



Pacific Lutheran University

Prism

A Publication of the Division of Humanities

Spring 2011

Take Up and Read

Read any good books lately?

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Greetings from the Dean



In this, my first year as Dean since taking over for my colleague Doug Oakman (now on a well-deserved sabbatical), I'm delighted to welcome you to the 2011 edition of *Prism*.

These are tough times for higher education as the continuing effects of the economic recession impact the budgets of states, universities, and families trying to pay for college. In this climate, Humanities programs have been hit especially hard—with some state universities eliminating programs (in Romance Languages or Classics)—and traditional funding sources like the National Endowment for the Humanities facing severe budget cutbacks.

The picture is brighter here at PLU. We've had to tighten our belts, like everyone else, but the Humanities remains central to PLU's educational mission, and our Humanities faculty and students continue, semester in and semester out, to do inspiring work.

This year's *Prism* will give you a flavor of what we've been up to. Our "Take Up and Read" feature highlights the imaginative and critical reading—of scriptural, philosophical, literary, and cultural texts—that forms the very heart of what do in the Humanities. We thought it would be fun to share with you some of the best books we've read lately. Perhaps you'll find some suggestions for your own reading list!

Meet our new faculty members—outstanding young scholar-teachers who bring fresh ideas and energy to our classrooms.

And our "Humanities at Work" feature highlights what some of *you* alumni are doing. Read up on where life has taken these interesting PLU grads, and how they reflect back on the shaping influence of their time at PLU.

We'd love to hear from *you*! Stories about our alumni are one of our most effective tools for communicating, to prospective students and their parents, the way a PLU education does indeed prepare one for a life of "thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership, and care."

So be in touch. Drop me a note or e-mail (albrejcm@plu.edu), to tell us where life has taken you—or better yet, stop in to say 'hello,' if you're on campus.

Wishing you all the best,

Jim Albrecht, *Associate Professor of English & Dean of Humanities*

Prism

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Prism, the magazine of the Humanities Division at Pacific Lutheran University, expresses the scholarly viewpoints or deliberations of Humanities faculty, and occasionally others by invitation, while also announcing publications and achievements within the Division.

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Humanities at Work

Hannah Love, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Dr. Roy Hammerling (Classics, Philosophy & Religion, '78)



Growing up in Eastern Washington in Odessa, a town of 1000 and a high school graduating class of forty-two students, while

spending summers working in wheat fields, was a wonderful upbringing. So, asks Hammerling, where do you go from there? He went to PLU, not really prepared for what happened next: he fell in love with the life of the mind, which opens the heart to compassion and the soul to a world of wonder. According to Hammerling, his upbringing was somewhat sheltered, so his experiences reading Plato, Augustine, Julian of Norwich, Descartes, Nietzsche, C.S. Lewis, and Doris Lessing made him feel as if he had emerged from a musty cave into a veritable literary Garden of Eden. Since Hammerling couldn't settle on only one major, he chose three: Religion, Classical Languages, and Philosophy. Such a trifecta set him up well for his careers as an ELCA pastor and Professor of Church History at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota.

But his vocations were mere side benefits. Hammerling's grandfather, who helped him understand the value of an education, grew up as a German-Russian near Odessa, Russia. After narrowly surviving the Second World War, his grandfather escaped from East Germany and eventually made his way to the United States. One day when Hammerling was home from PLU during Christmas break, his grandfather shared these words: "An education is a wonderful thing. Even if you lose everything, even if your wealth is taken from you, like it was taken from us at one time, if you have an education, you will not only be able to make a living, but you'll know how to live. Indeed, with an education you can never be poor again."

As Hammerling puts it today, "the wealth of Midas pales in comparison

to what I received from PLU, and especially the humanities, namely all the complexity, cruelty, and the beauty of the cosmos revealed at the hands of professors who cared enough to walk with me on the beginning of the path that leads to the threshold of mystery itself. What more could a small town boy ask of a liberal arts education?"

Bryan Herb (Communication Studies & English, '95)

How Herb landed in PLU is a strange story, as he recalls: "Classmates of mine were heading to PLU for a tour, and at the time I was interested in studying advertising so I decided to go, thinking that PLU offered an advertising major. As it turned out, at the time it did not, but walking around campus, something just felt right."

During Herb's freshmen year, he had an early morning English class for which "remarkably," he notes, "I didn't mind waking up to attend. Dr. Campbell was so passionate about his subject—he made me see the true art of literature." Hooked, Herb ended up double majoring in Public Relations and English with a Religion minor. One of the books he read in those early freshman days was *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin. This text challenged him to confront societal norms that didn't feel right, such as forcing himself to be straight when he simply wasn't. Herb notes that, to this day, *The Awakening* remains one of his favorite books.

Today Herb lives in Chicago and runs a travel agency, *Zoom Vacations*: his business specializes in services for GLBTQ travelers, their families and friends. He is the past board chair for the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA), and his agency has won numerous industry



awards, including Tripoutgaytravel Award: Best GLBT Tour Operator; Planet Out Award: Best Small Tour Operator; Out Traveler Reader's Choice Award: Best Small Gay Tour Provider; and the IGLTA Award for Travel Excellence: Best Website Promoting Gay Travel. In addition to running his agency, Herb also works as a travel expert for the Travel Channel's hit show "Vacation Challenge" as well as being the Gay travel expert for the world's top-rated gay and lesbian travel show, "Bump."

When Herb thinks back to his time at PLU, he mentions that the most positive thing from his experience (besides the great friends he made) was the Campus Ministry. According to him, "When I came out, I would have thought that the ministry would have been the least supportive, most closed-minded entity on campus. To my delight, I could not have been more wrong, and I learned a lot about my own biases and preconceived notions. The campus ministry took an embracing, incredibly thoughtful and cerebral stance on my gay identity. They taught me firsthand that there was a place for gay people within the Christian faith, and they taught me how to really view and embrace Jesus' message. They helped me feel healthy about who I am, and for this I am indebted to them."



Dr. James Nieman (Philosophy, '78)



According to Nieman, “one of the advantages of a small department like Philosophy in the ‘70s was that we all knew each other very well. I recall quite fondly the small

but ardent number of fellow Philosophy majors, each of us by turns inquisitive and geeky. Even more, though, I recall the faculty and their remarkable combination of intellectual rigor, patience, and generosity that made me want to work all the harder to understand whatever we were studying.” His first philosophy course was Philosophy of Law with Prof. Paul Menzel. Nieman had never realized before how much hard work it could take simply to think clearly, let alone the deep satisfaction that comes with having expended the effort. If that weren’t enough, Menzel would then invite students to his home in the woods, and talk long into the evening about matters profound and meaningful. “It was simply exhilarating to be taken seriously around serious questions, and in such a hospitable, gracious manner.”

These days, Nieman is Professor of Practical Theology at Hartford Seminary (and will soon become the Academic Dean of the school). But his path was not direct; when he graduated from PLU, he enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Philosophy at the University of Minnesota. Yet he quickly realized this was not the best vocational fit. As he puts it, “just because I was familiar with a particular academic discipline didn’t mean that it made my heart sing. More importantly, and in an unexpected way, the deeper value of my philosophy major came in taking that personal insight seriously, even to the point of rethinking my direction.” Subsequently Nieman engaged in parish ministry in two ELCA congregations (in Iowa and then Alaska), and ultimately received a Ph.D. in Religion from Emory University.

His current research home is within the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, where he studies developments in American religious life and institutions with a special interest in the religious practices of ordinary

adherents and how those reflect theological commitments and claims. Hartford Seminary, a long-time interfaith school, is unconventional; rather than prepare ministers for ordination, the Seminary instead offers Masters and Doctoral programs in various aspects of religious studies and leadership. About a third of Nieman’s faculty colleagues are Muslim, and the students embody a balance of domestic and international origin, from all three Abrahamic traditions. In addition to his teaching, administrative and scholarly work, Nieman leads various professional societies, directs a fellowship grant program that supports younger scholars, serves on the Louisville Institute board, and edits the *International Journal of Practical Theology*.

In whatever academic milieu he finds himself, Nieman remains grateful for receiving a foundational understanding of Western intellectual movements and traditions as part of his PLU education. He writes: “Knowing the historical contours of these people and ideas, as well as their intersecting influences, soundly prepared me to navigate an increasingly complex, globalized interplay of social and religious forces today. It has given me a handhold through recent developments and a sounding board for making sense of the unfamiliar. To be sure, little that I studied in philosophy back in college *directly* pertains to my present research in areas like action theory, ethnographic fieldwork, social semiotics, or lived religion, but the discipline of thinking clearly has helped me find my way through them and locate each in a wider framework of understanding.”

Rev. Katy McCallum Sachse (English & Religion, '95)



Sachse, a life-long Lutheran, knew all kinds of stories about Jesus from being brought by her parents to Sunday School every week—sometimes kicking and screaming.

But her first religion class, “Religion and Literature of the New Testament” taught by Prof. Doug Oakman, was different. It sparked an interest in studying the Bible further, something she would never have anticipated when she began at PLU.

Intending to be a Psychology major, but adrift in General University Requirement classes and unsure of her direction, Sachse became a Religion major and later added an English major to the mix.

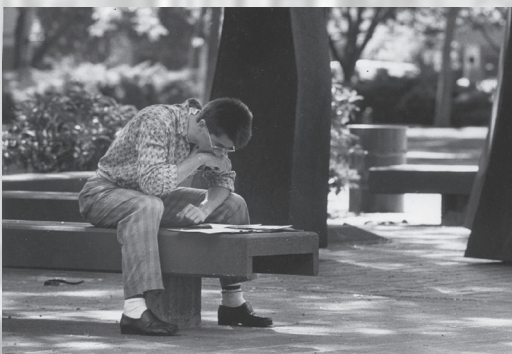
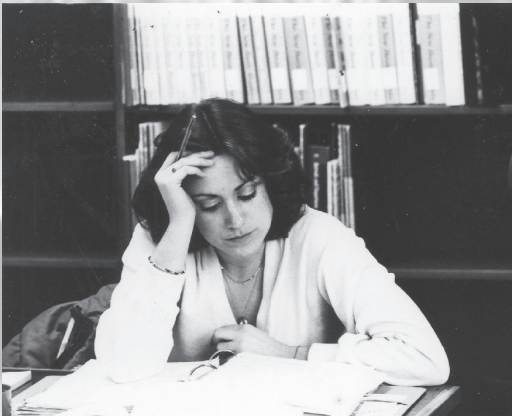
According to Sachse, those two areas of the Humanities have served her well as a pastor. She found that her majors thoroughly prepared her for seminary and she states that this background continues to support her writing of sermons and other pieces for her congregation. She learned how to “read the Bible beyond Sunday school, how to ask questions of context and historicity, how to look for narrative threads, and how to wrestle with the thousands of questions posed by the Bible that have no answer at all.”

It’s that way of thinking—not any specific piece of information she learned along the way—that has made the biggest difference in her vocational life. Recently Sachse met with the mother of a 7th grader who absolutely *bated* confirmation. His primary objection was that he felt his peers “just swallow everything they’re told”; they nodded their heads yes to every Bible story, and he felt like the only one in the corner thinking “Jesus *really* turned water into wine?” Sachse suspects he’s not the only one with those questions, if only because she has many of them herself. Through her studies in Religion, she learned to be comfortable with questions—to even find them exciting—and therefore the boy in her class could find himself an ally in his pastor and teacher.

She writes: “My studies at PLU didn’t answer a lot of my questions; in fact, my PLU education left me with more questions than I brought with me in the first place. And that is the most valuable legacy of my university experience.” In *Letters to a Young Poet*, Rainer Maria Rilke wrote, “Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.” According to Sachse, Rilke’s words voice what she sees as the center of her vocation: “to live the questions now, and to help others do the same; to resist the easy, black-and-white answers offered by some religious traditions; to struggle in ways the Bible both reflects and demands; to worry less about getting it right, and more about those in the world who wonder instead what they will eat for the next meal.”



Take Up and Read



Department of English

Constant and Changing Text

Alison Mandaville, Visiting Assistant Professor of English

The PLU English Department is all about story and book—from the book arts, to printing and publishing, to history of the book, to the complex languages of image and text we use to tell our stories. As English alum Bryan Herb testifies regarding the impact Kate Chopin's novel *The Awakening* had for him, books—and the stories, articles, and poetry they may contain—can be life-changing. In the interview below, Adela Ramos notes how human society today is undergoing as fundamental a shift in understanding and interaction with story and text as at any time since the 18th century, when print culture really took off in Europe and the Americas.

We certainly are turning to a more image-based understanding of text, making Associate Professor Nathalie op de Beeck's work in her 2010 book *Suspended Animation: Children's Picture Books and the Fairy Tale of Modernity* particularly relevant. And when I traveled to Azerbaijan this past summer to conduct a creative writing workshop with women there, I found that some writers had already ventured into the wild and woolly land of global web-publishing—a more economical choice for many in the developing world. The books our faculty suggest you read, for pleasure or teaching, run the gamut from a graphic novel, to a do-it-yourself picture-story making manual, to a pop culture memoir, to a global love story. As the word “book” flexes to adapt to the rapidly changing story-telling needs of this world, what seems clear is that stories, whether in pictures or print, online or on paper, seem in no danger of losing their central place in our lives.

English in a Global Context: New Faculty Adela Ramos



A new transplant to the Pacific Northwest from New York City, Dr. Adela Ramos joined the PLU English Department in the Fall of

2010 as assistant professor of 18th century literature. In addition to her period specialty she brings interests in animal, gender and genre studies as well as comparative work in Latin American and European literature. A native of Mexico City, her family and life experiences reflect the increasingly global nature of work and family today. Her comparative work in literature illustrates how the study of English literature is indeed a global enterprise, impacting and, in turn, influenced by literary and political landscapes all over the world.

I came to English literature for both familial and intellectual reasons. As a child, my mother, who was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, migrated with her own twenty-eight-year-old mother and young brother to Pittsburgh, PA, in the early 1940s. Then in 1967, at the age of thirty with a music education degree under her belt, my mother returned to Mexico City and met my father, who was beginning his career as a lawyer. Though my father was born in the small town of Uruapan in the state of Michoacán, like most families in the mid-twentieth century, his had migrated to the big city.

Even though my father never really learned English, my mom made sure that my brother and I grew up in a bilingual and bicultural home and enrolled us in a bilingual school. While it was the school's mission to provide a balanced bicultural education, in truth the British educational system ruled over the Mexican system (yes, colonialism all over again), and so my elementary, middle, and high school education was mostly shaped by the Cambridge academic curriculum. This is a fact I could have grown up to

resent if I hadn't met Mr. Macilwreith, my first real intellectual influence.

It was in Mr. Macilwreith's class that I first read *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *Glass Menagerie*. He convinced me that close reading is a key to open all doors; after taking his classes, it was hard for me to imagine doing anything other than English literature.

When the time came for college, uncertain about detaching myself from my Spanish, my Mexican literature and culture, my Mexican friends, or my Mexican self, I decided to study English literature at the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at my father's *alma mater*, UNAM, the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Here, Professor Argentina Rodríguez introduced me to the eighteenth century and encouraged me to bring together two of my interests: feminism and literature. I found my first big intellectual adventure through the eighteenth-century novel. Why were all those voluminous novels titled after women?! Four years later, I applied to Columbia University's graduate program in English using my paper on Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and Frances Burney's *Evelina* as a writing sample, and like my grandmother and mother before me, moved to New York City.

Today, within my main area of study—British eighteenth-century literature—I specialize in animal studies, gender, and the history of the novel. My dissertation examines anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, and the discourse of species as three competing ways of describing human-animal and social relations in eighteenth-century Britain. I have also developed an interest in early American literature and hope to incorporate texts such as Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* in my book project.

My other area of focus is comparative and examines the relationship between the European novel and the Latin American novel. I've studied Miguel Angel Asturias, a twentieth-century Guatemalan writer, who appropriates the *Popol-Vuh* in his novel, *The President*, as a means to critique the figure of the Latin American dictator. I've also explored Cervantes's influence

on the British, Continental European, and American novel. I hope to bridge Hispanic American and Anglo American literatures in my current book project.

I love to teach eighteenth-century literature. So often students cite Victorian literature, Shakespeare or Modernism as their favorite fields, while the eighteenth century seems to them a patch of darkness, where dim candlelight reveals decomposing corpses and dusty books. In class I counter these dreary images students have with the many colorful, impertinent, acerbic, and beautiful paintings and satirical etchings of the period.

Teaching this literary period involves an equal measure of myth busting and translating. One myth is that this is a male-centered period, when, in fact, women and men played equally important roles in shaping the literature of the time, and in many instances collaborated. Women's rights, animal rights, environmental awareness, ideas that we usually associate with contemporary society, were all being explored and developed by eighteenth-century writers. Making connections between the eighteenth century and the present is not only fun but also easy; as in the eighteenth century, we are today at a turning point in the history of print culture. I like to tell students that eighteenth-century readers probably experienced formal realism not unlike we experience virtual reality and even texting.

This summer, I am looking forward to teaching another of my passions, the literature of immigration. It will be the first time that I teach a course on a topic which is tied to my own biography. I've chosen to focus the course on narratives about young adults crossing borders to bring the experience of immigration closer to our students. I enjoy the freedom I have at PLU to design courses that can really change the way students think about literature and the world.

In a smaller university, it is actually possible to have an interdisciplinary conversation, and to interact with faculty members who I might rarely even meet at a larger institution. Every morning I come into the humanities suite to find my new colleagues in the hallway catching up on their lives or discussing a class they just taught,

asking each other for advice. I really hadn't predicted that my relationships with my colleagues would be such an important part of my everyday life at PLU. Everyday they remind me how important it is to make time for a real conversation, not just for shop-talk; and I've quickly come to see that good teaching and research don't only happen behind closed doors.

My interests in animals permeate my personal life, and I regularly read biographies of writers and their pets, as well as books that explore the inner lives of animals. My husband and I adopted a stray cat in New York City whom we brought with us to Tacoma. "Max," the cat, is a huge part of our life. I derive great pleasure from observing him and finding out something new about his mysterious inner life everyday. I also love cooking, particularly traditional Mexican food. And, like any righteous reader of eighteenth-century novels, I embroider when I can.

"Take Up and Read": English Department

Call me by your name by André Aciman (New York: Picador, 2008)
This is Aciman's first novel, published after his highly recommended memoir, *Out of Egypt*. While I usually shun love stories, this novel beautifully narrates a shattering love affair that flourishes between two young men who meet one summer in Italy. The story is narrated in retrospect by one of the young men who has since married and become an English professor. It is a powerful reminder of how the decisions we make today construct and affect our future.
Adela Ramos, Assistant Professor of English

Life by Keith Richards with James Fox (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010)
Why? It's a study in the obsessiveness required for art; Keith literally slept with his guitar ("Satisfaction's" riff came in a dream). Plus he's a guy totally at home in a woman's world, with his five or so aunts, three daughters, a long-lasting marriage: not the yang-absorbed sleazy pirate we might have expected.
David Seal, Professor of English

Jokes and the Unconscious by Daphne Gottlieb and Diane DiMassa

(Berkeley: Cleis Press, 2006)

This work of graphic fiction explores the dark side of a daughter's relationship with her abusive doctor-father (among other things). DiMassa, a long-time comics artist better known for her serial *Hothead Paisan: Homocidal Lesbian Terrorist*, contributes the "graphic" (in this case appropriately termed) narrative artwork to a story that is frank, disturbing, and finally, one of the most moving books I have read in the past few years. This is an adult read that powerfully stretches the bounds of the graphic novel form. Find a quiet place and prepare yourself!
Alison Mandaville, Visiting Assistant Professor of English

What It Is by Lynda Barry (Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2008)
A writers' workshop in graphic narrative form, this visual text is a practical guide to overcoming inhibitions, finding inspiration in memories, and writing vivid prose. Barry's collage-and-India-ink artwork appears chaotic at first glance, but closer inspection reveals her attention to detail, enthusiasm for the writer's craft, and self-expression. A sequel called *Picture This* (2010) does the same for visual narrative. In both books, Barry generously shares what she has learned over several decades in comics art. In my Writing 101 course, "Image, Memory, Narrative," *What It Is* was a favorite among first-year PLU students who explored the critical definitions of the term *image*, researched the ways *memory* informs our knowledge and our attitudes toward images, and practiced constructing personal *narratives* in literary and visual images.
Nathalie op de Beeck, Associate Professor of English

The Slave Ship: A Human History by Marcus Rediker (New York: Penguin, 2007)
In this historical ethnography of the ships used to transport enslaved Africans to the "New" World, Rediker uncovers the powerful forces, technological, economic, and rhetorical, that created and sustained the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Through his skillfully rendered portraits and narratives, we find ourselves in the company of those who suffered, those who resisted, and

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Department of Languages & Literatures

Recent Books by Languages & Literatures Faculty

A Woman Who Defends All the Persons of her Sex: Selected Philosophical and Moral Writings by Rebecca Wilkin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010)

In 1693, an ex-nun living in Dijon, France published at her own expense a massive tome, a *Treatise on Ethics and Politics*. Most pro(to)feminist works of the seventeenth century emphasized the equality of men and women and thus women's equally pertinent claim to advantages such as education and political authority. Suchon, in contrast, crafted an argument for women's right to freedom, knowledge, and authority, based on the Catholic notion of free will. Freedom, she argues, is that which God grants uniquely to humans; humans thus have a natural right to enact their inherent freedom. When they are prevented from doing so, they suffer constraint. Suchon extends this logic to two further areas of human achievement: knowledge and authority. Knowledge is not a privilege, but a fundamental aspect of human development without which people are ignorant and thus, not free. Authority is also an inherent capacity in all people; whoever is deprived of his or her natural capacity for authority remains dependent on others, subject to the authority of others. Suchon's dynamic picture of human becoming, and her devastating portrayal of the effects of women's systematic deprivation of what we would today call the "right" to freedom, knowledge, and authority, anticipates capabilities theories of rights articulated by contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum and economist Amartya Sen. For this book, Wilkin has co-translated and co-edited selections of Suchon's *Treatise on Ethics and Politics*, as well as select chapters of Suchon's second work, *On the Celibate Life Freely Chosen* (1700).
Rebecca Wilkin, Assistant Professor of French

Literatura a ciencia cierta: Homenaje a Cedomil Goic by Tamara Williams and Leo Bernucci (Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs, 2010)

Literatura a ciencia cierta: Homenaje a Cedomil Goic is a collection of over twenty critical essays on Latin American literature by scholars from Europe, Latin America, and the U.S. The essays include the study of a variety of literary genres from a range of Latin American countries representing key periods and are eclectic in their theoretical and methodological approach. Conceived as a *Festschrift*, the anthology celebrates the mentorship and accomplishments of Chilean critic and professor, Cedomil Goic, while also underscoring the depth and breadth of his legacy in the discipline of Latin American literature.
Tamara Williams, Professor of Hispanic Studies

"Take Up and Read": Languages & Literatures Department

The Forever War by Dexter Filkins (New York: Vintage Press, 2009)
The Forever War is a curious book. Filkins presents it as "com[ing] entirely from my own experiences and my own reporting" based on 561 notebooks from nine years of reporting in the Middle East (347). But as his epigraphs from Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* suggest, Filkins's ambitions here are literary, and he achieves some powerful effects. *The Forever War* consists of essayistic, retrospective, dreamy impressions of complicated, often horrific experiences in war zones that can be subtle, bizarre, or opaque. He often juxtaposes details as though free-associating. The implicit plot line of the book is tragic, but Filkins has expunged the American intentions that created the Iraq war from his narrative and substituted a vague notion of the defectiveness of reality itself that is sometimes historical, sometimes metaphysical (the title of the book goes unexplained, but Filkins seems to believe that war is part of the nature of human society).

The epigraphs confirm this interpretation: Americans invariably figure not as perpetrators of crimes but victims, often of their own good intentions. However, given Filkins's own ordeal and the extraordinary risks he ran, it is impossible to ascribe this

position to cynicism; it must correspond to his sincere beliefs, though he never accounts for them. Often what one comes away with from Filkins's writing is a mood. As is the case for a work of literature, it is hard to say precisely what it is that one has learned from reading Filkins's book. Obscure places are not identified and the book is almost devoid of exposition, so strange names mostly create an atmosphere. Brief tales of horror are told in a matter-of-fact way, with little commentary. Nothing is explained. Thus we read that "Oil lay at the heart of everything in Iraq" (258; cf. 180), but oil is never discussed. The destruction of the Golden Mosque at the Askariya Shrine in Samarra in February 2006, which set off the civil war, goes unmentioned, for example. However, though the effect seems initially absurdist, the cumulative effect of *The Forever War* is to tell Americans what they want to hear. There are no American torturers in this book, and the Abu Ghraib scandal is downplayed in the single sentence that mentions it. Any harm done willfully is excused as a response to provocation, and almost all are well-intentioned. Americans are innocents abroad, doomed to a sort of noble failure.
Mark Jensen, Associate Professor of French

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate by Jacqueline Kelly (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2009)
Set in rural Texas in 1899, this is the story of a young girl who explores the world around her with her naturalist grandfather. Darwin shares the limelight with the antics of Calpurnia's six brothers, whom she manages quite skillfully with Tom-Sawyer-like wits, but it is the shared passion for science between granddaughter and grandfather that propels the story forward. The period is richly evoked, from Calpurnia's first sip of Coca-Cola at the county fair to the installation of the town's first telephone. Wilkin read this book with her convalescing eight-year-old daughter: this is a coming-of-age story appropriate for those who have not yet come of age.
Rebecca Wilkin, Assistant Professor of French

Collected Fictions by Jorge Luis Borges (New York: Penguin Books, 1999)
In my course "Introduction to Hispanic Literary Studies," I like to teach Jorge

Luis Borges' short story "El Sur" ("The South," 1953). Many students in this course are either taking it because it is a requirement for the Spanish minor, or are planning on continuing with upper division Spanish courses for their Spanish major. Some students have also traveled abroad to a Spanish-speaking country for either a January-term or a semester. In most cases, these students—who have continued taking Spanish courses because they love the language and the culture of the Spanish-speaking world—may not yet see that it may not be history, or sociology, or even daily life in the host country which may afford them the deepest insights into the cultures of the Spanish-speaking worlds—but, instead, perhaps surprisingly, literature.

Borges' "El Sur" tells the story of Juan Dahlmann, a city-dweller, who, while dying in a hospital after a freak accident, re-imagines his death in the open plains of the Argentinian Pampas, because, "dying in a knife fight under the open sky, grappling with his adversary would have been a liberation, a joy and a fiesta." On the one hand, to understand what is at stake in literature, in this story—in Dahlmann's yearning for a dignified death outside the city of Buenos Aires—one requires the contextual information which only knowledge of Argentinian history and culture can provide: that when Borges writes the story, Argentines were in the process of inventing partially fictive "national identity" out of their triple heritage: the conquered, dwindling indigenous communities; the Criollo sons and daughters of Spaniards; and the ex-Europeans in cities like Buenos Aires. In the story, the narrator tells us that it is—paradoxically—Dahlmann's German side which has chosen to identify with the opposite, "romantic," Criollo line. In the story, it is then a dreamed or imagined encounter with an indigenous Gaucho which allows Dahlmann to retain a dignity in death which the modern hospital seems to take from him.

Is Dahlmann's imagined identity as Criollo, or his encounter in the Pampas with the indigenous cowboy simple delusion—or is it an imaginative accomplishment that Dahlmann can accomplish because of the intermingling of his different heritages? Stimulated by the story's mysteries and tiny inconsistencies, the

readers—my students and I—are drawn to consider the complexities of myth, imagination, and national identity, in a fashion no *argument* could.

Carmiña Palerm, Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies & Director of International Honors Program

Phenomenology of Spirit by G.W.F. Hegel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) It is a misfortune of liberal arts education that its most profound consequences are not quantifiable. This is only a misfortune, because—from the advent of modern science, to the deliberations of today's accreditation committee or school reform movement—*justification* has increasingly been equated with *quantification*. If non-quantifiable educational outcomes are considered, then they usually have to do with relevance to the student's personal or professional lives. For this reason, when college educators decide what their students most need to learn, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is not usually the first book on the list. And yet I can think of few texts which have as many crucial things to teach students as this one.

Leaving aside both the book's profound *influence*—something which might excite the scholar, but in which most students, eager to be moved, understandably have little interest—as well as Hegel's actual philosophical *doctrine*—which is in itself certainly of great interest—I want to focus on just one aspect of this book: a feature of Hegel's philosophical method which has profound implications for liberal education in general. In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel professes to depict the journey of "soul" or "intellect" ("Geist") towards true knowledge. The "journey" is composed of various episodes, which explore the consequences of different philosophical, religious-ethical, and aesthetic stances towards the world. Hegel draws many of the various stances, and associated episodes from the history of Western culture (non-Western cultures don't figure in Hegel's story): from the Bible, from history, from literature. Each episode reveals the shortcomings of the associated stance towards the world. The journey has a direction: the "soul" or "intellect" ("Geist") moves from one stance to another which logically follows from it, until "Geist" reaches a final, uncontradictory stance towards itself and the world: the end of the journey, or absolute knowledge.

As a reader and interpreter of Hegel, I find neither his endpoint, nor many of the transitions he constructs between episodes convincing (and if the transitions are not logically compelling, then one has no reason to accept the legitimacy of the ending). But I nevertheless find that this book has something crucial to teach, simply in its method. For the reader is not *told* what the endpoint—knowledge—will be. Rather, she experiences vicariously the various episodes in the journey of "spirit" or "Geist"—sees herself how a particular stance, once adopted and practiced, entwines itself in contradictions. Hegel writes in the "Introduction" that since "natural consciousness...directly takes itself to be real knowledge, this path (what we have called the "journey", a.s.) has a negative significance for it... counts for it rather as the loss of its own self." Hegel's point here is that "natural consciousness," with most of its ideas and attitudes derived from the conventional views of a particular society, or community, or culture (or even, in the modern, pluralistic world, sub-culture) will experience this vicarious journey as a painful one—as a "way of despair"—since at least some of its most cherished values and beliefs will turn out to be self-contradictory, and therefore illusory (if, of course, we find Hegel's exploration of the internal contradictions of each stance convincing). For what happens on Hegel's journey of *Geist* is not "shilly-shallying about this or that presumed truth," but a profound experience of despair, when the beliefs—or at least some of the beliefs—upon which one has anchored one's identity turn out to be self-contradictory.

Regardless of what the reader thinks of Hegel's version of this journey, what he has provided here is a very strong description of what *can* happen in liberal education, whether in the context of Lutheran, secular, or other institutions of higher education. For, ultimately, we ask students to engage in conversations with the books we assign them not only in order to turn them into professional scholars (for few will go on to do this), nor in order to fill the air of the seminar room with mere *discussion*, but in order that they continue a process of adopting ideas and values out of reasoned insight, rather than habit or inheritance. And as Hegel's "Introduction" to the *Phenomenology* reminds us, the stages of such a process are more often "paths of despair" than triumphal marches.

Arthur Strum, Visiting Assistant Professor of German

Department of Philosophy

Professors at Work and Play

Hannah Love, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Current and past Philosophy students might wonder, “What *do* professors do when outside of their natural classroom or office environments?” As a partial answer to that question, here are some observations of PLU’s Philosophy Department working and playing last summer....



Associate Professor Keith Cooper taught both terms of summer school, and spent his

spare time continuing to worry over what proponents of Intelligent Design think it is to provide evidence for a scientific theory. He also visited with his two daughters and his and his wife’s families on the East coast; his dog eventually forgave him for leaving.



Associate Professor and Department Chair Greg Johnson traveled extensively,

first to The Wye Seminar for Academic Leadership (sponsored by the Aspen group) and then to China with the PLU Gateway Program.

Assistant Professor Pauline Kaurin spent extensive energy on multiple projects, including the following: completed “Provocateur for the Common Good: Reflections on the Vocation of a Philosopher” for a new book titled *Luther and Philosophy* (Fortress, 2011); served on the PLU 2020 Summer Writing Group; worked on her Regency Advancement Award projects (consisting of library acquisitions in Race Studies/Theory and a paper “Feeling Your Pain (or Not): Hume, Sympathy and White Privilege”); and (with Visiting Assistant Professor Brenda Ihssen from Religion) worked on a book proposal tentatively titled *Permanently Temporary: Narrative Analysis of Contingent Faculty*



Professional Lives. She also grew her worst garden ever.

Assistant Professor Hannah Love presented a poster at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME) at the University of Colorado-Boulder: “Shattering the Blurred Lens” dealt with the use of patient autonomy as a justificatory concept for non-medical sex selection (an application of the technology preimplantation genetic diagnosis, or PGD). She also traveled (and took photographs) in France and England.



Professor Erin McKenna presented at the Food in Bloom Conference in Indiana in June, and at the Summer Institute in American Philosophy in Oregon in July. She also focused on summer research with two PLU students (Jonathon Stout and Danielle Palmer), studying how farmers view their relationship with nature. McKenna also attempted to grow some vegetables and competed in her first Second Level Dressage test with her horse Hank.

Instructor Michael Schleeter, the Department’s newest addition, spent his summer writing and moving out to Tacoma from Chicago.

New Faculty Profile: Mike Schleeter

Hannah Love, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Mike Schleeter, the Philosophy department’s newest faculty, is a native

Minnesotan who performed the feat of a triple major at University of Minnesota, Twin Cities: Biology, Philosophy, and Comparative Literature. After moving east to pursue his graduate education in philosophy at Penn State University, he was awarded a DAAD research grant to study with Professors Axel Honneth and Hermann Deuser at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität in Frankfurt am Main. During the course of his studies at Penn State and the Goethe Universität, Mike found himself drawn to political philosophy and the philosophy of German Idealism; in particular Hegel’s notion that we are intersubjective beings (in the sense that our theoretical and practical categories are socially constituted and that those categories change and progress dialectically through time). In his dissertation (“Sentiment without System: An Hegelian Reconsideration of the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism”), Schleeter united his interests in political philosophy and German Idealism through a reconsideration of the communitarian critique of liberalism advanced by contemporary political theorists Michael Sandel and Charles Taylor, a critique loosely rooted in and, his dissertation argued, subject to improvement by a return to Hegel’s thought.

Before Schleeter’s arrival at PLU, he was an instructor at DePaul University in Chicago, where he taught Philosophy of Race as well as Business Ethics. Through teaching at DePaul, Schleeter became increasingly aware of certain limitations in traditional business ethics pedagogy. In particular, he began to doubt that business ethics is best taught as “applied ethics” (which involves bringing ethical standards external to the sphere of business to bear on the practice of business) and to suspect that it might be better taught with reference to standards internal to that sphere. Thus he began to explore the writings of political economists from Adam Smith to John Maynard Keynes to Milton Friedman and economic historians from Karl Polanyi to Robert Heilbroner to Niall Ferguson in order to discover what these ethical standards might be and to design a business ethics curriculum that would incorporate them. Schleeter has found this alternative pedagogy to be very effective in the classroom and is excited by the prospect of its general adoption in business

ethics courses at PLU. His pedagogical endeavor has led to a host of new research interests: the various failures of the practice of business to measure up to ethical standards internal to the sphere of business, and the relation between such failures and contemporary issues of economic inequality.

Schleeter views teaching as his true vocation, and has long wanted to teach at a smaller liberal arts institution; in his short time here, he has been extremely impressed with both the quality and the enthusiasm of his students as well as the welcoming character of the PLU community in general. During his out-of-classroom moments, Schleeter is many things: a cinephile with a special penchant for horror films, political dramas, and documentaries; a music lover who likes to sing, play guitar, and listen in a variety of genres, especially Americana and indie rock; an avid reader of American history and politics, volumes of English language poetry, and graphic novels; a microbrew enthusiast who is always on the lookout for new and well-hopped potables; finally, a traveler currently in the process of planning trips to both Ireland and Norway.

“Take Up and Read”: Philosophy

Native Tongue by Carl Hiassen (New York: Fawcett, 1992)

Skinny Dip by Carl Hiassen (New York: Knopf, 2004)

Currently, I am reading various Carl Hiassen novels for their humorous yet meaningful dealings with the environment and accompanying issues. Since I regularly teach the class “Philosophy, Animals, and the Environment,” these books provide a nice alternative to the very serious subject matter of that course. While often sexist in terms of the development of women characters, these novels nonetheless show the way human women, other animals, and the environment are often used and abused in our society today. This ties very nicely to my “Women and Philosophy” course as well.

Erin McKenna, Professor of Philosophy

On the Genealogy of Morals by Friedrich Nietzsche (New York: Vintage, 1989)

This text is one of the most iconoclastic in

the history of western moral philosophy. It presents a critique of modern moral categories such as “good,” “evil,” “guilt,” and “conscience” in both their religious and their secular variants. And it does so in the form of a genealogy of these categories, which locates their origins in historically oppressed classes and raises certain doubts about their capacity to promote human life and flourishing. I teach this text in my PHIL 125 course, “Ethics and the Good Life,” because it serves not only to challenge but also to clarify and sometimes even to strengthen many of my students’ deepest moral commitments.

Michael Schleeter, Instructor of Philosophy

Human Identity and Bioethics by David DeGrazia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

I love this book both in its own right and as a well-received text for an upper division course I have taught twice (January ‘09 and ‘11). DeGrazia admirably summarizes classic and contemporary work on the nature of our individual human identity (is it that of an animal organism, a bundle of related psychological states, an “embodied mind,” some other sort of “person” identity above and beyond animal organism, or what?). He clearly draws out implications from the underlying philosophical debate for some “big” problems in bioethics: status of the fetus (and morality of abortion and embryo research), definition of death, and the authority of advance directives by competent persons for later states such as severe dementia that raise the “someone else?” problem. DeGrazia’s conclusions are clearly argued and at times surprising. Of all the high level books I have used in recent decades, students have liked this one the best.

Paul Menzel, Professor of Philosophy

Finding Darwin’s God by Ken Miller (New York: Harper Perennial, 2000)

I teach this book in my J-Term Philosophy 253 course, “Creation & Evolution.” This course might be seen as doing “applied philosophy of science,” and Miller (who is a Brown University professor and co-author of several best-selling biology textbooks) is an ardent defender of evolutionary theory and critic of both traditional creationism and Intelligent Design. In reading this book, my students encounter a clear explication of what evolution does (and does not) say, honest

but fair criticisms of views many of them think they should be sympathetic toward given their faith commitments, and a thoughtful account of the way in which Miller sees his own Catholic faith enhanced, not challenged, by the best of human understanding.

Keith Cooper, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Philosophy and Real Politics by Raymond Geuss (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008)

This book challenges some of the most deeply held beliefs about the nature of political philosophy. In doing so, it not only questions those most influential on political philosophy (Kant and John Rawls, for example), but also pushes us to take more seriously the lived existence that is the very condition for entering into the domain of politics.

Greg Johnson, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Department Chair

The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle by J. Glenn Gray (Lincoln: Bison Books, 1998)

Wired for War by P.W. Singer (New York: Penguin Books, 2009)

While not written by a philosopher, *Wired for War* does bring up a host of pressing ethical issues around the increasing use of technology in war. Another favorite (for me as well as my students) is *The Warriors*, which is written by a philosopher reflecting on his WWII combat experience and features lots of Nietzsche.

Pauline Kaurin, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Born in the USA by Marsden Wagner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010)

As part of my work on a project around how entrenched fertility norms affect judgment of women’s reproductive choices, I’ve discovered this fascinating book. Wagner, a former Director of Women’s and Children’s Health at the World Health Organization, advances an important criticism of contemporary American obstetrical practices and their roots in a medical history of paternalism and sexism, questioning the rise in medical procedures such as elective caesarean sections as evidence not of patient but physician choice.

Hannah Love, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Department of Religion

New Faculty Profiles

Marit Trelstad, Associate Professor of Religion

Erik Hammerstrom



Erik J. Hammerstrom started in the Department of Religion this past fall as Assistant Professor of Chinese and Comparative Religions. Raised just outside of

Portland, Erik is excited to return to this most beautiful corner of the nation. Since graduating from Aloha High School, Erik has lived on both the East and West coasts, in the Midwest, and in Hawai'i. He also spent over four years living and studying Asian religions in East Asia (one year as a Fulbright Fellow in Taiwan), and he is looking forward to sharing his experiences with his students.

Last spring Erik received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Indiana University, and now teaches courses about religion in China and East Asia, with a focus on Buddhism. He is particularly excited to teach a new course he is designing for Fall '11 called "The Myth of the Spiritual East." In this course students will critically approach the history of the idea that Asian culture is more spiritual than Western culture. In his research, Erik studies the intellectual and institutional history of Chinese Buddhism during the modern period, concentrating on Buddhist responses to discourses of modernity, such as the discourses surrounding both modern science and comparative religion (what F. Max Müller labeled the "Science of Religion"). When not working, Erik plunks away on a number of semi-esoteric stringed instruments and supports the Portland Timbers.

Agnes Choi

Choi is an expert on the New Testament, and teaches courses in biblical studies, with a focus on Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. A native of



Toronto, Canada, Choi is a *bona fide* city-girl. She received a Bachelor of Science from the University

of Toronto, a Master of Divinity from Tyndale Seminary (in Toronto), and a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of St. Michael's College (unsurprisingly, also in Toronto). In order to better understand the setting of Jesus' ministry and the background of the Gospels, her dissertation, entitled "Urban-Rural Interaction and the Economy of Lower Galilee," focused on the relationship between villages and cities in first-century C.E. Galilee. Her research currently focuses on the ancient economy and the impact of the economy on the urban-rural relationship.

When she is not in her native environment of concrete and tall buildings, she enjoys travelling in Israel: walking the streets of Jerusalem, sitting on the shores of the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee), exploring the archaeological excavations (including Khirbet Qana, where she excavated during the 2008 season), and enjoying the falafel.

"Take Up and Read": Religion Department

"Take up and Read!" a child's voice in a garden chanted to St. Augustine. Hearing this, he picked up the Bible next to him and converted to Christianity. He writes, "It was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart." Written in 397 A.D., Augustine's *Confessions* is heralded as the first autobiography of Western literature. Other famous lines also come from this work, including the humorous "Make me chaste, but not yet." Through many Humanities Division discussion and retreats, we have discussed how study and work with texts transforms us and, ideally, leads us to be both more human and humane. With that in mind, the Religion Department is pleased to share a group of books we find transformative and inspiring. Read on!

Books We Teach:

The Story of Christianity by Justo L. González (New York: HarperOne, 2010)
As a graduate student I began my study of Christian history with González' fine text, and over the years I have failed to find a comprehensive history of Christian as well-written and thoughtful as his; I consistently use it in my "Christian Tradition" course. González, conversant in the methodologies of history and theology, seamlessly weaves historical events along with doctrinal themes from the years following the death of Jesus to the most modern incarnations of global Christianities. Ever sensitive to normative presentations of Christian history, González' inclusive history reminds students that the story of Christianity is not the personal property of one select group, nor does it begin in Rome and end in the Colonies. *Brenda Ihssen, Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious History & Historical Theology*

Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko (New York: Penguin Classic Books, 1977)
As a novel, this is an engaging read, but beyond that it encompasses many of the key themes and ideas I try to introduce in my Native American Religious Traditions class: the challenges that colonialism brings to traditional communities and cultures, and the ways in which ritual and oral traditions can offer healing, renewal and transformation. *Suzanne Crawford-O'Brien, Associate Professor of Religion & Culture*

Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy by Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, and David L. Weaver-Zercher (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007)
On October 2, 2006, an armed man walked into an Amish schoolhouse near Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, and held 15 young girls hostage. Before shooting himself, he fatally wounded five of the girls and injured 5 others. In response to this tragedy, the Amish community wept and mourned and struggled to rebuild their community, but they also made a point of reaching out to the killer's widow and children, arranging financial and emotional support and making it clear that they had forgiven them and the killer. *Amish Grace* tells the story of this response to tragedy, and gives readers a sense of the kind of culture and community from which it emerged. The authors, researchers who are not themselves Amish, reflect on

the nature of forgiveness for this community and raise questions about what mainstream society can learn from this ideal and the way it is enacted. I have been using *Amish Grace* in my Christian ethics course because it helps to spark awareness of how diverse Christianities in the U.S. are, discussions about how Christians should respond to violence in the world, and thought about what forgiveness means and how it can be put into practice in troubled times. My students and I have found it to be a quick read that is worth talking and thinking about for a long time.

Kevin O'Brien, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics

The Birth of Satan: Tracing the Devil's Biblical Roots by T.J. Wray & Gregory Mobley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Pocket Guide to the Afterlife: Heaven, Hell, and Other Ultimate Destinations by Jason Boyett (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009) In a Christian theology course titled "Death and the Afterlife," we covered two books I would recommend for general audiences. *The Birth of Satan* provides an excellent summary of ancient cultures that inspired the late Jewish understandings of Satan and, thereby, also influenced the Christian beliefs surrounding the Devil. The book also explains the development of Satan's character across the Bible as well as the post-biblical history of Christianity that developed popular ideas of the devil using the imaginative narratives of Dante, Milton, and William Blake. In *Pocket Guide to the Afterlife*, Boyett's very funny text is simple and quite silly while being fairly accurate concerning many world religions' views of the afterlife. It is a quick and engaging read that gives a launching pad for further reading.

Marit Trelstad, Associate Professor of Religion

Books We Recommend:

The Birth of Orientalism by Urs App (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010)

In this work, App argues that the real roots of Orientalism lay in the Western "discovery" of South and East Asian religions during the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. This book expands the study of the origins of Orientalism into new realms, and I hope it will add to my understanding of the roots of religious

studies, and certain persistent Western ideas and misunderstandings about Asian religions.

Erik Hammerstrom, Assistant Professor of Chinese & Comparative Religion

Saving Fish from Drowning by Amy Tan (New York: Random House, 2005)

Quite different from her other work, this particular piece of fiction tells of an ill-fated art expedition to Burma (Myanmar). When the leader of the tour—Bibi—dies violently and mysteriously before the trip, the group decides to go forward with the trip anyway; what they do not know is that she accompanies them in spirit form, and is able to narrate for the reader their experiences. Different relationships among the various characters are explored while they discover the food and culture of unfamiliar territory—for good and ill. While this book did not receive the critical praise that some of her other books received—*The Joy Luck Club*, *The Kitchen God's Wife*, for example—nevertheless it is a clever and thought-provoking work, and I applaud her desire to play with new methods of storytelling.

Brenda Ihssen, Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious History & Historical Theology

Spirits of Our Whaling Ancestors: Revitalizing Makah and Nuu'chah'nult Traditions by Charlotte Cote (University of Washington Press, 2010). I'm excited about this book because it locates Native American cultures and religious practice within the context of the lived experience of contemporary communities who are seeking to reclaim their cultures and revitalize their communities. *Suzanne Crawford-O'Brien, Associate Professor of Religion & Culture*

The "Other" In Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011)

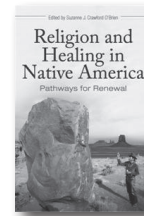
As its subtitle reveals, this book is a collection of essays on the topic of "otherness" in honor of the prominent Second Temple scholar John J. Collins. These essays are written by some of the senior scholars in the field of the Hebrew Bible as well as former advisees of Dr. Collins. I happen to be among the latter and I have contributed to this volume an essay with the title: "The Other in Haggai and Zechariah 1-6."

The category of *Other* is fairly modern and it is used to refer to the outsider, to the people opposing a normative cultural category. For example, a slave is *Other* to a master, a person of color is *Other* to a white person, a woman is *Other* to a man. The setting up of these oppositional relationships has two practical effects. First, it disempowers the people marked as *Other* and then, it functions as a foil against which the dominant subject seeks to understand himself better. In both instances, the people in this category are denied actual personhood. Even though the concept of *Otherness* is modern, the construction of binary opposites has been a standard practice of human culture. This book discusses this practice beginning with the texts in the Hebrew Bible and continuing with the literature that leads to the New Testament. It is important to understand this category clearly if we want to refrain from repeating past mistakes. To paraphrase J. Berger, if we see the past clearly enough we shall ask the right questions of the present.

A recent movie that highlights the very same topic is *Agona* by Alejandro Amenábar (2010). The film examines the life of Hypatia, a fourth century C.E. philosopher, in the turbulent world of Alexandria, Egypt. As A. O. Scott, of the New York Times wrote, this film "shows that no group is entirely innocent of violence and intolerance. Whoever is in power tries to preserve it by fair means or foul, and whoever wants power uses brutality to acquire it." I would argue that we stand to learn several useful lessons from observing the parallels between the past world of Alexandria and our present. Together or separately both the book and the movie provide excellent opportunities for reflection and entertainment.

Antonios Finitis, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible

Recent Books by Religion Faculty



Religion and Healing in Native America: Pathways for Renewal by Suzanne Crawford-O'Brien (Santa Barbara: Praeger Publishing, 2008)

This book explores religion and healing in Native America, emphasizing the lived experience of indigenous religious

practices and their role in health and healing. The book brings together first-hand accounts, personal experience, and narrative observations of Native American religion and healing to present a portrait of the intersection of tradition, cultural revival, spirituality, ceremony, and healing. These portraits range from discussions of pre-colonial healing traditions to examples where traditional approaches exist along with other cultural traditions—both Native and non-native. At the heart of all the essays is a concern for the ways in which diverse Native communities have understood what it means to be healthy, and the role of spirituality in achieving wellness.

Suzanne Crawford O'Brien, Associate Professor of Religion & Culture



An Ethics of Biodiversity: Christianity, Ecology, and the Variety of Life by Kevin O'Brien (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2010) Life on earth is wildly diverse, but the future of

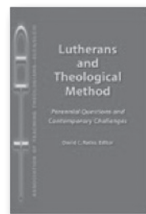
that diversity is now in question. Through environmentally destructive farming practices, ever-expanding energy use, and the development and homogenization of land, human beings are responsible for unprecedented reductions in the variety of life forms around us. Estimates suggest that species extinctions caused by humans occur at up to 1,000 times the natural rate, and that one of every twenty species on the planet could be eradicated by 2060. This book argues that these facts should inspire careful reflection and action in Christian churches, which must learn from earth's vast diversity in order to help conserve the natural and social diversity of our planet. Bringing scientific data into conversation with theological tradition, the book shows that biodiversity is a point of intersection between faith and ethics, social justice and environmentalism, science and politics, global problems and local solutions. *An Ethics of Biodiversity* offers a set of tools for students, church groups, scholars, and concerned citizens who want to think critically about how human beings can live with and as part of the variety of life in God's creation.

Kevin O'Brien, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics

"There Goes the Bride: A Snapshot of the Ideal Christian Wife," In *Women and Christianity, Women and Religion in the World Series*, edited by Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan and Karen Jo Torjesen (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010)

What written and visual texts have been used to teach girls and women how to be ideal Christian wives in the past and present? This chapter traces the historical development of six models of the ideal Christian wife archetype in Western culture by examining religious, economic and political factors used to construct this archetype. This historical overview demonstrates how the texts for defining "wife" shift from biblical scripture to the miracle and mystery plays of the early medieval church, to the street puppet theater and woodcut illustrations of the Renaissance and Reformation period, and then how capitalism and the new middle class influenced religious beliefs about the role of the Christian wife. Following this historical overview, the chapter analyzes how the Christian archetype of two wives—Eve and Mary—continues to influence the portrayal of wives as good or bad in contemporary films in the United States.

Kathlyn Breazeale, Associate Professor of Contemporary & Feminist/Womanist Theologies and Chair of the Religion Department



Theological Method: Perennial Questions and Contemporary Challenges (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2010)



Transformative Lutheran Theologies and Lutherans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2010)

In the past year, Marit Trelstad has published chapters in each book.

In both publications,

Trelstad develops her understanding of a Covenantal Theology in which the meaning of the cross and the Christian impetus for social action is grounded in the primary love of God. This develops Luther's understanding of justification by grace in light of insights and critiques from feminist and process theologies.

Marit Trelstad, Associate Professor of Religion

Department of English continued

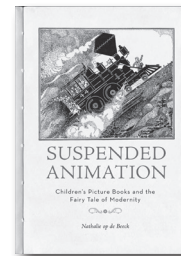
those who profited from the trade that helped build global capitalism. *Callista Brown, Associate Professor of English & Director of the First-Year Experience Program*

Pine Island Paradox: Making Connections in a Disconnected World by Kathleen Dean Moore (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2004)

At once intimately lyrical and weighted with accessible philosophical heft, Moore tells stories about the islands of the Pacific Northwest to explore identity, family, and the shaping power of place. A philosopher at Oregon State University, her central trope— islands that appear to be isolated but which are always connected underwater—frames her graceful questioning of a western philosophical tradition that has shaped us into lonely, isolated creatures, struggling to connect with each other and the natural world.

Charles Bergman, Professor of English

Recent Books by English Department Faculty



Suspended Animation: Children's Picture Books and the Fairy Tale of Modernity by Nathalie op de Beeck (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

In this book, op de Beeck looks at American picture books published between 1919 and 1942. Her chapters explore tensions between old traditions and modern technology; look at representations of racial and ethnic differences for young audiences; and show how stories of sentient machines reveal 1930s concerns about human labor, industry, and the environment.

Nathalie op de Beeck, Associate Professor of English



Buta: The Baku Workshop edited by Alison Mandaville and Shahla Naghiyeva (Baku: OSI Institute, 2010) *Buta* offers a rare glimpse into the

concerns and lives of contemporary Azerbaijani women. Presented in side-by-side Azeri and English translation, these stories and poems were collected from twenty Azerbaijani women writers attending a two-week creative writing workshop given by Mandaville last June in the capital city of Baku.

While Azerbaijan has a long history of fine literature (in which women writers have been a significant force), the economic, political and social problems facing the country since the fall of the Soviet Union have made being a writer, much less a woman writer in a traditional

society, very challenging indeed. With support from Fulbright and the Open Society Institute, this workshop offered these women an unusual opportunity to gather, develop and share their creative writing. The full text is available online—the medium fast becoming the most economical and accessible way for many of these writers to find a wider voice in the world (http://translit.az/ELEKTRON%20KITABXANA/AZERIEDEBIYXARICIDIL/ENG_DILINDE/kitab.pdf).

Alison Mandaville, Visiting Assistant Professor of English

Support Humanities Students and Engage the World

With 40 percent of our student body participating in at least one study-away program (compared to the national average of 3 percent), the numbers speak for themselves. Add in the students who study away near campus, and more than half the PLU community studies somewhere beyond campus boundaries.

For this reason, PLU has made a conscious decision to talk about “study away” rather than “study abroad”; when South Puget Sound is so richly diverse, students need not travel more than a few blocks to have a cross-cultural experience. That fact was reinforced when PLU received the 2009 Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus

Internationalization, a prestigious award that honors outstanding efforts on and off campus to engage the world and the international community. So prestigious, in fact, PLU was the first and only private college in the West to receive the honor.

As you have read in these pages, the lives of Humanities students (and faculty) are enriched by ongoing opportunities to engage not only the world but their own beliefs and experiences through texts. All gifts to Engage the World or PLU are welcome. To learn more, go to www.plu.edu/development for a list of opportunities and projects. Or, call the Office of Development at (800) 826-0035.



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