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- 1 *Lessons of Documentary: Reality, Representation, and Cinematic Expressivity*, by Jonathan Walley
- 5 *Spoiler Alerts..Teaching "Intro to Aesthetics" with Some Recent Documentaries*, by Jeanette Bicknell
- 6 Review of Mary Litch, *Philosophy through Film*, by Luke Cuddy
- 8 *Denis Dutton Remembered*, by Deborah Knight, Ellen Dissanayake
- 11 News from the National Office
- 11 Aesthetics News
- 12 Conference Reports
- 13 Calls for Papers
- 15 Upcoming Events
- 19 Active Aestheticians

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Lessons of Documentary: Reality, Representation, and Cine- matic Expressivity

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Oprah Winfrey, introducing the "Best Documentary" segment of the 2010 Academy Awards:

After 83 years of Oscars, here's one thing we know for sure: if we're feeling lousy, if the news is bad and people are hurting, what do we do? We go to the movies, and we escape. But I'm here to present the award to the best movie that did not let us escape: the outstanding documentary of the year.

Brief though they were, Winfrey's comments reflect a historical conception of documentary as an "oppositional" cinematic practice, a rejection of the popular fiction film's escapism. This rhetoric of documentary as a minority art form struggling ("against great odds," Winfrey also said) to counteract the ideology of mainstream cinema has recurred across its history. It even turns up in contexts we might expect to be inhospitable to such ideals, like the Academy Awards. The oppositional view carries over into the classroom, where it informs film history and filmmaking courses alike, reinforcing received notions of documentary that students already have.

The standard history of documentary provides the basis for this oppositional view. In its earliest years, the cinema's appeal was precisely that it documented the world, and with unprecedented verisimilitude and detail. Early films attracted and astonished viewers simply on this basis. These films (sometimes called "actualities"), which recorded every facet of life in every part of the world, are often taken as primitive progenitors of documentary. But a distinct form called "documentary" could only have appeared when documenting reality was no longer the *de facto* use of the film medium and thus became a meaningful choice, which could only happen after the ascendancy of fictional narrative cinema to the position of dominance (around 1906-07). The term "documentary" was not even used until the mid-1920s. It might therefore seem that documentary could only be legible against the backdrop of the fictional narrative cinema, as an "alternative" defined less by its own inherent qualities than by its presumed differences from fictional cinema (differences that become value-laden: truth vs. illusion, social engagement vs. escapism, honesty vs. manipulation, etc.).

Such differences do make documentary attractive. Like other forms of "alternative" cinema (e.g., experimental film), the documentary is more heterogeneous than fiction film, both formally and in the range of topics it addresses. Indeed, because documentary films have taken so many forms, it is difficult even to define "documentary," to pin down what makes it a distinct, recognizable form. Critics and filmmakers have struggled with this for decades; the attempt to "define documentary" is at the heart of most major scholarly studies of the form, and controversies have arisen over whether certain films "really are"

documentaries. This frequently happens when documentaries are up for awards, as in the case of Michael Moore's *Roger and Me* (1989), and, more recently, *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010), by and about British street artist Banksy. Hence, the very idea of talking about "the" documentary is tricky. We can pick out consistent traits in mainstream narrative films, even in "indie" and "art" cinemas, but finding similar unifying traits within documentary, amidst its countless variations, is much more difficult.

This difficulty frequently stems from another unique facet of documentary: the questions it raises about the relationship between reality and representation, and the nature, even the possibility, of truth and objectivity in such representation. Certain fictional narrative films may possess complex philosophical themes, but documentary by its very nature, as a form that claims to represent reality "truthfully," raises philosophical questions automatically: given that "truth" is such a fuzzy concept, that our understanding of reality is so subjective, that knowledge is fleeting and contingent, and that cinema is inherently illusionistic, can there really be a form of film that captures reality, represents truth, and creates knowledge?

But this is precisely what attracts me to documentary, as both film scholar and teacher. To study documentary is to grapple with intriguing questions and important ideas. And teaching documentary involves challenging students to re-think some of their fundamental presuppositions about the nature of film, reality, knowledge, and truth. I enjoy teaching documentary because it connects my narrow little subject to some of the loftier ideas at the center of a liberal arts education.

But while it is tempting to think of documentary in oppositional terms—which favor it over the escapist, manipulative, and unsophisticated fiction film—this view creates a liability for documentary. To explain this requires another brief historical digression. Cinema faced an obstacle to its acceptance as an art form precisely because it began its life as a documenting medium: it produced perfect images of reality automatically, by way of mechanical means that required no artistry on the part of its operator. Validating cinema as an art form called for generations of filmmakers and critics to demonstrate that film did not merely replicate reality, but could *transform* it via aesthetic devices unique to the medium (e.g., framing, lighting, photographic effects, and editing). And the staggering range of expressive possibilities that filmmakers cultivated in the early decades of cinema was largely the product of their efforts to make film into a storytelling medium. This required them to convey increasingly complex narrative information, express (and provoke) emotions, and, perhaps most importantly, dramatize abstract ideas.

To oppose documentary to the fiction film, then, threatens to deprive the former of all the aesthetic options and expressive resources pioneered by the latter. Such an opposition is both aesthetically limiting and historically inaccurate. Documentary may have crystallized as rejection of popular cinema's fictions, but not of its expressive language. From the beginning, documentarians sought to strike a balance between the documentation of reality and its creative transformation. In the words of one of its first practitioners and theorists, John Grierson, documentary was "*the creative treatment of actuality.*" The only alternative was for documentarians to revert to the primitive cinema of pure documentation, reducing film to passive recording instrument and filmmaker to chronicler.

I have invoked something called "cinematic expressivity," by which I mean the use of aesthetic techniques and devices more or less specific to cinematic media to express or amplify meaning, heighten viewers' emotional responses, and/or create sensory pleasure. Such

techniques and devices, whether employed in fiction or non-fiction filmmaking, are not merely ornamental; they do not simply make a film more aesthetically pleasing, but are constitutive of our total experience of a film—sensuous, emotional, and intellectual. On this view, cinematic media are not neutral vessels for "film content." The expressive means brought to bear on the representation of reality transform that reality, as in Grierson's famous formulation. The great works of the documentary tradition, then, are also outstanding examples of cinematic art in general, because they systematically employ the same range of expressive devices as the canonical films of the narrative tradition.

But recently I have seen a troubling shift in documentary. The most visible examples of the form—those that win major awards, generate "buzz," enjoy theatrical releases—strike me as abandoning the expressive ethic of the tradition and embodying simplistic conceptions of the form. Put another way, these documentaries reduce a complex form to a narrow and uninteresting *format*, one that represents a drastically impoverished range of aesthetic options. Call this the "talking heads plus B-roll" format (the term is not my own, but a common designation used, derogatorily, by filmmakers and critics). "Talking heads" refers to interview footage (e.g., of experts on the subject at hand); "B-roll" refers to footage that "illustrates" the talking heads' statements. For instance, in *Trekkies* (1997), a film about particularly rabid fans of the Star Trek television and movie franchise, Leonard Nimoy recounts his first *Star Trek* conference in close-up—a "talking head": cut to archival footage of an early conference, with the young-looking stars of the show (including Nimoy) appearing overwhelmed by the huge turnout and enthusiasm of the attendees.

The "talking heads plus B-roll" format (hereafter "the format") predominates in most contemporary documentaries. It is filled out by a few other familiar devices, including voiceover narration, on-screen text (used to orient the viewer to the time and location of the action or the identity of the talking head), and scenes in which the camera follows either the filmmaker or one of his/her subjects—merging the presence and authority of a talking head with the ambience and illustration of B-roll footage. In *Spellbound* (2002), a film about young spelling bee champions, each subject is followed through some aspect of their "training," and eventually accompanied by the film crew to a spelling bee. This footage is punctuated with more formal "talking head" interviews, so that a full picture of the entire topic emerges from a series of specific instances peppered with commentary.

There are variations on these devices, but it is safe to say that "the format" is the dominant style of the contemporary popular documentary. And it is even safer to say that it is ubiquitous in student-made documentaries. Having taught film and video production classes over many years, I have seen "the format" represented to students as practically synonymous with documentary, as if the entire form was reducible to one format.

Art instructors teach their students the conventions and traditions of their art forms. This knowledge is at the core of cinema studies courses; the ability to recognize the artistry at work in a film is the basis upon which our students can cultivate critical viewing and thinking skills. But familiarity with these conventions and traditions also guides the efforts of developing artists, providing them with basic structures within which to work. They may also be taken as starting points for innovation: knowing an art form's rules and conventions enables students who want to innovate to do so meaningfully. In film production, for instance, we expect our students to learn the techniques of continuity editing or three-point lighting, or the conventions of major film genres, as these constitute a fundamental "grammar" of

cinema in which all filmmakers should be fluent, even if they wish to violate convention and develop novel techniques.

The talking heads plus B-roll format is different. The conventions of cinematography, editing, lighting, genre, et. al., can be used well or badly—employed with great subtlety and sophistication or in utterly conventional ways. Again, they are part of that rich vein of expressive options students can mine. “The format,” on the other hand, severely restricts that range of options, which is lamentable given how aesthetically varied and inventive documentary film has been. But the real significance of “the format” is the shift it represents in the position of language (written or spoken) among cinema’s myriad expressive means. In each of its recurring devices—interview footage, voiceover narration, and on-screen text—language is the primary vehicle for the

expression of ideas. Even the B-roll footage is merely a redundant illustration of language, simply confirming spoken or written assertions. In short, “the format” relies on language so heavily as to make the expressive “language” of cinema practically unnecessary. Cinematic media function as mere audio-visual recording devices, which undoes decades of work by filmmakers and critics to establish cinema as a unique art form rather than a mechanical device whose only artistic value could be the practical one of documenting and preserving other art forms (e.g., theatrical performances). I thus take “the format” as a symptom of a crisis in the documentary tradition.

A few comparisons of contemporary popular documentaries to their predecessors will illustrate this shift. Given space limitations, my examples must be brief, but hopefully they will be suggestive; at the

The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism Editor Search

The American Society for Aesthetics is soliciting applications and nominations for the position of editor of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, the official journal of the Society, to begin 1 February 2013. (The second term of Susan Feagin, the current editor, ends 31 January 2013, and she has announced her intention to step down at that time.) The term of the editor is five (5) years, with a possible 5-year renewal, subject to review and approval by the ASA Board of Trustees. The editor must be a member of the Society and receives a monthly honorarium from the Society.

The editor is responsible for the content of the journal. The editor is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Society and serves on the Executive Committee and all standing Board committees. The editor makes an annual report to the Board of Trustees on the operations of the *Journal*. The book review editor is selected by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the editor, and reports to the editor. The editor is advised by an Editorial Board appointed by the editor.

The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism is published four times a year by Wiley-Blackwell Publishers for the Society. It includes articles, book reviews, and occasional symposia. From time to time a special issue may be devoted to a single topic approved by the Editorial Board, and such special issues may be republished in book form by Wiley. The journal is indexed in The Philosopher’s Index and other sources and is electronically accessible through JSTOR and the Wiley Online Library.

The position of editor normally requires institutional support, including office space, student assistance, and released time. The nature and extent of the institutional support to be provided, and a commitment from the institution, should be included in the candidate’s application for the position.

Applications or nominations should be submitted to Dabney Townsend, ASA Secretary-Treasurer, P.O. Box 915, Pooler, GA 31322 or electronically at <dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu> by 31 January, 2012. A search committee of officers and members of the Society will review applications, conduct interviews, and recommend a candidate to the Board of Trustees, which makes the final decision on the appointment. It is expected that the successful candidate will be notified by the summer of 2012 and formally approved at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees in October 2012.

For further information or questions, please contact ASA President Paul Guyer at <pguyer@sas.upenn.edu>, current editor Susan Feagin at <feagin@temple.edu>, or ASA Secretary-Treasurer Dabney Townsend at <dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu>.

very least they will draw attention to worthwhile films that interested parties can investigate for themselves. These films raise a variety of issues for in class discussion of documentary. This is especially the case when they are subject to comparative analysis, which throws the aesthetic, historical, and philosophical questions to which I've already referred into bold relief. In a documentary course I taught recently, I flagged this on the very first page of the syllabus:

This course focuses on a body of documentary films that aspire to be cinematic art as much as they aim to document, persuade, or propagandize. The films we will see are important works in the history of film art: as aesthetically, emotionally, and philosophically compelling as they are informative. These characteristics distinguish them from the more straightforwardly expository or journalistic documentaries of the mainstream.

Two recent documentaries, the Oscar-winning *An Inconvenient Truth* (Guggenheim, 2006) and Oscar-nominated *Gasland* (Fox, 2010), expose the detrimental environmental effects of unchecked industrial practices. The former is surely the apotheosis of "the format," as it documents former Vice President Al Gore's illustrated lecture on global warming—a "talking heads plus B-roll" treatment of a talking head (Gore) using b-roll (Powerpoint) to support his claims. *Gasland* employs "the format" in a more standard way, incorporating voiceover narration, on-screen text, and interviews in an argument about the environmental consequences of natural gas drilling.

The extent to which these two films are compelling is largely a matter of how interesting we find their subjects. This, in turn, comes down to how persuasive we find their arguments about those subjects, their organization of written and spoken language (including litanies of scientific data). The primary means of expression is language, which communicates information that pre-exists, and is largely indifferent to, cinematic treatment. That is, cinematic form is employed as a neutral vessel for the linguistic content that constitutes the bulk of each film's message.

Compare these films with three earlier environmental documentaries: Pare Lorentz's Farm Security Administration-produced *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1938), and Werner Herzog's *Lessons of Darkness* (1992). The first two, like *An Inconvenient Truth* and *Gasland*, possess rhetorical structures, but the arguments are made as much through sophisticated compositional choices, editing strategies, and sound-image relationships as they are by language. Complex causal claims are made entirely without voiceover narration or text. A particularly powerful scene in *The Plow That Broke the Plains* communicates the connection between increased wheat harvesting in the United States and the material needs of the allied forces in

WWI by intercutting shots of tractors and harvesters with shots of tanks and battleships. The escalation of both the war and the (over) production of grain is dramatized by a strategic ordering of the shots: as the scene progresses, each shot is of more, and larger, farming and war machines. These kinds of stylistic choices, recurrent across both Lorentz's films, require the viewer to do remarkably subtle inferential work to piece together the argument from the abstract cues provided. A purely linguistic argument bypasses such viewer engagement.

In Herzog's film, about the effort to extinguish the massive oil fires that ravaged Kuwait after the first Gulf War, voiceover commentary accompanies stunning images of these fires, but is so poetic and ambiguous that it undermines the authority of the spoken word. The voiceover offers no historical context and no explanation of the firefighters' methods (the film also lacks on-screen text). In fact, it frequently interprets the images in ways that contradict our expectations, describing them in heroic, epic terms despite their patently horrific nature (Herzog was criticized for aestheticizing the destruction caused by the war). In one scene, in which firefighters appear to re-start a previously extinguished fire, the voiceover incredibly suggests that it is an act of madness driven by an insatiable need for fire.

Another popular documentary genre is the "true crime" film. Recent examples, such as *Cropsey* (Zeman and Brancaccio, 2009) and *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (Berlinger and Sinofsky, 1996), faithfully adhere to "the format," and thus call to mind television journalism ala *Dateline* and *60 Minutes* (the popularity of "the format" among students is surely due in part to the fact that it is the template for this type of television programming). Again, language—interviews, police documents, court testimony, newspaper headlines, on-screen titles, and voiceover narration—is the primary means by which the films convey information about their cases, and the viewer is made a more or less passive witness.

The Thin Blue Line (Morris, 1988), about a man imprisoned for the 1976 murder of a Dallas, Texas police officer, provides a striking counterexample to the routine, TV news-flavored true crime documentary. Rather than abandoning "the format," Morris embraces it, but only to attack the assumptions about the efficacy of language at its heart. Morris intercuts conflicting accounts from multiple "authorities," and includes damning admissions and slips of the tongue made by several talking heads. Another cliché documentary device, the re-enactment, appears across the film, but each time enacting one of numerous opposing accounts of the crime and thereby revealing their incompatibility and the unreliability of the statements made by the interviewees. Even police records and court documents are called into question by Morris's masterful editing. As in *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, the spectator is required to puzzle through a complex argu-

The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal

The *American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal* (ASAGE) is now accepting high caliber articles, book reviews and dissertation abstracts by graduate students in aesthetics and the philosophy of art for its Fall 2011/Winter 2012 issue. We are also seeking article reviewers. More information, including complete submission guidelines, is available on our website at <www.asage.org>.

Deadlines are 1 October 2011 for articles and 1 November 2011 for book reviews and dissertation abstracts.

ment articulated not in plain language but through a series of subtle cinematic devices—and yet the film was so effective that it led to the release of the man who had been wrongly imprisoned.

Of course, my examples barely scratch the surface. A fuller account would include the silent-era films of Dziga Vertov and Robert Flaherty, the aggressively modernist political films of Emile de Antonio, the experimental ethnographies of Jean Rouch, the postmodernist documentaries of Trinh T. Minh-ha and Marlon Riggs, and the avant-garde documentaries of Jonas Mekas, Stan Brakhage, and Ben Rivers. It would also point to contemporary work in this tradition (including by Trinh and Rivers), which continues to create ingenious aesthetic alternatives to the simplistic expository approach of “the format” and its over-reliance on the crutch of language. If these films are “oppositional,” it is as much to mainstream documentary and its limited conceptions of meaning, expression, and spectatorial engagement as to the escapism and social disengagement of the fiction film. These are the real values of the documentary tradition that I believe we should teach our students, in the hopes of raising their expectations of the form and heightening their critical awareness of its potential.

Spoiler Alerts.... Teaching “Intro to Aesthetics” with Some Recent Documentaries

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For the past couple of years I’ve taught an “Intro to Aesthetics” course at OCAD University, Canada’s main institution for art and design education. Few of my students have much formal background in philosophy, and they tend to have even less patience than the average undergraduate for the abstract questions that typically engage philosophers. No matter the issue, they insist on knowing its relevance for art and design practice. I’ve been fortunate to come across a number of recent feature-length documentaries that bring to life some important philosophical issues in an engaging and compelling manner.

Some practical matters: There are typically around sixty-five students in a class. I spend roughly the first half of the 12-week course on the problem of defining art and going over some of the major theories. We read Plato, Aristotle, Bell, Tolstoy, Danto, Dickie and others. For the rest of the course I choose from a variety of topics related to art and design, including aesthetic judgment, value, creativity, ethical evaluations of art, public art, and outsider art. We read classic sources (Hume and Kant for example), as well as contemporary articles. I announce ahead of time on the course syllabus which days I’ll be showing a film and place the DVD’s on reserve in the library. That way, if any students miss a class they can arrange to view the DVD at their convenience in the library. I usually tie films to essay assignments, or at least to a question on a quiz, in order to emphasize that I regard the film showings as an integral part of the course. If the film will be tied to an essay

assignment, I distribute the assignment before the film in order to help students focus their attention while viewing.

I’ve used the following films in the course:

1. *My Kid Could Paint That* (Bar-Lev, 2007) This film tells the story of Marla Olmstead, a pre-schooler from Binghamton, New York whose large and colorful abstract paintings sell for thousands of dollars. Marla and her family receive enthusiastic world-wide media attention. Then an episode of *60 Minutes* casts doubt on the authenticity of the paintings, suggesting that the girl’s father, an amateur artist, had a hand in their production. The rest of the film is part puzzle, part psycho-drama. Did the father in fact do the paintings? Was he in cahoots with the family’s gallery-owning friend who provided exhibition space? The gallery owner is later revealed to be a talented photo-realist painter with ambivalent feelings towards abstract art. Were Marla’s paintings intended as a hoax in order to send up the world of modern art? If this was in fact a scam, was the girl’s mother involved? Viewers will find themselves scrutinizing facial expressions and vocal inflections for signs of insincerity. The film offers no conclusive answers.

My Kid Could Paint That works well in getting the students to think through some of their intuitions about the nature of art and of artistic value. Are Marla’s paintings formally excellent, and is this why so many have found them appealing? Is it the case that the quality of a painting depends on its formal qualities, as Bell argued? The film provides an opportunity to discuss issues raised in Tolstoy’s writings. Certainly, Marla’s paintings seem strongly expressive and many people claim to have been emotionally moved by them. How significant is this for their status as artworks and in determining their value as artworks? Tolstoy famously argued that the artist’s sincerity is crucially important. But what is the significance of “sincerity” when the artist is a child or otherwise untrained and so at some level incapable of anything but sincerity? The issue of sincerity is all the more pressing when we consider that Marla may have been aided by her father, whose motives and intentions can only be guessed at. The film also raises questions about the nature of artworld institutions. Children’s drawings and paintings are not usually treated as art. They are rarely displayed in public places, they are not reviewed by critics or discussed in specialist magazines and journals, and they are not bought by collectors. Is the fact that Marla’s paintings have been recognized by the artworld sufficient reason for us to accept them as artworks?

2. *Who the (beep) is Jackson Pollock?* (Moses, 2006) is a film that has it all: a crusty but lovable working-class heroine, snobby artworld gatekeepers, reformed felons, friends and associates of the late Jackson Pollock, and a splattered canvas that just may be by his hand. Terry, a plainspoken truck-driving woman, buys the painting at a thrift store for a few dollars. When she puts it in her garage sale, a local art teacher tells her that it looks like a Jackson Pollock. She finds out who Pollock is then sets upon a quest to authenticate the painting, only to be dismissed and undermined by haughty artworld insiders. Her son hires Peter Paul Biro, a self-styled scientific expert, who puts forensic technology to the service of art authentication. Along the way we hear from Thomas Hoving, Pollock collector and art advisor Ben Heller, art forger John Myatt, painter Nick Carone (a friend of Pollock’s from his New York days), and various colourful bit-players.

The film sets up a contrast between art and science, connoisseurship and empirical evidence, artworld authority figures and plucky outsider upstarts. Many viewers will be dismayed by Hoving’s arrogant-sounding dismissals of Terry and her paintings,

and heartened by the film's ending, which reports that Biro has found a match for a Pollock fingerprint on the back of the canvas. However the film's conclusion (and its entire narrative arc) is considerably complicated by information that came to light after the release date. An article by David Grann in the July 12, 2010 issue of the *New Yorker* provides a compelling case that Biro may not be all he seems. In particular, Grann discusses evidence suggesting that Biro may have faked the fingerprint "match" on the back of Terry's canvas. (The entire article, well worth reading, is available on the *New Yorker's* website: <http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/07/12/100712fa_fact_grann>). So the snobby artworld experts may have been right all along.

I like to show this film after the class has studied David Hume's classic essay "Of the Standard of Taste." I ask the students to consider whether anyone in the film meets the criteria for being a "true judge" of art. To do this they will likely have to set aside both their sympathy for Terry (who clearly lacks the relevant education and experience to judge the painting) and their discomfort with the arrogance of artworld experts (who do not present congenial figures). I also like to discuss the nature of evidence for aesthetic judgments. If anyone in the film does approach the status of a true judge, to what extent should he or she be obliged to explain his or her judgments to others? Hoving's airy dismissal that Terry's canvas doesn't "sing like a Pollock," may turn out to be vindicated, but it would be nice to know how and why he arrived at it.

3. I have an interest in outsider art and I've had good responses from students to two documentaries about outsider artists: *In the Realms of the Unreal* (Yu, 2004) and *My Name is Alan and I Paint Pictures* (Boston, 2007). The first is about Henry Darger, a reclusive hospital custodian who lived in Chicago until his death in 1973. When Darger moved from his apartment to an institution shortly before his death, his neighbors discovered an elaborately illustrated manuscript of several thousand pages telling the story of the "Vivian Girls"—child-leaders of a rebellion against a repressive regime on a distant planet. Since his death Darger's work has been widely exhibited and has influenced other artists. The story of Darger's early life—he was orphaned then sent to an Illinois asylum—is quite moving. We don't know why Darger turned to making art, or what his intentions for his work might have been. This is the mystery at the heart of the film, and to their credit the film-makers resist offering easy answers.

We get a little more insight into the motivations of street artist Alan Russell-Cowan, whose life and work is featured in *My Name is Alan and I Paint Pictures*. Russell-Cowan is a British-born painter who lives and works in New York City, painting street scenes outdoors in all kinds of weather. The film recounts Russell-Cowan's life and upbringing, his decision to drop out of art school, his struggles with mental illness, and the eventual peace and stability he seems to find as a working artist. The film-makers endeavor to be even-handed. We're shown people who respond to Russell-Cowan's art for its formal and expressive qualities. But the film also raises the possibility that the work's value as art is eclipsed by its therapeutic value for the artist. Viewers are left to come to their own assessment.

When I discuss these films with students, I try to get them to think about the term "outsider artist" and its value as a label. While the French term "art brut" emphasized the qualities of an artwork, "outsider art" emphasizes the maker's isolation from a mainstream society and in particular from the artworld. In calling Darger and Russell-Cowan "outsider artists" we imply that the proper comparative class for their work is that of other outsider artists. If

we eschew the label and refer to them simply as "artists" it implies that their work should be compared, favorably or not, with that of other artists. Female painters used to be designated as "woman artists," thereby implying that their work was in a separate (presumably lesser) category than the work of real (male) artists. Does a similar mindset drive the use of the label "outsider"? Do the artist's intentions matter for the classification and evaluation of their work? We have no way of knowing Darger's intentions. Russell-Cowan's conception of his own artistic practice seems to change over time and shift with his moods.

All of these films, in their different ways, touch on the question of the value of art in human life. The people who admire Marla's work claim that it puts them in touch with innocence and the child-like joy of creation. Terry eventually turns down an offer of nine million dollars for her paint-splattered canvas. At a certain point, she holds that the painting seems to have on her is no longer about its potential monetary value, nor about her desire for acceptance from the artworld. The painting and her quest to authenticate it have come to structure her life. The making of art similarly seemed to structure the life of Darger, and to play a comparable role in Russell-Cowan's life. What is it about art, and about our relation to it, that makes this possible?

While none of these films is a cinematic masterpiece, each dramatizes some crucial questions about art, and any of them should spark discussion among students. It has been my experience that when it comes to capturing students' attention and motivating them to reflect, the most carefully constructed thought experiments are no match for "true stories"—especially those presented with a little dramatic flair and engaging visuals.

Book Review

Review of Philosophy Through Film

Luke Cuddy

Southwestern College and MiraCosta College

Mary Litch. 2nd. ed. New York: Routledge, 2010. x+374 pages. \$39.95(pb).

If you are like me, you responded to your friends' praise of *The Matrix* with a bit of smugness. After all, we philosophers have been familiar with the concept of people being unknowingly enslaved since Plato. While philosophical interpretations of *The Matrix* are not likely to impress a tenured philosophy professor, they just might have the capacity to jog a student out of her stupor. This jogging of the mind is one of the things Mary Litch hopes to help induce in introductory philosophy students with *Philosophy Through Film*.

The book is set up conveniently with an overview of each major film at the beginning of the chapter in which it is discussed. The films analyzed are *The Matrix* (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999),

Vanilla Sky (Cameron Crowe, 2001), *Hilary and Jackie* (Anand Tucker, 1998), *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2000), *I, Robot* (Alex Proyas, 2004), *Minority Report* (Stephen Spielberg, 2002), *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (Woody Allen, 1988), *Antz* (Eric Darnell and Tim Johnson, 1998), *Equilibrium* (Kurt Wimmer, 2002), *The Seventh Seal* (Ingmar Bergman, 1957), *The Rapture* (Michael Tolkin, 1991), and *Leaving Las Vegas* (Mike Figgis, 1995). While one could quibble with Litch over her choices (what, no Hitchcock?), they are quite diverse in genre and are based on two considerations: philosophical relevance and ability to engage the typical American undergraduate. In cases like *The Seventh Seal* where the latter consideration is minimal, the former consideration is much stronger. In some cases, a single film is used in multiple chapters. For instance, *Crimes and Misdemeanors* is discussed in both Chapter 6 (ethics) and Chapter 9 (existentialism). The chapters are divided according to subject (skepticism, relativism, the problem of evil, etc.). The appendix includes the story line of each film by elapsed time; this allows students to double check what happened at what time for the film in question. There is also a section at the end of the book with readings from primary sources that Litch refers to throughout the chapters when appropriate. As Litch notes in the preface, her book "is geared for use as the primary textbook in a first course in philosophy and covers the same topics as a standard introductory text." She goes on to say that "in some contexts" the book might be used in an upper division course. This is ironic because after finishing the book I was left wondering whether it is more appropriate for upper division philosophy majors (and beyond) and less appropriate for undergraduates taking their first philosophy course. Nevertheless, I immensely enjoyed *Philosophy Through Film*.

Litch notes in the introduction that she is not responsive to criticisms of the form "you are reading too much into the film" because she will find philosophical content wherever possible regardless of the intention of the director. For instance, directors Andy and Larry Wachowski probably did not intend *The Matrix* to be an argument for skepticism. In fact, Descartes only needed dreams to discuss skepticism. But the incredible technological world depicted in *The Matrix* makes skepticism "an easier sell" (p. 13). Litch is trying to teach, she claims, not impress other philosophers. She offers a comparison between Plato's allegory of the cave and a movie house, suggesting that Plato would approve of using movies to teach philosophy in light of a nuanced understanding of the shadows on the cave wall. Should we not do everything we can to guide students out of the cave, Litch suggests, even if it means using the shadows as teaching tools?

Of course if one does not buy the assumption that some feature films can be interpreted as attempts to answer classic questions of philosophy, then one will not be a fan of *Philosophy Through Film*. Is half-baked popular philosophy still philosophy? Philosophers are still arguing about this, as evidenced by the different viewpoints concerning the Pop Culture and Philosophy series of books started by William Irwin. The series includes titles on many popular films, from *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) to *The Golden Compass* (Chris Weitz, 2007). We know where Litch stands on the issue. Irwin's defense of the series (in *Philosophy and the Interpretation of Popular Culture*, co-edited with Jorge Gracia) is worth reading if one has an interest in the topic.

Litch goes on to point out the importance of thought experiments to the history of philosophy, claiming that films can basically be used in the same way. She says that some films provide the context for events within the film to be interpreted as thought experiments. When a film leaves out relevant parts of a good thought experiment, *Philosophy Through Film* is there to fill in the missing links.

For example, in *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, one of the characters, Judah, orders the death of his wife, causing him to struggle over the morality of his action. This event from the film provides a context for examining the moral positions of consequentialism and non-consequentialism. As it turns out, according to both positions Judah's ordering of his wife's death is wrong. So the event gives Litch the opportunity to discuss the different reasoning involved in each moral position, to extend the thought experiment engendered by the film.

While Litch occasionally sprinkles in a tenuous connection to some philosophical idea from one of the films (making her more vulnerable to the above "reading too much into it" criticism) most of her connections are deeper, and apt. The high points of the book come to the fore when Litch suggests that the content of one of the films complicates some philosophical position. For example, the circumstances of the protagonist in *Memento*, Leonard, complicate the psychological continuity theory of personal identity. Each day Leonard forgets what happened the previous day of his life; after several minutes go by he forgets what happened in the last several minutes. Despite all this, Leonard does have a clear idea of his identity before the accident that led to his short term memory loss. In other words, Leonard does not have the series of memory links necessary to establish psychological continuity, and yet he seems to have at least some coherent identity as a person. In what does his personhood consist then? Litch goes on to discuss different possibilities and interpretations, but the simple fact that the film presents a protagonist with such characteristics illuminates psychological continuity in a way which can lead the viewer to consider it, and to question its veracity. This process of illumination will be all the more fruitful for an undergraduate, with a professor's commentary and Litch's book at hand. Then again, it depends on the undergraduate.

For the engaged and motivated undergraduate, *Philosophy Through Film* seems very appropriate. On the other hand, a detailed discussion of psychological continuity and its complications might be more difficult to engage in for undergraduates who are less motivated, or who have never heard any philosophical theories of personal identity. Upper division philosophy students who are already familiar with the theories might be more inclined to discuss, and more capable of tackling intellectually, the complications of psychological continuity. To be fair, Litch does present an overview of each topic in each chapter before discussing the film in question, and before going on to discuss how events in the film complicate the topic or illustrate it in more detail. But if a student's understanding of personal identity is foggy due to having only been introduced to the topic recently, will he be ready to tackle the deeper complications? We are left wondering at Litch's implication that the book is most appropriate for undergraduate students taking their first course in philosophy.

Furthermore, there are other parts of the book where one wonders about Litch's priorities, given her focus on presenting detailed philosophical theory at what seems to be the expense of making material more digestible for general undergraduates (that is, leading them efficiently out of the cave). For example, in Chapter 4 (artificial intelligence) Litch devotes a lot of time to explaining different theories of mind and consciousness from the Turing Test to Searle's Chinese Room, only occasionally bringing in the movie under discussion (*I, Robot*) for an illustration. I had no problem following Litch's line of thought; in fact I quite enjoyed it. However, some undergraduates might not derive a similar enjoyment after reading pages of dense theory only to see a small paragraph or a couple of lines devoted to *I, Robot*.

Naturally, part of teaching is explicating the theory in the readings through lecture, so we cannot entirely blame Litch here. Still, I have related doubts about the effectiveness of using *Philosophy Through Film* in an introductory course based on my teaching experience. In my introductory philosophy course, we watch a couple of films, and even that takes up more class time than I would like. Litch's book discusses twelve films in detail. Even if some chapters are skipped, a professor is left with six or more films to watch during class time. How much time will be left for discussion, lecture, and other activities? Can a professor expect students to watch six to twelve full length films on their own time? While these may seem like extraneous considerations, they are relevant because of Litch's emphasis that her book is designed for use in a classroom, presumably limited by time constraints.

Despite a few weak points, most of the chapters in *Philosophy Through Film* do a great job of explicating a philosophical idea clearly, summarizing the movies, analyzing the movies for philosophical content, and sometimes offering new takes and complications to existing philosophical problems. It is not Litch's ability to write a good book that is in doubt; it is her goal of the book being used as a primary text for introductory philosophy courses. The bottom line is that I did immensely enjoy Litch's book. Then again, I am a philosophy professor who loves film, not an undergraduate, first time philosophy student.

Denis Dutton Remembered

Deborah Knight
Queen's University

On the morning of 28 December 2010, I learned that Denis Dutton had died. Denis was a terrific mentor to me when I was a junior member of the profession. I confess, I had not known he was ill. I miss him very much.

We mainly met at conferences, although periodically, and sadly too few times in recent years. The first time I met Denis was at the ASA meeting held several years ago in Santa Barbara. Everyone from the conference attended a reception on the campus of the University of California, Santa Barbara. I didn't realize until much later that this was Denis's alma mater. At UC Santa Barbara, Denis and I met at the exhibit of—I think it was—Goya engravings in the art gallery adjacent to the reception. His eye for technique was tremendous, as was his ability to narrate what made these works so visually and emotionally compelling.

A real highlight of my early academic career was being named to succeed Alex Neill as Assistant Editor of the journal Denis founded, *Philosophy and Literature*. Denis took a bit of a risk on a junior member of the discipline when he chose me. Back then, we were scarcely into the age of colour-screen computers, but it was very exciting to be in regular contact with Denis and his then co-editor, the wonderful Patrick Henry. There I was in Ontario, Canada, Patrick in Washington State, and Denis in New Zealand, and yet journal business went along well thanks to lots of internet exchanges. *Philosophy and Literature* continues to be a touchstone for those of us at the intersection of literature and aesthetics.

Members of the ASA who have been to conference meetings at Asilomar just outside of Pacific Grove in California will enjoy a story about a meeting Denis attended a few years ago where I learned about his keen interest in astronomy. During the reception, a few of us went outside with Denis to track a comet visible over southern California with the help of a high-powered set of binoculars he had brought with him from New Zealand.

Denis hated bad prose with a passion. He hated bad academic prose and more so hated bad philosophical prose. He taught me a great deal about how to edit for clarity, and this is a lesson I've been sharing with my own students ever since.

In the many tributes to Denis, much has been said about his wonderful book *The Art Instinct*. I want to mention, in addition, his terrific work on art forgeries, where, in the space of a journal article, Denis propounded a theory of art as performance. It will remain one of his major contributions to the philosophy of art.

Denis Dutton Remembered

Ellen Dissanayake
University of Washington

In October 1981, I gave a special talk, the Second David and Marianna Mandel Lecture, at the annual ASA conference, held that year in Tampa. My talk was titled "Aesthetic Experience and Human Evolution" and was published, with revisions, in 1982 in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. At the time, Mr. Mandel was a retired labor lawyer in his eighties; he was passionate about a new field that was then called sociobiology and had himself self-published a book about art in human evolution called *Changing Art, Changing Man*. By endowing these lectures to the ASA, he hoped to stimulate the interest of philosophers of art in the subject of the arts in human evolution.

Sixteen years later (in late 1997), when I met Denis Dutton for the first time, he confessed that he had attended that Tampa conference. He had even looked in the door of my talk but didn't go inside to listen since the subject didn't interest him. However, in 1995 his name (and existence) came to my attention when a colleague showed me Denis's review of my second book, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why* (1992) in the Bookmarks section of *Philosophy and Literature*, the journal he founded. It remains the lengthiest, most thoughtful, and most positive review that the book has received (for a slightly rewritten version in 1994, see <http://denisdutton.com/dissanayake_review.htm>).

So what happened between 1981 and 1995? I appreciate the irony of the fact that the man who in 2009 published a blockbuster book called *The Art Instinct* (by far the most well-known discussion of the subject of aesthetic experience and human evolution) passed up an early opportunity to hear a talk about exactly that. He was certainly fully on board at our first meeting and we easily became both colleagues and friends at that time.

Besides art and evolution, we discovered many overlaps in our interests. Astronomy? I knew the names of all the constellations (and a bit more) from a class I had taken; he had a telescope in his

back yard. South Asia? I had lived in Sri Lanka; he, in India. South Asian music? I had come to love the stuff; he learned to play the sitar. Classical music? Piano was my undergraduate major and I still played chamber music; he listened to classical music constantly on earphones and at concerts, took piano lessons as an adult, and had hosted a classical music radio program. Anthropology? I had lived in Nigeria and Papua New Guinea, later using my experiences and reading in my thought and work; Denis's doctoral thesis focused on the relationship between art and anthropology, especially on the problems and possibilities of cross-cultural understanding. He had lived with carvers in the Sepik River area of PNG.

There's more. I learned recently from an obituary that as a university student Denis "found himself particularly fascinated by the philosophy of art: 'I was trying to figure out how works of art – literature, music, paintings – could produce such intense experiences in human beings.'" My own interest in human ethology (behavioral biology laced with evolution) was first sparked by an overpowering music listening experience I had as an 18-year-old undergraduate.

Although we met rarely – perhaps four times – we stayed in touch by telephone and e-mail. It was of course a shock last fall to learn that Denis was undergoing cancer treatments. Only now, looking back over our correspondence in order to write this remembrance, did I piece together that Denis, unknown to any of us, had faced cancer seven years earlier. We met for what would be the last time at a workshop of evolution-and-arts scholars in Auckland in November 2003. After the last day, I remember several of us speculating that Denis had seemed uncharacteristically quiet and "pensive." When I wrote to him about it right after the workshop, he replied "Pensiveness had to do with work for the week and a sneaking regret that we spilled over into Monday (leaving Sunday night would have been more convenient)."

But in September 2010, after I first heard of Denis's cancer, he replied to a message from me: "Didn't I mention this diagnosis to you in Auckland? I thought I had. That was very early and I didn't know if it was going to advance. Alas, it has, and I have a kind of resistible bone cancer in my shoulder (and elsewhere). But it is not as deadly and aggressive as other bone cancers, and I am responding to the chemo, which does not happen with most people."

Well, that explained the "pensiveness" in 2003, which was most unlike his usual energy and bonhomie. I well remember running behind him to keep up as we strode "together" to a hotel elevator or dining room. He was a "Constant Force" (his e-mail name). But did any of us suspect that while he was writing, publishing, and then enjoying the acclaim of his book, cancer had been and would be again his companion?

What I'll remember most about Denis are his energy, good humor, generosity, intellectual curiosity, and – in the end – his kindness and courage:

From Denis, September 2010:

When I go for treatment I see mums with young toddlers there, and teenagers. No self-pity is possible! . . . I've had such a charmed life in so many respects that it would be unreasonable for me to feel very sorry for myself. Our son in Sydney, Ben, has just proposed to his dreamboat girlfriend. She is so super! And Sonia opened her art gallery in Austin Texas, last week, and my book is an embarrassing success . . . Got new projects now I

want to take on for our summer, which is just beginning.
Warmest wishes,
Denis

From Denis to a group of colleagues, 20 November 2010:

Have had a few rough patches in terms of health... I'm crippled, confined to bed, unable to walk. Damn. Trying to keep up with your lovely conversations here. What with all the morphine, it's the best I can do.

"Keep up" he did. Until two weeks from the end, even when bed-ridden, he was reading our papers in attachments, recommending articles he liked, commenting on our exchanges. I think I speak for Denis's colleagues as well as myself in saying that his example will remain both constant and forceful in our continuing efforts to understand the role of the arts and aesthetic experience in our ancestral past and today.

I'll end with a "pure Denis" message from a year ago that conveys his unique spirit as well as anything anyone has written about him:

From Denis, 27 January 2009:

Next week at this time, I'll be back in sleepy Christchurch, dreaming of the glory days – the stretch limos to take me to CBS and the Comedy Central studios, the dinners at Elaine's, the adulation. It'll all be over. But for now – violins, please – I live the dream . . . sigh . . . And . . . thank you, Mr. Darwin, wherever you are . . . (steps out of the spotlight).

The chairs of the ASA Eastern Division Meeting are initiating an email list in order to inform and coordinate with members interested in the meeting. To join the list, simply send an email to Christopher Bartel at <bartelcj@appstate.edu>. In the subject line, write, "EASA Email List."

A Special Issue of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*: Song, Songs, and Singing

Guest Editors: Jeanette Bicknell and John Andrew Fisher

Any philosophical treatment of songs or singing will be considered, but papers addressing these topics are especially welcome:

1. Songs and singing across the genres and cross-culturally – art music, opera, lieder, Broadway and jazz standards, folk song, religious vocal music, lullabies, work songs, popular songs (of all sorts, blues, rock, rap, etc.), mass art.
2. Meaning and Representation. How is the song representation established and what sort of representation is it? How does it compare to visual art, to the art of poetry or to theatre?
3. Exploring the contrasts between vocal and instrumental music. Do these make different kinds of demands upon listeners, composers, performers?
4. The unity of music and text. What is this, and how is it established?
5. Ontology. How do songs and recordings fit into the ontological catalogue of musical works?
6. Performance. How does singing compare with other types of performance, such as acting? How does live singing compare to recorded? How does singing in popular, jazz or folk music compare with singing in art music, such as lieder?
7. Singing and expression. Does vocal music raise different problems than instrumental music? Are expressive properties established in a different way in vocal music? Is “authenticity” different for songs than for instrumental music?
8. Singing and cinema. The problems raised by both diegetic and non-diegetic songs in film. How does the contemporary use of popular songs as the musical score of films change the relation of sound track to the visual narrative?
9. Ethical criticism. Is moral criticism of popular songs as appropriate as moral criticism of movies and literature?
10. What trends in the history of art theory or core assumptions about the field of aesthetics have inclined philosophers of art and music to ignore songs as an important art form?
11. Philosophical analyses of specific vocal music in any genre.

Submissions should not exceed 7,000 words and must comply with the general guidelines for submissions (see “Submissions” on the JAAC website: <www.temple.edu/jaac>). Send submissions as e-mail attachments to both guest editors, indicating clearly that your submission is for the special issue: Jeanette Bicknell, OCAD University, Canada, <bicknellj@hotmail.com>, and John Andrew Fisher, University of Colorado, <john.fisher@colorado.edu>

Deadline: 16 January 2012

News From The National Office

My thanks for everyone's patience in dealing with the transition from a quarterly membership calendar to an annual renewal date. The membership roles should be complete now. I apologize for mistakes and confusion. When in doubt, I have credited past members with membership through 2011. The way it will work from now on is that everyone except those who have renewed for multiple years will receive a single renewal reminder in late 2011 for the calendar year 2012. Those who have not paid will receive the next issue of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (70.1), but will then be dropped from the mailing list if membership is not up to date by 15 April 2012. So mark your calendars—ASA membership is due along with taxes! That should be an easy date to remember. I appreciate everyone's cooperation. The ASA is no longer affiliated in any way with Armstrong Atlantic State University. For the time being at least, I am handling the administrative chores. The email address for the ASA remains <dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu> (I get that as a retired faculty member), but all mail should be sent to me at PO Box 915, Pooler, GA 31322.

Some members have had a little difficulty navigating on-line renewal through our web site. We take Mastercard and Visa only. When one goes to the web site <www.aesthetics-online.org> there is a menu of options in the left hand margin. Click on "ASA Dues" and you will be taken to the ASA Shop where there is an information page for membership renewal. I need that information to know what your membership category is. (One can also pay for things like meeting registration, back issues of *JAAC*, and make contributions (much appreciated) at the ASA Shop.) That is not the actual payment, however. The second step is to click on the "proceed to checkout" link, which will transfer you to the Verisign secure payment site. As soon as you receive an Order ID number from Verisign, you know that your credit card has been charged. I get a copy of that Order ID and at that point I enter the information in our records. The Order ID serves as your receipt. It also confirms your email address (very important) and your mailing address. If you do not receive an Order ID that looks like this—Order ID: VPEE6BCC#####—then your credit card has not been charged and I do not enter your payment information. Occasionally, credit

card transactions, especially from overseas, do not process correctly because of glitches in multiple bank links on-line. Be patient and try again. If by some chance, someone is charged twice, I can send a refund or credit an extra year of membership.

For anyone who may have missed the elections results, Sondra Bacharach, Andrew Kania, and James Shelley were elected to three year terms on the Board of Trustees to replace Eva Dadlez, Derek Matravers, and Aaron Meskin, whose terms ended in January 2011. Congratulations to the new trustees, and thanks to the retiring members of the Board, including Stephen Davies, whose term as Past President has now ended. Paul Guyer has assumed the Presidency, Jenefer Robinson becomes Past President, and Dom Lopes was elected Vice President and will succeed Paul Guyer as President in 2014 without further election. I will continue as Secretary/Treasurer until January 2016 unless there is a significant uprising or day of rage.

Another important transition in the Society will take place at the beginning of 2013. Susan Feagin, the editor of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, has announced her retirement at the end of her second term. President Paul Guyer has established a search committee for a new editor. The current plan is for that committee to conduct a search over the next year, then to make its report to the Trustees in time for an orderly transition during 2012. The position of *JAAC* Editor requires institutional support. Expressions of interest and nominations may be conveyed either to me or to Paul Guyer. A more detailed advertisement of the position appears elsewhere in this Newsletter and will be posted on the ASA web site. The ASA is deeply indebted to Susan for her work as editor, which will continue until a new editor is selected and takes office 1 February 2013. The financial situation of the ASA remains strong primarily because of income from its publications, especially *JAAC*, and that income depends on the world-wide reputation of the journal under Susan's guidance.

The ASA Annual Meeting will be held in Tampa, Florida from 26-29 October 2011 at the Sheraton Riverwalk Hotel. Kevin Sweeney is local arrangements chair, and James Shelley is Program Chair. Professor Paul Bloom from Yale University has accepted an invitation to give a plenary address, and Professor Berys Gaut from St. Andrews University has been nominated by the British Society for Aesthetics to give the Wollheim Memorial Lecture and has accepted. More information will be forthcoming and will be posted on the web

site as it becomes available. Please make plans to attend.

The 2012 Annual Meeting will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, 24-27 October, 2012. Stephanie Ross will be Local Arrangements Chair and Rachel Zuckert will be Program Chair. Please mark your calendars. I am presently working on arrangements for 2013. We no longer are adhering to a strict regional schedule, but it is likely that we will seriously consider a west coast site. San Diego has been suggested, and I will be checking on possible hotels there. In the meantime, other suggestions are in order for any future meeting, either from possible hosts or just from members who would like to make suggestions. Because of the economy and the restrictions on university budgets, especially travel budgets, we do not expect a subvention. Any financial help, including in-kind support, is always appreciated, however. Primary considerations in choosing a meeting site include the ability to secure adequate meeting and hotel space at a reasonable rate, accessibility to air travel, and aesthetic opportunities. Please send me suggestions as they occur to you.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Charlene Waldron who served as administrative assistant to the ASA until the termination of our agreement with Armstrong Atlantic State University. Thank you Charlene.

Dabney Townsend
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Aesthetics News

ASA Board of Trustees

Sondra Bacharach, Andrew Kania, and James Shelley have been elected for three year terms on the Board of Trustees. Paul Guyer has succeeded Jenefer Robinson as President. Jenefer remains on the Board as Past President.

ASA Diversity Committee

The ASA Diversity Committee has selected two candidates to participate in the PIKSI/

Penn State and Rutgers diversity institutes this summer. They are: Dwayne Tunstall (Grand Valley State University) for PIKSI and Fernando Zapata (SUNY-Binghamton) for Rutgers. The committee's recommendations were accepted with enthusiasm by the respective institute directors.

The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal

The *American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal* (ISSN: 1946-1879) published its fifth issue at <<http://www.asage.org/>>. We invite you to review the Table of Contents below and to view the full text of all articles free of charge on our website. ASAGE is also now available via EBSCO.

Thanks for your continuing interest in our work, and for letting your graduate students know about publishing, refereeing, book review and dissertation abstract opportunities with us.

We are also now accepting submissions for our Spring/Summer 2011. See <www.asage.org> for more details.

Aili Bresnahan, Editor
Zach Jurgensen, Book Review and Dissertation Abstract Editor

British Journal of Aesthetics

Issue 50/4 from the *British Journal of Aesthetics* was the journal's fiftieth anniversary issue!

The Oxford Aesthetics Lectures

The Oxford aesthetics lectures given this past term are now available for free download on iTunes U. They are available from this link: <<http://itunes.apple.com/ca/itunes-u/aesthetics-philosophy-art/id426430244?ls=1>>. The topics of the lectures are as follows: 1. Plato's Philosophy of Art, 2. Aristotle's Poetics, 3. Hume and the Standard of Taste, 4-5. Kant's Critique of Judgment, 6. Literary Interpretation, 7. Musical Expression, 8. Defining Art.

Enrahonar, the Philosophy Journal at the Autonomous University

The latest edition of *Enrahonar, the Philosophy Journal at the Autonomous University of Barcelona* is out, and is available here: <<http://www.raco.cat/index.php/enrahonar/issue/view/15824/showToc>>. This is a special

issue on Aesthetics of Nature.

Journal of Scottish Philosophy

Volume 9 Number 1 of the *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* has just been published online. This is a themed issue on Scottish Aesthetics, guest edited by Andrew Chignell and Timothy Costelloe. See <<http://www.eup-publishing.com/journal/jsp>>.

Like so many relatively new academic journals, the JSP needs more institutional subscriptions if it is to survive. The more people that want to read it, the likelier that will be. The editor would be very grateful indeed for any help you can give in making the journal better known to potential readers, contributors, and subscribers—especially institutional.

However, the main purpose of this email is just to point you in the direction of papers you might find interesting, including "Delicacy in Hume's Theory of Taste" by Theodore Gracyk, (Winner of the George Elder Davie Prize), "Good Sense, Art, and Morality in Hume's 'Of the Standard of Taste'" by Reed Winegar, "Aesthetically Non-Dwelling: Sympathy, Property, and the House of Beauty in Hume's *Treatise*" by Neil Saccamano, "Gerard and Kant: Influence and Opposition" by Paul Guyer, "Adam Smith's 'Sympathetic Imagination' and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Environment" by Emily Brady, "Remarks on the Varieties of Prejudice in Hume's Essay on Taste" by Peter Kivy, and "Ideal Presence: How Kames Solved the Problem of Fiction and Emotion" by Eva Dadlez, University of Central Oklahoma.

Contemporary Aesthetics

The online journal *Contemporary Aesthetics* is pleased to announce that it is now being archived by the Scholarly Printing Office of the University of Michigan. All past annual volumes (1-7) and the two special volumes are available there <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/ca>> as well as on the *Contemporary Aesthetics* website <<http://www.contempaesthetics.org>>. The SPO archive also offers a universal search function. Readers are invited to explore these resources: see <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/ca>>.

NEH Summer Seminar for School Teachers on Existentialism

Thomas Wartenberg, Department of Philosophy, Mount Holyoke College, will conduct an

NEH Summer Seminar for School Teachers on existentialism. It will take place from 4-29 July on the Mount Holyoke College Campus. The Seminar website is: <www.existentialismseminar.org>.

Environmental Values

The latest edition, volume 19:3, of *Environmental Values* is out. This is a special issue on environmental aesthetics and contains a posthumously published paper by Ronald Hepburn. The editorial by Isis Brook is called "Ronald Hepburn and the Humanizing of Environmental Aesthetics" and is available at <<http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EV/EditEV193.html>>.

Conference Reports

ASA Eastern Division Meeting Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 8-9 April 2011

The Eastern Division Meeting was held in the Old City District of Philadelphia at the Best Western Independence Park Hotel. In addition to many sessions on analytic aesthetics, this year's meeting included a number of presentations on continental philosophers and themes. Robert Pippen delivered an expansive lecture, "After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Visual Modernism," which was this year's Monroe Beardsley Lecture, held at Temple's Center City campus. This period in German philosophy and poetry was considered further in the panel, "Time, Being and the Inexpressible in German Romanticism"; chaired by Kristin Gjesdal, this panel featured Jane Kneller, David Kenosian, and a commentary by Karl Ameriks. The conference closed with a special session on the value of art, in which Sean D. Kelly expanded upon fecund themes from *All Things Shining* (co-authored by Hubert Dreyfus), with a focus upon Herman Melville. Michael Kelly's talk, "The Value of Art: Art as the Enactment of Value," gave an enticing preview of his forthcoming book, *A Hunger for Aesthetics*.

The arts most discussed this year were film and music. The panel, "Film: On Location," featured Zed Adams, Jay Elliott, and Dan Wack. A session on film included papers by Craig Fox, Aaron Smuts, and Christy Mag Uidhir. There were two sessions on music; the session on ontology included papers by

Oscar Barragan and John Dyck; the session on the emotions included papers by Phil Jenkins and James Young—the latter with a special commentary by Jeanette Bicknell.

The remainder of the sessions featured papers on a wide range of issues; for example, Casey Haskins, “The Network of Aesthetic Inquiry”; James Harold, “On the Idea that Music Shapes Character”; Eva Dadlez, “Being Evil: RPGs [role-playing games], Imaginative Immersion, and Moral Complicity”; Ira Newman, “Narrativizing Shame: A Study in Moral Psychology and Literary Structure”; Mary Beth Willard, “Historical Criticism and the Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance.”

It is noteworthy that graduate students from a range of area universities—Princeton, Columbia, Binghamton, NYU, Rutgers, Temple, etc.—participated as presenters and commentators.

The program co-chairs would like to thank the philosophy graduate students from Temple for their continued service to the Division. And we would like to give special thanks to those who served on this year’s review committee: Sondra Bacharach, Brandon Cooke, Alessandro Giovannelli, James Harold, Robin James, John Kulvicki, Margaret Moore, Jonathan Neufeld, Glenn Parsons, Bill Seeley, and Melissa Zinkin.

Please direct any questions concerning the 2012 Eastern Division Meeting to the conference organizers Chris Bartel (Appalachian State University) and Jonathan Neufeld (College of Charleston).

Tiger Roholt, Montclair State University
Christopher Bartel, Appalachian State University

Calls for Papers

A Special Issue of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*: Song, Songs, and Singing

Guest Editors: Jeanette Bicknell and John Andrew Fisher

Any philosophical treatment of songs or singing will be considered, but papers addressing these topics are especially welcome:

1. Songs and singing across the genres and cross-culturally – art music, opera, lieder, Broadway and jazz standards, folk song, religious vocal music, lullabies, work songs, popular songs (of all sorts, blues, rock, rap,

etc.), mass art. 2. Meaning and Representation. How is the song representation established and what sort of representation is it? How does it compare to visual art, to the art of poetry or to theatre? 3. Exploring the contrasts between vocal and instrumental music. Do these make different kinds of demands upon listeners, composers, performers? 4. The unity of music and text. What is this, and how is it established? 5. Ontology. How do songs and recordings fit into the ontological catalogue of musical works? 6. Performance. How does singing compare with other types of performance, such as acting? How does live singing compare to recorded? How does singing in popular, jazz or folk music compare with singing in art music, such as lieder? 7. Singing and expression. Does vocal music raise different problems than instrumental music? Are expressive properties established in a different way in vocal music? Is “authenticity” different for songs than for instrumental music? 8. Singing and cinema. The problems raised by both diegetic and non-diegetic songs in film. How does the contemporary use of popular songs as the musical score of films change the relation of sound track to the visual narrative? 9. Ethical criticism. Is moral criticism of popular songs as appropriate as moral criticism of movies and literature? 10. What trends in the history of art theory or core assumptions about the field of aesthetics have inclined philosophers of art and music to ignore songs as an important art form? 11. Philosophical analyses of specific vocal music in any genre.

Submissions should not exceed 7,000 words and must comply with the general guidelines for submissions (see “Submissions” on the JAAC website: <www.temple.edu/jaac>). Send submissions as e-mail attachments to both guest editors, indicating clearly that your submission is for the special issue. Jeanette Bicknell, OCAD University, Canada, <bicknellj@hotmail.com>, and John Andrew Fisher, University of Colorado, <john.fisher@colorado.edu>

Deadline: 16 January 2012

The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal

The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal (ASAGE) is now accepting high caliber articles, book reviews and dissertation abstracts by graduate students in aesthetics and the philosophy of art for its Fall 2011/ Winter 2012 issue. We are also seeking article reviewers. More information, including complete submission guidelines, is available on our website at <www.asage.org>. Sub-

missions should not exceed 7,000 words and must comply with the general guidelines for submissions (see “Submissions” on the JAAC website: <www.temple.edu/jaac>). Send submissions as e-mail attachments to both guest editors, indicating clearly that your submission is for the special issue.

Deadlines: 1 October 2011 (articles) and 1 November 2011 (book reviews and dissertation abstracts)

SPSCVA at the APA Eastern Division Meeting

Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, DC
27-30 December 2011

The Society for the Philosophic Study of the Contemporary Visual Arts (SPSCVA) invites papers to be presented at its divisional meeting held in conjunction with the Eastern divisional meeting of the American Philosophical Association. Papers may address any topic that involves the connection between philosophy and the visual arts: film, photography, video, or other aesthetic media. Presentations should be 20-25 minutes (10-12 pages in length; 2500-3000 words). Presenters must be currently paid members of the SPSCVA. (You do not need to be a member of the SPSCVA to submit a paper for consideration.) Please submit full papers only (not abstracts) through e-mail by 10 May to the Eastern Division coordinator Christopher Grau at grau@clemsun.edu <<mailto:grau@clemsun.edu>>

Deadline for full papers: 10 May 2011

Ethics and Existentialism

Special Interest Edition of *Film and Philosophy*. Submissions are invited concerning the ethical content of films, and the ethical implications of depicting certain types of behavior. Existential approaches to philosophizing about films are also sought after, as are articles on directors whose films reflect an existentialist sensibility. Essays that relate films to ethical theory, and to such classic existential themes as dread, guilt, authenticity, nihilism, absurdity, etc. are particularly welcome. Articles should be 2500-7500 words, using the Chicago Manual of Style’s system of endnotes (with all relevant bibliographic information included therein). Email Daniel Shaw at <dshaw@lhup.edu>.

Deadline: 30 June 2011

4th Annual Comics and Popular Arts Conference at Dragon*Con

Atlanta, Georgia
2-5 September 2011

The Institute for Comic Studies, together with Dragon*Con, present their fourth annual academic conference for the studies of comics and the popular arts. The conference will take place at Dragon*Con, the largest multimedia, popular culture convention focusing on science fiction and fantasy, gaming, comics, literature, art, music, and film in the US. For more info on Dragon*Con, visit <http://dragoncon.org>.

Please submit a proposal that engages in substantial scholarly examinations of comic books, manga, graphic novels, anime, science/speculative fiction, fantasy, or other parts of popular culture. A broad range of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives is being sought, including literary and art criticism, philosophy, linguistics, history, and communication. Proposals may range from discussions of the nature of the comics medium, analyses of particular works and authors, discussions of the visual language of comics and manga, comics and pop culture in the classroom, cross-cultural and cross-medium comparisons, and more. We're open to any topics relevant to the study of comics and the popular arts.

This conference at Dragon*Con represents the Institute for Comics Studies' mission to promote the study, understanding, and cultural legitimacy of comics and to support the discussion and dissemination of this study and understanding via public venues.

Send any questions to: thehangedman@gmail.com.

Deadline: 15 May 2011

The Dragon Tattoo and Philosophy

Open Court Books is currently accepting Abstracts and Proposals for *The Dragon Tattoo and Philosophy*, edited by Sara Livingston and Josef Steiff for publication in late 2012. Your proposal can address any iteration of the Millennium Trilogy: the books, the films, the TV series, or the real-life drama surrounding the life and death of author Stieg Larsson.

You may use philosophy (or literary theory and/or media theory with philosophical underpinnings) as a tool to create a deeper and more thoughtful exploration and understanding of issues raised in this property. The

Millennium Trilogy, including *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* contains characters and situations filled with contemporary ethical, moral, social, psychological, feminist, and epistemological issues ripe for philosophical discussion.

Your proposal should be 1 to 2 pages that briefly summarize and outline your analysis. Finished manuscripts will be approximately 3500–4500 words; further guidelines will be provided to accepted contributors. Initial proposal submissions are due by 15 May 2011. Acceptances will be notified by no later than 1 September. First drafts would be due in late November 2011. Please submit your initial proposal/abstract/outline to ocbook@gmail.com.

Deadline for proposals: 15 May 2011

How to Make Believe: The Fictional Truths of the Representational Arts

University of Lund, Sweden
15-17 March 2012

We are looking for proposals that investigate these specific ways of generation of fictional truths within all representational arts. We are inviting proposals from scholars within the whole range of the Humanities. Possible topics of investigation include case-studies of the generation of fictional truths in literature, film, narrative in general, theater, opera, dance, painting, photography, visual arts in general, computer games, music. We especially welcome contributions that focus on works of art in lesser known areas of research, such as the graphic novel, radio theatre and other possible genres and media which so far have been neglected in research about their specific ways of generating fictional truths. We also like to especially encourage papers working with interdisciplinary and interartial approaches, e.g. studies that focus on adaptations of novels into movies, or any other kind of interrelation between the generation of fictional truth in different categories of the representational arts. Besides contributions about specific categories within the arts as well as specific artworks, we are also interested in contributions that further investigate more general topics within the theoretical framework, e.g., but not exclusively the so-called principles of generation: the reality principle, the mutual believe principle, the principle of minimal departure, the principle of genre convention, the principle of media convention, as well as newly formulated principles for the generation of fictional truths, or other topics of more general character within the theoretical frame of fiction as make-

believe. Keynote speakers: Gregory Currie, University of Nottingham (Great Britain) Peter Lamarque, University of York (Great Britain) Stein Haugom Olsen, Høgskolen i Østfold (Norway) Kendall L. Walton, University of Michigan (USA). Please provide the title and a 300-word abstract of the paper you propose; your name, institutional affiliation, and email address; and a brief statement (no more than 100 words) about your work and your publications. Due to pending decisions on fund raising, a conference fee may be charged. Please send your proposal to alexander.bareis@tyska.lu.se, as well as any requests for further information. Announcement of accepted proposals by 1 September 2011.

Deadline: 1 July 2011

***Trópos: Journal of Hermeneutics and Philosophical Criticism* issue on "Thinking Creativity"**

The idea that art is (the result of) a process of creation is a modern one. Through a complex history, which is not without contradictions, in the 20th Century the connection between art and creativity was debated in different fields – psychology, epistemology, cognitive science etc. – and became the target of attacks from Marxism and (Post-)Structuralism.

Philosophical papers are welcome that investigate the theoretical issues raised above. They may offer, for instance: methodological researches ('Which methodological approach best suits the task of understanding creativity?'); historical-philosophical reconstructions ('Is it still possible to argue for creativity in the aftermath of the critiques given by Marxism and Post-Structuralism?'); ('What is creativity in contemporary art, and how to we discern it?'); theoretical arguments ('What does it mean to think creativity in extra-aesthetic contexts?'). Articles should be written in English or Italian and should have no indication of the writer's identity on them, allowing for blind refereeing. They should not exceed 6,500 words and should include an abstract (in English) of no more than 200 words. Papers must use the author-date system. The texts in English must be written according to the specifications of The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2003). The Works Cited page should appear at the end of your paper and start on a separate sheet.

Submissions should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere. In the case of your paper being accepted, you will also be asked to provide a biographical

note of between 50 and 60 words in length. Manuscripts should be submitted by email attachment in a single file (.doc), including the abstract and the paper, to <tropos.filosofia@unito.it>.

Deadline for submission: 31 August 2011

2012 ISPA Conference

Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
11-13 July 2012

The International Society for the Philosophy of Architecture is presenting a conference on "Ethics and Aesthetics of Architecture and the Environment."

In taking on the aesthetic in a manner that pushes its considerations beyond the realm of mere beauty, questions of ethics often arise. Indeed, Wittgenstein is quoted as saying, "ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" (1921: §6.421). Questions as to why, for instance, a building's form takes the shape it does raises not only conventional aesthetic questions but also questions about what purpose or meaning the building serves beyond purely visual stimulation. Does the form for instance relate somehow to a social ideal or economic ideal? And if so, is this ideal something that its inhabitants subscribe to or are even aware of? In an effort to draw thinkers attention to the ethical role architecture plays as well as the ethical function architects play, the second part of this conference call addresses this often overlooked dimension of architecture. Calling both philosophers and architects to grapple with questions regarding the ethical and aesthetic qualities of architecture, the hope is to propel the discourse beyond the limitations of a purely visual understanding of the architectural experiences.

Paper Abstracts should clearly address one of the highlighted themes above. Each abstract should be no longer than 500 words and should address one of the above or related topics and should be clearly marked if intended for a panel session.

Deadline for abstracts: 28 October 2011

Paris International Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences Research

Paris (France), Hotel Concorde La Fayette,
24-28 July 2012

The congress will bring together humanities and social sciences (HSS) researchers, scientists, academicians, experts, engineers, developers, administrators and other HSS

research-related professionals and practitioners from all over the world. The aims are to promote multidisciplinary dialogue and mutual cross-fertilization of ideas and methods; to offer a place for participants to present, discuss, and showcase innovative recent and ongoing HSS research works and their applications or development; to update on- and explore new ways and directions; and to take advantage of opportunities for contacts, interaction, international collaboration and networking. All areas of Humanities and Social Sciences research are invited: anthropology and ethnology; applied mathematics, statistics and sciences for HSS research; archaeology; area studies; arts; business administration; classics; communication studies; cultural studies; demography; development studies; economics; environmental studies; epistemology; gender studies; geography; history; information science; international relations; languages and cultures; law; linguistics and language sciences; literature; philosophy; policy, epistemology and methodology of multi-, inter-, trans- and cross-disciplinary HSS research; political science; psychology; religion; research policy, administration and strategies; and sociology. Proposals are in the form of abstracts. Session formats include individual paper sessions, symposia, workshops, roundtables and poster sessions. The languages of the congress are English and French. Closing date for early bird registration: 29 February 2012. For more information, submission and registration: <<http://education-conferences.org/homehss.aspx>>. Contact: <Paris-Conference@analytrics.org>

Deadline for abstract submission: 30 October 2011

Rivista di Estetica

This issue of *Rivista di Estetica* is focused on wine. Why does this drink, that since ancient times has been considered the "nectar of the gods", never stop raising cultural, philosophical and aesthetical interest? Under a philosophical perspective, wine may be analyzed in at least three different ways. First, from an ontological point of view: explaining what kind of object wine is, what kinds of objects are tastes, aromas, and what is the difference between taste and tasting. Then from an epistemological point of view: what does it mean to know, to identify, to appreciate and to value a wine? What do its aesthetical properties correspond to? And in general what is the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity? Finally, from an ethical-social point of view: why is wine considered an expression of pleasure and conviviality, and a

cultural symbol? Each of these areas makes reference to specifically aesthetic considerations as well as to topics in philosophy of language (How does the lexicon of tasting work? What are the referents of taste terms?) and to philosophical anthropology (the relation between nature and culture). Contributors are invited to submit papers along those guidelines. All editorial correspondence should be addressed to <tiziana.andina@unito.it>

Deadline: 30 October 2011

Graduate Conference in Aesthetics

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
April 2012

A one-day conference occurring the Sunday after the ASA Eastern Meeting. Keynote speaker: Sherri Irvin, University of Oklahoma. The conference will accept for presentation five of the highest quality papers from students enrolled in M.A. or Ph.D. programs. A prize of \$200 will be awarded to a student with an outstanding paper. Submissions must be no longer than 3000 words and accompanied by a 100 word abstract. Please email submissions to the conference organizer, John Dyck, at <john.dyck@gmail.com>.

Deadline: December 2011

Upcoming Events

ASA Rocky Mountain Division Meeting

Santa Fe, New Mexico
8-10 July 2011

Keynote Address: Robert Ginsberg, Director, International Center for the Arts, Humanities, and Value Inquiry, and Professor Emeritus, Pennsylvania State University, Delaware County, speaking on: "From the Aesthetics of Ruins to the Ruins of Aesthetics." Artist at Work: Sally Weber, Resonance Studio, Austin, Texas, <<http://www.sallyweber.com>>.

For information, please contact one of the officers: Dr. Linda Dove, President, ASA/RMD, email: <ciphercanyon@earthlink.net>; Dr. James Mock, Vice President, ASA/RMD, Department of Humanities and Philosophy, Box 184, College of Liberal Arts, University of Central Oklahoma, 100 North University Drive, Edmond, OK 73034-5209, email: <jmock@uco.edu>; or Dr. Elizabeth Graham, Secretary/Treasurer, ASA/RMD, Sociology, Brandon University, 270-18th Street, Brandon, Manitoba, Canada, R7A 6A9, email: <GrahamE@BrandonU.CA>.

ASA Annual Meeting

Tampa, Florida
26-29 October 2011

The next annual meeting will be held in Tampa, Florida from 26-29 October 2011 at the Sheraton Riverwalk Hotel. Kevin Sweeney is local arrangements chair and James Shelley is program chair. The 2012 meeting will be in St. Louis, Missouri 24 October 24 through 27 October 2012. As 2011 marks the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of David Hume, the Program Committee proposes a set of broadly Humean themes for the 2011 annual meeting.

Sixth International Conference on the Arts in Society

Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Berlin, Germany
9-11 May 2011

The International Conference on the Arts in Society and the *International Journal of the Arts in Society* provide a scholarly platform for discussions of the arts and art practices, enabling an interdisciplinary conversation on the role of the arts in society. They are intended as a place for critical engagement, examination and experimentation of ideas that connect the arts to their contexts in the world - in studios and classrooms, in galleries and museums, on stage, on the streets and in communities.

As well as an impressive line-up of plenary speakers, the conference will also include numerous paper, workshop and colloquium presentations by practitioners, teachers and researchers. We would particularly like to invite you to respond to the conference Call-for-Papers. Presenters may choose to submit written papers for publication in *The International Journal of the Arts in Society*. If you are unable to attend the conference in person, virtual registrations are also available which allow you to submit a paper for refereeing and possible publication.

Whether you are a virtual or in-person presenter at this conference, we also encourage you to present on the Arts in Society YouTube Channel. Please select the Online Sessions link on the conference website for further details. Additionally, please join our online conversation by subscribing to our monthly email newsletter and subscribing to our Facebook, RSS, or Twitter feeds at <http://www.Arts-Conference.com/>.

Full details of the conference, including an online proposal submission form, may be

found on the conference website at <http://www.Arts-Conference.com/>.

Metaphor and Communication

Cagliari, Italy
12-14 May 2011

We are pleased to announce the International Conference on Metaphor organized by the Italian Association for Metaphor Studies - Metaphor Club and the University of Cagliari. The Metaphor Club Conference is usually held every two years and the purpose of Conference 2011 is to discuss the role of metaphor in communication, by exploring some of the major issues in contemporary metaphor theories. The conference will be divided into four sections, having as main subject of discussion the following topics:

Keynote and Invited Speakers include Robyn Carston (University College London), Sam Glucksberg (Princeton University), Roberto Muffoletto (Appalachian University, Boone North Carolina), Jeannette Littlemore (University of Birmingham). Joan Elies Adell i Pitarch (Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona), John Barden (University of Birmingham), Alessio Ceccherelli (University of Rome Tor Vergata), Maurizio Galluzzo (IUAV, Venezia), Stefano Gensini (University of Rome "La Sapienza"), Emiliano Ilardi (University of Cagliari), Stefania Manca (Institute for Educational Technology, Genova), Rachel Sutton-Spence (University of Bristol), Daniela Veronesi (Free University of Bozen).

For further information, please contact metaphor2011@gmail.com or visit the website at sites.google.com/site/metaphor2011

Registration: 12 May 2011

Art, Aesthetics and the Sciences Graduate Conference in association with the AHRC project: Method in Philosophical Aesthetics: the Challenge from the Sciences

The University of Nottingham
16 May 2011

The University of Nottingham and the University of Leeds in association with the AHRC funded project 'Method in Philosophical Aesthetics: The Challenge from the Sciences' present a one day graduate conference investigating the relevance of recent empirical developments to the study of aesthetics.

The methods of philosophical aesthetics, in line with those of philosophy more generally, have tended to be broadly a priori in nature. For instance, the traditional methodology of

analytic aesthetics has relied heavily on the reflective analysis of concepts and appeals to suitably-informed intuitions. Some notable aestheticians even went so far as to argue that it is impossible in principle for empirical work to have any bearing on philosophical issues in aesthetics. Recently, however, a number of theorists--both philosophers and those from other disciplines--have come to advocate a different approach to the study of aesthetics, based on empirical investigation and guided by developments in the sciences. This conference provides an opportunity for graduate students from different disciplines to present and discuss high quality work relating to this recent trend. Keynote Speaker: Jesse Prinz (CUNY)

Advanced registration is not required but please email if you plan to attend and provide information about any dietary or mobility requirements. A number of bursaries towards subsistence and accommodation costs are available for postgraduate students wishing to attend the conference. To apply for a bursary or for any other queries please contact Dr. Jon Robson (jonvrobson@googlemail.com). For further details see <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/humanities/aesthetics/news.html>.

28th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Aesthetics

Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada
28-30 May 2011

Congress Theme: "Coasts and Continents: Exploring Peoples and Places / Rivages et continents: exploration des peuples et des lieux." For more information, contact Ira Newman at inewman@mansfield.edu or see <http://www.csa-sce.ca/en/index.htm>.

Dutch Association of Aesthetics Annual Conference

Ghent, Belgium
27-28 May 2011

The Dutch Association of Aesthetics (<http://nge.nl/daa/>) is a society for everyone interested in theoretical, philosophical and critical reflection on the arts and the aesthetic dimensions of contemporary culture. The association offers a meeting place for philosophers, artists, art critics, art scientists, and people employed in art education and art policy. Keynote speakers are: Paul Crowther (National University of Ireland, Galway) and Jerrold Levinson (University of Maryland).

Conference languages are Dutch and English. Conference venue: Ghent University,

The ASA would like to offer its sincere gratitude to Charlene Waldron, who served as administrative assistant to the ASA until the termination of our agreement with Armstrong Atlantic State University. Thank you, Charlene.

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Blandijnberg
2, 9000 Gent.

**6th Annual International Conference on
Philosophy**
Athens, Greece
30 May-2 June 2011

The Philosophy Research Unit of the Athens Institute for Education and Research (AT. IN.E.R.) organizes its 6th Annual International Conference on Philosophy, 30 May-2 June 2011. For programs of previous conferences and other information visit the conference website at <www.atiner.gr/philosophy.htm>. The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars and students of philosophy. Selected papers will be published in a Special Volume of the Conference Proceedings.

First Biannual Meeting of the North American Kant Society
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
2-4 June 2011

Papers are in the three areas of Kant's philosophy: theoretical, practical and aesthetic. For further information, contact Anderson-Gold: <anders@rpi.edu>.

Aesthetics, Art and Pornography
Institute of Philosophy, London
16-18 June 2011

The aim of this conference is to investigate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the artistic status and aesthetic dimension of pornographic pictures, films, and literature.

The conference will bring together philosophers and aestheticians, art historians and film theorists, to explore these topics. This interdisciplinary approach is intended to throw new light on these general questions, and to lead to a more accurate and subtle understanding of the range of representations that incorporate explicit sexual imagery and themes, in both high art and demotic culture, in Western and non-Western contexts.

Contact Hans Maes at <H.Maes@kent.ac.uk> for more information.

The State of Aesthetics
Chancellor's Hall, Institute of Philosophy,
London
23-24 June 2011

An international conference sponsored by the AHRC project "Method in Philosophical Aesthetics: The Challenge from the Sciences", the Institute of Philosophy, the Brit-

ish Society of Aesthetics, the University of Leeds, the University of Nottingham, and the Open University.

The conference has three themes: aesthetics and philosophy, aesthetics and the art world, and aesthetics and the human sciences. In addition, we will have a panel discussion on teaching aesthetics in art school and other non-philosophical contexts.

Information regarding registration and accommodations is available through the conference website:

<<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/state-of-aesthetics/registration.shtml>>. Please address any additional queries to Dr. Margaret Moore at <M.Moore@leeds.ac.uk>.

Music and Philosophy: 1st Annual Conference of the Royal Musical Association Music and Philosophy Study Group
London, UK
1-2 July 2011

The RMA Music and Philosophy Study Group will have their inaugural two-day international conference in London on 1-2 July 2011. The event, the first of an annual series of conferences run by the Study Group, will offer an opportunity for musicologists and philosophers to share and discuss work in the

hope of furthering dialogue between the two disciplines. This year's theme is 'Opera and Philosophy'. Please contact the conference organizer for more information: Dr Nanette1 Nielsen, at <nanette.nielsen@nottingham.ac.uk>.

**V Mediterranean Congress of Aesthetics
"Art, Emotion and Value"**

Cartagena (Spain)
4-8 July 2011

Confirmed invited speakers are: Dominique Chateau (University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne), Rachida Triki (University of Tunis), José Luis Molinuevo (University of Salamanca) and Anna Christina Ribeiro (Texas Tech University).

As in former editions, the congress aims at providing a frame for inter-disciplinary discussion and cross-methodological interests. We encourage artists and specialists from all sorts of disciplines related to art and aesthetics to participate in the congress; graduate students and early researchers are also encouraged to participate at the conference.

Official languages of the congress are, English, French, and Spanish. For more information see webpage: <<http://www.um.es/vmca/>>.

The British Society of Aesthetics 2011 Annual Conference

Old College, Edinburgh
16-18 September 2011

See <<http://www.british-aesthetics.org>> for more details.

Unsettled Boundaries: Philosophy, Art, and Ethics East/West

Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
12-14 October 2011

The aims of this exciting international conference are to advance mutual scholarly communication and intercultural understanding of issues in contemporary aesthetics and its relation to philosophy and art. Through the papers and the publication that follows we hope to contribute to global appreciation of common ground and differences existing in contemporary approaches to the topic. You are invited to attend this conference and to participate in scholarly dialogue that ranges from East to West.

The conference sessions are free and open to all who have an interest in the subject. Ad-

vanced registration is requested. Additional activities may be registered for (see our website) after 1 August by sending your name, affiliation (if you have one), and activities you'd like to attend to: <universityspecialevents@marquette.edu>. Please send checks for meal reservations to: Department of Philosophy Marquette University P.O. Box 1881, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881.

For more information, contact Curtis L. Carter at <curtis.carter@marquette.edu>, Department of Philosophy, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, 53201. Office phone: (414) 288-6962. Please also visit our website at: <unsettledboundaries.wordpress.com>.

"The Power to Imagine Better": The Philosophy of Harry Potter

New York, New York
October 29 2011

Contact the conference coordinator, Carrie-Ann Biondi (Assistant Prof. of Philosophy, Dept. of Philosophy & Religious Studies), at (212) 517-0637 or <cbiondi@mmm.edu>.

Annual Meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) 2011

Cleveland, Ohio
2-5 November 2011

The intersection of art, science and technology constitutes a burgeoning field of artistic practice and a productive site for the development of new theoretical approaches in science studies. For this panel, we invite submissions from artists practicing in this area as well as theorists grounded in science studies, history and philosophy of science, art history, literary theory and related disciplines whose research addresses the novel questions posed by these new artistic practices. We seek to generate a productive exchange about the hybrid methodologies necessary to theorize these artworks and their contribution to science studies. In the interest of generating approaches to art criticism and interpretation that are informed by science studies, we intend to bring to bear the approaches of a group of theorists on one or more artists or artworks. We welcome submissions on topics that address the significance of scientific materials and methods as artistic media; critical practices within sci-art; the rhetoric of scientific and/or artistic expertise in the production and reception of sci-art; and artworks and theoretical approaches that engage with specific fields such as bio-art, synthetic biology, systems of classification, models of experimental practice, scientific instrumentation, environmental art and nano-art. Looking

at the way these works position themselves in relation to science and technology, we will reflect on what tools may be developed for use in other disciplinary arenas as well as considering the ways these artworks engage and respond to debates within science studies.

Touched: Philosophy Meets Art

University of Liverpool, England
19 November 2010

Some of the most prevalent views in the history of philosophy and art have suggested that philosophy and art are both devoted to the discovery of "universal" truths and should result in works, textual or non-textual, that must remain untouched: their value must defy time and transcend space. Yet neither philosophy nor art can be divorced from concrete experience and they both make a claim on our thinking and being—on our most refined concepts and reasoning as well as our most unrefined desires, emotions and dreams. The distance between "knowing oneself" and "making oneself" seems blurred, and to get our bearings we turn to philosophy and to art: they both issue in forms of experience that intensely influence the way we situate ourselves in the world, the way we construct our personal, community, and cultural identities.

We ask: is there a role for touching in the aesthetic division of labour, which is indisputably dominated by the seeing and hearing that seem to safeguard the distance between the work of art and us? How would this change the set of metaphors that still guide our understanding of artistic creation and reception? And then a question of unexpected resonance: are we touched by Art? How do works of art transform the way we understand and form our identities? And indeed, do art festivals such as the Biennial prompt personal, cultural, and social change?

For more information, see <http://www.liv.ac.uk/philosophy/events/conferences/Philosophy_Meets_Art/index.htm> or contact Dr. Panayiota Vassilopoulou at <yiota@liv.ac.uk>.

Active Aestheticians

The Polish journal, *Sztuka i Filozofia (Art and Philosophy)* has just published a special issue (No. 37, 2010) honoring the work of **ARNOLD BERLEANT**. Among the contributors are ASA members **YURIKO SAITO**, **CHERYL FOSTER**, **CRISPIN SARTWELL**, and **MARA MILLER**. In addition, The Rhode Island School of Design has announced that Professor Berleant will be awarded the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts *honoris causa* at its 128th commencement on 4 June 2011. He will also be a keynote speaker at the international conference on "Transition Landscapes/ Paysages en Transition" organized by the Centre of Philosophy, University of Lisbon (Portugal) on 7 October 2011.

LEE B. BROWN and **DAVID GOLDBLATT**, editors, published the 3rd edition of their *Aesthetics: A Reader In Philosophy of the Arts*, with Pearson/Prentice Hall.

JOS DE MUL published, *Cyberspace Odyssey: Towards a Virtual Ontology and Anthropology* with Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

DAVID GOLDBLATT and **ROGER PADEN**, editors, published *The Aesthetics of Architecture: Philosophical Investigations into the Art of Building*, with Wiley/Blackwell. The publication is the book version of the Special Issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Winter 2011).

JOHN T. GOLDTHWAIT published two novels, titled *Falling Back to Earth* and *This Ungodly Crew*, with the Xlibris publishing house, a print-on-demand house. Goldthwait

believes he is one of the longest-enrolled members of ASA having belonged "for something around 45 or 50 years."

ANDREW KANIA has been granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor at Trinity University, San Antonio.

ANDREW KANIA and **THEODORE GRACYK** have published the *Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music* (Routledge).

Would you like to be featured in "Active Aestheticians" in our next newsletter? Please share any information you might have about your professional achievements with the editors at: <goldblatt@denison.edu> or <henry.pratt@marist.edu>.

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ASA Newsletter

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Deadlines: 1 November, 15 April, 1 August