

First Friday 2007–2016

2016

7 October 2016 | Nick Frankel

“Oscar Wilde in Prison”

In 1895, after years of success as one of the wittiest writers in the English-speaking world, Oscar Wilde was jailed for two years with hard labor for the crime of gross indecency with another man. Upon release from prison in 1897, he went immediately to France where he died, impoverished and in exile, three years later.

My presentation will describe the traumatic psychological and physical collapse that Wilde experienced in prison, as well as how he attempted to both absorb and transcend the horrors of his sentence as the date of his release drew nearer. After describing the harsh regime of “hard labor, hard board, and hard fare” under which Wilde was imprisoned, my presentation will address the effects of Wilde’s prison sentence upon his psyche, his writing, and the broad movement for prison reform that resulted in the 1898 Prison Act, one year following his release.

4 November 2016 | Cristina Stanciu

“Print Culture, Native Education, and Americanization at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, 1879–1918.”

This talk will draw on a key archive for studying Americanization in a Native American context: the records of Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the first federally-funded off-reservation boarding school started in 1879 in Carlisle, PA. Competing visions for Native education and print culture shaped this key period in the American Indian intellectual tradition, when emerging writers, editors, lawyers, and politicians started a print debate over American citizenship in the publications of Carlisle Indian School. Revealing editorial intervention and control of the students’ narratives in pamphlets, letters, student files, and the Carlisle magazines, I read student writing as complicit with the institution’s ideology, popularized by the school’s founder, Richard Henry Pratt, and yet critical of the very demands that the institution made of its students. Education for Americanization aimed to erase tribal identity and instill patriotism in students; yet, an examination of the ways Native students integrated indigeneity into their writing and expressive culture tells a different story. I argue that the students’ rhetorically bold writings and performances set the stage for reading the cultural work of the Society of American Indians (SAI), the first pan-Indian national organization with a national agenda for the political and intellectual future of Native communities.

2015

2 October 2015 | Marcel Cornis-Pope

“Literary Studies in Multimedia Contexts”

As Nancy Kaplan has argued in “E-literacies” (1995), “In the past ... the chief technologies of literacy, especially the early printing press, have privileged the written language over all other forms of semiosis. [...] Today’s definition of literacy includes visual, electronic and [...] non-verbal or gestural or social literacies.” My presentation will focus on two major publication projects that explore literature in multimedia contexts: the 4-volume *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe* (2004–2010) edited by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, and *New Literary Hybrids in the Age of Multimedia Expression: Crossing Borders, Crossing Genres*, edited by Marcel Cornis-Pope (2014). Both projects highlight “crossings” and “nodes” that bring together various literary traditions, emphasizing the intermixed nature of late twentieth-century cultural practices. The very definition of what is “literary” is stretched in the process, as literature’s interactions with multimedia environments expand to include increasingly more complex hybrids.

6 November 2015 | Catherine Ingrassia

“Cultures of Captivity/The Poetics of Failure”

Mary Barber’s 1734 poem “On Seeing the Barbary Captives” recounts the parading of a group of British citizens enslaved in North Africa who have been freed and returned to England. Yet these ‘freed captives,’ as Barber terms them, exist within a larger culture of captivity that informs eighteenth-century literary representations. The poem, however, also speaks to Barber’s own experience as an Anglo-Irish female poet: like many of her female contemporaries, Barber, seeking to make visible the disappointments of the social, literary, and financial cultures she negotiates, articulates a poetics of failure. As such, the poem provides a point of entry into two longer projects on which I’m working simultaneously: “The Cultures of Captivity” and “Women Writers and the Poetics of Failure in the Long Eighteenth Century.”

The title “Cultures of Captivity” is drawn from historian Linda Colley’s *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (2002); Colley uses that phrase to characterize a period in the eighteenth century when cultural anxiety about individuals’ potential captivity in other countries existed simultaneously with pride in British commercial and colonial success built largely upon the enslavement and captivity of others. I expand Colley’s term to suggest that the anxiety she identifies also bespeaks a cultural awareness of the many authorized (often institutionalized) forms of captivity that existed within eighteenth-century domestic culture (e.g. indentured servitude, prison, domestic service, marriage). The project uses both canonical and lesser-known texts to look at different kinds of captivity (domestic and global) represented in the long eighteenth century. The anxiety about captivity, and the powerful allusions to very specific kinds of captivity that appeared in dramatic, poetic, and fictional texts were not, in fact, metaphorical but all too literal possibilities. Indeed, the four women writers of the “Poetics of Failure” (Aphra Behn, Mary Barber, Elizabeth Thomas, and Laetitia Pilkington), each invoked the specific image of the Barbary captives to describe her situation (all were imprisoned at some point). These writers negotiate the material and symbolic economies of print culture, and produce creative and autobiographical texts that

articulate the struggles of their existence—debt, divorce, prison, homelessness, political oppression, illness. A re-examination of these writers and their poetics of failure compels us to reexamine the narrative used to discuss women writers of this period and challenges the dominant feminist paradigm.

2014

7 February 2014 | Terry Oggel

“A.B. Paine and Mark Twain’s Literary Reputation”

Before Albert Bigelow Paine (1861–1937) met Mark Twain, he was well-known as an author of fiction and verse and as the biographer in 1904 of America’s pioneer editorial cartoonist, Thomas Nast. Paine met Twain in 1906 and in admiration of Paine’s work on Nast, Twain named Paine his biographer. Paine began immediately, assisting the author with his final works and promoting and enhancing both Twain’s public presence and his national and international literary reputation. Upon Twain’s death in 1910 and with the agreement of Clemens’s daughter Clara, Paine became the first executor of Mark Twain’s literary estate.

Paine’s accomplishments alone or in collaboration with others in behalf of Twain’s reputation are stunning: a biography, a final novel, a volume of selected letters, a 37-volume edition of Twain’s works, a volume of speeches, a large volume of mostly unpublished international essays, a two-volume autobiography and a notebook volume. These works dominated the infancy of Twain studies during the first half of the 20th century, both here and abroad.

Reputations wax and wane but in his time and ours, Paine’s influence can be seen by a survey of Twain’s inclusion in early American literature anthologies and a review of translations of his works worldwide. Early silent film adaptations and special editions of his novels illustrated by such artists as Thomas Hart Benton and Norman Rockwell also show Paine’s deep influence.

4 April 2014 | Richard Fine

“Forging the ‘Pyle Style’ of War Reporting: French North Africa, 1942–43”

I explore the material conditions that led to the creation of a particular type of war reporting during World War II, sometimes referred to as “the Pyle style” after its foremost practitioner, Scripps-Howard reporter Ernie Pyle. This approach looked not to explain the larger strategic landscape or to report the progress of armies, but rather focused on the small picture, the ordinary foot soldier, most frequently depicted as stoically heroic under trying conditions.

While analysts have linked this style to the conscription army of citizen-soldiers fielded by the United States in World War II, this paper reveals how this style developed not out any ideological orientation or even out of the sensibility of Pyle or other journalists at the time. Rather, it was forged by the peculiar set of circumstances surrounding the six-month campaign that followed the TORCH landings in French North Africa in November 1942. These included the specific Allied censorship regime, transmission delays caused by the remoteness of the battlefield from communications centers, the relatively small scale and sporadic fighting in the early stages of the

campaign, and the fact that the Allies (for political reason) sought to downplay the fact that British forces, rather than American, were doing the brunt of the fighting.

Using archival materials from both the United States and Britain, I examine how the campaign in French North Africa shaped the Pyle style, one which heavily influences American journalism to this day. It also suggests how such reporting influenced American thinking about the Second World War itself, our cultural memory most often reduced to such catch phrases as “The Good War” and “The Greatest Generation.”

3 October 2014 | Rivka Swenson

“Beyond Prospero: Toni Morrison’s *Tar Baby*”

Tar Baby has been discussed for its engagement with Shakespeare’s enchanted island. What has not been discussed—or even noticed—is *Tar Baby*’s resonance (undeniable, deep, and wonderfully complex) with a certain novel from the 1700s. This talk spans the centuries, bringing to light Morrison’s sophisticated refraction that is nothing short of remarkable in both its execution and its implications.

7 November 2014 | Jason Coates

“Visual Poetry and Open Connectivist Courses”

This presentation discusses an English 215 course from Summer 2014 called Visual Poetry, which was dedicated to using the affordances of the internet to introduce general education students to the analysis and interpretation of poetry. It was also run online on open platforms like WordPress blogs and Twitter, and tasked students with writing posts and connecting with their classmates as their only means of knowing each others’ contributions to the larger group. I propose to display the completed design of the course for feedback and walk my audience through its design process and the decision to open it to the larger world of learners. My major question before I taught the summer course was whether my students would find the potential for hostile interaction with a non-course audience inhibiting for their intermediate interpretations, or whether they would find the act of publishing their work stimulating and professionalizing. To this I now add a further question: whether open course design that seeks to shield students from the dangers of the open web is an effective way of teaching facility with literary analysis and interpretation.

2013

1 March 2013 | Winnie Chan

“The ‘Curry Capital’ in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*.”

Brick Lane, E1, London is home to one of the world’s most famous diasporic communities. Synonymous with curry—a signifier invented and popularized to refer to spice mixtures, sauces, and even “Indian food” generally—the east London thoroughfare is also the eponym for Monica Ali’s controversial debut novel, which, this essay argues, appropriates the “exotic” (multi)cultural capital of Brick Lane’s gastronomic associations on the fringes of Western capitalism to negotiate Brick Lane’s position in a globalized literary marketplace.

5 April 2013 | Nicholas Frankel

“The Censoring of Oscar Wilde”

Censorship is sometimes thought of as the official or semi-official repression of free speech, usually through the interference of governmental, quasi-governmental, or religious authorities. But there is a more unofficial kind of censorship, not so easy to quantify or identify, often closely allied with commercial forces that can inhibit the activities of writers in a supposedly liberal and secular age. This was especially the case in late-Victorian England, when paranoia about sexuality, new legislation, a series of lurid, highly-publicized sex scandals, and the unprecedented power assumed by the administrators of the burgeoning periodical press (on which virtually all Victorian fiction-writers were dependent) all combined to limit what Oscar Wilde was able to represent in fiction.

This presentation will address how Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was censored not once but twice as it entered the public sphere, resulting (until very recently) in the reification of a “text” that can by no means be equated with what Wilde wanted to say. The presentation will touch on the timidity of scholarly editors and the authority that inheres (or fails to inhere) within the person of the first-time novelist. It will ultimately ask what exactly is circumscribed when we speak of the “text” of a piece of fiction: to what extent is the delimitation of the fictional text a matter of cultural politics and history?

4 October 2013 | Cristina Stanciu

“Recovering Laura Cornelius Kellogg: Oneida Leader, Native Activist, American Writer.”

My talk will build on a recovery project I have undertaken with Prof. Kristina Ackley (Evergreen State College), in collaboration with the Wisconsin Oneida Cultural Heritage Department, to bring Laura Cornelius Kellogg's work back into print. Kellogg was an orator, linguist, performer, and reformer of Indian policy, founding member of the Society of American Indians, author of fiction, poetry, and essays, and a public speaker with electrifying charisma. Our project, *Laura Cornelius Kellogg: Our Democracy and the American Indian and Other Writings* (forthcoming from Syracuse UP), is a first collection of Kellogg's writings that not only reintroduces one of her major works into circulation—*Our Democracy and the American Indian* has been out of print for almost a hundred years—but also (we hope) illuminates other texts and contexts informing her work, from poetry and stories, to speeches and congressional testimonies, to media coverage and contemporary reclamations of her legacy (in the Wisconsin Oneida community and, more broadly, in the American Indian Studies scholarly community). We place her work in several distinct contexts—turn of the twentieth-century Native intellectual history, Indigenous women's history, Haudenosaunee/Iroquois history, tribal economy, land claims activism, and public performance; in the interest of time, the second half of this presentation will focus on “Kellogg, the Writer: Against the Vanishing Indian Trope.” In a congressional testimony in 1916, Kellogg asked Senator Charles Curtis: “Senator Curtis, what is the objection to keeping an Indian an Indian provided he is a better Indian than he is a white man?” This question sums up her legacy as an Oneida leader and as an American Indian intellectual of the early twentieth century, a time when Native people in the United States faced incredible pressures to assimilate as individuals into American society.

1 November 2013 | David Wojahn

“‘And Not Releasing the Genie’: On *Stuff* vs. Knowledge.”

My presentation will be an investigation into why so many contemporary poems are preoccupied with various kinds of specialized subject matter (drawn from history, from science, from kitsch, from pop culture as well as high culture), and why they so frequently address these subjects only in the most superficial fashion. The age of the Google Search Poem has arrived, and I will try to draw a contract between that sort of poem—let’s call it the poem about “stuff”—and the poem about things more penetrating and enduring, a poem deriving from something like knowledge. Some poets I plan on discussing will include Michael Robbins, Robert Pinsky, Linda Bierds, and Albert Goldbarth, among others.

2012

3 February 2012 | Cristina Stanciu

“‘Can’t He Talk English?’: Americanization Narratives in Print and Visual Culture at the Turn of the Twentieth Century.”

2 March 2012 | Gretchen Soderlund

“Sensationalism, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and Journalism Reform after 1885.”

My presentation examines the relationships between the American press and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), paying particular attention to the organization’s attempt to focus national attention on “white slavery” in the wake of William T. Stead’s “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon.” It will demonstrate that the WCTU made a number of contributions that reshaped mainstream American journalism. The organization, under the leadership of Frances Willard, launched a highly sophisticated media campaign, hired professionals to engage and critique media, created their own media, and formed a large-scale proto-mass audience which they proceeded to self-consciously market as a commodity audience to the press. In doing so they redefined and redrew the boundaries of “sensationalism” while deploying sensationalism strategically themselves, merging activism with a strikingly modern media campaign.

6 April 2012 | Jennifer Rhee

“Ryoji Ikeda’s Infinities: The Digital Subject and Privacy in the Age of Big Data.”

My presentation explore digital artist Ryoji Ikeda’s explorations of sound, light, infinity, and big data. Drawing on media theory that foregrounds human embodiment in technological relations, I will bring Ikeda’s work into conversation with booming big data business strategies such as data mining and data tracking. Through an examination of Ikeda’s aesthetic environments, I will discuss how, in thinking about embodiment and the materiality of big data, we might imagine counter-narratives that reconceptualize and reprioritize privacy while fostering creative relations and potentialities with our media technologies.

5 October 2012 | Kate Nash

“Relocating the Implied Author in Woolf’s Late Manuscripts.”

I completed my first book of narrative theory, *Feminist Narrative Ethics*, just before taking a course at the Rare Book School in Charlottesville. This essay revises one of my book chapters, making an effort to put narratology in conversation with textual theory. However, I am interested in theory as a means to an interpretive end, not just theory for its own sake. After proposing an alternative to narratology’s prized concept of the implied author, I will illustrate my theory with close readings of Virginia Woolf’s manuscripts, typescripts, and two early editions of her novel *The Years*. My main contention is that some texts—some implied authors—are richer when we acknowledge the echoes of previous versions, of deleted variants, in the published text. As it stands now, narrative theory is not listening to those echoes, but I suggest a way in which it could.

2 November 2012 | Joshua Eckhardt

“The First Popular Objection to British Colonization Overseas.”

Initial reports from Jamestown indicated that the colony needed to broaden its base of both investors and settlers. To attract such popular support, the Virginia Company of London turned to clergy. In 1609, three churchmen wrote and published sermons to encourage Londoners to commit their “purse or person” to the venture. These preachers faced a difficult task. They had to convince people to undertake the first overseas missionary campaign in England’s history. They also had to answer a number of tough questions about it. The big question was this: how could the company even enter, much less claim, land that natives had rightly inherited and were peaceably governing? The prevalence and persistence of this objection can be downright shocking for those of us who have been left to imagine that early modern English people could hardly imagine the rights of native peoples. On the contrary, their right to their own land was the first thing that early modern Londoners imagined about Native Americans. Moreover, they kept insisting on this right despite company preachers’ repeated attempts to dismiss it. After one preacher devoted several pages to doing so, another preacher saw the need to add a few more pages to the effort. Ten months later, a third company preacher explained that, far from diminishing, the objection had remained strong among not only radicals but also honest Christians, who simply could not support colonization in good conscience. Rather than silence all these critics of Virginia, the company and its preachers seem to have given up trying: they stopped printing sermons altogether for over a decade. Londoners’ primary objection to Virginia indicates that they did not need to wait for the enlightenment or the 1960s or anything else to recognize the rights of natives. It offers to close a certain imaginary ethical gap between them and ourselves. It also suggests some unsettling questions about how easy it may eventually be to overlook our own objections to our fellow citizens’ actions abroad.

7 December 2012 | David Latané

“The London Press and the Case of Maria Foote: Privacy and the Press in 1824–25.”

On the night of 6 February 1825 the crowd at Covent Garden sensationally erupted when, in the middle of a scene in Belle’s *Stratagem*, a 45-year old play by Hannah Cowley, the attractive actress on stage sang the line “My face is my fortune, sir.” The demonstration related to the fact that this iteration of the play starred Miss Maria Foote in her first appearance on the boards after her widely publicized breach of contract trial against Joseph Hayne, Esq. The trial had taken place on the 21st

of December at the King's Bench, with Foote being awarded £3,000 damages by Lord Chief Justice Abbott.

While newspapers remained stamped and expensive in the 1820s, the decade saw the rumbling beginnings of the mass tabloid press in the form of weeklies that catered to scandals of various sorts, and in particular the creation and demolition of proto-celebrities, forerunners of the race of people who are famous for being famous. I propose to examine questions relating to this phenomenon by tracing the rise and fall in the press of the story of Berkeley-Foote-Hayne. What brings such a story (prior to its appearance in court) to the attention of the reporters? What characteristics of the story appear to be determinative in selecting it for inclusion in the press? What gives the story legs, and, to the extent that we can determine it, what response is there from readers?

The case of Berkeley-Foote-Hayne offers a chance to study both the utility of celebrity scandal in selling papers and magazines and also the manner in which the sympathies of readership (and the theatre audience) shaped the tenor of the coverage. It also raises questions of press intimidation, as a few months after Foote's reappearance Col. Berkeley and two henchmen nearly beat to death the editor Jasper Judge (Berkeley escaped with £500 damages), and later Berkeley backed both the Palladium and the weekly paper *The Age* in order to attack opponents and puff his advocates—including his new mistress the wife of the theatrical manager Alfred Bunn.

This presentation will use the extant newspaper databases as well as other contemporary documents to read closely the particular moment at which the story peaked in February 1825, when the textualized Maria Foote reappeared in the flesh at Covent Garden.

2011

4 February 2011 | Les Harrison

"Textual Fluidity and the Digital Edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*."

Aside from the Bible, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is probably the most widely reprinted work of the nineteenth century. Yet despite intense critical interest in Stowe's novel over the past 30 years, little, if any, attention has been paid to the fact that this novel underwent significant revisions by its author and editors as it passed from edition to edition. Focusing on chapter 20 of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—which introduces the character of Topsy—I will examine in my presentation the applicability of John Bryant's principles of fluid text editing to the construction of a digital edition of Stowe's novel, as well as to other digital projects

4 March 2011| David Golumbia

"Reintegrating Philology: Deconstruction, Endangered Languages, and the Second Chomskyan Revolution in Linguistics."

One of the most familiar and at the same time perplexing sentiments in contemporary literary studies is the call for a "return to philology." Both its familiarity and the confusion surrounding it can be seen in the dual essays with exactly that name by Paul de Man (mid-1980s) and Edward Said (mid-2000s). These two famous statements not only oppose each other almost point-by-point;

both also fail to engage with—indeed, hardly mention—perhaps the single most salient definition of philology in contemporary practice, which is as the close reading of either classical, or classical and medieval, texts (the meaning invoked—until very recently—by all of the leading journals with philology in their titles, and a version of which is advocated by “traditional” contemporary philologists like Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht).

Rather than selecting among these competing sentiments, in this talk I build on some recent synthetic work on the history of philology and linguistics (particularly work by Geoffrey Galt Harpham, Sheldon Pollock, Lydia Liu, and Joseph Errington), and argue that all of these visions are comprehensible within a larger and still unrecovered framework, which is the setting of philology alongside the fields called typology and linguistic typology.

These fields are today known in literary studies primarily as contributors to a racist and progressivist view of language and culture, represented especially by the most famous of 19th century typologists, Wilhelm von Humboldt. Little known in literary studies is what I will argue is a recent and (implicitly) deconstructive reconsideration of this work within linguistics, ultimately giving birth to an almost entirely transformed conception of the scientific basis of linguistics within Chomskyan practice itself. While this transformation is seen outside linguistics mainly under the heading of “endangered languages,” within linguistics they invoke a series of paradigm shifts that remain to be realized in literary studies. Understanding the implications of these shifts in turn allows a new perspective on the ongoing and today largely unrecognized connections between the studies of language, literature and culture and suggests a variety of directions for future research.

1 April 2011 | Ece Aykol |

“Still Life, Still Alive: The Poetics of Ekphrasis and Sam Taylor-Wood’s Short Films”

In my presentation I will discuss the contemporary British artist, Sam Taylor-Wood’s short films as meditations on the multifarious definitions of the word “still.” The films I will focus on utilize both analog and digital technology and combine the “old” culture of images with “new attitudes to time and history.” In my reading of her work, I will turn to the poetics of ekphrasis in order to explicate the temporal complexities her films convey. I will argue that the ways in which Taylor-Wood’s films problematize the construction of time make her art an exciting terrain to be explored by word/image studies in the twenty-first century.

4 November 2011 | Catherine Ingrassia

“By a Woman Writt’: Women, Poetry, and Print Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century.”

Female poets had to operate within the commercial literary marketplace, a site governed by the economic realities of the publishing industry and they did so with great success: Between 1660 and 1800, 243 women published books of poetry, 28.8 percent of all books of poetry published in the period. Yet these women also actively traded in an alternate economy centered in women's relationships with each other. A tradition of female poetry, female friendship, and established communities of female readers and writers comprise another equally—or perhaps more—powerful and symbolically remunerative economy. The intangible currency of recognition, intimacy, and success within this alternative symbolic economy richly complements financial compensation..

Strategies for negotiating these competing and complementary marketplaces shaped both women's careers and the world of print culture at the time.

2 December 2011 | Thom De Haven

“The Red Demon and the Radium Girls.”

For the last year and a half I've been working on a manuscript called “Patsy Touey.” It's a novel set primarily in the early 1920s, in the city of Bayonne, New Jersey, where I was born and lived till I was 22 and where my mother lived till her death in 2009. The major characters are loosely modeled on my grandmother, Mary O'Hare, a well-educated, much beloved (but very cantankerous) public school teacher for almost 50 years, and on the younger brother she lived with nearly all of her life (my grandmother was married in 1910 and widowed in 1916 and never remarried). Her brother Patrick Ahearn, called Patsy, was a sweet-natured, mildly retarded garbage man (he would never have called himself a sanitation worker). The only food he ever ate were soft-boiled eggs. Soft boiled eggs and toast, and tea.

The novel's story, which revolves around my eponymous hero's infatuation with a dying “radium girl,” is completely made up, but was partly inspired by the real-life tragedy of several dozen young (mostly teenaged) factory girls in Orange, New Jersey who contracted radiation poisoning while painting glow-in-the-dark watch dials using brushes tipped with radium. It was also partly inspired by the life and career of Pearl S. Bergoff, “King of the Strikebreakers.” This colorful monster actually lived in Bayonne during the 1920s, buying his way into respectable society and setting himself up as a real-estate developer and philanthropist while his armies of goons wreaked havoc across the United States. Bergoff played a major role in the single ugliest event in the history of Bayonne, the July 1915 strike of (mostly Polish) workers at the Standard Oil complex, which resulted in the deaths of 6 people and the wounding of dozens of others.

My presentation will be about what I've researched (and am still researching) to write “Patsy Touey”: Pearl Bergoff (the infamous “Red Demon”); the Standard Oil Strike; the story of the “radium girls”; and Bayonne itself (a blue-collar city Steven Spielberg chose to attack and destroy in his remake of War of the Worlds).

2010

12 February 2010 | James Kinney

“The Battle of the Books: Literature and Race in 19th Century America”

From 1830 to the Civil War and again from 1877 to World War I, race became a dominant motif in American literature. Around 1830, major changes took place both in the need to defend slavery and in the effort to abolish it. A number of genres developed rapidly: 1) Plantation Romances; 2) Abolition Novels; 3) Anti-Abolition Texts; 4) Slave Narratives; 5) Revolutionary Works—all attempting to define blacks and the institution of slavery.

After the War and Reconstruction, in response to the “Negro Problem” white writing tended to group into three essentialist racial “mentalities” identified by historian Joel Williamson: 1) White Liberal Mentality; 2) White Conservative Mentality; 3) White Radical Mentality; while in ever

increasing numbers 4) Black Voices articulated the struggle of emancipated African Americans to define themselves. In both eras, literature did much to construct the lived reality.

5 March 2010 | Patty Strong

“OMG! Texting Toward Illiteracy?: LOL. Why Social Writing Trumps School Writing”

9 April 2010 | David Latané

“Being and Event—Browning and Schlegel in the 1830s”

Browning’s first three books (excluding the anonymous Pauline) are probes of historical characters (the chemist and mage Paracelsus, the courtier Earl of Strafford, the poet Sordello of Mantua). In each case Browning conjures interior action crucial yet invisible to history. This paper will look at what he’s up to by taking into consideration both the contemporary historiographical ideas of Friedrich Schlegel’s Philosophy of History (trans. in the 1830s) and also the theories about event stemming from Alain Badiou’s work.

1 October 2010 | Kathy Graber

“In-Dwelling: Stephen Dunn in Deadwood”

The title of my presentation plays with the titles from one of Dunn’s collections, Local Visitations, in which he resurrects 19th Century writers in small southern New Jersey towns (“Twain in Atlantic City,” for instance). My presentation attempts to move toward a better understanding of the particular way moral concerns manifest themselves in Dunn’s work and argues that the pursuit of the uncomfortable truths constitutes the core of his aesthetics. It does this not only by looking at some poems and prose by Dunn but also by employing the David Milch HBO series as a pop cultural illustration of such an aesthetics in action and using a few small bits of Heidegger for intellectual grounding.

5 November 2010 | Tim Glenn

“Representing Race, Property and Reconstruction in Peter Matthiessen’s Killing Mister Watson”

In my presentation I will contend that Peter Matthiessen’s 1990 novel Killing Mister Watson creates an alternative history of post-Reconstruction South Florida by using a mix of oral narratives, journal entries and newspaper clippings. Rather than accepting a view of the past comprised of one monolithic voice, Matthiessen’s text argues that the past can be more fully understood by recognizing those voices that have traditionally been marginalized. By giving authority and agency to the historical accounts of not only white settlers, but also African Americans and American Indians in the American South, Matthiessen’s text’s depiction of post-bellum battles over race claims and land claims amidst the ruins of the Civil War and Reconstruction gives minority voices an equal stake in the creation of historical narratives.

3 December 2010 | John Wells

“Samuel Beckett’s Negations: Tragedy, Comedy, and Subjectivity In Endgame”

My presentation will explore how Samuel Beckett’s Endgame interrogates aesthetic forms of meaning by negating the traditions it inherits from literature, theology, and philosophy. That negation discloses the “messianic light” that according to Theodor Adorno provides the only

responsible form of philosophizing in a postmetaphysical world, a world “after Auschwitz,” as Adorno would have put it, in which the potential for catastrophe without a means to redeem it seems ever-present. I will demonstrate how Beckett explodes entire systems of philosophical discourse (particularly Existentialism) and the criteria for drama that he inherits, not for the sake of mere negation but to present the meaning of modern meaninglessness, that is, of philosophy’s failure to preserve qualitative experience within its explanation of the world. The play’s nonidentical relationship with conventions from tragedy and comedy compels reflection on what adequacy those forms might once have possessed and why they prove inadequate for the modernist and postmodernist world. The value of Beckett’s work, I contend, lies in its exploration of how the aesthetic forms that have established the possibilities for what we can mean may be rendered thematic—that is, how form can become content and compel conceptual mobility in the audience that enables them to witness what value a category like redemption can possess when the theological and aesthetic forms upon which drama has relied have grown inconsistent with the empirical world. Redemption’s value for such a culture becomes apparent in the nostalgia for nature voiced by Beckett’s characters who seem to mourn a nature with which they could have had a harmonious relationship even as they fear the possibility of other life and seem only to await their own deaths. That nostalgia within the play for a state the characters might never have known implicates the messianic visions of this play that might have initially seemed only to wallow in a postapocalyptic landscape of debris.

2009

6 February 2009 | Sachi Shimomura

“Chivalric Stasis, or the Walking Dead in Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale”

While historians agree that medieval chivalry was balanced between historical and literary ideals, and that literature influenced the history of chivalry at least as much as historical actions provided a basis for chivalric ideas, the literary implications for chivalry have not been adequately historicized in studies of how medieval romances stabilize chivalry—and thus recreate it within a historical vacuum: often an actual rejection of historicity. In my presentation, I will examine how Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale rejects historicity through its manipulations of narrative setting and time, and a chivalric world that seems repeatedly to stop in its tracks.

Ideas of chivalry evolved in society and literature throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but also thus displayed complementary elements of stasis and obsolescence. Chaucer, through his Knight and the Knight’s Tale, evokes and enacts literarily such unstable stasis.

The characters in the tale, in particular, represent dead and dying traditions, preserved through the anachronisms of the story, in which, at the broadest level, medieval knights joust in ancient Athens under Theseus’s watchful eye. Even as the knights themselves uphold ideals of chivalry, their actions come to occupy a temporal limbo—a realm of stasis, of deferrals, and of narratives that seem to forget or ignore their own origins. The two Theban knights who pursue the lady Emelye, in fact, enter the tale as nearly dead knights within a pile of dead bodies; this liminal status continues through their constantly deferred deaths. The Tale thus enacts a stasis matching the stasis of the chivalric ideals.

My presentation is part of an overall project on narrative stasis and its production of narrative temporalities that defy historicity for ideological reasons. The stasis of the Knight's Tale resembles what A. S. Byatt, through a narratologist character in her novelette "The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye" (1994), terms the "stopped energies" in the life of Griselda, heroine of another of the Canterbury Tales. Such energies held in stasis establish a broader Chaucerian interest in the power of interrupted changes/lives/ideals, reminiscent of an even broader medieval context: the fascination with the stopped lives and perpetually (and statically) preserved bodies of saints. For late medieval society, was stasis a basis of ideological power?

6 March 2009 | Gretchen Comba

"The Art of Atonement: The Jewish Character in William Maxwell's 'Haller's Second Home' and 'With Reference to an Incident at a Bridge'"

In addition to his six novels, one memoir, and one volume of essay-reviews, William Maxwell published sixty-three stories between 1936 and 1999 in magazine publications. Of these stories, forty-nine originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, and fourteen originally appeared in the magazines *Life and Letters To-day*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *The Cornhill Magazine*, *Perspectives U.S.A.*, *Pax*, *The Paris Review*, *Antaeus*, *Tamaqua*, *Story*, *New England Review*, and *DoubleTake*. In addition, the story "Remembrance of Martinique," which originally appeared in the British journal *Life and Letters To-day*, was revised and reprinted in *The Atlantic Monthly*; and the story "The Front and Back Parts of the House," which originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, was reprinted alongside the previously unpublished story "The Old House" in *Tamaqua*. Including these reprints, Maxwell's short fiction appears in magazine publications sixty-five times. Although Maxwell published two volumes of stories, two volumes of fables (one printed privately), as well as one volume of collected stories, many of the stories first published in magazines never appeared in any of these collections, and some, when they appeared in a collection, were reprinted under different titles or as revised texts, the revisions ranging from the slight to the substantial. Among these stories is "Abbie's Birthday," which first appeared in the August 1941 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*, and was later re-titled "Haller's Second Home," as well as substantially revised, to ultimately appear in the 1977 collection *Over by the River and Other Stories*. In this presentation I will examine the substantial revisions made to this story in order to argue that Maxwell's inclusion of a distinctly Jewish character in the later version suggests that in the thirty-six year span between the publication of the first version and the publication of the last version Maxwell's consciousness with regard to Jewish ethnicity, as well as the social prejudice that Jews face, grew into the need for atonement evident in his 1984 story "With Reference to an Incident at a Bridge."

3, April 2009 | Kathy Bassard

"Toni Morrison's Virginia"

In my presentation I will trace Morrison's use of Virginia as not only geographical space, but as a trope for the contradictions of American race relations. In the course of my presentation I will discuss Morrison's new novel, *A Mercy*, which is set in 17th Century Virginia and Maryland.

2 October 2009 | Nick Sharp

"Adrift in the Drunken Boat: A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Digital Poetics and NewMedia Literature"

Because the term “electronic literature” is so widely misconstrued, this presentation will open with a definition of the term and three brief examples intended to suggest the nature of the field. The presentation will then argue that these new kinds of literature pose a significant challenge to the conventional, print-oriented notions of “reading,” requiring serious modifications in the received methods of criticism and interpretation. The core of the presentation, however, will be a consideration of three short works from Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (“The Last Day of Betty Nkomo,” “Bust Down the Doors,” and “Miss DMZ”) intended to suggest how these Flash animated texts both remediate established habits of reading and yet achieve traditional literary effects.

6 November 2009 | Rivka Swenson

“Vulnerable Subjects: Theorizing the Eighteenth-Century Gaze”

In eighteenth-century visual theory, the object of the gaze is not the one who is seen but the one who sees; such a notion feels counter-intuitive to readers who have naturalized the theory of the dominant/male gaze. Eighteenth-century optical theories drew on an intromissionist (Aristotelian) model of vision to insist that the eye receives impressions via particulate rays that proceed from objects. Bodies enter bodies; particles intrude through eye-windows, affecting the ontologies of seeing subjects. Such subjects are not agents; eighteenth-century seeing subjects cannot be understood as proper subjects, since they are not the source of action. If “physical objects give rise to our perceptions,” then, in grammatical terms, the seeing subject is the object—not of another’s gaze but of another’s seen being. Putative objects of the gaze, empowered within prevailing optical discourse, act upon the vulnerable, penetrable subject, vigorously entering its apertures “with a motion,” Isaac Newton explains, “like that of an Eel.” Accordingly, Jonathan Swift’s male gazer in his meta-satirical poem “The Lady’s Dressing Room” hardly experiences dominion over the forbidden territory into which he trespasses. Celia’s belongings—because of what Bill Brown would call their “thingness,” their force as a sensuous, metaphysical presence—are totemic versions of Celia’s body, and it is in this capacity that they undo the peeping Strephon. Swift’s suggestive caution “To him that looks” bespeaks grave anxiety about the dangers of the (male) gaze within a cultural and scientific milieu wedded not to the idea of the “eye/penis” (to borrow a phrase from Janet Todd’s reading of Freud) but to an idea expressed by John Taylor’s 1761 parsing of Newton: “the Eye,” Taylor avers, “is a Female.” As we shall see, such sentiments pervade a culture that was obsessed with the dialectics of vision in light of new optical technologies (prism, telescope, microscope, Claude glass, sash window).

In this talk, I will propose that we reorient our thinking about the politics of the visual field in eighteenth-century optics and in literary representations of visual exchange. As explored by John Locke, George Berkeley, and the venerable Newton, the relationship between seeing, knowing, and being during the period exceeds post-Freudian equations between sight and agency; in fact, a vast body of scientific, popular, and belles-lettrist discourse challenges latter-day assumptions about the primacy of the (masculine) seeing subject. I’ll use this time to discuss how vision is theorized and represented in the early modern period and the eighteenth-century, and I’ll offer a practical application of the crucial reorientation I’m proposing through readings of “The Lady’s Dressing Room” and Mary Wortley Montagu’s poem “Epistle to Bathurst.”

4 December 2009 | John Brinegar

“My soule bitake I unto Sathanas’: Parodic Witchcraft in Chaucer’s Miller’s Tale”

Absolon kissing Alison's bottom is one of the high points of the comedy of the Miller's Tale; in its context, though, it is something more. Fifteen lines after the description of the kiss, Absolon makes a conditional pledge of his soul to Satan. In my presentation I will argue that this conjunction of an anal kiss with pledging a soul to Satan echoes medieval descriptions of a witches' sabbat; since witches were seen primarily as heretics, this echo amplifies the parodic religious undertones of the Miller's Tale.

My presentation begins by tracing the history of the obscene (anal) kiss from accounts of the Cathar heresy through fourteenth-century descriptions of witches' activities. Throughout this period, the obscene kiss is seen as the action marking a heretical declaration of allegiance to Satan; it is essentially a mark of heresy, and only secondarily a mark of witchcraft. By Chaucer's time, though, the obscene kiss appears as a standard issue in witch trials such as that of Edward IV's mistress Alice Perrers.

My presentation then turns to Absolon's unintentional obscene kiss, which is a means of marking Absolon as an amorous "heretic" whose love is undesired because of the way in which he offers it; in his comic oath of frustration, Absolon unwittingly confirms his heresy. He follows this oath with an action of maleficia (the burning of Nicholas' bottom) having an effect, though not a means, commonly attributed to witches. The deployment of these signs of heresy and witchcraft thus adds another strand to the religious parody of the Miller's Tale.

2008

1 February 2008 | Winnie Chan

"Sarah Josepha Hale and the Proto-Post-Colonial Rhetoric of the Thanksgiving Menu"

In the October 1857 number of Godey's Lady's Book, editor Sarah Josepha Hale augured that "[t]he Day of Thanksgiving would . . . soon be celebrated in every part of the world where an American family was settled." The exuberance of her editorial belies the fact that Hale had been making the same appeal for months, and would continue to do so from her "Editor's Table" until October, 1863, when President Lincoln, attempting to hold together a nation torn by Civil War, would make his famous Thanksgiving Declaration. In fact, Hale had been advocating a day of thanksgiving for a glorious "Yankee nation," united North and South, since before 1827, as editor of several increasingly influential ladies' magazines. Moreover, in her cookbooks and, perhaps most fundamentally, in her first novel, *Northwood* (1827), she would set down the now-familiar menu, described in strikingly militaristic terms. A stalwart abundance of American meat, for instance, serves "as a bastion to defend innumerable bowls of gravy." As for the holiday occasioning such dazzling gluttony, it, "like the Fourth of July," is a "national festival" to be "observed by all people."

This presentation interrogates the Thanksgiving menu as the unstable, edible reification of a nationalist rhetoric, which self-consciously promoted (and revised to include distinctly British foods) the first "fusion" meal between the pilgrims and the Wampanoag as the first post-colonial cuisine. However fictional, the now-familiar Thanksgiving foods stabilized an imagined community, the shared spectacle of their common, private consumption solidifying a society in violent transition. As patriarchal and racist as it is patriotic, Hale's nationalization of this regional

feast constitutes an unlikely, early manifestation of what Salman Rushdie famously declared “the Empire writ[ing] back.”

4 April 2008 | Les Harrison

“Never flitting, still is sitting” : Poe’s Raven and the Problem of Mass Culture

In his 1845 essay, “Anastatic Printing,” Edgar Allan Poe looks with hope toward the advent of new communication technologies which would democratize the publishing process, freeing the author from the control of the publisher, allowing him to “arrange his pages to suit himself, and stereotype them instantaneously, as arranged” interspersing “them with his own drawings, or with anything to please his own fancy, in the certainty of being fairly brought before his readers, with all the freshness of his original conception about him.” The liberatory rhetoric is, no doubt, familiar to scholars of the World Wide Web and the assorted “new medias” of the past fifteen years.

Yet while the web and its allied medias have worked to bring an abundance of Poe “pages” before a wide variety of readers, the quality of “freshness,” of “original conception,” remains elusive. On the one hand, the “popular” Poe pages continue to present gothic and macabre images of the author: Poe as the American Byron. On the other hand, more “scholarly” sites, and, in particular, the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, while more sensitive to the multivocal properties of Poe’s authorial voice, subsume this multivocality beneath a valorizing rhetoric dedicated to “celebrating” the author’s achievement. In both cases, the visitor to the site is denied an “original” or “fresh” relationship to Poe insofar as their experience of the author and his works is mediated by these competing conceptions of Edgar Allan Poe.

Focusing on the widely-reprinted and frequently-illustrated poem “The Raven,” this paper will examine Poe’s deep ambivalence towards the visual technologies characteristic of an emerging mass culture over the course of the nineteenth century. While Poe’s critical writings emphasize an aesthetics centered around the poetic creation of “supernal” beauty and “indistinctness,” his most successful poems and tales repeatedly offer their readers spectacular images—the “stately Raven,” enshrouded figure of Madeline of Usher—in order to compete for the attention of a readership newly awash in the proliferating images of an increasingly visual culture.

2 May 2008 | Gary Sange

“Comic Surrealism”

What’s comic that isn’t absurd, isn’t satirical, isn’t amusing—isn’t even funny? What happens when we want our humor to be as crazy as the world? Can “Comic Surrealism,” even the humorously grotesque, stir us to imaginative compassion? Using examples from the films *Harold and Maud*, *Being There*, and *Dr. Strangelove*, from Paul Simon’s song “Call Me Al,” and from the comic-surrealist poetry of Charles Simic and Frank O’Hara, we will move towards a partial understanding of the following question: What is “surrealism” beyond “weird,” beyond its definition of “Beyond Reality”?

3 October 2008 | Kate Nash

“The Politics of Romance in Dorothy L. Sayers’s Detective Fiction”

As a theorist and writer of Golden Age detective fiction, Dorothy L. Sayers knew the famous rule against introducing a love interest into a mystery: “[T]he less love in a detective-story, the better....

A casual and perfunctory love-story is worse than no love-story at all, and since the mystery must, by hypothesis, take the first place, the love is better left out.” I will argue that when Sayers decided to let her series detective, Lord Peter Wimsey, fall in love, she managed to succeed where other novelists had failed. In the novels featuring Peter’s beloved Harriet Vane, Sayers uses formal narrative techniques to communicate her first-wave feminist politics. Politicizing the romance between Harriet and Peter, and making her narrative progression depend on the reader’s provisional acceptance of certain feminist beliefs for the duration of the novels, allows Sayers to balance the generic demands of romance and mystery, while avoiding the usual negative consequences of combining the two.

7 November 2008 | Richard Fine

“Covering D-Day: the Media and the Military during “The Good War”

In the past several decades we have witnessed any number of military conflicts large and small (Vietnam, Granada, Panama, the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq among others) in which relations between the media and the military have been fraught, to say the least. The press, the public and the military all look back nostalgically to World War II, when the armed forces and the media were reassuringly assumed to be “on the same side.” Seeking to clarify a subject about which much is assumed but little actually documented, I have begun exploring the institutional mechanisms within the U.S. Armed Forces that governed the work of war correspondents during World War II, focusing on the invasion of Normandy and subsequent battle in the summer of 1944 that culminated in the liberation of Paris in late August. Surprisingly, no authoritative study exists of military censorship during World War II, and so at the most basic level this is a project of recovery. That reconstruction, though, has yielded some intriguing complexities and contradictions.

This presentation reports on my initial research into the records housed in the National Archives and other repositories as well as the published accounts of a number of the reporters, broadcasters and military personnel who participated in the Battle of Normandy. I question the commonplace notion that correspondents in World War II willingly acted as a virtual adjunct of the American armed forces, uniformed and unapologetic “cheerleaders” for the Allied cause. Unsurprisingly, historical reality seems to have been far more nuanced. While journalists rarely balked at censorship for reasons of military security, for example, they did much more frequently object to what they perceived as “political” censorship. Competitive pressures among news organizations, between reporters and broadcasters, and between the national media of the Allies also led to demonstrable frictions between the media and the military. My research to date indicates that during the Second World War relations between reporters and their armed forces handlers were more antagonistic—and that the American public was less well served by the media—than is commonly asserted by those who wish to draw a clear distinction between World War II reporting and that in more recent conflicts.

That said, the combination of the strict censorship system and the press’s willingness (with notable exceptions) to abide it led to a distinctive style of war reporting focused on the stoic heroism of the common soldier, and best exemplified by Ernie Pyle’s dispatches. Contemporary press coverage of D-Day and the Battle for Normandy, then, established a prevailing view of that campaign and its prosecution which romanticizes and glorifies the “citizen-soldier” and which connects with the more recent interpretation of D-Day (in the works of historian Stephen Ambrose and the films of Steven Spielberg) that is dramatically ethnocentric and self-congratulatory—the notion that the

United States Army, made up of amateur, reluctant warriors, was both morally and militarily superior to its enemies.

5 December 2008 | David Coogan

“Strip Poker: A Writing Workshop at the City Jail”

In my presentation I will describe a writing workshop in autobiography that I taught at the Richmond City Jail. The goal of the workshop was to trace the roots of criminal behavior and write your way beyond it—what one of the writers characterized as a game of strip poker. A closely related goal was to address a public unaccustomed to thinking about the complex causes of crime or the challenges of rehabilitation and reentry. After contextualizing these project goals within rhetorical theory and pedagogy, I read from the manuscript, *Strip Poker*, which dramatizes the workshop sessions and features the men’s life stories.

2007

2 February 2007 | Laura Browder

“If This Is Tuesday, it Must be Montgomery: or, Adventures in Documentary Film Making”

In the early 1970s, the Klansman and former Wallace speechwriter Asa Carter reinvented himself as the Cherokee author Forrest Carter—and wrote a bestselling “memoir” about his childhood. I’ll be showing the twenty-minute promo of *Gone to Texas: The Lives of Forrest Carter*, a documentary based in part on my book *Slippery Characters*, and talking about my work as a writer and co-producer of the film.

(Browder’s talk was recorded and published in [v6n1 of Blackbird: an online journal of literature and the arts.](#))

2 March 2007 | Marcel Cornis Pope

“Interplaying National and Transnational Perspectives in post-1989 Literary History”

The break-up of the bipolar world system in 1989 has removed the traditional ideological polarizations between East and West, “first” and “second” world, but has to some extent replaced them with nationalistic and ethnocentric perspectives that promote new cultural divisions. Under these circumstances, the input of a mediating consciousness is needed now more than ever. By comparing, translating and interfacing cultures, this type of consciousness can help us rediscover that middle ground between Eastern and Western, dominant and peripheral that we have neglected because of our polarized worldviews.

Post-1989 comparative literary history can help us reconstruct that middle ground of intercultural coexistence, emphasizing “transference,” “translation,” and “cultural contact.” The multifaceted landscape of East Central Europe, punctuated by multicultural and minority discourses, is an especially fertile ground for a transnational literary history that, while not neglecting the points of conflict, will foreground the conjunctions and crossings between cultures. I test these claims on examples taken from the *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, a multi-volume work I am currently co-editing with John Neubauer.

6 April 2007 | Nick Frankel

“The Designer’s Eye: Ornament and Poetry in the mid-Victorian Period”

This will be a presentation about the relation between graphic design and poetry in a specific text—John Murray’s 1841 edition of J. G. Lockhart’s “Ancient Spanish Ballads,” as the epitome of a certain kind of ornamented literary text that was especially popular at the beginning of Victoria’s reign. I shall begin by generalizing about early Victorian fascination with a Romanticized Orient (which, for the Victorians, included Southern Spain) as well as the penchant for gorgeously illustrated “picturesque” books that accompanied early Victorian developments in graphic reproduction. But essentially I shall be reflecting on the interdependency of design and text in this edition—and by implication, on what the Victorians have to teach us about the independency of mind, eye and the reading “senses.”

5 October 2007 | Joshua Eckhardt

“Manuscript Verse Collectors and the Politics of Anti-Courtly Love Poetry”

The early modern collectors of John Donne’s manuscript verse accomplished much more than scholars have recognized. Manuscript experts and editors have shown that these collectors made Donne the most popular poet in the manuscripts of the period, and in several cases recorded more authoritative texts than did printers and publishers. Yet, by focusing exclusively on Donne’s poems, editors in particular have taken them out of their immediate contexts in manuscript books, most of which feature great numbers of other poets’ works as well. In their poetry anthologies, or miscellanies, manuscript verse collectors regularly opposed Donne’s most popular and sexually explicit poems, such as “To his Mistress going to bed,” to courtly love lyrics, like those that Sir Walter Raleigh purportedly wrote for Elizabeth I. In so doing, collectors effectively consolidated the hitherto unrecognized poetic genre of anti-courtly love poetry. Employing methods that distinguish them from better-known literary agents (such as authors, stationers, and even readers), manuscript verse collectors came to exhibit this overlooked genre as both the aesthetic and the ideological antithesis to the Petrarchan lyrics that Raleigh and others had associated with the late Elizabethan court.

2 November 2007 | Susann Cokal

“Turning Cold Hard Facts into Technicolor Lies”

A discussion of some of my research—into, among other things, miracles, Mormons, wet-nursing, medieval sculpture, Victorian painting, frontier prostitutes, the technology of the greenhouse, Munchausen by Proxy, tuberculosis, sixteenth-century gynecology, and the history of the needle—that has led to two books, *Mirabilis* (2001) and *Breath and Bones* (2005), and *The Kingdom of Little Wounds*, a novel-in-progress set in Renaissance Scandinavia.

7 December 2007: | Gretchen Soderlund

“Journalist or Panderer? Investigating and Framing Underage Web Cam Sites”

If the television brought images of the outside world into the home, web camera technology potentially inverts this trend by transmitting activities in the home to outside viewers. Over the last two years, there have been a number of high-profile cases of teenagers utilizing their home computers, web cameras, and other web-based commercial establishments like PayPal to establish

and conduct their own home-based interactive Internet pornography businesses. This presentation will consider recent journalistic and public policy discourses surrounding these sites—often run surreptitiously out of minors' rooms—especially the uneasy representation of teens as simultaneously stars, victims, producers, perpetrators, and entrepreneurs. I argue that what is being produced is not only a classic narrative of underage victims and adult perpetrators but also a new set of complex social and legal relationships enabled by and embedded within these new technologies.