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Oregon Humanities Center

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Winter 2014

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Science writer Craig Childs describes life on an apocalyptic planet

Are we facing the end of the world as we know it? If so, what will that end look like? Science writer and intrepid adventurer **Craig Childs** will contemplate some possible futures in his lecture “**Apocalyptic Planet: Field Guide to the Future of the Earth**” on **Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.** in **182 Lillis Hall** as the **OHC’s 2013–14 Robert D. Clark Lecturer**, and the second speaker in our “vulnerable” series.

Based on his many years of experience in the field, Childs asserts that this planet we call home is an unstable, constantly changing, and at times violent place to live. The Northridge, CA earthquake of 1994 brought this home to him in a visceral, deeply personal way, as he teetered about on the third floor of an apartment building



in Pasadena as the 6.7 temblor jolted the floor beneath him. As Childs notes, “Humans may have a big hand in carpeting the atmosphere with heat-trapping gases and dumping every toxin we can imagine into waterways, but when the earth begins to roll, it is no longer our game.”

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A modern doctor finds wisdom in Hildegard and the healing practices of the past

In recent years, many people have embraced the “Slow Food” movement as one antidote to our fast-paced, fast-food world. But how many of us have contemplated the potential benefits of “Slow Medicine?” Are there situations in which it might be more efficient to be “inefficient?” How does healing actually take place, and what facilitates it? What can we learn from pre-modern Western medicine—in which the human body was regarded more like a garden to be tended rather than a machine to be fixed—that might be of value to us today?

Prize-winning author and physician **Dr. Victoria Sweet**, this year’s **Tzedek Lecturer in the Humanities**, will share her story of how healing practices of the past have shaped her approach as a modern-day physician in her lecture “**God’s Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine.**” The lecture will take



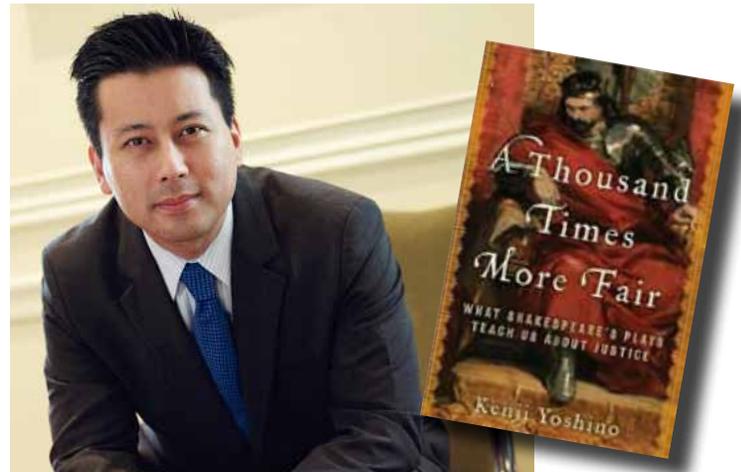
place in **Eugene** on **Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.** in **182 Lillis Hall**. It will be repeated on **Thursday, March 6th at 7:30 p.m.** at the **UO in Portland**, White Stag Block, 70 NW Couch St.

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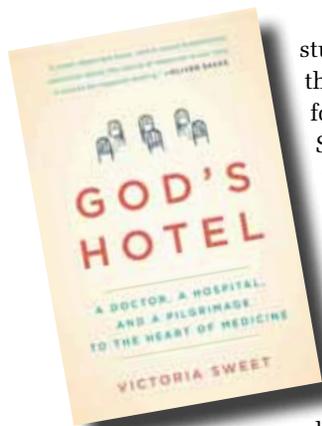
New! O'Fallon Lecture scheduled Kenji Yoshino tackles Shakespeare and modern justice

A new lecture has been added to the OHC's "vulnerable" series. The 2013–14 **Colin Ruagh Thomas O'Fallon Memorial Lecture in Law and American Culture** is slated for **Friday, April 11, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.** in **175 Knight Law Center**. Legal scholar **Kenji Yoshino** will consider these questions: Why is the rule of law better than revenge? How much mercy should we show a wrongdoer? What does it mean to "prove" guilt or innocence? In his talk "**A Thousand Times More Fair: What Shakespeare's Plays Teach Us About Justice**," Yoshino will show how the Bard's plays—and the many advocates, judges, criminals, and vigilantes who populate them—can elucidate some of the most troubling issues in contemporary life.

Look for more information in the spring newsletter and on our website: ohc.uoregon.edu.



Sweet *continued from page 1*



During her clinical work as a medical student, Dr. Sweet became curious about the *anima*—that mysterious invisible force that animates the physical body. Several years later, she happened upon the works of Hildegard of Bingen, a medieval abbess who was a theologian, visionary, and medical practitioner. Thus began Sweet's quest to understand the pre-modern view of the human body and healing, and her pursuit of a Ph.D. in the history of medicine. Serendipitously, her part-time job as a physician at San

Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital—the last almshouse in the country—allowed her not only the time she needed to study and write, but also a living laboratory in which to practice some of the medieval healing skills she was researching. She learned to embrace the "efficiency of inefficiency," and to get to know her patients on a deeply personal level, so that she could assist them in accessing their own inner source of healing—the *veriditas*, or "greenness" to which Hildegard refers in her writings. In short, Dr. Sweet's Ph.D. studies and her more than twenty years of experience at Laguna Honda changed the way she understands and practices medicine.



Sweet is an Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. She is also a practicing physician and a prize-winning historian, with a Ph.D. in history and social medicine. In addition to *God's Hotel* (2012), she has published a book on Hildegard of Bingen, *Rooted in the Earth, Rooted in the Sky: Hildegard of Bingen and Premodern Medicine* (Routledge, 2006), and several essays, including "Hildegard of Bingen and the Greening of Medieval Medicine" in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (1999).

The lectures are free and open to the public. The Eugene lecture will be followed by a book sale and signing. For more information, or for disability accommodations (which must be made by February 26th), please call (541) 346-3934.

Work-In-Progress talks are given by OHC research fellows on their current or recent work on **Fridays at noon** in the Humanities Center Conference Room, **159 PLC**. Brown-bag lunches are welcome.

January 17

Steven Shankman, English and Classics: "Turned Inside-Out: Reading the Russian Novel in Prison After Levinas"

January 24

Priscilla Peña Ovalle, English: "Hair/Style"

February 7

Gina Herrmann, Romance Languages: "Jorge Semprún: Duty of the Witness, Task of the Writer"

February 21

Qing Ye, Graduate Student, East Asian Languages and Literatures: "Aesthetic Beauty and Authentic Sentiment in the 18th-Century Chinese Domestic Novel *Guwangyan* (Preposterous Words)"

February 28

Mary Ganster, Graduate Student, English: "Imagining Revolutionary Spaces: Affect, Emotion, and Citizenship in 19th-Century Ethnic American Narrative"

Childs *continued from page 1*

Childs traveled the globe, visiting some of Earth's most remote and inhospitable places—including the driest deserts of Chile, the genetic wasteland of a cornfield in central Iowa, and the Greenland Ice Cap—and allowed the Earth to tell him some of its many stories of upheaval, change, and continual endings. Drawing upon geology, archaeology, biology, natural history, climate science, literary references, and personal reflections, Childs paints an engaging and evocative picture of the land beneath us, and the sixth mass extinction that scientists agree is underway.

Childs is a regular commentator for NPR's Morning Edition, and the author of more than a dozen critically acclaimed books, including *Apocalyptic Planet*—which won both the 2013 Orion Book Award and the 2013 Sigurd Olson Nature Writing Award—and *The Animal Dialogues: Uncommon Encounters in the Wild* (2009). His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Men's Journal*, *Outside*, and *Orion*. He is a contributing editor at *High Country News*, and he teaches writing at the University of Alaska in Anchorage, and at Southern New Hampshire University.

The lecture is free and open to the public, and will be followed by a book sale and signing. It will be live-streamed on our website at: ohc.uoregon.edu. For more information, or for disability accommodations (which must be made by January 21st) please call (541) 346-3934.

Lecture explores Kara Walker's silhouette imagery and films

The Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art will present a lecture and film screening by **Arlene R. Keizer** on **February 19, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.** in **180 PLC** in conjunction with its exhibit "Emancipating the Past: Kara Walker's Tales of Slavery and Power."

In her talk, "**8 Possible Beginnings: Slavery, Pornography, and Formal Origins**," Keizer will explore Walker's use of the visual language of pornography in her video art. Three of Walker's videos will be screened along with the lecture.

Keizer is a distinguished scholar of English and African American Studies at UC-Irvine.

She is the author of *Black Subjects: Identity Formation in the Contemporary Narrative of Slavery* (2004).

This event, which is free and open to the public, is co-sponsored by the Oregon Humanities Center's **Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities** as part of the 2013–14 "vulnerable" series. For more information go to jsma.uoregon.edu.

Director's Report



I write these words at the end of a busy and inspiring term at the Oregon Humanities Center, my first full term as this year's Interim Director. In November, we hosted the first of our series on the theme of Vulnerable, a galvanizing visit and lecture from the Cressman lecturer, Jeff Duncan-Andrade. Associate Professor of Raza Studies and Education at San Francisco State University and a master high school teacher in East Oakland for over twenty years, Duncan-Andrade spoke to a rapt audience about his innovative uses of critical pedagogy in urban high schools to help vulnerable youth succeed to become college-educated, contributing members of their communities. Duncan-Andrade also hosted energizing seminars with a group of faculty and local educators and a group of graduate students in Education, as well as giving an exciting interview for *UO Today*, our half-hour television program. You can view both Duncan-Andrade's lecture and interview for *UO Today* on our website.

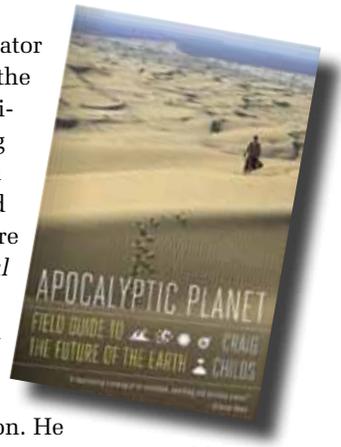
Duncan-Andrade's visit provided a terrific start to the Vulnerable series. During the next two terms, the OHC will host distinguished speakers from a variety of fields reflecting on the topic of vulnerability. We'll hear from the science writer and environmentalist Craig Childs (January), the physician and historian Victoria Sweet (March), the legal scholar and Shakespeare enthusiast Kenji Yoshino (April), and the cyber-security expert Bruce Schneier (May).

Members of our Faculty Advisory Board have recently completed deliberations to select next year's recipients for our Faculty Research and Faculty Teaching Fellowships. The pool of applicants was large and competitive this year, which made the selection process particularly challenging. The new fellows represent an impressive selection of the exceptional humanities research and teaching being done at UO. I look forward to hearing about the results of their fellowships next year in our annual series of Work-In-Progress talks, most Fridays from 12–1 p.m. in the OHC conference room on Campus (PLC 159).

Speaking of our Work-In-Progress talks, this past term we hosted five fascinating WIPs from the first cohort of this year's Research Fellows. Based on the fine quality of those talks, the WIPs scheduled for the remainder of the year will doubtless provide further enriching food for thought. Our calendar of events provides the details on these talks, our Vulnerable lectures, and the many other exciting humanities events on campus, many sponsored or supported by the OHC.

I want to conclude with a note of gratitude and admiration for the many people who help the OHC carry out its critical mission to promote and strengthen the humanities on campus and in the broader community: our exceptional staff, Faculty Advisory Board, Board of Visitors, and those many fellow devotees of the humanities at the UO, in Eugene, around the state of Oregon, and beyond who help support and advance the humanities. After serving as Interim Director of the Oregon Humanities Center for a term, I am more convinced than ever of the vital importance of that calling. With all the best wishes for an enlightening and stimulating New Year!

Paul Peppis, Interim Director





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OrchestraNEXT provides sizzling live music for ballet

Prior to its 2012 production of *The Nutcracker*, the Eugene Ballet had commissioned UO trumpet professor Brian McWhorter to write a piece called *Tyranny of the Senses*. McWhorter was therefore quite surprised when he

subsequently learned that for years the Ballet had been using recorded music for its annual performances of *The Nutcracker*.



McWhorter immediately set out to remedy this situation by establishing OrchestraNEXT—an ensemble uniting aspiring young orchestral musicians with some of the leading professionals in the Pacific Northwest. The group provides crucial experience for student musicians, and demonstrates to audiences that live music is essential to the art of ballet.

With support from the Oregon Hu-

manities Center’s **Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities**, OrchestraNEXT provided music for Eugene Ballet’s performance of Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker* in December 2012 and again in 2013. With additional support from the Endowment, the orchestra will collaborate once again with the Ballet to present Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade* and Maurice Ravel’s *Bolero* in February of 2014. The Ballet’s web site describes *Scheherazade* as “a visual feast of exotic scenery and costumes showcasing Dennis Spaight’s

sensual choreography” coupled with Rimsky’s dramatic orchestral interpretation of the classic *1001 Arabian Nights*. The performance will also include a sizzling interpretation of *Bolero* featuring an original choreography by Toni Pimble.

Scheherazade will be presented on **Saturday, February 15 at 7:30 p.m.** and **Sunday, February 16 at 2 p.m.** at the **Hult Center for the Performing Arts**. Tickets are \$28-\$53 at hultcenter.org or (541) 682-5000. For more information go to orchestranext.com or eugeneballet.org

