no one visiting the spot would believe it had once been inhabited.” Sixty-five years later, Rome put down a second Jewish rebellion with a brutality that deterred all further insurrection. Though some Jews always continued to live in the Land of Israel, the vast majority over the next 18 centuries tried to follow the Jewish way of life outside its borders.

Memory of the national defeat seemed to divide Jewish history into unequal parts: the relatively shorter span when Jews had inhabited their land and the longer stretch of exile when they were ruled elsewhere by others. Mourning the Great Destruction became so intense that it almost rivals praise of God as the central motif of Jewish worship. “Rebuild Jerusalem the holy city quickly in our time,” reads the liturgy incorporated into the grace after meals. Every Jewish ceremony and celebration invoked the Great Destruction and expectation of Return. When a Jew dies, family members are consoled with the words, “May God comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.” For three weeks of every year, culminating in the fast of the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, Jews commemorate the fall of Jerusalem. The annual Passover Seder concludes with the pledge, “Next year in Jerusalem.”

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But where do these beliefs originate? They come, she says, from stories—derived from mainstream science, religion, and pop culture—and are imbued in most of us simply from living in the world. We have all heard about how someone’s incurable cancer went into remission from a “laughing” cure, or how Tibetan lamas are able to raise or lower their body temperature just by thinking. Harrington compares the way we learn these stories to the ways we learn the common rules of etiquette: by being exposed to multiple concrete examples and figuring out the underlying rules.

“I spent a long time thinking about the narrative classifications that help us make sense of specific stories before I became persuaded that this was the way to write the book,” she says. “One of the things that persuaded me is that when I would tell people the stereotypical plot of one or another of these narratives, they’d realize they’ve always known them. I’m not inventing these narratives. They have the same kind of external status as any kind of cultural rule.”

One such narrative is “The Body That Speaks,” which helped give birth to psychoanalytic psychosomatic medicine: Its core idea is that illness and diseases can be brought about by “unhealthy” or repressed thoughts.

“This idea came as close to being mainstreamed in American medicine as anything in this history,” says Harrington. “It had its own professional organization, its own journal, its own research programs. It also had huge popular penetration: I talk about the fact that it was satirized in the musical *Guys and Dolls*.”

In the song “Adelaide’s Lament,” the desperate-to-marry Adelaide suffers from chronic respiratory problems because “‘The average unmarried female / Basically insecure / Due to some long frustration / May react / With psychosomatic symptoms ... Just from waiting around / For that plain little band of gold / A person can develop a cold!’”

What interests Harrington about a song featured in a successful mid-20th-century American musical is not the joke itself, but that the lyricist knew his audience—middle America—would get the joke.

“Positive thinking as a medical therapy, says Harrington, “probably endures because it also resonates with the can-do optimism, an ‘I-believe-I-can fly’ kind of American sensibility.”

“I had that kind of penetration,” Harrington says. “Everyone understood that if you repress your negative emotions or you have un-worked-out issues, you’re likely to succumb to some kind of disorder that bore a symbolic relationship to what was really going on. So you get ulcers or asthma—or a cold!”

That thinking was once commonly accepted, but it since has fallen on hard times. “Now the only place where you hear that kind of talk, interestingly, is on the margins of some holistic alternative medicine, particularly feminist, where it’s been given a different kind of spin,” she says. “People say: ‘The doctors no longer believe in these things, but you know that there’s a relationship between the fact that your husband is abusive to you and you’ve been constantly repressing your rage, and now you have cancer. You need to trust what your body is telling you.’ In this way, it’s been used in a kind of patient-oriented politics.”

Many of the core narratives of mind-body medicine go back centuries to Europe, with the “miracles” of Lourdes, and the work of Franz Mesmer, the 18th-century physician turned showman who secularized key aspects of the medieval ritual of exorcism (the banishing of invisible demons from the bodies of possessed people) and claimed to heal others through the use of “animal magnetism.” Mesmer blamed illness on imbalances in a person’s existing animal magnetism, which he would then correct by administering a dose from the overpowering supply from his own body. This was later reinterpreted as a kind of hypnotism.

With a series of “sweeping gestures to direct magnetic fluid to appropriate parts of the patients’ bodies,” Mesmer would induce trembling that led to a convulsive “crisis,” including screaming and fainting. These were conducted often for public consumption, and the patients were nearly always women.

Although Mesmer and other mesmerists occasionally healed the sick, their methods were deemed fraudulent by a Paris
medical commission. The “mere fact that a treatment worked—at least on some level, and some of the time—was not sufficient grounds itself to take it seriously,” Harrington writes.

Although these stories of miracles, exorcisms, and hypnotism—which Harrington groups under “The Power of Suggestion” narrative—have European roots, “The Power of Positive Thinking” narrative flowered in the New World.

It reached a crescendo with the immense mid-20th-century popularity of Norman Vincent Peale’s writings and later, in the 1970s, with the self-healing testimonies of the writer and editor Norman Cousins.

Peale was the New York pastor who reached millions through his weekly NBC radio program, which aired for more than 50 years. His 1952 book *The Power of Positive Thinking* became a best-seller and continues to sell 3,000 copies a week, according to Harrington. Thinking your way to health (and wealth, incidentally) was possible, Peale said. Millions agreed.

Cousins, a magazine editor, touted the “laugh cure,” based on his own personal journey of healing through positive thinking. After being diagnosed with a debilitating degenerative disorder, which his doctors had deemed terminal, Cousins recovered by watching Marx Brothers movies, reading humorous literature, and taking massive doses of vitamin C. He recounted the experience in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Had the article been submitted before the 1970s, Harrington writes, Cousins “might have had trouble winning a hearing” from the journal’s editorial board. But Cousins’s narrative appeared when the mainstream medical establishment was under attack for caring more about its own professional growth and status than the clinical needs of its patients. At the same time, his work coincided with a rising interest in traditional Asian medicines, homeopathy, and other alternative therapies such as biofeedback.

Positive thinking as a medical therapy, says Harrington, “probably endures because it also resonates with the can-do optimism, an ‘I-believe—I-can-fly’ kind of American sensibility. A European might say it’s naïve [to think that way], but we’d say we have the courage to believe in the impossible.”

Self-healing also presumes an individualistic attitude, very much rooted in American sensibilities. “A belief in our ability to heal [ourselves] has historically often been closely interwoven with our belief in our ability to also make ourselves rich and to make ourselves happy. Positive thinking started off as a particular claim about the effects of positive thinking on health. It generalized into a broader claim about the effects of positive thinking on wealth and in general on getting what you want in life.”

Today, that positive-thinking narrative can be seen in the success of another best-selling book, Rhonda Byrne’s *The Secret*. The “secret” of the recent best-seller is, essentially, that wishes make reality. The book’s predecessor, says Harrington, was the 1910 volume *The Science of Getting Rich*. “[This] came directly out of the mind-cure movement, part of this second generation of mind-cure writers,” says Harrington. “So there’s a fundamental and perhaps unexpected way in which the history of American religion has intersected with the history of American capitalism.”

Harvard researchers have also played a role in the history of mind-body medicine, none more so than Herbert Benson, a fixture on the Medical School faculty since 1969 and one who has held major appointments at teaching hospitals in the Boston area.

“He’s been a not-uncontroversial but very catalytic figure in this history,” says Harrington. “Benson’s importance lies not only in the research that he did [into meditation] but also in the ways he was able to translate this into a technique that millions bought into.” That technique was transcendental meditation (TM).
In the late 1960s, while the Beatles were helping to popularize the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and TM, Herbert Benson was a young cardiologist at Harvard studying the impact of stress on hypertension. While proving that behavior contributed to high blood pressure, he wondered: could behavior also lead to lowering blood pressure?

After initial hesitation, Benson left off studying monkeys and began studying TM practitioners, a risk for one so high up in the medical establishment. Consequently, Benson hosted the practitioners in his lab “after hours.” But he got results.

Benson found direct evidence that sitting quietly for 20 minutes and mentally reciting a repetitive word could ease some of modern life’s stresses on the human heart. Benson discarded the “mantras” and other spiritual rites that were part of TM and called his streamlined, Americanized version “the relaxation response.” In 1974, his book of the same name became a best-seller and, according to Harrington, is now in its 64th printing.

Before Benson came along, most people in the United States thought meditation “was a thing that hippies do to experience altered states of consciousness,” says Harrington. Today, most Americans—and scientists—accept that meditation is a good form of stress reduction.

Before Benson, there was Harvard’s Walter Bradford Cannon (1871–1945), a physiologist at the Medical School who “created the science that gave birth to the understanding of stress,” says Harrington. In studying the “fight or flight” response among animals, Cannon discovered that humans endure similar physical reactions to stressful situations. They aren’t worried about the cougar about to devour them but rather about the modern world of the 1930s eating them up with “fear and worry and hate.” Worry can lead to physical illness, and Cannon urged the medical establishment to take note.

Harrington is critical of how stress studies have evolved. “It’s kind of ironic that stress is the one [area of mind-body medicine] I’m skeptical about because, in some respects, it’s the one best grounded in physiology and laboratory research; it seems like it should be the most solid of everything,” she says.

“But I think [stress] has become a language that is so elastic and so generic that it describes a multitude of human experiences that have very little in common with each other. ... It becomes kind of a physiologized shorthand for human malaise, human anxiety, human fear, human suffering of all sorts. And I worry about all that’s lost in terms of human experience by that narrowing of our language, our vision, into a single word.

“There’s a certain interpretation of [stress that includes] everything from what’s happening to men on the battlefield, to how ... I can’t meet my mortgage payments, to what I’m feeling if my boss is giving me too much work [that has] created a kind of monosyllabic space in which to deal with the complexity of our experience,” she says.

One of the book’s notable features, however, is Harrington’s reluctance to disavow—or advocate—any one particular element of mind-body medicine. Readers, interviewers, and her own students have been denied a “scorecard” tallying up which forms are effective and which are not. Yes, Harrington criticizes the study of stress and, alternatively, waxes enthusiastic about research into the healing properties of social connections. But those opinions, she says, could change in a matter of years because “all of these stories are unfinished.”

Moreover, what works clinically is not the most important question when considering the historical saga of the field, she says. “Even [with] ideas I’m skeptical of—and I’m very skeptical of the wish-your-cancer-away-through-positive-thinking belief [for example]—I’m also very conscious of its cultural and social and political power. I take the effects of these beliefs seriously. They have real effects on people’s lives, both deeply empowering and deeply undermining.

“If you’re going to be interested in human experience, you have to follow all beliefs, even the ones that you personally don’t find that persuasive but that still have power in our culture.”

The late Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (pictured here in Vlodrop, Netherlands) brought the transcendental meditation movement to the West (with a little help from The Beatles). The spiritually based relaxation technique was further Westernized by Harvard cardiologist Herbert Benson, who adapted meditation into “the relaxation response,” helping practitioners to lower their blood pressure and ease the stresses of modern life.
to pay for purchases with a pocketful of bandwidth. For example, the more content (such as a video) a user uploads (i.e., earns) and the higher the quality of his or her contributions, the more he or she would be able to download later (i.e., spend) and the faster the download speed.

But, since people don’t always play fair (taking more content than they give) or act ethically (giving away or downloading copyrighted materials), Seuken admits the need for a system that can evaluate the trustworthiness of users. With proper internal regulation, one potential outcome of their virtual economy may be no less than the decentralization of the traditional monopolies, such as banks and commercial firms, which control online content and services.

The song goes, “Just a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down.” Even with advances in medicine, the best and most advanced drugs and procedures mean little if people cannot easily get the care they need.

With that philosophy in mind, bioengineering graduate student Yun-Ling “Ling” Wong worked with researchers at SEAS and the School of Public Health (HSPH), including Dean Barry R. Bloom, to develop a novel spray-drying method for preserving and delivering the most common tuberculosis vaccine. The low-cost technique offers several potential advantages over conventional freezing procedures, such as greater stability at room temperature and use in needle-free delivery. Both characteristics make the vaccine ideal for use in the developing world.

“You always have to have the big picture in mind, regardless of the small experiments in the lab,” says Wong. To gain that broad perspective, she worked with Medicine in Need (MEND), a Harvard start-up founded by her advisor, David Edwards, professor of the practice of bioengineering. MEND, with offices in Cambridge, Paris, and South Africa, aims to liberate “burdened populations from diseases of poverty through advanced drug vaccine delivery.”

Before she began to tackle a global-level problem, however, she had to address a more localized problem. “I originally was deciding between HSPH and SEAS,” recalls Wong, who was accepted by both programs. Happily, she found out that Bloom and Edwards had plans to collaborate, enabling her research to straddle both schools. Upon graduation in June, Wong will take advantage of yet another connection. She has a job lined up at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation—the very foundation that has supported much of her joint HSPH-SEAS endeavors.
ENGINEERED WEATHERING

Even with a November 2007 cover story on actress Charlize Theron, the editors of *Esquire* magazine found the space to name Kurt Zenz House’s carbon-sequestering process (burying CO₂ in the ocean floor) as among “six ideas that will change the world.” Not bad company, on both counts, for an Earth and Planetary Sciences graduate student in his late 20s.

Since the article appeared, House has upped the ante. He teamed up with Mike Aziz, the Gordon McKay professor of materials science in SEAS; Daniel Schrag, professor of earth and planetary sciences and professor of environmental science and engineering at SEAS; and researchers at Pennsylvania State University, to give nature a nudge. The group invented a “natural” technology that could reduce the accumulation of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) caused by human emissions.

By electrochemically removing hydrochloric acid from the ocean and then neutralizing the acid by reaction with silicate (volcanic) rocks, the researchers say they can accelerate natural chemical weathering, permanently transferring CO₂ from the atmosphere to the ocean. Unlike other ocean sequestration processes, the new technology does not further acidify the ocean and may be beneficial to coral reefs.

“The technology might enable us to turn back the clock on global warming,” House says. “Essentially, the process dramatically accelerates a cleaning process that nature herself uses for greenhouse gas accumulation.”

Although implementation would be costly and still requires further study, House says with the willing collaboration of scientists, industrialists, and politicians, the technology could help make the world a greener place.²

If Apple ever enters the medical field, Nan Sun and Yong Liu may get a call from Steve Jobs himself.

In collaboration with Hakho Lee in Ralph Weissleder’s group at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, the two engineering graduate students who work with Donhee Ham, the John L. Loeb associate professor of the natural sciences, built what may be the smallest complete Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) system to date.

NMR is the basis for most medical imaging devices, such as the familiar donut-shaped full-body scanners shown on TV medical shows such as “House.” The “nano” version of this system, which is about the size of a breadbox and weighs two kilograms (4.41 pounds), scans biological samples by using magnetic nanoparticles. To do so, the diminutive device relies on a sophisticated CMOS RF receiver chip...
Life in the racing pits began for Canadian-born PhD candidate Jacomo Corbo when he was named one of eight finalists in an Altran-sponsored engineering competition. The prize: a six-month work placement at the Renault team’s Formula One (F1) racing factory.

Although Corbo, who studies distributed computing and rational decision making, didn’t grab the top spot, Robin Tuluie, head of research and development for Renault, pulled him aside to ask a number of pointed questions about the finer points of game theory. One formal interview later, Corbo was contracted to be the team’s race strategist.

It turns out that game theory, a way to mathematically model decision problems whereby the best course of action depends in part on someone else’s course of action, is where the rubber hits the road in F1 racing. The sophisticated mechanics of F1 vehicles and the sport’s complicated rules necessitate the same kind of modeling computer scientists use to understand everything from behavioral economics to neural networks.

“An F1 team faces several difficult decision points during the typical two-hour, 200-mile race: when in the race to stop to add fuel and when to change tires,” says Corbo. “With the right timing, a driver can effectively ‘pass’ other cars while not moving an inch. Enter game theory to help a racing team find the right equations for a checkered flag.”

For the Renault team, the numbers didn’t lie. “At the end of an eight-month campaign waged in 16 countries over 17 rounds (mostly against Ferrari), we prevailed,” says Corbo. “Renault clinched both the 2006 Drivers’ and Constructors’ World Championships. It was a wonderful ride … and all of it in the name of research—incidentally at least.”

Perfect timing (on and off the track) enabled Jacomo Corbo to combine his love of F1 racing with computer science.
Then I was sort of a natural fixer of things. 
... When things went wrong in the house,
my mother would say, “Can you fix
these?”—and I was fairly handy. Then
when the radio came that my father
bought, in 1924, I became very interested
... and tried to learn how that little Crosley
set worked. That got me interested in radio
engineering.

Have you had many role models along
the way?

LB: First, there was my mathematics
professor in Cornell College (Iowa), Elmer
Moots. Then when I had just received my
doctorate degree I felt that Professor Philip
Morse at MIT was one of my idols. He’s
the one who came to me to get involved in
the Electro-Acoustic Laboratory during
World War II. I did get to know Fred
Terman of Stanford and [William] Hewlett
and [David] Packard of HP, and thought
very highly of them, even though they were
on the West Coast. They were sort of role
models for me. At national meetings of the
Institute of Radio Engineers we would
talk. They took an interest in what I was
doing because I was designing acoustical
measuring equipment as a consultant to the
General Radio Company in Cambridge,
and they were interested in my book on
acoustics measurements.

Of all the many acoustical successes, does one
stand out for you?

LB: I still think it was remarkable that we
were able to make the sound system work
successfully in the United Nations building
in New York. So many people figured it
was going to be a failure, because the archi-
tect had mandated that the loudspeakers
should be directly behind the microphone
that one was talking into. That usually
means there is going to be feedback,
a singing noise. We managed to get by
without that problem. That was a big one.

Then the big muffler [at the Lewis
Flight Propulsion Laboratory] in Cleveland.
There were even technical people in my
own firm that didn’t think it could possibly
work, but it did work. And then my work
in Japan where previously I had accumulated
enough experience and had written books
on the subject and here I had a chance to
try them out in the [New National Theater]
Opera House in Tokyo. The excellent
results are something I’m very proud of.

You’ve worked in both academia and industry.
Should these two realms interact more?

LB: The time between a new, good idea and
the time that it gets built has to be cut
down. In the old days you could wait
ten years between the birth of an idea in
a university and the emergence of a product.
Now you’re lucky if you can get a year
between because everything moves so fast
today. To turn ideas into products quickly,
you have to couple the place where the
ideas are generated with the people who
build the things. MIT has been ahead of
Harvard, but Harvard is gearing up to be
a leader in innovation.

Where do you see your field of acoustical
engineering heading?

LB: People are becoming more conscious of
the impact of noise on their daily lives and
on their hearing. So one of the areas
that’s being pursued in most all countries
is to achieve quieter products and homes
and neighborhoods. This means that
governments must take a greater hand in
promoting quiet. Governments in Europe
are specifying ways of rating the noise of
equipment like lawnmowers so people can
use that information as one of their guides
when they’re buying things.

There are a lot of other branches of
acoustics that you don’t usually think
about—underwater sound, the detection of
submarines, and so on. Then you have
hearing implants in the head, so people
who can’t hear through their regular
hearing mechanism can hear through these
electrical implants. There’s also design of
schoolrooms. One of the big advances in
the last ten years is getting information
to architects in the form of studies and
actual constructions that show how class-
rooms should be built so that students
can hear the teachers better. And there are
other things. \[\]
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING ELECTS NEW MEMBERS
The National Academy of Engineering (NAE) elected 65 new members and nine foreign associates in February 2008, including three members of Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Barbara J. Grosz, interim dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and Higgins professor of natural sciences in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, was elected for “pioneering research in natural language communication between humans and computers and its application to human-computer interaction.” Frans Spaepen, the John C. and Helen F. Franklin professor of applied physics, was elected for “contributions to the understanding of structures of melts, amorphous metals, and semiconductors.” Finally, Zhigang Suo, the Allen E. and Marilyn M. Puckett professor of mechanics and materials, was elected for “fundamental and applied contributions to the thermo-mechanical performance of electronic material systems, actuator materials, and composites.” Spaepen and Suo are GSAS alumni (PhD ’75 and PhD ’89, respectively). Election to the NAE is among the highest professional distinctions accorded to an engineer.

GSAS DEAN WINS BANCROFT PRIZE
Dean Allan Brandt was one of three historians to win the 2008 Bancroft Prize, the most prestigious book award in the field of history and given for books of “exceptional merit.” Brandt was honored for The Cigarette Century: The Rise, Fall, and Deadly Persistence of the Product that Defined America. The prize, founded in 1948, is awarded annually by the Trustees of Columbia University to the authors of books of exceptional merit in the fields of American history, biography, and diplomacy. This year’s three Bancroft winners will each receive an award of $10,000. Brandt is the Amalie Moses Kass professor of the history of medicine at the Medical School and professor of the history of science in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES HONORS RECOGNIZE MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT
Among the 13 recipients recognized in January 2008 by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) for extraordinary achievement was Clifford H. Taubes, the William Petschek professor of mathematics and department chair, who was honored “for groundbreaking work relating to Seiberg-Witten and Gromov-Witten invariants of symplectic 4-manifolds, and his proof of the Weinstein conjecture for all contact 3-manifolds.” The NAS Award in Mathematics was established by the American Mathematical Society and has been awarded since 1988. Taubes is GSAS alumnus (PhD ’80).

—Compiled by Susan Lumenello
ILLNESS AND THE LIMITS OF EXPRESSION
By Kathlyn Conway, PhD ‘77, English and American literature and language

The modern language of fighting disease comes largely from self-help books and “triumphalist” memoirs. These, however, avoid the complexity of experience around serious illness, writes the author, who calls for more realistic narratives. A survivor of three bouts of cancer herself, Conway examines darker writings that “embrace all aspects of the experience” from authors such as Virginia Woolf, Oliver Sacks, Floyd Skloot, and others. Conway is a practicing psychotherapist and author of Ordinary Life: A Memoir of Illness.

LIFING THE OBSIDIAN MASK
The Artistic Vision of Carlos Fuentes

Masks—literal and metaphorical, negative and positive—figure prominently in Fuentes’s fiction. Even institutions and historical events are portrayed as having mask-like “facades.” The effect is to convey enigmatic characters with multiple identities and histories with multiple interpretations, especially concerning Mexican-American relations. This volume examines all of Fuentes’s writings to offer a panoramic yet comprehensive view of this continuing and elastic theme. Gyurko is professor of Spanish at the University of Arizona in Tucson and has published extensively on Argentine and Mexican literature.

ETHIOPIA IN MENGISTU’S FINAL YEARS
Vol. 2: Until the Last Bullet
By Paul B. Henze, AM ’50, regional studies-USSR

This follow-up memoir to The Derg in Decline, is an account “of continued decline and confusion” in Ethiopia during the author’s stay there from the late 1980s to the ’90s. At the time, Henze was conducting research for the RAND Corporation and observed the collapse of Mengistu’s rule and the Derg’s armies, by the rebel forces of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front. The country has moved toward more democratic forms in place of the old Stalinist-style regime. Henze worked for three decades on the Horn of Africa and served on the National Security Council, 1977–80. He is the author of several volumes on Ethiopia, including Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia.
GUILT AND ITS VICISSITUDES
Psychoanalytic Reflections on Morality
By Judith M. Hughes, PhD ’70, history

This slender volume outlines the divergence between Freudian and Kleinian approaches to such matters as guilt, morality, and psychoanalysis, and proposes that psychoanalyst Melanie Klein’s approach deepened and extended the Freudian view, making it a more suitably complex narrative of moral development. Hughes is a professor of history and an adjunct professor of psychiatry at the University of California at San Diego. Her previous books include Freudian Analysts/Feminist Issues and From Obstacle to Ally: The Evolution of Psychoanalytic Practice.

THE SANUSI’S LITTLE WAR
The Amazing Story of a Forgotten Conflict in the Western Desert, 1915–1917
By Russell McGuirk, AM ’70, Middle East studies

A “little war within the Great War,” is how McGuirk describes this battle in Sollum, a coastal Egyptian city near the Libyan border. The Grand Sanusi, also known as Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, was a charismatic Arab leader and caught in the international rivalry between the German-Turkish forces, with whom he was allied, and British colonialists over the occupied territory. This big book about a little war reveals a cast of fascinating military men from all corners engaged in political intrigue. The author was a journalist for The Egyptian Gazette and also published the book Colloquial Arabic of Egypt.

REGULATING CAPITAL
Setting Standards for the International Financial System
By David Andrew Singer, PhD ’04, government

Markets are more internationally integrated than ever and more vulnerable to “foreign shocks,” writes the author, who adds that some scholars have issued claims of a crisis in global capitalism. In this volume, the author presents a recent history of how financial regulators have succeeded—or failed—in cooperating with international counterparts to contend with intertwined markets. Singer is assistant professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

MONTEVERDI’S LAST OPERAS
A Venetian Trilogy

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643), writes the author, was the first great composer of opera. His works, Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria, L’incoronazione di Poppea, and Le nozze d’Enea e Lavinia—the Venetian trilogy of the subtitle—were not intended as a trilogy. Taken together, however, they “offer, in effect, a complex commentary on marriage”—both the personal and political. Here, Rosand traces the works’ musical and intellectual journeys. She is the George A. Saden professor of music at Yale University and the author of Opera in 17th-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre (1991).
WHY TAIWAN?
Geostrategic Rationales for China’s Territorial Integrity
By Alan M. Wachman, AB ’80, PhD ’92, government

To whom does Taiwan belong—to the People’s Republic of China or to the Republic of China? Wachman explores the question by tracing the history of this geographically strategic spot. A “fragile calm” exists between the two governments, but he wonders how long that will hold—and how increased tensions could affect the region. Wachman is associate professor of international politics at Tufts University and the author of Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization.

THE BEST SYSTEM MONEY CAN BUY
Corruption in the European Union
By Carolyn M. Warner, PhD ’94, government

The formation of the European Union in the early 1990s was supposed to foster free market competition. Instead, writes Warner, a culture of corruption has emerged, especially between corporations and politicians. The problem, which goes back to the 1980s, is a result of weak governmental institutions that lack accountability, and increased economic competition. Anticorruption mechanisms have been implemented lately, but a more systemic approach is needed to halt the damage. Warner is associate professor of political science at Arizona State University and the author of Confessions of an Interest Group: The Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe.

PASSION FOR REALITY
Paul Cabot and the Boston Mutual Fund

The author writes from personal knowledge of the noted businessman (1898–1994), a College and Business School alumnus who founded the first mutual fund and went on to become treasurer of Harvard. The book examines the beginnings of the fund industry and of investment research processes, as well as Cabot’s exposure of financial fraud during the 1920s and his successful management of the Harvard endowment. Yogg is an investment manager in Boston.

Authors: GSAS alumni who have published (as author or editor) a general interest book (no textbooks, reprints, or revised editions, please) within the past year and would like it to be considered for inclusion in Alumni Books should send a copy of the book to: Colloquy, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Holyoke Center 350, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-3846. Questions? E-mail gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

from the dean, continued

The awards are a small but important recognition of a relationship that may be hard to define but is so crucial to graduate student development.

Going forward, we at GSAS will continue to look for new and innovative strategies to encourage the most skilled mentoring for our students. Mentoring must never be simply a matter of luck; nor can we pretend it is simply a matter of the right match. We need to work together, as an academic community, to assure that excellent, conscientious mentoring is the standard for all of our talented and committed students. This is a goal that will help guarantee the future of the University and the world of learning, because good mentoring can help produce the next generation of great mentors.

I welcome your ideas for improving graduate education. Contact me at University Hall, Harvard Yard, Cambridge, Mass., 02138, or through the Graduate School Alumni Association, gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

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What is a Church?
John Seitz Examines Catholic Practice and the Boston Parish Shutdowns

By Abigail Adair

In 2004, when John Seitz learned that the Boston Archdiocese planned to close more than 70 of the city’s 357 parishes, he expected to study the parishioners’ sense of loss. He had no idea that resistance, not grief, would become the theme of his dissertation.

“In a few parishes slated to be closed, people started rolling out sleeping bags between the pews. They had decided not to leave,” says Seitz, a sixth-year doctoral student in the study of religion who has spent the past few years doing fieldwork among the frustrated parishioners—some of whom have occupied their churches for three straight years.

For Seitz, these communities were interesting not only because of their radical occupations, but because they brought to the surface broader challenges facing the Church in the midst of competing legacies.

At the core is the fundamental question: What is a church?

This year, after previously juggling teaching responsibilities, course work, and a range of jobs to supplement his income, Seitz received funding from a dissertation completion fellowship to allow him to devote himself fully to his research. Since fall 2005, these fellowships have been guaranteed to social science and humanities students deemed ready to write, thereby shortening their time to degree.

During his fieldwork, Seitz noticed that both the Catholic hierarchy and the resisting parishioners relied on Church reforms of the mid-20th century to justify their positions. At the same time, both sides laid claim to traditions stretching back to the early Church.

“The struggle over the parishes in Boston was also a struggle over the meaning of the Catholic past,” Seitz argues. The reforms of the 1960s, for example, emphasized that the Church was not only the hierarchy but actually comprised the entire “people of God.”

“Parishioners were told to see themselves as essential contributors to the Church, both as donors and as decision makers,” says Seitz. This idea stuck, gained force in Boston after the sexual-abuse crisis, and helped motivate the resistance.

Yet older ideas about churches as places uniquely holy and fundamentally inviolable also retained their influence among resisters. This combination of old and new ideas gave the resisters the sense that they were defending not just their beloved church buildings, but the faith itself.

Meanwhile, the Boston Archdiocese reminded parishioners that the “people of God” is a universal term that encompasses the entire Catholic community, says Seitz. For Church leaders, Boston’s church buildings aren’t holy in themselves, only for what happens in them: the rites that bring people together as the Church. Yet for many of today’s Catholics, such teachings conflict with what they were taught when they were young.

“It’s great to be able to finish my degree in a reasonable amount of time and move on with my academic career,” says PhD candidate John Seitz, pictured here outside Widener Library.

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“Despite fierce battles and powerful emotions, the resisters in Boston are not alienated from the Church,” Seitz says. “They exemplify the Church’s ongoing struggles with the relationship between past and present truths.”

“John’s project is a challenging one that calls for sympathies and critical distance at the same time,” says David Hall, one of Seitz’s advisors and the John A. Bartlett professor of New England church history at Harvard Divinity School. “He appreciates the importance of the past, the sacrifices made by immigrants to build up their parishes and shrines, and how memories and older ritual patterns have been disrupted or modified.”

Seitz will defend his dissertation this spring. After graduation, he’ll move to New York City to become a post-doctoral teaching fellow in religion at Fordham University, where his wife will take up a tenure-track job after giving birth to their first child.

“It has been wonderful getting the chance to complete meaningful fieldwork here,” he says. “The project really enabled me to get to know the city better while also contributing to our understanding of contemporary Catholicism. I’ll miss Harvard and Boston.

“That said,” he concedes, “it’s great to be able to finish my degree in a reasonable amount of time and move on with my academic career.”

Abigail Adair is an associate director for communications with the University Development Office.

For information about supporting the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, contact Marne Perreault, director of GSAS Giving, at 617-495-1629 or marne_perreault@harvard.edu.
Alumni Events and Notices

Contact the GSAS Office of Alumni Relations (gsaa@fas.harvard.edu, 617-495-5591) for more information about any of the following events or services.

CHAPTER EVENT
Thursday, May 8, 2008 | New York City
Steven Levitsky, the John L. Loeb associate professor of the social sciences, will speak on “Latin America’s Left Turn: Causes and Implications.” Professor Levitsky is author of Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America: Argentine Peronism in Comparative Perspective and is currently writing a book on the rise of competitive authoritarian regimes in Latin America, Africa, Asia, East-Central Europe, and the former Soviet Union in the post-Cold War era.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:
THE GSAS CENTENNIAL MEDAL AND GRADUATE SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION COUNCIL
Help GSAS recognize its most distinguished alumni through nomination for the Centennial Medal. The medal recognizes contributions to society that emerged from graduate study at Harvard. Some of the 68 alumni/ae who have received this honor since 1989 include theological scholar Elaine Pagels, historian Bernard Bailyn, author Susan Sontag, and biologist E.O.Wilson. The medal is awarded annually at a ceremony held in Cambridge during Commencement Week.

Alumni are also invited to submit nominations to the GSAA Council, the governing body of the Harvard Graduate School Alumni Association. Typically, Council members will have achieved distinction in their careers or may have made significant contributions through community service. Council members share a strong commitment to Harvard and to graduate education.

To nominate: Submit a letter stating your reasons for selecting the candidate, marked either for the Centennial Medal or for the Graduate School Alumni Association Council, to: GSAS Alumni Association, Holyoke Center 350, 1350 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Nominations may also be e-mailed to gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

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