

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.

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.

Humanities Center Staff

Director
Jonathan Gross,
Professor, English

Associate Director
Anna Vaughn Clissold, Ph.D.

Center Assistant
Alecia Person

Student Worker
Laura Mena

The Humanities Center wishes to thank DePaul graduate student Jeremy Rasmussen for his valuable contributions to this year's annual report.

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
Associate Professor
English

H. Peter Steeves
Professor
Philosophy

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Though we sometimes think of art and literature as the sister arts, music and literature are no less intimately connected. Whether we think of Miles Davis as a dandy, feminist interpretations of Salome's dance, or a Brahms-inflected interpretation of the plague, our lecturers and performers--John Szwed, Susan McClary, Fifth House Ensemble--reminded audience members that music has played a vital role in bringing words to life. I was very proud to see how our faculty fellows and invited lecturers rose to the occasion and offered DePaul and the city of Chicago an example of how vibrant and alive the humanities are at this nexus. Special thanks to Matthew Abraham and Rachel Shteir for arranging stellar events and to Kurt Westerberg for sharing with us the debut of his musical settings for poetry by Dylan Thomas. Congratulations to Rachel Shteir on the publication of her book, *The Steal*, and thanks to Martha Nussbaum for reminding us that university life is "not for profit." Even Lord Byron was honored on the 200th anniversary of his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Cantos I and II, an event that attracted student papers from around the world, an independent scholar from California with a forged Byron letter, and an excellent lecture on eco-criticism by Drew Hubbell from the Susquehanna Valley, where Coleridge planned an ideal community in the late 18th century. With such a full roster of talented faculty to speak in their own voice, I'll keep my own remarks brief and thank them for their efforts. Who knows, but on the lower registers, as the protagonist of Ralph Ellison's novel says, they also speak for you?

Sincerely,

Jonathan Gross

2011-2012 SPEAKERS

LITERATURE & MUSIC SERIES

LITERATURE AND MUSIC

**DEPAUL HUMANITIES CENTER
2011-2012**

FIFTH HOUSE ENSEMBLE
OCTOBER 4, 2011
7:00 P.M.

PERFORMING *BLACK VIOLET*, ACT 1
"A MODERN CLASSIC." —CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

JOHN SZWED
OCTOBER 17, 2011

*MILES DAVIS:
THE JAZZ MUSICIAN AS DANDY*

6:00 LECTURE
5:30 RECEPTION

SUSAN McCLARY
JANUARY 19, 2012

*SALOME IN THE COURT OF QUEEN CHRISTINA:
STRADELLA, WILDE, AND STRAUSS*

6:00 LECTURE
5:30 RECEPTION

ALL EVENTS TAKE PLACE AT:
CORTEYOU COMMONS
2323 N. FREMONT ST.
CHICAGO

These events are free and open to the public.

For more info, contact:
DePaul Humanities Center
773-325-4500
aperson@depaul.edu
www.las.depaul.edu/humanitiescenter

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

FIFTH HOUSE ENSEMBLE *BLACK VIOLET*

Fifth House Ensemble strives to breathe new life into the chamber music format by discovering new and innovative ways to enhance its appeal. Their performance of *Black Violet, Act 1* is a testament to this worthy endeavor. Created in collaboration with graphic novelist Ezra Clayton Daniels, *Black Violet, Act 1*, tells the tale of a black cat's survival during the last major outbreak of the Black Plague in 17th Century London. During this time, it was commonly believed that black cats were the source of the infamous disease. Such superstitions led them to be rounded up and systematically exterminated. The elimination of this natural predator led to the explosion of London's rat population the actual carriers of the disease.



Fifth House Ensemble is a Chicago-based group whose versatile and dynamic performances engage audiences through its connective programming and unexpected performance venues.

Performances highlight relationships between classical music and art forms as diverse as film, dance, gourmet food, theater, winemaking and visual art, as well as create new sounds through collaborations with artists of other music genres.

"Local narrative chamber music ensemble Fifth House likes to take risks, and its latest production, "Black Violet," a collaboration with graphic novelist Ezra Clayton Daniels, seems likely to reward audiences who do the same."

– Chicago Sun-Times



“We had decided that we wanted this years subscription series to involve some sort of connection with the graphic novel. We experimented last year with story telling through our concerts and we wanted to go a step further. We felt that graphic novels are a great vehicle for story telling and so musical and nature.”

— Adam Marks

“My girlfriend who was studying early modern history, told me the story first of the way cats were being scapegoated during the last great plague in London and I just kind of fell in love with the idea.

....

I have really specific inspiration for this book. I went back to the art that was popular at the time, these period engravings. I went back to the work of William Hogarth and Wenceslaus Hollar. Both of these guys were doing mass consumption art engravings and satire in cross hatch heavy style that I tried to mimic with Black Violet.

....

My favorite part is getting so deep inside the music that the story is tangible in my mind. My favorite part is falling in love with music the more I listen to it, the more I pick out the emotions in between each note.”

— Ezra Clayton Daniels

JOHN SZWED

MILES DAVID: THE JAZZ MUSICIAN AS DANDY

John Szwed is a Professor of Music and Jazz Studies at Columbia University, Editor-in-Chief of *Jazz Studies Online*, and author of the Grammy-award winning *Dr. Jazz*, which accompanied the 2005 release of *Jelly Roll Morton: The Complete Library of Congress Recordings* by *Alan Lomax* on Rounder Records.

Some of his books include: *Jazz 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving Jazz* (2000), *So What: The Life of Miles Davis* (2003), *Doctor Jazz, Jelly Roll Morton* (2005) and *Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World* (2010).

The persona of Miles Davis transcends the music he played, the instrument he mastered, and the culture he transformed. His performance both on-and off-stage, along with his fashion, speech, and attitude, all led to the creation of a new type of musician—a musician who fulfills our expectations of what it means to be “cool.” The word “cool” has its roots in West African and Congo philosophy and is used to describe someone whose beauty and character are joined together free of anger. Additionally, the word “cool” resonates in what Baudelaire called “the dandy,” which he defines as a bohemian intellectual with a burning desire to create for himself originality, someone with an “air of coldness” and “unshakeable determination not to be moved.”



“In a time when the trumpet player symbolized a certain kind of modern man, a highly loud and virile player, technically proficient and master of this piece of instrumental machinery, Miles played soft and low, turning the trumpet into an organic extension of himself, hitting what seemed to be wrong notes along the way, reminding the audience it was a human performance after all.

....

These gestures, the relaxed posture, the studied and inarticulateness, the calculated detachment verge on elements of the cool, a powerful metaphor for 20th century life. Cool has its roots in West African and Congo philosophy where beauty and character are joined in self possession free of anger, in a face that is perfectly poised, but also resonates with a 19th-century sense of the artful self, the dandy a type of aristocratic bohemian intellectual spelled out by Baudelaire, who said:

‘The distinguishing characteristic of the dandy’s beauty consists above all in an air of coldness which comes from an unshakeable determination not to be moved; you might call it a latent fire which hints at it self, and which could, but chooses not to, burst into flame.’”

— John Szwed



SUSAN McCLARY

SALOME ON THE COURT OF QUEEN CHRISTINA

In 1905, famous German composer Richard Strauss adapted Oscar Wilde's provocative play *Salome* as an opera. The title Salome refers to King Herod's stepdaughter who played a vital role in helping her mother obtain the head of John the Baptist. Strauss' operatic version of the events employs an array of dances and harmonies that allude to themes of sadism, obsession, and eroticism. In the end, Strauss kills his Salome as punishment for her transgressions. Yet, quite a different version of events appears in an earlier operatic adaption of Salome by Italian composer Alessandro Stradella, who composed for the outspoken and powerful Queen Christina of Sweden. In Stradella's portrayal, Salome lives to celebrate her feminine cunning. The contrast between Strauss and Stradella's Salome illustrates a striking difference between 17th and 20th century notions of the femme fatale, between triumph and the need to punish. Furthermore, this contrast reveals an absence of strong women in the predictable operas of the 18th century. It was exactly the unpredictability of Stradella's Salome that makes it so stunning.

Susan McClary received her PhD in musicology from Harvard and teaches courses on music history, music theory, and early music performance practices at Case Western Reserve University. She assisted in the creation of a new academic field: feminist musicology.

McClary is the author of many celebrated books, including *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (1991); *Georges Bizet: Carmen* (1992) *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (2001) and *Modal Subjectivities: Renaissance Self-Fashioning in the Italian Madrigal* (2004), which won the Otto Kinkeldey Prize from the American Musicological Society.



“Today I want to make you fall in love, at least a little bit, with Stradella the artist. To seduce you away, if only temporarily, from no doubt more edifying composers such as J.S. Bach. To instill in you a taste for the pre-enlightenment. I am aided and abetted in this venture by Stradella’s scores which need only the breath of performance to bring them vividly back to life. And I want to explain why reconstituted sonic experience ought to qualify as evidence for the historical record. Stradella’s compositions include many of our familiar markers. His arias have a degree of expansion comparable to those of 18th century opera, and they introduce many of the formulas that will continue to characterize later repertoires. Yet, he wrote just before the period when all these procedures were expected to confirm foregone conclusions. In short, his music is not predictable. Not, however, because he attempted, like the 19th century romantics, to rebel against established norms, but rather because he was among the foremost practitioners of the 17th century predilection for generating energy arcs that careen ever forward, refusing anticipated points of closure.”

— Susan McClary

MARTHA NUSSBAUM

NOT FOR PROFIT: WHY DEMOCRACY NEEDS HUMANITIES

The humanities are indispensable in the development of one's critical thinking. Yet, policy-makers all over the world have been defunding the humanities and the arts in order to invest more fully in avenues that produce short term economic gains in the new global world order. Martha Nussbaum examines the ramifications of this economically centered attitude, posing the question: "What does it mean, then, for a nation to advance, to improve its quality of life?" In asking this timely and evocative question, Nussbaum points out that the implications of our new world order threaten basic standards of democracy by marginalizing the importance of race, gender, and social equality. She argues that in order to have a society that encourages opportunities for everyone, it will need citizens who examine, reflect, and think compassionately and objectively about politics, fellow citizens, and the reasons and justifications for their own beliefs. The humanities, Nussbaum believes, is the vehicle through which these critical examinations are possible.

Martha Nussbaum is Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago.

She is the author of an expansive collection of influential texts, many of which have received awards, including the Ness Book Award of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Book award of the North American Society for Social Philosophy, and the Grawemeyer Award in Education. Her award-winning publications include: *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (1997); *Sex and Social Justice* (1998), and *Hiding From Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (2004).



“We have to think about what democratic nations are and what they really strive for. So, what does it mean, then, for a nation to advance, to improve its quality of life? On one view, it simply means to improve its gross domestic product per capita. This measure of national achievement has for decades has been the standard one used by developmental economists all around the world, as if it was a good proxy for a nation’s overall success. The goal of the nation, says this model of development, should be economic growth: never mind about distribution and social equality, never mind about the preconditions of stable democracy, never mind about the quality of race and gender relations, never mind about the improvement of other aspects of a human being’s quality of life such as health and education.

....

Critical thinking is particularly important for good citizenship in a society that needs to come to grips with the presence of people who differ by ethnicity, caste, and religion. We will only have a chance at an adequate dialogue across those boundaries if young people know how to engage in dialogue and deliberation in the first place, and they will only know how to do that if they learn how to examine themselves and to think about the reasons why they are inclined to support one thing rather than another.”

— Martha Nussbaum

2011-2012 FACULTY FELLOWS

MATTHEW ABRAHAM

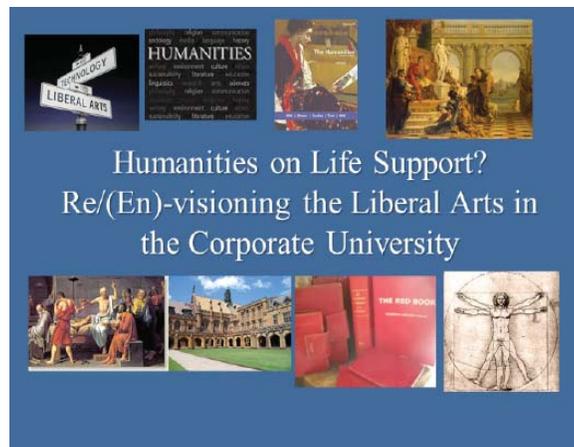
WRITING, RHETORIC, AND DISCOURSE

*THE HUMANITIES' CENTRAL ROLE IN THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY:
RESUSCITATING JOHN HENRY NEWMAN'S IDEAL*

"During the year, I participated in a number of different activities related to my DePaul Humanities Center Fellowship. These activities were directly supported by the course releases that were provided to me through the fellowship.

On November 22nd, 2011, I delivered a lecture sponsored by the William G. Copper Jr. Honors Program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock: 'Humanities on Life Support? Re/envisioning the Liberal Arts in the Corporate University.' As I noted, 'Humanism, as Edward Said tells us, is the last form of resistance against Blake's mind forged manacles, the last resistance against the clichés that litter a sound-byte culture.' During my remarks, I challenged the humanists in the audience to revitalize the humanistic disciplines by making them more relevant to the concerns of our present historical moment. As I explored the seemingly dismal state of humanities funding in the contemporary university, I argued

Matthew Abraham is an Associate Professor of Writing, Rhetoric, and Discourse. His scholarship on Edward Said, academic freedom, and the Question of Palestine has appeared in the following venues: *Cultural Critique*, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, the *Journal of Advanced Composition*, and *Arab Studies Quarterly*. Matthew is completing a book project entitled *Out of Bounds: Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine* with Continuum. He is also the co-editor of a forthcoming book from Parlor Press on *Barack Obama and the Politics of Persuasion*.



that humanities professors will need to find new and compelling arguments to convince administrators and the public to support our work. This argument is at the center of an article I am completing on Newman's conception of the university for *College English*. My extended review of Jonathan Cole's *The Great American University: Its Rise to Preeminence, Its Indispensable National Role, and Why It Must Be Protected* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009) appears in the Fall 2012 issue of *Illinois Academe*. A former provost and the John Mitchell Mason Professor of the University at Columbia, Cole has witnessed the various changes that major research universities have undergone, noting with concern how the drive for profits within the areas of scientific and medical research has the potential to harm the mission of the university. As I pointed out in my essay, 'In spite of the pressures that may influence university leaders to cut corners in the name of profit, it is incumbent upon those seeking to maintain a great university to maintain a set of core values (academic excellence and standards, for example) that cannot be compromised.' As part of maintaining this commitment to core values, universities must support the humanities, which are a key component of any great university's curriculum.

On March 8, 2012, Professor Martha Nussbaum, the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, delivered a lecture entitled 'Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities' in Cortelyou Commons at DePaul University. This lecture was directly related to my Humanities Center project on John Henry Newman and the resuscitation of his ideal of the university. Approximately one hundred and twenty people consisting of faculty, staff, and students attended the lecture. The event generated excellent discussion, with students posing several probing and thought-stimulating questions to Professor Nussbaum. President Holtschneider hosted a special dinner in Professor Nussbaum's honor at his University House residence immediately after the talk."



RACHEL SHTEIR

THEATER SCHOOL

THE STEAL

Rachel Shteir shared her knowledge of subjects often overlooked by academics with a reading, Q & A, and discussion from her third and latest book *The Steal*. From an offense punishable by death in 16th century London to its classification as a disease with the rise of modern psychiatry and the department store, *The Steal* not only reveals how shoplifting became an irrepressible part of culture, but a shapeshifting act that takes on different forms with the changing conditions of society. Moreover, it confronts how the language used to describe shoplifting today is impoverished.

“I feel incredibly privileged to have been a Humanities Center Fellow twice at DePaul. The course release was invaluable in getting my fourth book jump-started. The new book, tentatively titled *Houdini/Houdin*, tells the story of two of the greatest magicians that ever lived--Harry Houdini and Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin. With support from the Center, I was also able to go the UT Austin Harry Ransom Center, which holds a large collection of Harry Houdini material, including materials that Houdini collected about Robert-Houdin, whose ghost he pursued for years.”



Rachel is an Associate Professor at the Theatre School at DePaul. Before going to Chicago in 2000, she taught at Yale, Carnegie Mellon University, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, the Columbia University School of the Arts, and the National Theatre Institute.

Rachel holds a BA from the University of Chicago in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and an MFA and a DFA in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from the Yale School of Drama.

Her books include *Striptease: The Untold History of the Girlie Show* (2004); *Gypsy: The Art of the Tease* (2009) and her latest book *The Steal* (2011).



“The woman is between the hat boutique and the hose boutique of the accessories department when the amount of stuff she is carrying overpowers her. She drops something and squats on the floor to pick it up. She begins messing about in the garment bag and the shopping bag. After a few minutes of shuffling (there is a digital clock in the upper-right-hand corner of the screen and you can see time passing), she crams one or two pairs of socks and some hair bands into the crown of a hat, which she plops on top of the clothing and bags. She hoists herself off the floor and wanders back to the hat section. From the wooden shelf, she takes a floppy black hat and sets it on her head. The tag hangs in front of her ear. She takes off the hat and tries one whose brim hides more of her face.

....

The guards have divvied up her bags. There is no tension among them. They appear to be exchanging pleasantries as they stroll to the down escalator. They vanish, their destination the holding room in the basement, where the woman will be interviewed, and where she will be turned over to the police. The screen goes fuzzy. It's 5:37 p.m. in Saks Fifth Avenue, Beverly Hills, Winona Ryder is about to join that notorious category—the celebrity shoplifter.”

— Rachel Shteir



KURT WESTERBERG

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

VISION AND PRAYER

Kurt Westerberg's inaugural performance *Vision and Prayer* examines the intersection between music and literature by setting the poetry of Dylan Thomas to music. Thomas wrote the poem *Vision and Prayer* shortly after WWII. The poem is an eclectic composition in both the unique shape of its stanzas and various themes that represent struggle with birth, creation, and salvation. Inspired by the vivid imagery and unique strophes of Thomas' work, Westerberg has set the themes of *Vision and Prayer* into distinctive and often haunting harmonies, noting that each strophe has its own tempo, image, and sound, which allow for a recurring connection between text and music.

Kurt Westerberg chairs the Department of Musicianship Studies and Composition. He has been received both nationally and internationally for his solo and ensemble music. He is also the Director of Music at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Evanston.

Some of his recent work performed include: *Night Music I* for solo guitar (1994); *Fantasy* for violin and piano (2005); *Sargasso* for string Quartet (1999); *In Time of Silver Rain* (2007) for SATB chorus and piano; *Einstein Dream Preludes* (2007) for solo piano, and *Ritual and Laments* (2009) for solo percussionist.



“Throughout the work, the solo mezzo-soprano voice has the principal musical material and principal setting of the text. The other voices sustain, expand or ‘comment’ (sometimes ironically) on the principal text, sometimes quoting from Mozart, Durufle, French Nativity Carols, bluegrass, ‘Amazing Grace’, and, since Thomas was Welsh, ‘All Through the Night’.

....

Vision and Prayer represents the poet balancing, juggling and struggling with creation, birth, salvation, making love, Jesus, God, and so on.”

— Kurt Westerberg

When
The wren
Bone writhes down
And the first dawn
Furied by his stream
Swarms on the kingdom come
Of the dazzler of heaven
And the splashed mothering maiden
Who bore him with a bonfire in
His mouth and rocked him like a storm
I shall run lost in sudden
Terror and shining from
The once hooded room
Crying in vain
In the caldron
Of his
Kiss

ADDITIONAL EVENTS 2011 - 2012



Prof. Hugh Ingrasci of the Department of English leads Chicago teachers in a discussion of Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* for the Humanities Center's 2012 session of the Chicago Humanities Festival's annual *Books Unbound* series.



Graduate Theatre student Lauren Fields recites from Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* opening the Center's conference honoring the 200th anniversary of its publication.





Writer in Residence Mahmoud Saeed with panelists (Nesreen Akhtarkhvari and Allen Salter) and attendees at the Humanities Center's event announcing the release of his new book, *The World through the Eyes of Angels*.

Faculty gather to discuss John Szwed's work on Alan Lomax, ahead of Szwed's evening lecture on Miles Davis, part of the Center's 11-12 series on Literature and Music

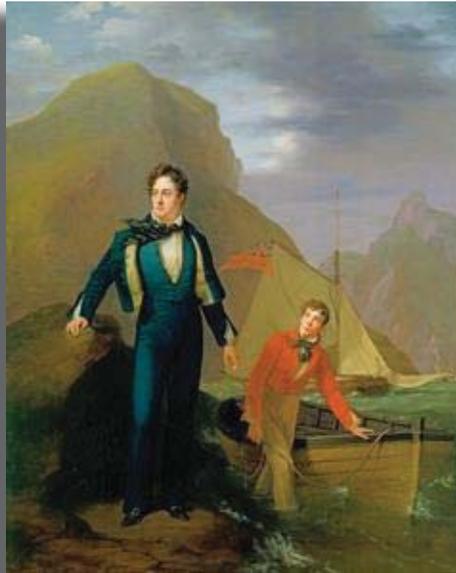


l-r: Jennifer Finstrom, Lizzy Pournara, Mary Kitamura, Peter Graham and Jonathan Gross examine a letter purported to have been written by Lord Byron, presented at the *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Conference by Johanna Cypis.

DEPAUL HUMANITIES CENTER

Celebrates
the 200th anniversary
of the publication of
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage
Cantos 1 and 2

Monday, April 30, 2012
Cortelyou Commons
2324 N. Fremont St., Chicago



Lord Byron, by George Sanders, 1808-09
The Royal Collection © 2011

DePaul Humanities Center
2347 N. Racine Avenue
Chicago, IL 60614
773-325-4580
aperson@depaul.edu
las.depaul.edu/humanitiescenter

In partnership with our cosponsors:
University Honors Program
Department of English



CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CHRISTINE KENYON-JONES

KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

The mistreatment of animals was the subject of various parliamentary debates in early 19th century England. It was also a subject in which Byron took special interest. Evidence of this is not only seen in his participation in one of these debates at the House of Lords, but in the way he links the politics of his day to the animals that appear about in his literary compositions. Using animals as a political trope allowed Byron to satirize and engage in a wide range of social commentary, on topics including: warfare, slavery, and religious skepticism. Whether Byron was lampooning Edmond Burke's notions of chivalry through a Spanish bullfight in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, or protesting the edicts of Trinity College Cambridge by keeping a pet bear, animals remained a consistent part of his life. More importantly, this was a part of his life that reflected more than just political satire, but an exceptional compassion toward animals that he attempted to extend to the larger public.

Christine Kenyon-Jones is an honorary Research Fellow at King's College in the Department of English. She is also a member of the executive committee of the Byron Society. Her research focus is British Romantic-Period writing, with a special interest in the representations of the animals in the period.

Her books include: *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-Period Writing* (2001), *Byron, Darwin and Paley: Interrogating Natural Theology* (2008). She is also the editor of *Byron: The Image of the Poet* (2008).



“As well as being born a poet, Byron was, I’ll be arguing, born a political animal. He was a writer who, like the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, found animals ‘good to think with.’ This meant that Byron’s deployment of animals in his work and his life provided him with opportunities for reflection on a very wide spectrum of topics, ranging from slavery to friendship, from warfare to hypocrisy, and from food and eating to religious skepticism.

....

In the setting of the Peninsula War, Byron suggests that it’s perhaps only animals that can stand outside the blood guilt that disfigures all the other human hands. The animal protection parliamentarian frequently made the point that cruelty to animals brutalizes human beings. And Byron’s bullfight illustrates how humans are made cruel toward each other by practicing and watching cruelty to animals.

....

In the political field it was not long before he realized that party politics was not his forte, and that he was ‘not made for what you would call a politician, and should never have adhered to any party.’ In terms of his approaches and responses to animals, however, whether expressed literally, or in that form of imaginatively personal performance that came naturally to him, Byron remained much more consistent. The same mixture of humor, satire, compassion, kinship, and fervent feeling which characterize his early involvement with animals, including the bullfight stanzas, was very much a part of his personality at the end of his life. ”

— Christine Kenyon-Jones

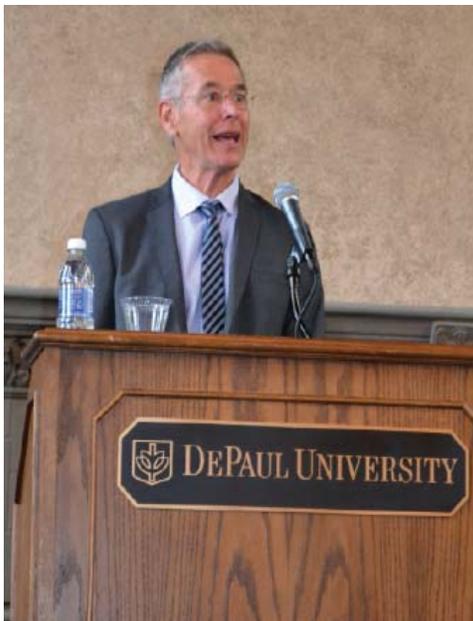
PETER GRAHAM

VIRGINIA TECH

Peter Graham is the Clifford Cutchins Professor of English at Virginia Tech, and is the winner of the Elma Dangerfield prize in Byron Studies. He is president of both the Byron Society of America and the Messolonghi Byron Society.

Graham is the author of *Byron's Bulldog: The Letters of John Cam Hobhouse to Lord Byron* (1984) and *Don Juan and Regency England* (1990), and is editor of *Disorderly Eaters: Texts in Self-Empowerment* (1992).

Both Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* have stood the test of time. It therefore seems worthwhile to investigate links there may be between these two literary achievements that have contributed to their enduring popularity. Although *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is markedly different than *Pride and Prejudice* in both time of conception and style—Byron started his poem in 1809 as an autobiographical travel log written in Spenserian verse, while Austen's novel was conceived in 1796 and later published in 1813—both texts capture the spirit of the age, especially through their male heroes. In Austen's text, readers see a successful fantasy domestication in which love is brought to the loveless heart of the cunning, charismatic, but socially alienated, Fitzwilliam Darcy. Childe Harold, like Darcy, can be described as astute, attractive, limited in his ability to love, and alienated—not from the social arena, but from society itself.



““In their different ways—Byron’s text, cosmopolitan, philosophical, and ambitiously speculative; Austen’s local, empirical, and determinately everyday—the two books succeed in remarkably suiting their contemporary audience. *Pride and Prejudice* was characterized as, at present, a fashionable novel by none other than Annabella Milbanke, who was soon to be Lady Byron. And it was reread with admiration for the third time at least by Sir Walter Scott, the most acclaimed novelist of the day. After taking the fashionable world by storm, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* went through ten editions in the three or so years following its publication. Between them, these two texts brilliantly embody the light and the dark sides of the spirit of the age—and nowhere better than in their heroes.

....

In Austen’s male protagonist, Fitzwilliam Darcy, readers see a remarkably successful fantasy domestication of the proud alienation that also characterizes the irresistibly badass, half-real hero of Byron’s poem--whether that hero is Harold, or the narrating poet, or Byron the author and person, whose real or imagined attributes his readers couldn’t and can’t resist detecting in the poem and its title character.

....

Even though *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and *Pride and Prejudice* were not begun as close together in time as their publication dates would suggest, and even though Jane Austen had imagined Darcy long before Byron articulated Harold, the two works, their characters, and their sensibilities derive from the same era. The politically conservative, post-revolutionary, pre-Waterloo period that might justly, even in England, be called the age of Napoleon.””

— Peter Graham

J. ANDREW HUBBELL

SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY

Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is often considered to be a work of cosmopolitanism and mobility. These prominent features often hinder the poem from being viewed as a piece of ecological romanticism. After all, romantic writers such as Wordsworth and Coleridge belong to an environmental epistemology that emphasizes how one must first dwell in nature in order to become rooted in its ethos. Yet, the notion of dwelling as the definitive approach to ecology is part of a false binary. Culture, all culture, is a product of an ongoing relationship to nature. Because of this, any environment can yield ecological insight. In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, such ecological insights are achieved through the protagonist's complete openness to each new experience. Especially in Greece, Harold's openness allows him to experience the freedom-driven spirit of ancient Athenians, even though that spirit is no longer part of the Greeks in Harold's time. This is because the land has preserved the spirit of freedom in its sun, soil, crags, groves, and mountain air. It is through Harold's immersion in the landscape that we see both the spirit of ancient Greece and the emergence of a cultural ecology.

J. Andrew Hubbell is an associate professor of English at Susquehanna University.

His scholarly essays have appeared in multiple journal publications, which include: *Wordsworth Circle*, *Studies in Romanticism*, and *Modern Language Quarterly*. He is also the author of two books entitled: *"The Mask of Anarchy": Shelley's Reform Myth* (1991), and *Regency Ethics and the Invention of English Romanticism* (1999).



“This analysis of Byron as an ecological poet and thinker has a number of important ramifications. For one, it allows us to place him squarely in the 19th century environmentalist movement and compare his environmental mentality with other influential nature writers like William Wordsworth. We can compare Byron’s definition of nature to theirs and compare his epistemology to theirs. This analysis also shows how an environmental imagination is an important component of the 19th century’s process of nationalization, because it provided a means of representing diverse communities coexisting in a particular place as an integrated unit. Byron’s cultural ecology makes it possible to imagine a Greek nation in the same way that Thomas Lekan demonstrated that German environmentalism made it possible to imagine the German nation.

....

Like Merle and Adams, two wanderers who achieve ecological understanding, Byron’s temperate, stoic, immersive travel is the epistemological process that triggers his environmental unconscious, so that he can become aware of how the Greek environment constructs and is constructed by Greek culture. This epistemology allows him to develop a complex imaginative identification with Greece as his spiritual ethos. Byron, Merle, and Adams demonstrate that the wanderer’s existential embeddedness produces the same kind of ecological vision of ethos as the Wordsworthian dweller in the landscape.”

— J. Andrew Hubbell

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

STUDENT SPEAKERS

DePaul University's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* conference was pleased to have the participation of five student speakers, hailing from as close as DePaul to as far away as Greece. The first three presentations, given by Lizzy Pournara, Jennifer Finstrom, and Tom Minogue, shared a common theme that investigated the different historical aspects of the poem. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki student Lizzy Pournara examined how *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* can be viewed as a text that mixes both bliss and pleasure. She makes these connections by focusing on various aspects of the poem that range from the use of sublime landscapes to the erotic encounters between the text and the reader. Through these connections, she investigates the role of pleasure in the construction of history. DePaul University's own Jennifer Finstrom looked at how Byron tweaked the conventions of Spenserian verse in *Childe Harold*. By doing so, Byron spoke of the modern world while using archaic language, which not only enabled him to unite diverse features of the past and present, but also allowed him to create something new. Virginia Tech student Tom Minogue explored the relationship and correspondence between Byron and his publisher John Murray, exploring how the two needed each other to thrive in the world of writing and publishing. In Byron, Murray saw the essence of poetry itself, and offering Byron constant encouragement, helped to make a possible piece of writing that was not only immensely popular in its time, but is still read and appreciated today.



Lizzy Pournara



Jennifer Finstrom



Tom Minogue

The last two readings, given by Joseph Baerenz and Sein Oh, centered on the theme of narration. Baerenz, who is a student at Virginia Tech, argued that contemporary scholars of Byron too often limit their criticism of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* to politics, neglecting the qualities that the poem shared with Byron himself. To support his claim, Baerenz illustrated how parts of Byron's character and life are reflected in the narration of poem. These qualities are not only what made Byron into a celebrity, but are the same qualities that ultimately established—and still establish today—a connection between the reader and Byron's work. Contrary to Baerenz's assessment, University of Illinois at Chicago graduate student Sein Oh claimed that *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was the birth of Byron's poetic voice, which stood independent of Byron as an individual. To Oh, the poetic power of Byron's narrator was able to transcend Byron's own ideologies.



Joseph Baerenz

Sein Oh



FEATURE COMMENTARY

LIZZY POURNARA

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI, GREECE

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Text of Bliss and Pleasure

"You address yourself to me so that I may read you [...] for you I am neither a body nor even an object [...] but merely a field of expansion." (Barthes 404)

In the above quotation, Roland Barthes argues that the text constitutes a point of departure, rather than one of arrival and ending. Openness and pliability are, according to Barthes, qualities of a text of bliss and pleasure. Siren-like, the text lures the readers into the practice of reading, during which the text does not impose itself on the readers but functions as a stimulus which provokes further thought. In this paper, I will examine Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as a text of bliss and pleasure and how this pleasure is vital for the construction of history, as illustrated in Canto II, which deals with the case of Greece. I will also demonstrate how the readers of *Childe Harold* gain insight into the process of history writing and how they ultimately come to construct their own version of history.

Barthes, in his book *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975), uses the word "jouissance" to describe the tension and release that the readers experience while they engage with the text. "Jouissance" is hard to translate in English, because as Richard Howard claims, the English language lacks the "vocabulary of eroticism" of the French in which Barthes originally wrote. More specifically, Howard, in his introduction to Barthes's text, points out that if the English "wish to speak of the kind of pleasure we take – the supreme pleasure, say associated with sexuality at its most abrupt and ruthless pitch – [they] lack the terms acknowledged and allowed in polite French utterance, [they] lack jouissance and jouir, as Barthes uses them here" (v). Therefore, Howard proposes the terms bliss and pleasure as translations of "jouissance." Barthes is never absolute and definite regarding the meaning of the word "jouissance." On the contrary, he playfully oscillates between pleasure and bliss, and it is this in-between-space which the core of his theory occupies.

Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) seems to complement Barthes' theory, since the experience of the sublime resembles the experience of "jouissance," being an odd mixture of pleasure and pain. Burke explains pleasure as the "[p]leasure of every kind [that] quickly satisfies; and when it is over, we relapse into indifference, or rather we fall into a soft tranquility" (32). Similarly, for Barthes, the text of pleasure is the one that "contents, fills, grants euphoria [...] is linked to a comfortable practice of reading" (*The Pleasure of the Text* 14).

Interestingly, Burke's sublime and Barthes's bliss are defined in similar ways. According to Burke, "[w]hatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (36). A similar effect to the sublime has Barthes's text of bliss, which according to Barthes, is "the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts [and] [...] unsettles the reader[s'] historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of [their] tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis [the readers'] relation with language" (The Pleasure of the Text 14). This is a critical point: Howard argues that both bliss and pleasure "are held to be unspeakable, beyond words" (vi), just like Burke argues about the basic elements of the sublime, namely pain and pleasure, that they are "incapable of definition" (30).

In Byron's *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*, this pleasure manifests itself in various guises and is enjoyed by both the readers and the poet. As far as the poet is concerned, Byron boldly experiments with the construction of his alter ego, a pleasurable process, since it results in an erotic union and the birth of "the child of [Byron's] imagination" (CHP, Preface 19). Regarding the readers, it can be said that they derive pleasure from the way Byron tackles history, namely as a ritualistic process. The aspect of the ritual disentangles the readers from their passive position, engages them into participation and leads them through ceremony into actual performance. In this respect, in Canto I the descriptions of war and death in the stanzas referring to the Spanish War and bull-killing provide a simulation of death, which enables the readers to "rehearse [their] own death" (McHale 232), maintaining thus a pleasure experienced as resolution. Furthermore, in Canto I, there is a combination of the seductive and the sublime as defined by Burke, resulting into a mixture of images being both grotesque and seductive. The readers experience, through a series of simulations of death, a sublime seduction, which provides pleasure as catharsis.

However, this uplifting seduction also involves the element of fear, which is vital for the experience of the sublime. For Burke, "[n]o passion effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear. For fear being an apprehension of pain or death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain. Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too, whether this cause of terror, be endued with greatness of dimensions or not" (53). Human's greatest fear is death; thus, death becomes part of the experience of the sublime and is mixed with pain and pleasure.

The events that I will be focusing on in Canto I of *Childe Harold* are the Spanish War and the ritualistic killing of bulls. The descriptions of the Spanish War of Canto I provide the general background, formulating the deathly discourse and atmosphere that will provide the simulation of death. Byron makes Spain the site where death is the active agent.

Another ultimate representation of the seduction of death in Canto I is actualized by the Spanish Maid. As a presence, she has already been “arous’d” (CHI, st. 54, l. 558) and in contrast to Spain that sings the “war-song,” the Spanish Maid is silent, since she “[h]angs on the willow her unstrung guitar” (CHI, st. 54, l. 559). She is a mute presence, yet her body makes up for the fact that she does not speak: “her black eye that mocks her coal black veil/ heard her light lively tones in Lady’s bower,/ Seen her long locks that foil the painter’s power,/ Her fairy form, with more than female grace” (CHI, st. 55, ll. 569-72). The readers are once more seduced, but this is not just an uncomplicated seduction, since her lovely form is fraught with the awfulness and grotesqueness of death, and she, the beautiful female, partakes of the awfulness of the landscape: “Her lover sinks – she sheds no ill-timed tear;/ Her chief is slain – she fills his fatal post;/ Her fellows flee – she checks their base career;/ The foe retires – she heads the sallying host” (CHI, st. 56, ll. 576-79). The readers are helplessly though blissfully entangled in this sublime landscape, experiencing pleasure, awe and dread, resulting into an ultimate “jouissance.”

What is more, Byron stresses out the ritualistic aspects of death, illustrated in the killing of the bull. The bull is presented as a weapon of death and violence: “His gory chest unveils life’s panting source/ Tho’ death-struck still his feeble frame he rears/ Staggering, but stemming all his lord unharm’d he bears” (CHI, st. 77, ll. 771-73). By killing death itself as embodied by the bull, the human soul experiences a resolution, although the latter is nothing more than an illusion. By killing death in a ritual, the Spanish people show both their respect, deep fear and dread towards death, for they are not content to just kill a wild animal – this has to be done ritualistically. They celebrate the defeat of something that is not easily defeated, as illustrated in the case of the bull: “Foil’d, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,/ Full in the centre stands the bull at bay/ Mid wounds, and clinging darts and lances brast” (CHI, st. 78, ll. 774-75).

The Spanish people, however, succeed in killing the bull in the end, experiencing themselves a resolution through the bull’s death. The power of the gaze is evident once more, since death via the bull is being objectified and is subject to the spectator’s devouring gaze:

Where his vast neck just mingles with the spine,
Sheath’d in his form the deadly weapon lie.
He stops—he starts—disdaining to decline:
Slowly he falls, amidst triumphant cries
Without a groan, without a struggle dies.
The decorated car appears—on high.
The corse is pil’d—sweet sight for vulgar eyes –
Four steeds that spurn the rein, as swift as shy,
Hurl the dark bilk along, scarce seen in dashing by.
(CHI, st. 79, ll. 783-91)

Spain is also being personified as death's caller, spokesperson, messenger that lures men with "her war-song" (CHI, st. 37, l. 413), which constitutes a fierce calling, an utterly compelling one, because her voice "speaks in thunder through yon engine's roar" (CHI, st. 37, l. 410). In addition, Spain is portrayed as "an ancient goddess" (CHI, st. 37, l. 406) who is incredibly powerful. As a seductress, Spain, in all her majesty, transforms into a war-like figure that brings death whenever she ventures. She is not the conventional mother figure, mild and silent, despite the fact that she has "sons" (CHI, st. 37, l. 405). Verbs such as "awake," "arise" and "advance" (CHI, st. 37, l. 411) promote the idea of constant activity, vitality, restlessness. Instead of employing bloodthirsty qualities, Byron introduces an image of Spain as a seductress, who allures her victims not through violence but through her voice – her only weapon. She is not in possession of "her thirsty lance" (CHI, st. 37, l. 407) that would cause mortal wounds, nor "shakes her crimson plumage in the skies" (CHI, st. 37, l. 408). In order to experience resolution that resembles the climax of an erotic, bodily union one needs the awfulness of death and the beauty of life. In the Canto, Spain becomes the figure that combines both love and death, precisely because she seduces men to their death. Thus, the readers, by participating in these realistic descriptions of death experience resolution.

Furthermore, verbs such as "arise" (CHI, st. 37, l. 411) may imply the physical arousal of her "sons" (CHI, st. 37, l. 405). The seduction of the body is once more emphasized. If Spain with her dreadful call succeeds in seducing her "sons" (CHI, st. 37, l. 405) bodily, she will be able to lead them to war and death as well. Once the "sons" (CHI, st. 37, l. 405) of Spain are lured to take part in the war, Byron provides his readers with simulations of war-scenes. There are "fires of death" (CHI, st. 38, l. 418) that announce the coming of demise since "thousands cease to breathe" (CHI, st. 38, l. 419). Death is being personified as well, since he "rides upon the sulphury siroc" (CHI, st. 38, l. 421), adding to the grotesqueness of the scene, encouraging thus the deathly elements of seduction. Relevant to this point is Philip Shaw's reading of Canto I as an "erotics of destruction" (223). In particular, his remark on the Spanish Maid as a phallic mother, makes love and death merge into the same entity. As he points out, "[t]hrough the attribution of a symbolic phallus, the Maid gains in power and is transformed into a devouring, destructive figure. She thus maintains a dual function as an emblem of unbridled maternal power" (225). The readers on the other hand, by rehearsing their own deaths via simulations, experience pleasure identified as resolution. Readers, in addition, are able through their imaginations to gaze at war and death as "a splendid sight to see" (CHI, st. 40, l. 432). In a synaesthetic way, Byron makes his readers experience death through simulation, as the battlefield becomes a game board where the "sons of Spain" (CHI, st. 37, l. 405) do "play/ Their game of lives" (CHI, st. 44, ll. 468-69) and in the end "die" (CHI, st. 44, l. 474); the winners are no other than Grave and Havoc, who "shall bear the chiefest

prize away” (CHI, st. 40, l. 439).

Apart from experiencing resolution, the readers of *Childe Harold* are about to derive a different kind of pleasure. This is obtained from their active participation in the formation of history and follows up what they have already experienced with Canto 1. This pleasure manifests itself around an erotic encounter between the readers and the text. Drawing on Barthes’s suggestion that the text “reveals itself in the form of the body, split into erotic sites” (Barthes, “From The Pleasure 410), it can be argued that the text of *Childe Harold* behaves in this manner and that its various parts and generic forms seduce the readers. As a matter of fact, seduction is brought a step further, since it culminates into a dialectical relationship between the readers and the text, in which both assume an active role. What the outcome of such an erotic union will be is nothing more than history and its actual formation.

Without a doubt, Byron’s preoccupation with the process of history writing and interpreting is more than evident. Caroline Franklin argues that “[t]he most cursory glance at Byron’s oeuvre demonstrates the centrality of history to virtually everything he wrote. Epigraphs or notes [...] often indicate a precise historical setting” (85). Although history is important to Byron, he does not constitute an authority on history. His attention to detail, as in for example in the case of songs, where he “phonetically transcrib[es] Albanian songs and translat[es] Romaic Greek ballads whilst on his travels” (87) indicates his intention to bring on to the surface things considered trivial and unimportant, destined to remain hidden and out of sight in the deeper layers. Byron subverts the “late Enlightenment historical thinking,” which according to Hayden White, “view[ed] history in essentially Ironic terms” (qtd. in Franklin 87). Yet, simultaneously, he resists the “‘empathy’ as a method of his historical enquiry” that the pre-Romantics supported ardently. Thus, Franklin’s urge that “[u]pcoming studies need to relate a historicist poet such as Byron to the change from eighteenth-to nineteenth-century historiography” (87) is important and timely, since it would open up new paths to our understanding of the process of history writing.

Furthermore, Philip Martin points out Byron’s fascination with “the making of history: war, empire, tradition, loyalty, heroism and, perhaps above all, the judgments of posterity [...] they are the subjects which this poem is reviewing and re-evaluating in the political chaos of Europe at the end of the nineteenth century’s first decade” (79-80). The case of Greece is revised and widely discussed by Byron in Canto II, and the readers are bid to participate to this “making of history” (80). For Byron, history does not constitute a linear sequence of events, as proved in the case of Greece, where Byron shows that a glorious past does not necessarily guarantee a glorious present: “Greece! [...] Thy glorious day is o’er, but not thine years of shame” (CHII, st. 76, ll. 727-28), “Her reign is past, her gentle glories gone” (CHII, st. 30, ll. 262), “Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth! Immortal, though no more! Though fallen, great!” (CHII, st. 73, ll. 693-94).

Byron helps the readers to reform the palimpsest of Greece's history by highlighting the existing links between past and present.

Yet, in order to review and reevaluate history, an insight into the process of history-writing is of vital importance. In her book *The Politics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon provides the background behind history writing and explains that any kind of "narrative has come to be acknowledged as, above all, a human-made structure – never as 'natural' or given" and considered a mode of "totalizing representation" (63). This totality is what Byron seems to be subverting. Hutcheon argues further that the term totalizing "points to the process [...] by which writers [...] render their materials coherent, continuous, unified – but always with an eye to the control and mastery of those materials" (63). However, Byron's "processing" of the material is very different from what Hutcheon describes with regard to totalizing structure, since he configures the opposite of a coherent and homogeneous narrative. Moreover, Hutcheon proposes a way of challenging "the impulse to totalize," that of contesting "the entire notion of continuity in history and its writing" (63). That is exactly how Byron's narrative works. Despite the fact that Byron and Hutcheon are not contemporaries, postmodern criticism can actually help us gain insight into how Byron constructs his text.

Finally, Hutcheon elaborates on the role of disruptions, effected by the various kinds of paratextual notes, whose primary role is to unsettle and subvert the linearity of the text. She argues that notes function as "self reflexive signals to assure the reader as to the historical credibility of the particular witness or authority cites, while at the same time they disrupt our reading, operating thus both centrifugally and centripetally" (85). In *Childe Harold*, Byron undermines the "totalizing representation" and disrupts history and narrative's continuity by constructing the text as a palimpsest, where verse, lyrics, songs and notes are placed the one over the other and create thus a network of texts that interconnect and develop vertical and horizontal connections with each other.

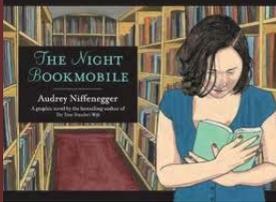
By fragmenting his narrative in this way, Byron sabotages the historians' authority that hides behind the writing of history, for "they establish a relationship between the past they write about and the present in which they write. The past may have appeared as confused, plural, and unstructured as the present does as it was lived, but the historian's task is to order this fragmental experience into knowledge" (Hutcheon 70-71). Byron transfers to the readers the authority of the historian and turns them "into [...] aware collaborator[s], not [...] passive consumer[s]" (88). The power of the readers lies in their capacity to represent, construct and interpret the past, as well as decide which "past 'events'" will become "historical 'facts'" (Hutcheon 71). The empowerment of the readers takes place while they are found in a state of extreme pleasure.

In conclusion, what this paper has attempted to do is to examine Childe Harold's Pilgrimage in relation to the principle of pleasure. As a term, pleasure has got multiple meanings and connotations. Bringing together thus in the first part of this paper Barthes's "jouissance" with Burke's theory on the sublime, I have argued that the readers experience through simulations of seduction and death a consuming, vivid and simultaneously cathartic pleasure. Offering a deeply intense experience, "jouissance" raises the readers' awareness to how history is written, constructed and interpreted. Subsequently, the readers become active participants who engage in a dialectic relationship with the various palimpsests of the text, building their own narrative.

Works Cited

- Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975. Print.
- Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.
- Byron, George Gordon. *The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- Franklin, Caroline. "Byron and History." *Palgrave Advances in Byron Studies*. Ed. Jane Stabler. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 81-105. Print.
- Howard, Richard. Introduction. *The Pleasure of the Text*. By Roland Barthes. York: Hill and Wang, 1975. Print.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print.
- Martin, Philip. "Heroism and History." *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*. Ed. Drummond Bone. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 77-98. Print.
- McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction*. New York: Methuen, 1987. Print.
- Shaw, Philip. "Byron and War." *Palgrave Advances in Byron Studies*. Ed. Jane Stabler. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 213-33. Print.

DEPAUL HUMANITIES CENTER



WELCOMES

AUDREY NIFFENEGGER

Best-selling author of *The Time Traveler's Wife* (2004), *Her Fearful Symmetry* (2009), and two illustrated novels—*The Three Incestuous Sisters* (2005) and *The Adventuress* (2006)—Niffenegger will be reading from her newest work, the graphic novel *The Night Bookmobile* (2010).

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2011
6:00 P.M.

SCHMITT ACADEMIC CENTER
ROOM 254
2320 NORTH KENMORE AVE.
CHICAGO

This event is free and open to the public.

For more info contact:
DePaul Humanities Center
773-325-4580
aperson@depaul.edu
www.las.depaul.edu/humanitiescenter



DEPAUL HUMANITIES CENTER

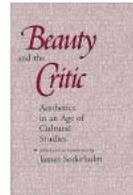
DO THE HUMANITIES MAKE US MORE HUMANE?

JAMES SODERHOLM PRESENTS
JUST LOOKING:
ART, ATTENTIVENESS AND THE
MORAL IMAGINATION



This lecture sketches connections between our capacity for at once noticing the streaks of the tulip and the shrieks of the tortured. A moral imagination makes it possible to both notice what is beautiful in the world and respond with sensitivity to the pain and suffering of others. Drawing on music, painting, philosophy and literature, I will offer twenty-seven brief meditations on 'the attentive' and 'the heartless' as a way of suggesting that our moral perceptions may be sharpened by works of art in which seeing is represented as understanding. I shall show that epiphany is the crystallization of [self] attentiveness and yet

also, at times, the heart
of an impenetrable
darkness.



James Soderholm is Professor of English at The King's School, Canterbury. He has published three books, including *Beauty and the Critic: Aesthetics in an Age of Cultural Studies* (1997), and most recently *Byron and Romanticism* (2002). He is currently completing a book of dialogues entitled "Platonic Occasions: Dialogues on Art, Literature and Culture" (with Richard Begam, Univ. of Wisconsin) and working on an experimental book on Hamlet.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2011
5:00 P.M.

DEPAUL HUMANITIES CENTER
2347 NORTH RACINE AVE.
CHICAGO

This event is free and open to the public.

For more info contact:
DePaul Humanities Center
773-325-4580
aperson@depaul.edu
www.las.depaul.edu/humanitiescenter



DEPAUL HUMANITIES CENTER LITERATURE AND MUSIC SERIES



FRANCESCA ROYSTER

Associate Professor, Department of English
Chair, African and Black Diaspora Studies

**MICHAEL JACKSON, QUEER WORLD MAKING
AND THE TRANS EROTICS OF VOICE, GENDER AND AGE**

Monday, April 23rd
5:30 p.m. Reception
6:00 p.m. Lecture
DePaul Student Center
Room 314
2250 N. Sheffield Ave.
Chicago

This event is free and open to the public.

For more info contact:
DePaul Humanities Center
773-325-4580
aperson@depaul.edu
www.las.depaul.edu/humanitiescenter



AUDREY NIFFENEGGER

THE NIGHT BOOKMOBILE & THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE

Sharing the creative process of her latest work and first graphic novel *The Night Bookmobile*, Audrey Niffenegger provided insight into the important interplay between words and images. Inspired by “The Door in the Wall,” a short story by H.G. Wells, *The Night Bookmobile* is a story about a young woman named Alexandra, who happens upon a roaming library in the form of a Winnebago. The librarian of this bookmobile is a mysterious man named Mr. Openshaw, who explains to Alexandra that the library’s catalogue is an exclusive compilation of everything she has ever read. Her chance encounter with the night bookmobile radically changes her life, as she starts to wander the streets at night hoping for another encounter. This does not sit well with her boyfriend, who accuses her of having an affair and promptly leaves her. Soon, she finds herself alone in her apartment with nothing else to do but indulge in her passion for books. Over the course of the story, Alexandra has two more encounters with the night bookmobile and is inspired by each encounter to make more life-altering decisions. As much as the story, it is Niffenegger’s illustrations of Alexandra’s world that conveys her poignant quest to find and be part of the night bookmobile.

Audrey Niffenegger is a Professor at Columbia College Chicago where she teaches a writing seminar for visual art students.

She is the author of several novels, including *The Time Traveler’s Wife* (a 2003 New York Times best-seller and winner of the Books Boeke Prize and a British Book Award), *Her Fearful Symmetry* (a 2009 New York Times best-seller), and two illustrated novels: *The Three Incestuous Sisters* (2005) and *The Adventures* (2006).



“I drank my tea and explored the farthest recesses of my collection. Each spine was an encapsulated memory, each book represented hours, days of pleasure, of immersion in words...In the same way that perfume captures the essence of a flower, these shelves of books were a distillation of my life.

....

Have you ever found your heart's desire and then lost it? I had seen myself, a portrait of myself as a reader. My childhood: hours spent in airless classrooms, days home sick from school reading Nancy Drew, forbidden books read secretively late at night. Teenage years reading—trying to read—books I'd heard were important, *Naked Lunch* and *The Fountainhead*, *Ulysses* and *Women in Love*...It was as though I had dreamt the perfect lover, who vanished as I woke, leaving me pining and surly.”

— Audrey Niffenegger

JAMES SODERHOLM

JUST LOOKING: ART, ATTENTIVENESS AND THE MORAL IMAGINATION

James Soderholm is a Professor of English at the King's School, Canterbury. He has also taught at Charles University, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Barry University, and Colorado College.

He is the author of *Beauty and the Critic: Aesthetics in an age of Cultural Studies* (1997), and is currently working on the book *Platonic Occasions: Dialogues on Art, Literature and Culture*, with Richard Begam, University of Wisconsin and an experimental book on Hamlet.

Can our moral perceptions be sharpened by works of art and literature? An aesthetic optimist would say yes. James Soderholm makes the case for aesthetic optimism through twenty-four meditations, many of which draw from philosophical and literary passages by writers including Joseph Conrad, Virginia Wolf, and Vladimir Nabokov. At the heart of aesthetic optimism is the notion that art and literature can enhance our appreciation of the subtle complexity of the world if only we are willing to be more attentive. The meditations also include views of aesthetic pessimism—or what Soderholm deems as the “heartless”—which maintains that art and literature are, in fact, incapable of improving our understanding of the world. After all, history is filled with villains who were ardent patrons of the arts. The meditations offered by Soderholm therefore left audience members seeking their own answer to the question: do the humanities make us more humane?



“Nabokov said ‘art is just paying attention.’ I would like to add a friendly amendment and to play with words: art is paying just attention. That is the artist, and readers sensitive to art, are never just looking when they produce or consume art in the sense of desultory, idle, and casual browsing. What if attentiveness is a kind of just looking? A way of seeing that does justice to the beauty, complexity, and subtlety of the world, including the world of words we call literature?

....

The ability to read a poem or a novel attentively, and the ability to read a person or situation carefully, are directly parallel. To strengthen the one talent is to strengthen the other, at least potentially. To be alive to a particularly subtle metaphor or narrative intricacy is to be alive to the suggestiveness and complexity of the person sitting next to you, the color of her eyes no less than the timbre of his soul. Let us call this position aesthetic optimism: the idea that somehow being steeped in the humanities will make us more humane.”

— James Soderholm

FRANCESCA ROYSTER

MICHAEL JACKSON, QUEER WORLD MAKING AND THE TRANS-EROTICS OF VOICE, GENDER AND AGE

Francesca Royster is an Associate Professor at DePaul University where she is the director of African Black Diasporas studies and teaches classes on Shakespeare studies, performance studies, critical race theory, gender and queer theory, and African American literature.

Royster is the author of *Becoming Cleopatra: The Shifting Image of an Icon* (2003) as well as numerous book chapters and scholarly essays that have appeared in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Studies*, *Performance Research International*, and *Women and Performance*.

Her upcoming book *Sounding Like a No-No: Queer Sounds and Eccentric Acts in the Post-Soul Era* is due November 2012.

Most of us are familiar with the physical aspects of Michael Jackson's performances, which range from his clothing—sunglasses, surgical masks, and the infamous single glittery glove—to his stellar dance moves such as the moonwalk. Acknowledged for his incredible voice, we are less aware of how his vocal aptitude connects to a transgendered erotic sound, one that not only reverberates with his audience, but defies their expectations. The throat is an erotic space; it is a site of flexibility and adaptability that transcends our notions of gender. It is able to change and develop sounds and words into forms of expression. From Jackson's signature sounds such as "hee hee" to his "grunts," "groans" and "gasps," we see an emotional expressiveness that occupies a third space of gender and adds both layer and depth to his music. Jackson's vocal style was able to pit the "friction of the body against meaning, against language" allowing overtones of sexuality and the expansion between the relationship of eroticism and the body.

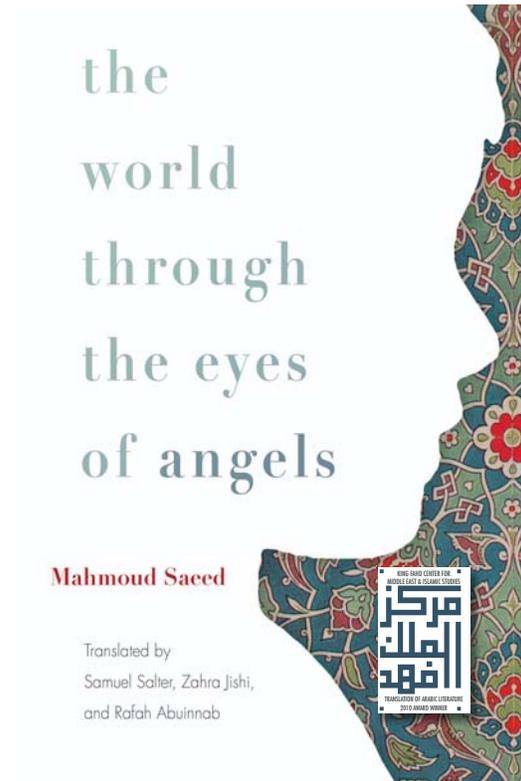
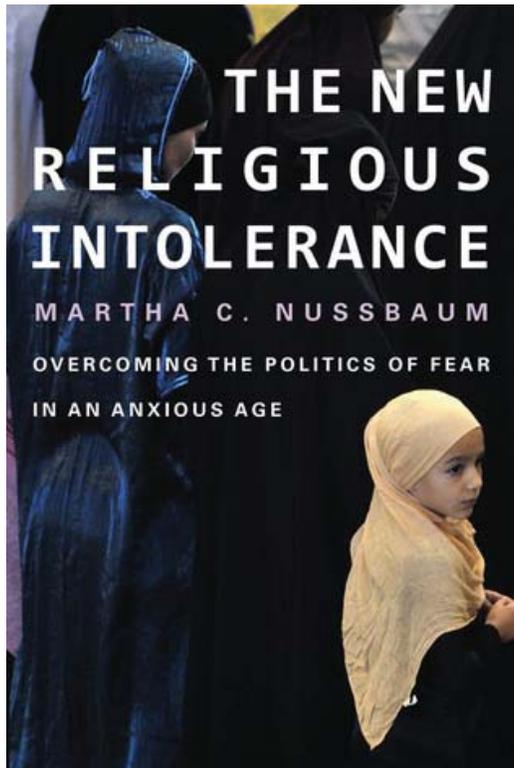
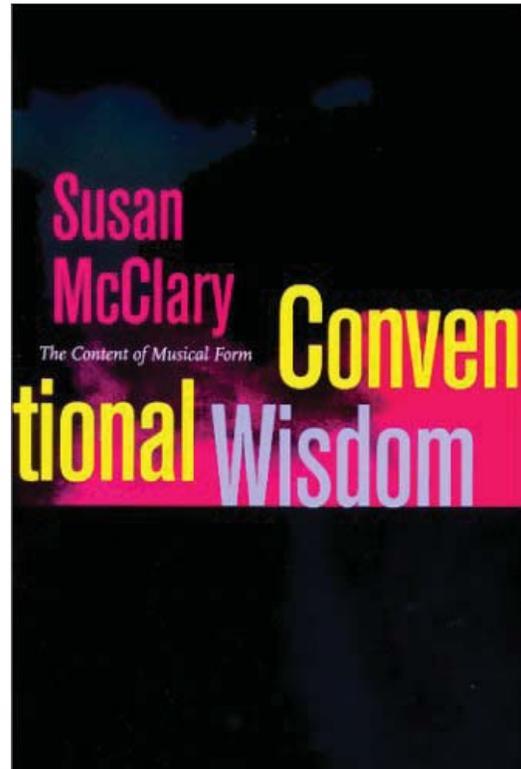
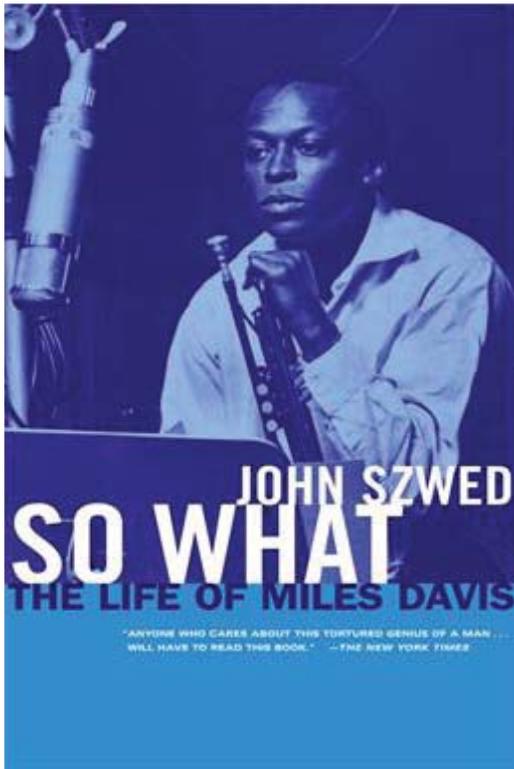


“Jackson’s vocal style betrays an intelligence of the throat’s strengths and its limits. His grunts, clicks, rasps, groans, gasps and stops, his use of emotional expressiveness, vocal range, volume and pitch, provide a depth that often adds layers to the sometimes simplistic lyrics of his songs. Roland Barthes talks about the ‘grain’ of the voice. It is the aspect of authenticity that speaks of a combination of the body—the ‘muscles, membranes, cartilage,’ the rasping of the throat, the state of the vocal chords—and its relationship to the symbolic. He says: ‘The ‘grain’ is the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs.’

....

So much of Jackson’s performative persona has been analyzed as being about either concealment or revelation—the glove, one on, one off, the surgeon’s mask, the sunglasses, the military uniform, even the crumbling nose—all costumes that signal their artificiality and their potential for being taken off. But the model of becoming tells us more about Jackson’s performances in terms of its imaginative and erotic link to audience.”

— Francesca Royster



DEPAUL HUMANITIES CENTER
 2347 NORTH RACINE AVENUE
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60614-3103
 773/325-4580; 773-325-4581(F)
 LAS.DEPAUL.EDU/HUMANITIESCENTER