



**DEPAUL
HUMANITIES
CENTER**

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2010-2011

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On the Cover:

Illustration of C. P. Snow by Matt Collins
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DEPAUL HUMANITIES CENTER

The DePaul Humanities Center, founded in 1999, serves as a site for discussion and research in the arts and humanities at DePaul University.

Bringing together faculty, staff, students, scholars, community leaders, and artists, the Center engages our communities in the most recent and impressive scholarship in the humanities. Central to the Center's community engagement is the exchange of ideas across disciplines, the communication of interests through active outreach, and the chance to learn from those outside of the academy.

Humanities Center Staff

Director
Jonathan Gross,
Professor, English

Associate Director
Anna Vaughn Clissold, Ph.D.

Center Assistant
Alecia Person

Student Worker
Stefani Chow

Our goals are to:

- Support and nourish humanities scholarship and teaching throughout the university;
- Support interdisciplinary work in the humanities;
- Increase public visibility of work in the humanities conducted by university faculty, staff, and students;
- Initiate and encourage the consideration of contemporary problems and solutions from the vantage point of humanistic thinking;
- Build and strengthen links with other institutions, community groups, and educators.

Executive Committee

Glen Carman
Associate Professor
Modern Languages

Frida Furman
Professor
Religious Studies

Darrell Moore
Associate Professor
Philosophy

Lucy Rinehart
Associate Professor and
Department Chair, English

Eric Selinger
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English

H. Peter Steeves
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Philosophy

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Our theme at the Humanities Center this year was Literature and Science. A series of lectures by Terry Eagleton, Anne Mellor, and Nicholson Baker helped frame a discussion of the ways in which science and literature have come to co-exist, not always comfortably, in the academy. C.P. Snow ignited a fire storm when he first suggested that the education of a humanist and scientist were almost incommensurable, challenging any literature professor to name Heisenberg's second principle of thermodynamics. Terry Eagleton explored the debate between Snow, an erstwhile novelist and popularizer of scientific ideas, and F.R. Leavis, whose Great Tradition influenced a generation of literary critics. Anne Mellor further explored the tension between science and literature through Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, explaining how recent discoveries in genetic engineering make Shelley's novel as relevant today as it was 200 years ago. Her vivid account of Mary Wollstonecraft's death at the hands of misguided doctors brought home, to students and faculty alike, the achievements and limitations of science. Nicholson Baker discussed the technology of print by considering the reading experience created by iPads and other handheld devices. His recent book, *Human Smoke*, like *Double Fold*, explores the moral implications of technological advances, showing how the destruction of newspapers (by microfilm) threatens to make the historical past itself disappear.

A highlight of this series was our round-table discussion of C.P. Snow's *The Two Cultures* (1957). In attendance were a variety of faculty members from the College of Arts and Sciences (now the College of Arts and Social Sciences) including Michael Mezey (Political Science), Lynn Narasimhan (Mathematics), and Ted Anton (English). Attendance at our parallel lecture series, in Digital Humanities, was also rewarding, as the audience listened to two different viewpoints on the benefits of technology: Michele Rubin, of *Writer's House*, explained the environmental downside of Apple, Google, and Kindle, while Steve Jones showed positive aspects of this brave new world, excerpts of which are included in this report.

The outreach work of our five faculty fellows was particularly imaginative and vigorous this year. The cohort (for lack of a prettier word) worked well together, offering informative and carefully

prepared power point presentations, as well as drafts of forthcoming articles and books. Seasoned teacher and scholar Margaret Storey offered a full-day seminar at the Newberry library, attended by Chicago-area high school teachers, on the opposition to Abraham Lincoln in the North. Storey included items from the Newberry's collection and surveyed, masterfully, the entire field of Civil War historiography, with particular attention paid to *Copperheads*, by Jennifer L. Weber. Storey is the author of a ground-breaking Civil War study, *Loyalty and Loss: Alabama Unionists in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. John Shanahan, an expert on 18th century drama and science, discussed David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* and other texts in his engaging research presentation at the Humanities Center. His outreach work included a screening of Werner Herzog's 2005 film, *The Wild Blue Yonder*, and the 1995 anime film *Ghost in the Shell*, with panelists June Chung and Miho Matsugu. The liaison with the Music Box was our first and attracted many members of the Chicago community.

Alexander Papadopoulos gave a lecture to an appreciative audience of more than 60 people on Byzantine Cartography at the National Hellenic Museum. He explored, in vivid detail, how little we really know about the subject and how few material objects we have upon which to base our conjectures. Jeff Carter's sculpture exhibition at the Illinois Institute of Technology's famous Crown Hall was equally well attended. He explored, through masterfully designed models, the aesthetic that informs IKEA, offering an ironic view of the mass-consumed object even as he reaffirmed the value of Arts and Crafts through his own carefully worked models. His polished exhibit, attended by Paul Jaskot and other members of the Department of History of Art and Architecture, was a resounding success, covered in *New City* (among other publications). Donald Opitz, who has been undertaking archival work at Windsor Castle and other locations, presented his work to top scholars in the field of Victorian science at Cambridge University, including noted Darwin biographer James Moore. He presented his research to DePaul faculty in a particularly engaging way, which led to a fruitful discussion of Victorian science and subsequently to the launch of a 19th century studies group, led by James Murphy, who was in attendance, along with Darrell Moore and Elena Boeck .

Continuing our efforts to reach DePaul students, we offered a one-day seminar on the Future of the Book, with archivist Nana Holtsnider, Diane Hoeveler, and Joseph Viscomi. The benefits of digital technology were on display with Nana's presentation of the Leigh Hunt letters, showing how digital archives will continue to offer scholars readily accessible texts, even as bookstores close and the

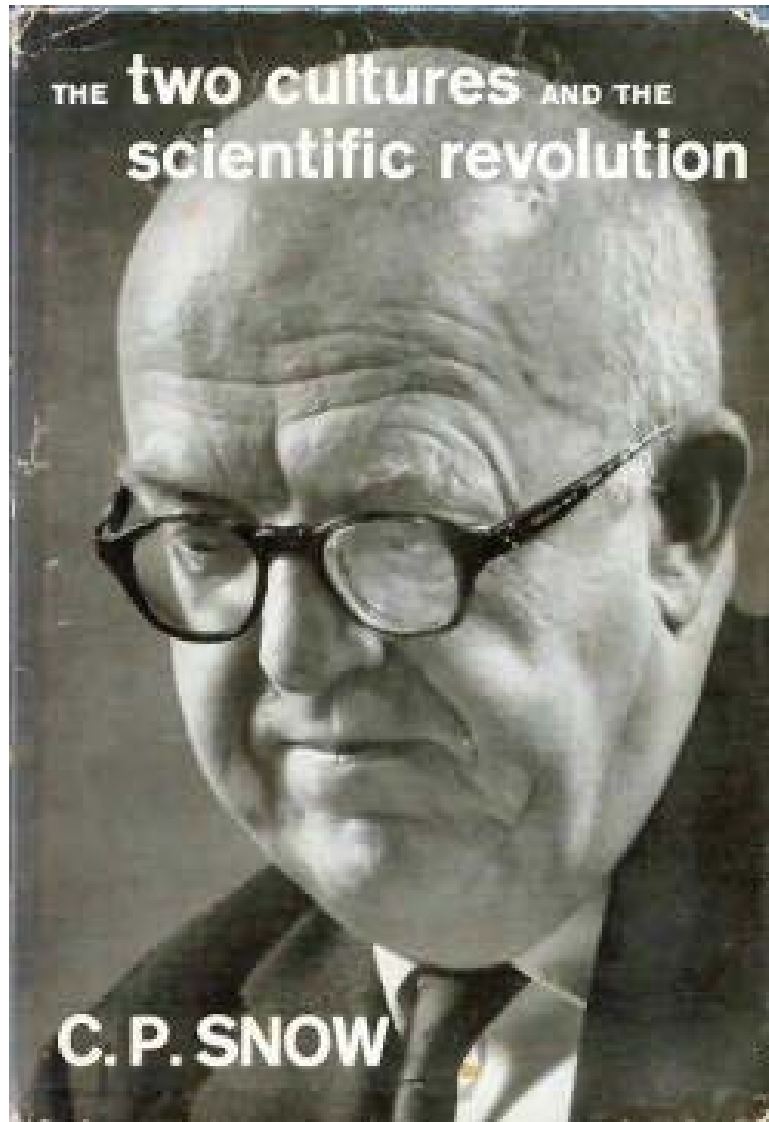
economy continues to reel from the digital revolution. Hoeveler, who has done extensive research on the Gothic novel, spoke about her recent book, *Gothic Riffs*, and her forthcoming study that explores representations of Catholicism in gothic novels. Her innovative focus on chap books promises to change the field of gothic studies and shows the efforts of a lifetime dedicated to this important field. An excellent discussion between Miles Harvey and James Murphy ensued after Hoeveler's provocative lecture. Joseph Viscomi, creator of the masterful William Blake Archive, discussed Blake's engraving techniques and how recent scholars have misunderstood them. These humanities scholars have made the best use of old and new technology, combining traditional archival work at the Corvey Institute in Germany, for example--or the Tate Gallery in London--with digital presentation, enabling large numbers of people to read texts (with expert scholarly commentary), to which they might not otherwise have access. Thanks to Viscomi's important work, for example, students can now compare multiple editions of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, no longer taking Walter Benjamin's word for it that the work of art has changed in the age of mechanical reproduction.

2011 saw the publication of *Brute Neighbors*, a collection of poetry, prose, and essays edited by Chris Green and Liam Heneghan. Here too we saw the intersection of literature and science, as contributors discussed Chicago in what would seem like an oxymoronic form, an urban nature anthology. Former DePaul Humanities Center fellow Dolores Wilbur contributed creative work, as did former fellow Liam Heneghan and Visiting Fellow, Chris Green. A launch party for the book took place at the Lincoln Tap with readings from the participants, and the Reader offered high praise for essays by Michele Morano ("Boy Meets World"), Miles Harvey ("17-Year Itch"), and other writers. Sally Berg and Mark Turcotte helped bring Chicago author Reginald Gibbons (also a contributor to *Brute Neighbors*) to DePaul. Gibbons gave a reading from his most recent poetry anthology, *Slow Trains Overhead*, which was attended by more than 70 people, including two creative writing classes.

Our fellows' programs would not succeed without the careful review of proposals by Glen Carman, Lucy Rinehart, and Peter Steeves, and we would like to thank them for their hard work. The Humanities Center wishes to thank faculty members (Paula McQuade, John Shanahan, Dan Stolar, Ted Anton, June Chung, Randy Honold) who have gone out of their way to send classes to our lectures and incorporate our work into their syllabi.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Gross
Director, DePaul Humanities Center

2010-2011 SPEAKERS
THE TWO CULTURES:
SCIENCE AND LITERATURE REVISITED



“It happens that, of all novelists, Dostoevsky is the one I know the best. When I was twenty, I thought *The Brothers Karamazov* was by a long way the greatest novel ever written, and its author the most magnificent of novelists. Gradually, my enthusiasm became more qualified: as I grew older I found Tolstoy meaning more to me. But Dostoevsky is to this day one of the novelists I most admire: besides Tolstoy there seem to me only two or three others who can live in the same light.

This confession of personal taste is not so irrelevant as it seems. Of the great novelists Dostoevsky is the one whose social attitudes are most explicitly revealed—not in his novels, where he is ambiguous, but in the *Writer's Diary* which he published once a month during the years 1876-80, when he was in his fifties and near the peak of his fame. In the *Diary*, which was produced as a single-handed effort, he gave answers to readers' problems of the heart (the advice was almost always practical and wise), but he devoted most of his space to political propaganda, to passionate and increasingly unambiguous expression of his own prescriptions for action.

They are pretty horrifying, even after ninety years. He was virulently anti-Semitic: he prayed for war: he was against any kind of emancipation at any time; he was a fanatical supporter of the autocracy and an equally fanatical opponent of any improvement in the lives of the common people (on the grounds that they loved their suffering and were ennobled by it).

He was in fact the supreme reactionary: other writers since have aspired to this condition, but no one has had his force of nature and his psychological complexity. It is worth noting that he wasn't speaking in a vacuum; this wasn't like Lawrence banging away with exhortations, some of them similarly regrettable. Dostoevsky lived in a society; his diary was influential, and acted as the voice of ultra-conservatives, to whom he himself in secret acted as a kind of psychological adviser. The question is this: how far is it possible to share the hopes of the scientific revolution, the modest difficult hopes for other human lives, and at the same time participate without qualification in the kind of literature which has just been defined?”

—C.P. Snow

TERRY EAGLETON, UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER

REFLECTIONS ON C.P. SNOW'S *THE TWO CULTURES*

“The idea of culture has always been a matter of ferocious contention in the modern era, and has become even more so in our own time. In the broadest sense, culture signifies forms of personal and social identity for which men and women are prepared to do battle. The confrontation some decades ago between C.P. Snow and F.R. Leavis is a locus classicus of this perennial debate, and the lecture will draw attention to the strengths and limits of both of these notions of culture, as well as to the diversity of the concept as a whole. It will also examine some of the ways in which the argument over culture has shifted its terms since this classic confrontation, not least as the quarrel between the arts and sciences has passed over into conflicts within the humanities, in the shape of the so-called culture wars.”



Eagleton converses with DePaul Professor Rocio Ferreira



Terry Eagleton is the Distinguished Professor of English Literature at the University of Lancaster. Prior to his move to Lancaster in 2008, he was John Edward Taylor Professor of English Literature at the University of Manchester from 2001, and before that Thomas Warton Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford (1992-2001).

His books include *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983); *After Theory* (2003) and *The Idea of Culture* (2000). He is also the author of the novel *Saints and Scholars* (1987) and *The Gatekeeper: A Memoir* (2001). His latest books are *How to Read a Poem* (2006); *The Meaning of Life* (2007); *Trouble with Strangers: A Study of Ethics* (2008); *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate* (2009) and *On Evil* (2010).

“The two central cultures are discussed here incidentally and are sometimes seen as culture versus civilization.

....

Culture is spiritual, inward, transcendent, intense, profound; civilization is mannered, willingly material, sophisticated, progressive, rational, enlightened and I think in this debate Snow played civilization to Leavis's culture.

....

Snow is concerned about how to abolish world hunger and practical political matters that Leavis certainly isn't, but he lacks any moral or scriptural depth. Leavis has that.”

—Terry Eagleton

ANNE K. MELLOR, UCLA

MOTHERING MONSTERS: MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN* AND GENETIC ENGINEERING

Anne K. Mellor is Distinguished Professor of English at UCLA, and a leading researcher in her field. In addition to her work on Mary Shelley, she is the author of *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing, 1780-1800* (IUP, 2000) *Romanticism and Gender* (Routledge, 1993), and editor of *British Literature: 1780-1830* (Heinle, 2005). She has appeared as an expert on Frankenstein on National Public Radio, the History Channel, ABC Prime Time, the South Bank Show, and at numerous venues in conjunction with the National Science Foundation's traveling exhibition on Frankenstein.



"Mary Shelley's waking nightmare on June 16, 1816, gave birth to one of the most powerful horror stories of Western civilization. *Frankenstein* can claim the status of a myth so profoundly resonant in its implications that it has become, at least in its barest outline, a trope of everyday life. The condemners of genetically modified meats and vegetables now refer to them as 'Frankenfoods,' and the debates concerning the morality of cloning or stem cell engineering constantly invoke the cautionary example of Frankenstein's monster. Nor is the monster-myth cited only in regard to the biological sciences; critics of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons alike often make use of this monitory figure. Of course, both the media and the average person in the street have frequently and mistakenly assigned the name of Frankenstein not to the maker of the monster but to his creature. But as we shall see, this 'mistake' actually derives from a crucial intuition about the relationship between them. Frankenstein is our culture's most penetrating literary analysis of the psychology of modern 'scientific' man, of the dangers inherent in scientific research, and of the horrifying but predictable consequences of an uncontrolled technological exploitation of nature and the female." This talk will elucidate both the scientific and the psychological origins of Mary Shelley's mythic novel, as well as Shelley's own vision of the worst and best ways to cope with the creation of 'monsters.'"

“I would like to suggest that implicit in *Frankenstein* the novel is an alternative to Victor Frankenstein's scientific project. Mary Shelley has a fundamental moral belief manifested in this novel, a belief that civilization can only be genuinely forwarded, that progress can only really occur, when we act in cooperation with Mother Nature.

....

Stem cell engineering, of course, is when a biologist genetically modifies a pre-fertilized egg in order, usually, to eliminate hereditary diseases. But also, potentially, stem cell engineering could change a pre-fertilized egg in order to produce eggs that would be replanted in the womb to increase, first, human intelligence, secondly, physical attractiveness and thirdly, emotional stability. You can make your not-yet-born child more intelligent, more attractive and more emotionally stable. I would say this has all sorts of Frankensteinian implications, and raises all the same issues that the text of *Frankenstein* does.

....

What Mary Shelley's novel shows us is what happens when we abandon or reject that which is unique. He becomes a monster. As he says in the novel, "You are my maker, but I am your master. Obey." A monster who is capable of destroying his maker. But the novel leaves open the question of what would happen if we loved this creature.”

—Anne Mellor

NICHOLSON BAKER

BRIDGINGS: FROM THE TWO CULTURES TO THE DIGITIZATION OF THE BOOK

Nicholson Baker was the final speaker in our lecture series, “The Two Cultures: Science and Humanities.” While considering the relationship between science and the humanities with reference to his work as a fiction writer, Baker also substantially addressed the theme of our second series, “Digital Humanities,” with respect to the digitization of the book. In 1999, Baker established a non-profit corporation, the *American Newspaper Repository*, to rescue old newspapers from destruction by libraries. Baker’s influential book, *Double Fold* (2002), grew out of this work and from a New Yorker essay he wrote on the subject of why libraries were destroying first editions of books and newspapers.

“Throughout his book, Baker hammers away at the Orwellian notion that we must destroy books and newspapers in order, supposedly, to save them. Particularly singled out for opprobrium are University Microfilms Inc. and the Library of Congress. This extremely well-written book is not a paranoid rant.... *Double Fold* is the narrative of a heroic struggle: Picture Baker as ‘Offisa Pup’ defending ‘Krazy Kat,’ of the printed word, against the villainous ‘Ignatz Mouse’ of the library establishment all in glorious, vivid color on brittle (but unbowed) newsprint. Highly recommended for all libraries.”

From Library Journal
Barry Chad, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Nicholson Baker is the author of several novels, including *The Anthologist* (2010, a fascinating exploration of the making of poetry and a poet’s undoing), *The Fermata* (2004), *The Mezzanine* (1998), and *Vox* (a 1998 New York Times best-seller), and four works of nonfiction: *The Size of Thoughts* (1997), *U and I* (1998, a meditation on John Updike), *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper* (winner of the 2002 National Book Critics Circle Award), and *Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization* (a 2008 New York Times best seller, *Human Smoke* is a history of World War II that questions the commonly held belief that the Allies wanted to avoid the war at all costs).



“Baker is one of the most beautiful, original and ingenious prose stylists to have along in decades. He has some of his idol Updike’s visual acuity and some of Nabokov’s gift for metaphor, but he is funnier than either and takes a kind of mad scientist’s delight in the way things work and how the world is put together. Here is the narrator of *Room Temperature* describing his infant daughter, whom he has nicknamed Bug:

‘The Bug’s nostril had the innocent perfection of a Cheerio (and Cheerios were on my mind, since lately we had begun to offer them to her), a tiny dry clean salty ring, so small, with the odd but functional smallness of the tires on passenger planes, or the smooth rim around the pistil of the brass pump head that you fitted over a tire’s stem valve to inflate it to a pressure you preset with a crank on the air machine.’

Years before David Foster Wallace popularized the extended digressive footnote, Baker stuffed *Mezzanine* with dozens of small-type, bottom-of-the-page mini-essays about doorknobs, staplers, plastic drinking straws and this one, about Jiffy Pop:

‘Jiffy Pop was the finest example of the whole aluminous genre: a package inspired by the fry pan whose handle is also the hook it hangs from in the store, with a maelstrom of swirled foil on the top that, subjected to the subversion of the exploding kernels, first by the direct collisions of discrete corns and then in a general indirect uplift of the total volume of potentiated cellulose, gradually unfurls its dome, turning slowly as it despirals itself, providing in its gradual expansion a graspable, slow-motion version of what each erumpant particle of corn is undergoing invisibly and instantaneously beneath it.’”

— Charles McGrath, *The New York Times Magazine*, August 7, 2011

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2010-2011 SPEAKERS DIGITAL HUMANITIES

MICHELE RUBIN, WRITER'S HOUSE THE FUTURE OF THE BOOK

"In the last 10 years, digital technology has changed the human landscape as significantly as the Gutenberg Bible did in the 15th century. It is swiftly evolving and growing and changing our culture in ways that we cannot always see and with consequences we cannot always unravel. The most profound and immediate impact is on the concept of the written word -- what gets written, published, taught, remembered. Literary agent Michele Rubin will discuss some of these changes and their impact on the book and on the humanities."

Michele Rubin is a Senior Literary Agent at Writers House, one of the largest and most successful agencies in the world. She represents a range of writers, focusing mostly on non-fiction. She is also the Literary Agent for the Estate of Martin Luther King, Jr, and was responsible for the creation of the new King Legacy Series Imprint at Beacon Press.

Writers House
A LITERARY AGENCY

THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES IN CONVERSATION

NANA HOLTSNIDER
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE LEIGH HUNT LETTERS DIGITAL ARCHIVE AT IOWA

“In today’s world of Google Books, Special Collections is where all of the unique content is. . . but there is a big problem of access. I discovered that there were these gems hidden away that provided great insight into the Romantic Circle, and that people were missing out by not knowing that these existed. Since no published complete collected letters existed for Leigh Hunt, this seemed like the perfect opportunity for Iowa to go straight online.”



Nana Holtsnider is a former Ruth Bywater Olson Fellow in Special Collections at the University of Iowa, and is currently a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of Chicago.

DIANE HOEVELER
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

HAUNTED ARCHIVES: RESEARCH IN DIGITAL AND DUSTY PLACES

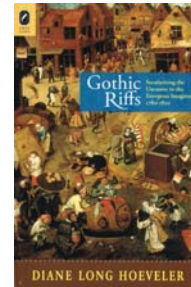
“This presentation traces one scholar’s journey to gather rare gothic texts, novels, dramas, and chapbooks, in England, Germany, and the United States. Where at one time such a quest would have been almost impossible, it is now much easier given the advances that have been made in disseminating information and databases, as well as allowing the digitization of rare materials in special collections.



Diane Long Hoeveler is co-editor of *European Romantic Review* and Professor of English at Marquette University, where she specializes in teaching courses on the Gothic, British Romanticism, and women’s literature. She is author of *Romantic Androgyny: The Women Within* (1990); *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the*

A powerpoint presentation of images accompanied the narrative, and a bibliography of resources was

provided to audience members.”



Brontes (1998); and *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780-1850* (2010). In addition to publishing some 65 articles on a variety of literary topics, she co-authored with Lisa Jadwin a critical study of Charlotte Bronte, and edited the Houghton Mifflin volume of *Wuthering Heights*.

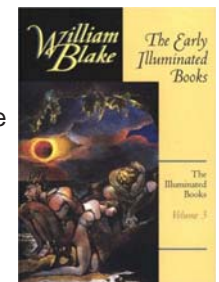


Joseph Viscomi is the James G. Kenan Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Humanities Center, and the Rockefeller Foundation Study Center in Bellagio, Italy. He is the co-editor, with Morris Eaves and Robert Essick, of *William Blake’s Illuminated Books*, volumes 3 and 5 (1993), and co-editor/creator with Eaves and Essick of the William Blake Archive <blakearchive.org>, a hypertext of Blake’s poetry and art, based on approximately 6000 images transferred to digital form.

JOSEPH VISCOMI
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

BLAKE’S ENLIGHTENED GRAPHICS

“Blake’s Enlightened Graphics: Illuminated Books and New Technologies is a richly illustrated lecture examining William Blake’s illuminated printing, the radical printmaking technique that he invented in 1788 and used to produce most of his illustrated books, the key facsimile technologies in the 19th and 20th centuries used to reproduce them, and the digital technology used to reproduce them today in the William Blake Archive <blakearchive.org>.”

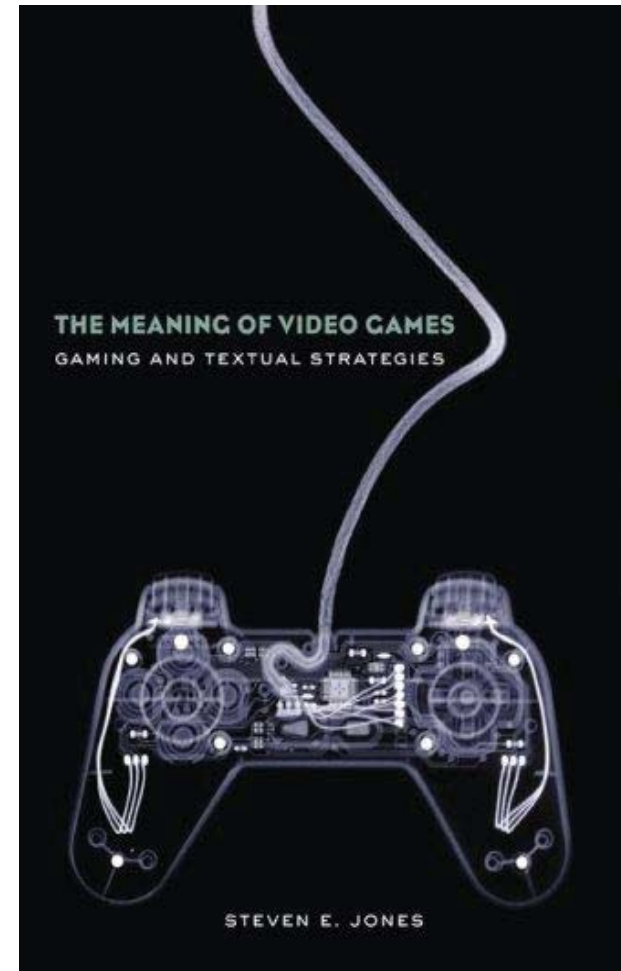


STEVEN E. JONES, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE NETWORK IS EVERTING: THE DIGITAL WORLD AND THE HUMANITIES

"As everyone knows, the world we live in is increasingly pervaded by digital media, from e-books to social networks to video games. It's widely feared that digital technology threatens to "take over" our time, attention, our very social being. Cultural anxieties about the metastasizing of the digital world are often based on the assumption that the digital is somehow inherently alien, inhuman, a separate matrix beyond the analog, the real—beyond the world we live in, something transcendent and apocalyptic, an immaterial force that humanists, especially, are called to resist. But is the digital a world apart? Or is it a part of the world? How humanists understand and frame the nature of digital technology today has a good deal to do with the forms it will take in the future, and with its broader cultural effects. Contrary to popular opinion (and the quiet culture panic running beneath that opinion), today the digital realm—what used to be called "cyberspace"—is "everting" (as author William Gibson has said), turning itself inside out and spilling out into the world. This offers profound opportunities—even ethical imperatives—for humanists, especially those willing to engage in the interdisciplinary and worldly practices of the digital humanities."

Steven E. Jones is the editor of *"The Satiric Eye"* and author of *"Satire and Romanticism,"* as well as *"Against Technology"* and *"The Meaning of Video Games,"* and coauthor of the forthcoming *"Codename Revolution: The Nintendo Wii Video Game Console."* His newest book, *"Codename Revolution: the Nintendo Wii Videogame Console,"* is forthcoming from MIT Press in 2012. A leading researcher in his field, he is the Co-Director of the Center for Textual Studies and Digital Humanities at Loyola.



2010-2011

JEFF CARTER

ART, MEDIA AND DESIGN

THE COMMON CITIZENSHIP OF FORMS



For my Humanities Center project I constructed a series of large-scale architectural models using altered IKEA products such as tables, desks, shelves and flooring. The models and their arrangement are based on the eight buildings at the Michael Reese Hospital campus designed between 1947 and 1959 by Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus. In the past year, these buildings have been destroyed by the City of Chicago (under the patently false pretenses of preparing the 2016 Olympic Games), drawing worldwide outrage. My exhibition opened June 2, 2011, at Mies van der Rohe's R.S. Crown Hall at the Illinois Institute of Technology, while the dust was still settling.

I am especially thankful that the DePaul Humanities Center recognized the timeliness of this subject and was able to respond quickly to my proposal. This has been the most ambitious project I have yet undertaken, and the resources provided by the Center were invaluable. Further, the support of the Center enabled me to successfully apply for an Illinois Arts Council Project grant, with which I will fund the publication of an exhibition catalog featuring two scholarly essays on this project.

The Common Citizenship of Forms

Jeff Carter



1. Power Plant 2010
Modified IKEA products (bamboo) MDF, aluminum, hard wood
2. Usability Building 2010
Modified IKEA products (bamboo) MDF, wood, paper, hard wood, electric motor, microcontroller, electronics
3. Usable Accelerator 2011
Modified IKEA products (bamboo) MDF, aluminum, light fabric, aluminum, electric motor, hardware
4. Research Pavilion 2011
Modified IKEA products (bamboo) MDF, wood, aluminum, glass, steel, light fabric, plastic, nylon, hardware
5. Surgical Hospital 2010
Modified IKEA products (bamboo) MDF, paper, LED light, hardware, programmed microcontroller
6. Consultant Home 2010
Subtotal sound composition by Ramin Doh
Modified IKEA products (bamboo) MDF, aluminum, wood, bamboo, paper, hardware, speakers, amplifier, MP3 players
7. Landscape (Richard Sandoz) 2011
Modified IKEA products (bamboo) plastic, glass, wood, wood, steel, nylon, electric motor
8. Seven Center 2011
Modified IKEA products (bamboo) MDF, paper, bamboo, wood, DVD player, video projector, laptop video



FACULTY FELLOWS



June 13: Art Break: Bauhaus versus IKEA

"I've been to IKEA ten, maybe twelve times, for this project," remarks Jeff Carter as we survey his current installation arching across the western corner of Crown Hall at the Illinois Institute of Technology. His gaze drifts over the modified IKEA products, and a small smile splays open his lips as he reflects on those trips, "I now know that modernist mecca far better than anyone should."



While his current work, "The Common Citizenship of Forms," isn't Carter's first use of the mega-store's materials, it may be his most thoughtful. Carter establishes a formal dialogue between common representatives of modernist design—IKEA and the Bauhaus—through a series of large-scale architectural models, composing a microenvironment that represents the layout of demolished buildings from the Michael Reese Hospital Campus. Former Bauhaus director Walter Gropius had created a master plan for its 28-building campus in 1946 as part of a post-war urban renewal effort to revitalize its surrounding Bronzeville neighborhood, as well as designed the eight structures that Carter chose to recreate.



While both the Bauhaus and IKEA promote simplified forms and the mass-production of goods intended for middle-class homes, IKEA sacrifices durability for cheap costs, relying on false surfaces to imply a quality that does not exist. Carter acknowledges this disjunct by exposing the unfinished sides of laminated MDF boards, as well as ragged gaps in his sculpture's edges that reveal flimsy cardboard. These intentional structural errors mirror the flaws inherent in contemporary culture's disregard for the logic of preservation and fixation on new, ephemeral objects—the same mentality that allowed the Michael Reese Campus to be demolished.

In referencing the absent Gropius buildings, Carter's sculptural objects allude to a certain nostalgia for these particular lost spaces, but they're not overly sentimental; his works act as tributes, not funeral dirges. Carter compellingly employs hearty doses of humor by translating the lost buildings into functional furniture pieces, using puns and irony to signify their original use.



For "The Laundry Building," he replaces a bank of rectangular windows in the building's center with a wire-grid laundry basket, and adds an on/off switch powering intermittent vibrations reminiscent of a spin cycle. The whole structure is placed on wheels for maneuvering large loads. Likewise, "Linear Accelerator" becomes a floor lamp, with an interior rotating electric motor powering tendrils of bare light bulbs strung on the ground around it. In his most playful interpretation, "Research Pavilion," Carter transforms the steel-and-glass vertical network of science laboratories into a simple grid of child-like cubbyholes, stuffed seemingly carelessly with materials ranging from cords to plush rat toys.

Carter's penultimate nostalgic act relies on the exhibition's site-specific staging in Crown Hall: a structure designed by the last Bauhaus director—Ludwig Mies van der Rohe—shelters models commemorating works by the Bauhaus' founder and first director. And, by exposing the artifice of low-cost IKEA materials, Carter's exquisitely crafted objects suggest a hopeful future for quality-driven modernist design. (Laura Fox)

Jeff Carter, "The Common Citizenship of Forms," shows through July 31 at S. R. Crown Hall, 3360 South State.

Reprinted with Permission of Newcity: <http://art.newcity.com/2011/06/13/art-break-bauhaus-versus-ikea/#more-7988>

DONALD L. OPITZ

SCHOOL FOR NEW LEARNING

AT HOME WITH SCIENCE: DOMESTICATING SCIENCE IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES



The fellowship supported my book project on Victorian country-house science, in which I analyze the practice of science within British aristocratic households as well as the role of the aristocracy in the advancement of science during the last half of the nineteenth century. My goals for the fellowship year included a draft of a chapter or two for the book, continuation of archival research, and submission of a book proposal to an academic press. I also desired to bring notice of my work to a wider audience, and to this end I sought an invitation to give a research seminar in the Cabinet of Natural History series at the University of Cambridge.

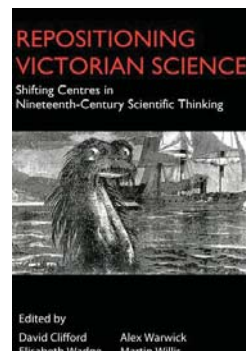


The Humanities Center has been an invaluable resource in pushing my work on this project forward. The theme for this year's fellows program concerned science and literature, and the conversations this stimulated provided a wonderful stimulus to my thinking about the cultural relevance of science within – and beyond – the Victorian age as I plunged into my own project. The feedback on my work by the Humanities Center staff and its fellows has helped me to imagine broader audiences for my work as well as consider new dimensions – both will undoubtedly enrich the final outcome.

By the conclusion of the fellowship I was pleased to accomplish what I had set out to do. I've successfully drafted the core of a chapter concerning royal patronage in early Victorian science, and this formed the basis of the research seminar I presented at Cambridge in late May: *Victoria's Secret: Science and the Monarchy*:

“Only weeks after Queen Victoria’s coronation, a controversy brewed over the naming of the South American ‘vegetable wonder’ (known today as *Victoria amazonica*), ‘discovered’ by Robert Schomburgk that New Year’s Day, 1837. This prominent water lily created a horticultural sensation, aspiring to such renown as ‘the most extraordinary and most gorgeous member of the Vegetable Kingdom’ in parallel with Princess Victoria’s own ascension. I revisit the controversy surrounding the naming of this lily to consider the manner by which its royal appeal – and its secrets – illustrates more broadly the making of ‘Victorian science’.”

The seminar was well-attended, with many of my field's top scholars present. Their questions, encouragement, and advice will continue to inspire my book's further development. This broader dissemination of my work also confirms the likelihood that the book, when published, will enjoy a broad readership. After the seminar, my conversations with various attendees enabled me to enthusiastically recap highlights of this year's successful faculty fellows program and how it has been a real boon to my research.



“‘This House is a Temple of Research’: Country-House Centres for Late-Victorian Science.”
In *Repositioning Victorian Sciences: Shifting Centres in Nineteenth-Century Thinking*, edited by D. Clifford, E. S. Wadge, A. Warwick and M. Willis, 235-259. Cambridge: Anthem, 2006.

ALEX G. PAPADOPOULOS

GEOGRAPHY

EXPLORING BYZANTINE CARTOGRAPHIES: ANCIENT SCIENCE, CHRISTIAN COSMOLOGY AND GEOPOLITICS IN IMPERIAL-ERA MAPPING



The Humanities Center Fellowship allowed me to work on a topic that integrates geography and the history of cartography, Byzantine studies, and theories of representation. The project emerged out of questions surrounding the great rarity of map objects from the millennium-long Byzantine era, and my earlier work on political territoriality in southeastern Europe



Byzantine map, by Cosmas Indicopleustes

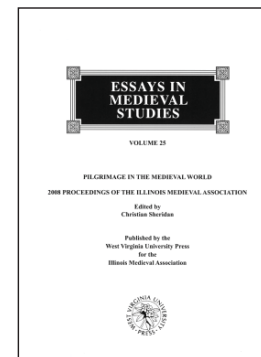
and the Eastern Mediterranean. Given the minimal cross-over between my discipline and Byzantine Studies, I found the field of Byzantine "spatial studies" to be largely open to exploration. Understanding how the Byzantines mapped the(ir) world and themselves in it, contributes greatly to the study of the spatial structure of the state, the court, and everyday life, and ultimately the Byzantines' place in the Late Roman and Medieval worlds.

structure of the state, the court, and everyday life, and ultimately the Byzantines' place in the Late Roman and Medieval worlds.

The Humanities Center and this year's group of Fellows provided me with a first-rate intellectual community. I was able to test out my ideas and offer comments and suggestions to my colleagues on their own work. Their help and the facilities that the Fellowship afforded to me allowed me to complete and present a paper by the same title at the Illinois Medieval Studies Association Conference. Moreover, in my outreach event at the National Hellenic Museum I was able to engage a diverse community of professionals, scholars, educators, collectors, and philhellenes who found the topic as wondrous as I did.



National Hellenic Museum
Executive Director Stephanie Vlahakis



"Exploring Byzantine Cartographies: Ancient Science, Christian Cosmology, and Geopolitics in Byzantine Imperial-Era Mapping." Forthcoming in *Essays in Medieval Studies*.

JOHN SHANAHAN

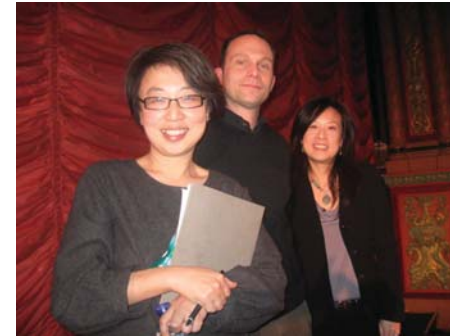
ENGLISH

**REMIEDIATION AND APOCALYPSE IN
DAVID MITCHELL'S *CLOUD ATLAS***

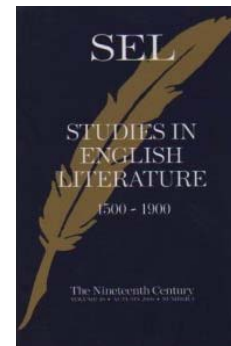


During the fellowship year I concentrated on drafting two chapters for my book in progress on ambiguous portrayals of advanced technology in contemporary fiction. Over the past few months, I have been writing on novelists David Mitchell and Michel Houellebecq. Over the last decade, both men have penned significant innovative narratives centered on the evolving tangle of humans with complex technologies. With the help of the fellowship, I had additional time for research and writing, as well as for finding ways to import this work into my teaching. In the fall, I presented some of my new research at the annual meeting of the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts.

My outreach event at the Music Box Theatre in February presented another chance to open up the work, this time in two ways: first, by giving comparative attention to how media and genre matter (placing film portrayals in dialogue with the novels), and second by examining the different receptions of the material in popular and academic settings. The panel and films at the Music Box Theatre were well attended, and testify to the vitality of the topic for formal analysis. As a scholar who has persistently aimed to learn from methods and findings beyond my discipline, I have benefited a great deal from my interaction with the other fellows. This year at the Humanities Center showed me how my work in literature can evolve productively when it is engaged in a dialogue with colleagues in other fields.



John Shanahan (center), with Miho Matsugu (left) and June Chung (right).



"Theatrical Space and Scientific Space in Thomas Shadwell's *Virtuoso*." In *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 49.3 (Summer 2009): 549-71.

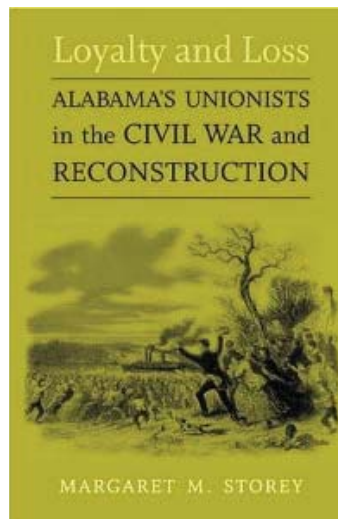
MARGARET STOREY

HISTORY

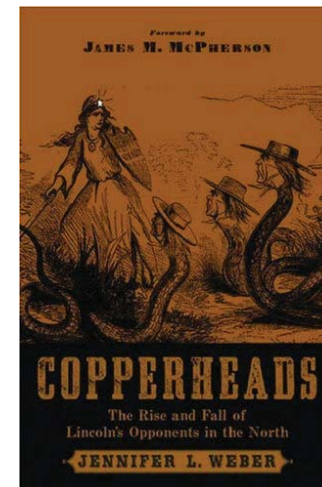


LOYALTY, NEUTRALITY, AND DISSENT: OCCUPIED MEMPHIS DURING THE CIVIL WAR, 1862-1865

My Humanities Center Fellowship allowed me to draft an article on federally-occupied Memphis during the American Civil War. Specifically, I spent my release time analyzing a range of archival sources that I had gathered on research trips over the last few years, and then begin to revise an earlier conference paper into a longer article. The argument of the work, to date, emphasizes the way that professions of Union loyalty by Memphis citizens became a form of currency which allowed day to day life to resume and interstate businesses (like the cotton trade) to flourish, while also unintentionally fostering a system of pro-Confederate espionage and counterinsurgency. The role of the federal government, and particularly the Union army, in the city thus became a strange mixture of pacification, accommodation, and policing, but in the end, it remained very difficult for the Union to determine who, exactly, was loyal to whom, much less what to do about it.



For her outreach, Storey conducted a seminar for teachers at the Newberry Library (above): "Treason or Loyal Opposition?: Copperheads and Dissent During the Civil War"



EVENTS

2010-2011



John Shanahan with teacher participants from "Classics in Context"



(left) Poet Tony Trigglio participates in the video recording session for the online edition of *Brute Neighbors*



(right) Poet cin salach reads her *Brute Neighbors* contribution at the Lincoln Hall launch



Faculty discussion of *The Two Cultures* (clockwise, from lower left): Liam Heneghan, Chris Green, Jonathan Gross, Don Opitz, Lynn Narasimhan, Mike Mezey, Mark Potosnak, Kenneth Saltman



Nicholson Baker speaks with a DePaul student following his lecture



Alex Papadopoulos presents his research at the National Hellenic Museum



Don Opitz presents his research at the University of Cambridge



Jonathan Gross with (above) Steven Jones and (right) Michelle Rubin and Sue Betz, Editor, Chicago Review Press



STEVEN E. JONES
DIGITAL HUMANITIES SERIES



excerpts from
THE NETWORK IS EVERTING

My title is “The Network is Everting: The Digital World and the Humanities.” But my topic, as you’ll see, is the Digital Humanities, which has been in the news lately, as the next big thing, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education and in a series in the New York Times. However, a tension remains, represented in the two parts of the term, and it was evident in a recent conference at Johns Hopkins on the Future of the Humanities--which spent a good deal of energy worrying about the impact of the digital world. I want to begin by thinking about what we think we mean by “the digital world.” Because I think how humanists frame digital technology has a lot to do with the forms it will take in the future, and with its broader cultural effects.

In some ways, it’s a question of where you put the emphasis. The world we live in is increasingly pervaded by digital technology and digital media, from e-books to social networks to video games. But doesn’t the phrase also capture a sense many of us have that the digital is being imposed on the real, physical world, that it threatens apocalyptic transformations humanists are called to resist? Is the digital world a world apart? or part of the world? This seems to me the fundamental question.

....

Many people today feel this alienating dread about the internet (often in some loose association with the cellular network)--in other words, about the quotidian technology that surrounds us, the water we swim in. And it’s telling that our most utopian and our most fearful imaginings of pervasive digital technology assume its scary ethereal ubiquity, its apparent immateriality.

....

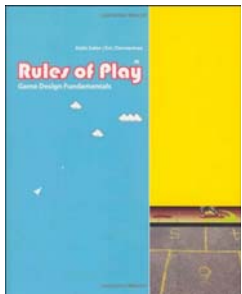
One way or another, though--and this is significant--the collective imagination repeatedly transmutes the materialities of a widely distributed system of interconnected components into a separate place, an immaterial somewhere above or beyond the material world we live in.

....

It [has seemed] a truth universally acknowledged that the point of this constructed idea of cyberspace was total immersion... the loss of body-consciousness as one disappears into the digital world. And we all know what that looks like. Total immersion in cyberspace is scary.

....

[But] even in video games, where it's useful to look for comparisons, this view that cyberspatial transcendence through total immersion was the endpoint towards which all gaming was striving has not been universally championed. One important theoretical alternative view came from Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman's work of game theory, *Rules of Play*.



In the book, Salen and Zimmerman expose what they call the “immersive fallacy”... “the idea that the pleasure of a media experience lies in its ability to sensually transport the participant into an illusory, simulated reality. According to the immersive fallacy, this reality is so complete, that ideally the frame falls away so that the player believes that he or she is part of an imaginary world.” The immersive fallacy, they say,

“represents an overly romantic and antiquated model for how media operate.” On the contrary, the authors point to the more normal “double consciousness” or layered consciousness experienced by game players, simultaneously both in and out of the game world and the real, physical world. Salen and Zimmerman argue: “The many-layered state of mind that occurs during play is something to be celebrated, not repressed--it is responsible for some of the unique pleasures that emerge from a game.” They ask: “What if game designers focused their efforts on actively playing with the double-consciousness of play, rather than pining for immersion?” This layered, double-consciousness is in fact what most gamers experience during fun gameplay, not total immersion. They can laugh with friends, eat snacks, and still control the avatar shooting aliens. A game system--and I think this characterizes the digital world in general more often than cyberspatial metaphors might indicate--is simultaneously digital and physical. It's simultaneously a data-rich and a social experience.

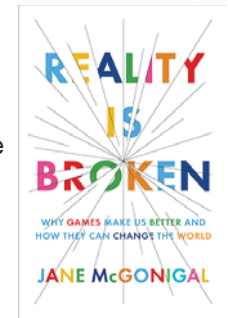
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As everybody knows, to play Wii games, you stand in front of the TV in your living room, preferably with friends or family, and you wave your arms and jump around in silly ways. That's the whole point of the system—to provoke that somatic interaction, that physical

movement, out in the room. The deliberately non-realistic graphics in Nintendo's own Wii games are a trade-off in terms of processing power, but they also make a point about design and intention: this system has almost nothing to do with the goal of total immersion in a virtual world. It's about playing with the layered double consciousness of the player, at the boundary of the digital world and the physical world.

....

Digital games, Jesse Schell said [in his now infamous dystopian speech], are increasingly “busting through to reality.” Exactly so. Which brings us to Serious Games, a deliberate movement to apply the conventions of gaming to real-world problems, often to mobilize large numbers of players to explore the structures of poverty or the energy crisis with an eye to doing what people do in games. Jane McGonigal's new book, *Reality is Broken*, explains her own work in helping to define serious games—which involve getting massive groups to work together in teams to gather resources, find solutions, overcome obstacles, achieve victories. It's actually a form of community organization that deploys voluntary gameplay and the benefits of collective intelligence--the same phenomenon that allows a guild to flourish in World of Warcraft--to address real-world social and economic problems, often on a global scale.



....

So let's review. What do all the developments from the past decade that I've been discussing have in common when it comes to the way we might frame the digital // world? The measurement of space--actual physical space--and the mapping of digital data onto that space. The Wii's casual revolution in video gaming is about mapping player motions in order to shift the focus of the game from an immersive virtual game world out into the living room where the bodies of players interact with game data. So-called social games on social networking platforms, despite their click-based limitations, are also about measuring and tracking player actions, however small, and aggregating those into a digital experience shared asynchronously by millions. Arguably, social media in general are successful in so far as they offer something like this hybrid digital and real world

experience--which is most vividly seen in the GPS-enabled spatially tagged hypermedia of locative art. But all of these media phenomena are about the combination of digital data with the physical world we live in, affording a view of that world as an open grid of possibilities. That's the sense in which I think you can say that the network // is // everting, leaking out into the world--and of course we know this. Just look at students in recent years. Now, I'm no utopian about this trend. And I know some internet users, gamers, social media fans can be seem as pursuing a kind of escapist total immersion, and some lose touch with the natural world, other people in the flesh, etc., while doing so. But that's not a "technology" problem; it's a psychological and social problem. As humanities educators, we need to respond with sophistication, nuance, and engagement to such trends. We need to make useful distinctions and the trend of the everting network offers the opportunity--even the imperative--to intervene to engage the digital in more hopeful, more socially engaged ways. How we imagine the digital world matters, and the point is, we have to imagine it.

....

Digital Humanities research connects the material objects of humanities research and study--archives, texts, documents, artifacts, works of art, including sculptures, images, installations--with computing applications, asking how humanities can critique digital technology as well as how technology can facilitate humanities research and learning.

....

The Digital Humanities is one possible and promising set of responses by academic researchers and teachers to the digital world, one way to actively and productively intervene.

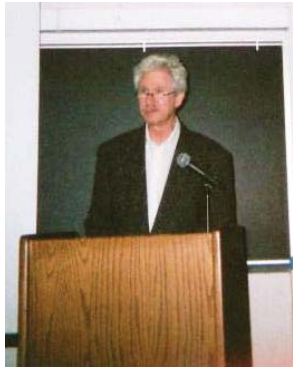
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Humanists are not actually "natural luddites," as C. P. Snow claimed, but they learn fast—and many have learned to be neo-Luddites. The two terms--"Digital" and "Humanities"--stand in potential opposition to one another, but my point is that they can signify a productive dialectic. Humanists have to take responsibility for shaping rather than merely decrying in neo-Luddite fashion the growing ubiquity of digital technologies. In that spirit I want to close, in good rhetorical fashion, with an exhortation. Here it is: I exhort you and myself to engage with the hopeful as well as the darker aspects of the digital world we find ourselves in (have made for ourselves), and to teach others by example how to engage, collaboratively in making that world, to be its designers rather than its victims. To see digital technology as offering potential ways of engaging with the material, with physical objects, including texts and archival research materials, but also the natural world, other people, rather than as a way to

transcend or escape from all these things. That collective, social engagement would be the humanities in action, not virtual anything but real scholars and students, researchers, writers, and artists, working to define and test the boundaries where the digital world and the physical world we live in are juxtaposed, superimposed, combined--and from which there is no escape. Because this is the world we live in. It's what a romantic poet Jonathan Gross and I both teach once called "the very world, which is the world / Of all of us, --the place where in the end / We find our happiness, or not at all."

It's important to remember that William Gibson originally described cyberspace as a "consensual hallucination." Thirty years later, in his novel *Spook Country*, a journalist, a curator, and a locative artist/hacker sit in a cafe discussing the apparent fact that, as one of them has said, cyberspace is everting, turning inside out and flowing out into the world. The hacker explains that "once it everts, then there isn't any cyberspace," that in point of fact "there never was, if you want to look at it that way. It was a way we had of looking where we were headed, a direction." The general direction is moving out into the world, I think. But as humanities scholars, teachers and students, researchers, writers, and artists--we're the ones to steer it.

REGINALD GIBBONS *SLOW TRAINS OVERHEAD*



On October 27, 2010, the Humanities Center, in collaboration with faculty members Salli Berg Seeley and Mark Turcotte, welcomed noted poet Reginald Gibbons to DePaul. Gibbons presented a reading from his latest collection of poetry, *Slow Trains Overhead: Chicago Poems and Stories*, to a capacity crowd of students, faculty and staff, and members of the Chicago community.

Slow Trains Overhead embraces a striking variety of human experience—a chance encounter with a veteran on Belmont Avenue, the grimy majesty of the downtown El tracks, domestic violence in a North Side brownstone, the wide-eyed wonder of new arrivals at O'Hare. These new and selected poems and stories take the reader from museums and neighborhood life to tense proceedings in Juvenile Court, from comically noir-tinged scenes at a store on Clark Street to midnight immigrants at a gas station on Western Avenue, and from a child's piggybank to nature in urban spaces. For Gibbons, the city's people, places, and historical reverberations are a compelling human array of the everyday and the extraordinary, of poverty and beauty, of the experience of being one among many.

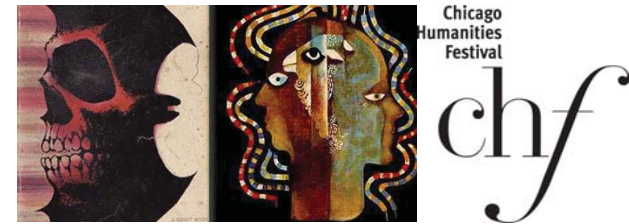
Reginald Gibbons is a poet, fiction writer, translator, literary critic, artist, and Professor of English, Classics, and Spanish and Portuguese at Northwestern University. In 2008 he published *Creatures of a Day*, which was a Finalist for the National Book Award in poetry. His other works include poetry collections *Fern-texts* (2005) and *In the Warehouse* (2004), the novel *Sweetbitter* (2003), and translations *Sophocles, Selected Poems: Odes and Fragments* (2008) and *Sophocles, Antigone*



Gibbons speaks with DePaul students following his reading

CLASSICS IN CONTEXT JOHN SHANAHAN ON RICHARD POWERS

As part of our sponsorship of the Chicago Humanities Festival, each year the Humanities Center hosts a session of the Festival's Classics in Context program, which brings together Chicago school teachers with humanities scholars to discuss classics past and present. Thirty-five middle school and high school teachers from the Chicago area participated in this year's session, led by Faculty Fellow John Shanahan.



CHF Educator Resources Classics in Context 2011 Series From Androids & Samba to Devices & Dracula

"Literary Devices" by Richard Powers

Thursday, April 14, 2011

5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

DePaul Humanities Center, DePaul University

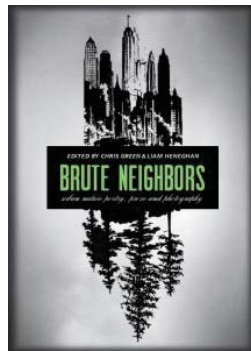
Contemporary author Richard Powers explores the implications of modern science and technology through a masterful blend of science, philosophy, and literature. He explores the relationship between technology and creativity in this story, in which a writer begins a correspondence with a computer program designed to generate stories. DePaul University Professor and literature of science expert, John Shanahan, leads this discussion of a thought-provoking contemporary short story.

DEPAUL POETRY INSTITUTE

BRUTE NEIGHBORS

In collaboration with DePaul's Institute for Nature and Culture and its Certificate in Publishing program, the Poetry Institute of the DePaul Humanities Center released a well-received anthology entitled *Brute Neighbors: Urban Nature Poetry, Prose and Photography*. Students enrolled in the Certificate in Publishing course, led by Featherproof Books founders Jonathan Messenger and Zach Dodson, aided in the editing, designing, publishing and publicizing of the book.

Edited Chris Green, formerly a Visiting Fellow with the Humanities Center, and Liam Heneghan, Professor of Environmental Science and co-director of the Institute for Nature and Culture, *Brute Neighbors* turns to an unlikely source for answers to the persistent threat now posed to our environment: the city. The poets, photographers and essayists included in this urgent anthology show there is much to be learned at the intersection of the urban and the wild. Contributors include some of Chicago's top writers, including Reginald Gibbons, Stuart Dybek, Christina Pugh, Marc Smith, Don Share, Marc Turcotte, Mary Hawley, Christian Wiman, cin salach, Tony Trigilio, Martha Modena Vertreace-Doody, David Trinidad, S.L. Wisenberg, and more.



Prior to launch of the print edition, the Certificate in Publishing Program created an online presence for the book at jonnymess.fatcow.com/brute-neighbors. For this online edition, several contributors to the



Videographer recording Martha Modena Vertreace-Doody

anthology, including DePaul poets Chris Green, Miles Harvey, Liam Heneghan, Michele Morano and Mike Puican, participated in a video recording session at the DePaul University Art Museum.

"The real gems of the collection are the nonfiction pieces. In '17-Year Itch', Miles Harvey takes the arrival of 17-year cicadas in Downers Grove as an occasion to reflect on his relationships with his aging mother and young children. Michele Morano's "Boy Eats World" is a funny take on her toddler's predilection for stuffing all of urban nature into his mouth. S.L. Wisenberg addresses her nature phobia and urbanphilia in 'Plain Scared, or: There Is No Such Thing as Negative Space, the Art Teacher Said.' And Heneghan's own contribution—"A City for Human-clams: A Plea for Environmental Immobility"—tongue-in-cheekily postulates that the best thing we can do for the environment is



Michele Morano



Liam Heneghan



**THE
OBSESSIONS
OF NICHOLSON
BAKER**

The Mezzanine, 1988
A novel that takes place during a single lunch hour, while the narrator, an office temp, goes out and buys a pair of shoelaces.

Room Temperature, 1990
Baker's second novel, this one plays out in even less time — while the narrator feeds his infant daughter a bottle and blows a current of air across the room.

U and I: A True Story, 1991
A memoir and an experiment in what Baker calls "memory criticism," which tries to explain his lifelong obsession with the writing of John Updike.

Vox, 1992
The book Monica Lewinsky gave to Bill Clinton. It recounts a single, highly inventive phone-sex conversation.

The Fermata, 1994
Baker's second erotic novel, about a man who can stop time and uses the opportunity to undress women.

The Size of Thoughts: Essays and Other Lumber, 1996
Nonfiction essays about, among other things, the engineering genius of the fingernail clipper and the movie projector.

“Baker is...one of the most consistently enticing writers of our time... Readers with a fondness for richly ridiculous diction, witty provocation and graphic sexual prose that celebrates desire, frailty and the comedy of life will not be disappointed.”

— Sam Lipsyte, *The New York Times*, August 11, 2011



The Everlasting Story Of Nory, 1998
A novel, based partly on Baker's daughter, about a 9-year-old American girl attending a British day school.

Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper, 2001
The book about what inspired Baker to spend his retirement savings on old newspapers. It's a manifesto against libraries that indiscriminately get rid of books, papers and even card catalogs in the dubious belief that microfilm is more permanent.

A Box of Matches, 2003
A novel about a man who gets up before dawn every morning, lights a fire and meditates on things like mortality, holes in socks and paper-towel designs.

Checkpoint, 2004
Like "Vox," a novel in dialogue, except in this one, a friend tries to talk his buddy out of assassinating President George W. Bush.

Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization, 2008
A collage-like documentary history, written in un-Baker-like prose, that implicitly takes a pacifist stand.

The Anthologist, 2009
In some ways Baker's most autobiographical and most affecting novel, about a poet unable to complete an essay he's supposed to be writing for an anthology of rhymed verse.

House of Holes: A Book of Raunch, 2011
Another sex novel, this one set in a fantastical theme park, where it is possible to trade your right arm for a bigger penis. The subtitle is not an exaggeration.

