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Oregon Humanities Center

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Paleoanthropologist will talk about Human Origins and the “Hobbit People”

At first the researchers thought they had discovered the skeletal remains of a child when they unearthed some bones of a tiny bipedal hominid in a cave on the remote Indonesian island of Flores in 2004. But further study of the bones and teeth proved the specimen to have been a full-grown female, about 30 years old, and only three feet tall. And what's more, the researchers found remains of six other similar beings—as well as the remains of pygmy elephants, giant rats, komodo dragons, and tools these diminutive people may have used to hunt—indicating that what they had found was not simply a modern human stunted by disease or malnutrition, but rather the remains of pygmy survivors from an earlier era.

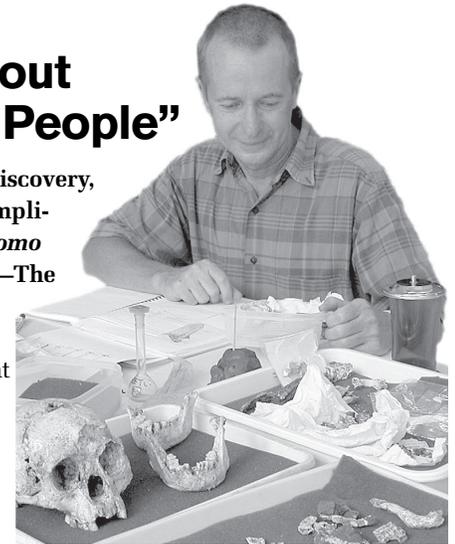
Australian paleoanthropologist **Peter Brown** will talk about the discovery of *Homo floresiensis* in a slide lecture entitled “A Revolution in

Evolution: Discovery, Story, and Implications of *Homo floresiensis*—The Hobbits” on **Wednesday, February 8 at 7:30 p.m. in 180 PLC** as the Oregon Humanities Center's 2005-06

Cressman Lecturer. The lecture is free and open to the public.

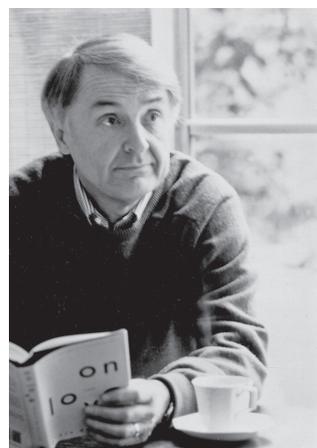
The miniature hominids unearthed by Brown and the team of scientists with whom he

continued on page 2



Pomona Philosopher to Give Lecture on Post-modern Human Identity and Belonging

Stephen A. Erickson, the E. Wilson Lyon Professor of the Humanities and Professor of Philosophy at Pomona College, will present a



lecture sponsored by the Oregon Humanities Center winter quarter. On **February 23 at 4 p.m. in Gerlinger Lounge**, Professor Erickson will ask, “**Can Philosophy Renew our Human Identity?**” Erickson will argue that we now

live in a particularly uncertain world; that this uncertainty is engendering a renewed sense of the need for human belonging; and that globalization, while offering a promise of global unity, is in fact often disorienting and uprooting. We in the modern West live in the wake of the Enlightenment, with its embracing of Reason. Professor Erickson will explore how non-rational—though not necessarily irrational—elements are beginning to transform our unfolding twenty-first century identities, and how we now seem to be moving in a decidedly *post-modern* direction, for better or for worse.

Professor Erickson's areas of expertise include Heidegger; European thought; crises in contemporary values systems; and the future

continued on page 3

Reflections on a Fellowship

During Fall Quarter 2004, I moved from my hectic life of teaching and advising in the German Department in Friendly Hall to the quiet confines of the Oregon Humanities Center. It was a special pleasure to fill my bookshelves only with the materials I needed for my research on my book project, "Poetic Encounters: Gender Constructs in Early Twentieth-Century German Literature."



I worked on two chapters devoted to the close friendships between expressionist poets Else Lasker-Schüler and Peter Hille between 1899 and 1904, and the love encounter between symbolist poet Rainer Maria Rilke and feminist intellectual Lou Andreas-Salomé around 1898.

Peter Hille's poetry has generally been overlooked. My research redresses this neglect and focuses on the Jewish-Christian dialogue that is revealed in the encounter between Hille and Lasker-Schüler. I presented my research on Rilke and Andreas-Salomé in a work-in-progress talk on "Articulate Madonnas: Rilke's Reception of the Renaissance" at the Humanities Center. In 1898, Rilke ded-

icated his "Florence Diary" to Andreas-Salomé. By calling Andreas-Salomé his "Madonna," Rilke draws on his understanding of the Madonna in Renaissance painting. Rilke's discussions engage the contradictions between motherhood and virginity as explored by Renaissance painters like Botticelli. Andreas-Salomé becomes, for Rilke, a modern, secularized Madonna, a fact that has been largely ignored by Rilke scholarship.

My time at the Humanities Center has had long lasting effects. Through lectures in Germany, based on my work as an OHC research fellow, I met the future publisher of my book and I established collaborations with researchers that will lead to further international exchanges of research efforts. We are now working on a special grant proposal to organize a lecture series on "Subversive Trends in Early Twentieth-Century Culture." My success with the OHC fellowship inspired me to continue grant-writing endeavors in order to find more time for my personal research and for furthering international exchanges among researchers. My students benefit immensely from these activities because my excitement about newly developed ideas translates into an engaged teaching style.

I am very grateful to the Oregon Humanities Center for its gracious support of my research, and the research of my colleagues, here at the University of Oregon.

Dorothee Ostmeier
Associate Professor of German
Director of Graduate Studies

Peter Brown

continued from front page

is working is one of the most spectacular discoveries in evolutionary science in the last half century, and one which Brown says is "truly remarkable, and [which] could not have been predicted by previous discoveries." These pre-historic dwarf humans, nicknamed "hobbits" by the popular press, lived—and may have co-existed with modern humans—some 18,000 years ago on an isolated island in Asia, and their discovery is serving to broaden our understanding of aspects of human evolution, human migration, human interactions with the environment, and basic conceptions of what it is to be human.

Peter Brown is a professor of Paleoanthropology at the University of New England in New South Wales, Australia, where he teaches Human Evolution, Forensic Anthropology, and Paleoanthropology. His research concentrates on the origins and evolution of people in the Australian and Asian regions, a broad research theme which has kept him busy with museum collections, field work, and the laboratory for more than twenty years.

For more information, or for disability accommodations, please call 541-346-3934.



Skull of *Homo floresiensis* compared with *Homo sapiens*.

**Oregon Humanities Center
Graduate Research Fellowship
applications are due
February 13, 2006.**

Leading Figure in Evolution and Literary Theory to Give Talks

The Oregon Humanities Center is collaborating with the **Institute of Cognitive and Decision Sciences** during winter term to bring **Joseph Carroll**, Professor of English at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, to the UO campus for a public lecture and afternoon colloquium.

Carroll is a leading figure in Darwinian Literary Studies—a field which combines the fields of evolution and literary theory. His best known book is *Evolution and Literary Theory* (1994).



He will be giving two presentations while on campus. On **Thursday, January 26 at 3:30 p.m.** in **Gerlinger Lounge**, Carroll will give a public lecture entitled **“Evolution, Human Nature, and Literature: Toward a New Humanities.”**

On **Friday, January 27 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.**, Carroll will be offering an informal colloquium in the Oregon Humanities Center Conference Room, 159 PLC. Participants are asked to read his article **“Human Nature and Literary Meaning”** before the meeting. The article is available on-line, in pdf format at: www.umsl.edu/~engjcarr/web_documents/0415970148.14.rev.pdf. Seating is limited to twenty at the afternoon colloquium, so please come early. For more information, call 541-346-3934.

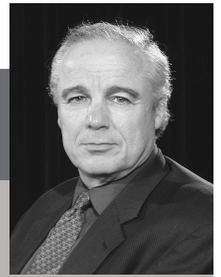
Stephen Erickson

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of human spirituality. In his current research, he is exploring the historical roots and the contemporary meaning of terrorism; medicine’s role in enhancing and/or altering human identity; and the intersection of religion and culture in our time. He is the author of *The (Coming) Age of Thresholding* (1999), *Human Presence at the Boundaries of Meaning* (1984), and *Language and Being* (1970). An influential and beloved teacher, he is the recipient of several awards for distinguished teaching at Pomona College.

OHC Director’s Report

by Steve Shankman



During fall term the Humanities Center, together with CAS Humanities Associate Dean Steve Durrant, organized two roundtables to discuss the state of the Humanities at the University of Oregon, and to assess where we are in relation to the state of the Humanities at other institutions nationwide. Before I give you a sense of our assessment, I’d like to fill in some background.

At the request of the AAU (Association of American Universities) Executive Committee, an AAU Task Force on the Status and Role of the Humanities was established in 2001 in order to examine the status and role of the Humanities in higher education among AAU institutions in the U.S. These institutions, including the University of Oregon, contributed data and specific examples of successful practices to a survey that was conducted in the summer of 2002. In October 2003, the AAU issued a report entitled *Reinvigorating the Humanities: Enhancing Research and Education on Campus and Beyond*. Starting in the spring of 2005, individual campuses began holding roundtables to discuss the findings and recommendations of this report, and to investigate how the questions raised are relevant to these discrete institutions and their communities. In early December, comments, recommendations, and suggestions from the individual AAU campuses were forwarded to the AAU Task Force and will form the framework for a national convocation on the Humanities in May 2006, sponsored jointly by the AAU and the ACLS. The convocation will bring together leaders from universities, foundations, professional associations, federal agencies, and congressional committees to draft a set of national objectives for the Humanities and to determine new areas of priority in higher education. The convocation will depend heavily upon the information gathered from our roundtable discussions.

Our roundtables were composed of Humanities department heads and other leaders in the Humanities. The AAU and ACLS recommended that the group be composed of about fifteen faculty and administrators from a variety of humanistic disciplines, and we followed their advice. President Frohnmayer kicked off the first session by expressing his support of the roundtable initiative and of the Humanities. I also consulted with the Advisory Board of the Humanities Center. We passed on the substance of our eight hours of roundtable discussions to the AAU and ACLS for inclusion in the report to be discussed at the national convocation in May, 2006. The general feeling among faculty was that the Humanities are strong at the University of Oregon, despite the obvious challenges created by chronic under-funding at the state level. Our faculty are remarkably collegial and enjoy engaging in many interdisciplinary, collaborative projects.

Our efforts to assess the state of the Humanities at the University of Oregon go well beyond our contribution to the upcoming Humanities convocation. We wish to use our discussions to work towards assessing our strengths, as well as determining those areas we would like to see improved. Our aim is to compose, by the end of this academic year, a terse but comprehensive statement about the health of the Humanities at the University of Oregon. I encourage you to write to me (shankman@uoregon.edu) or to Julia Heydon (jheydon@uoregon.edu) with any ideas you would like us to consider for inclusion in that statement.



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Call 541-346-3934 or send an e-mail to: peg@uoregon.edu.

Mark Your Calendars

We continue our series of **work-in-progress talks** by University of Oregon faculty and graduate students on their current or recent research on **Fridays** at **noon** in the Humanities Center Conference Room, **159 PLC**. Brown-bag lunches are welcome!

January

- 20 Chet Bowers**, environmental studies, will speak on "Beyond Complicity: University Reform in an Era of Weakened Democracy and Environmental Crises."

February

- 10 William Rossi**, English, and the 2005-06 Ernest G. Moll Professor, will speak on "*Walden's* Double Evolutionary Narrative."
- 17 Lori Kruckenberg**, music, will speak on "A New Kind of Song: *Congaudentes exultemus* and the Sequence, ca. 1100."

March

- 10 Michael Aronson**, English, will speak on "Boring Spectacle: The Production of Localness in the 'Local View' Film, 1914-1945."
- 17 Fabienne Moore**, romance languages, will speak on "Prose Poems of the French Enlightenment."

All faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend. The conference room seats eighteen; early arrival is recommended.

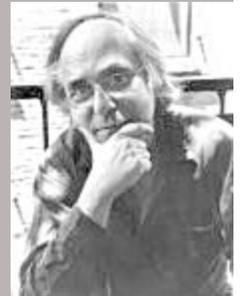
"Maus" Creator to Speak

Pulitzer Prize-winning illustrator and graphic novelist **Art Spiegelman** will give a talk about his book, *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004), which offers a searing response to 9/11, on **February 27, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.** in the Jaqua Concert Hall at **The Shedd**. For tickets and information, contact the Comparative Literature Program, 346-3986.

This lecture is part of the COLT Reading Project, a community-wide reading program initiated by the

Comparative Literature program and co-sponsored by the Oregon Humanities Center, which seeks to foster an engaged reading community both on and off campus.

For more information, go to <http://complit.uoregon.edu/events/index.htm>



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