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Oregon Humanities Center

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2015 Summer Report

Note from the Associate Director



Julia J. Heydon

With the exception of the campus tour groups that wander past my window here on the first floor of PLC every hour or two, it is fairly quiet now on campus as we settle into summer. This brief respite is welcomed indeed—the past year was one of the busiest ever at the Oregon Humanities Center! In addition to our usual series of large public lectures, we initiated several new programs. We were also fortunate to be visited in the spring by the UO Board of Trustees—an event we had not anticipated when we originally planned our year. So all in all, 2014–15 was an exciting and very full year for us!

We kicked off the year's "Connection" series with a fabulous talk by renowned architect and designer Maya Lin. Lin spoke eloquently and passionately to a capacity audience in the EMU Ballroom on November 20th, and explained how throughout her career she has endeavored in her work to connect art with the environment. Her inspiring talk, along with most of the other lectures we hosted this year, can be viewed online on the UO Channel, accessible from our website at: ohc.uoregon.edu/archivlect

In January, Susannah Heschel, the daughter of the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and a noted Jewish Studies professor in her own right, spoke in Eugene about the ethical challenges of scholarship, and in Portland about her famous father's enduring legacy. Like most of

our guests, Heschel gave a "UO Today" interview, and met with faculty and students while she was on campus. A professor at Dartmouth, she seemed especially at home in the classroom, when she met with a group of undergraduate students who were taking a course on Jewish life in America today.

Astrophysicist and theoretical mathematician Janna Levin followed in February, with a



Clockwise from top: Maya Lin, Janna Levin, and Susannah Heschel



mind-boggling but accessible talk spanning "Time, the Universe, and Everything." More than 500 people came to hear Levin—an expert on black holes and the Big Bang theory, as well as a fiction writer and a great storyteller—speak about how we are all connected at the molecular level with everything in the Universe. Amazing-

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Indigenous Philosophy RIG hosts spring symposium

Each year the OHC supports several Research Interest Groups or RIGs. These interdisciplinary study groups are composed of faculty, graduate students, and sometimes also community members who share a research interest and want to discuss their work with other scholars.

During the 2014–15 academic year, the OHC sponsored three RIGs, one of which was the Indigenous Philosophy RIG. This group gathered throughout the year to discuss indigenous issues ranging from gender roles to recognition politics to traditional storytelling. During the fall and winter terms, the members of the Indigenous Philosophy RIG read and discussed texts by six different authors. During spring term, three of those authors were invited to campus to participate in a symposium titled “Colonial-Decolonial Connections,” organized by the RIG and sponsored by the OHC as part of our year-long series of programs on the theme of “Connection.” RIG members also met several times during the spring for “work-shopping” sessions—i.e., members of the RIG presented papers and received feedback on their work from their RIG colleagues.

The two-day symposium organized by the RIG, “Colonial-Decolonial Connections,” was held on April 30th and May 1st on the UO campus. It was open to the public, and was widely attended by students, faculty, and community members in addition to the regular RIG participants. The visiting scholars (Beth Piatote, Ethnic Studies, UC Berkeley; Ty Kawika Tengan, Anthropology and Ethnic Studies, University of Hawai‘i-Manoa; and Kyle Powys Whyte, Philosophy and Environmental Studies, Michigan State University) presented their work in a conversational interview format, which created a more personal, accessible, and interactive means for the speakers to share their scholarly findings. This flexible and somewhat informal presentational style proved to be very successful and effective; the “staged conversations” were informative, engaging, and lively. The symposium schedule also included coffee and luncheon discussions for RIG members with the visiting scholars; a public reading by Beth Piatote from her recent book; a meeting with members of the Native American Student Union, and a Community Dinner at the Many Nations Longhouse.

From all accounts, both the Indigenous Philosophy RIG and the symposium they organized were a tremendous success. We look forward to similarly fruitful collaborations with our campus scholars in the coming year.

Dorothee Ostmeier, German and Scandinavian, and 2013–14 OHC Faculty Research Fellow, will give a free public talk titled “**The Brother Grimms’ Fairy Tales**” on **Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 6 p.m.** at the **Eugene Public Library**, 100 W. 10th Ave. All OHC Faculty Research Fellows give off-campus, non-academic talks in the year following their fellowships.

A symposium sponsored by the Indigenous Philosophy Research Interest Group and the Oregon Humanities Center

Colonial and Decolonial Connections



Beth Piatote, Ethnic Studies, UC Berkeley
Ty Kawika Tengan, Anthropology and Ethnic Studies, University of Hawai‘i-Manoa
Kyle Powys Whyte, Philosophy and Environmental Studies, Michigan State University

Thursday, April 30, 2015
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. break)
3 p.m. Ty Kawika Tengan: “Indigenous Masculinities, Militarization and Empire, and Native Pacific Studies”
7 p.m. Reading by Beth Piatote
ohc.uoregon.edu

Friday, May 1, 2015
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. break)
1 p.m. Beth Piatote: “Contested Demarcations: Laws, Contracts, and the Legal Imaginary”
4 p.m. Kyle Powys Whyte: “Structures of Settler Colonialism, Climate Justice and Indigenous Planning”



Free and open to the public. For disability accommodations, which must be made by April 23, contact ohc@uoregon.edu or (503) 343-3014.

Oregon Humanities Center
2014–15 connection
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2014–15 by the numbers

OHC co-sponsored events: 84
(26 campus units; Orchestra NEXT and Eugene Ballet)

Attendance at OHC lectures: 2,280

UO Today shows taped: 34

Fellowships granted: 18
(11 faculty fellowships, 7 graduate fellowships)

Work-in-Progress talks: 17

Website new visitors: 5,790

Website page views: 24,018
(from 83 countries)

Facebook friends: 277



Twitter followers: 180



YouTube subscribers: 110



YouTube views: 22,901
(288,899 minutes)

OHC faculty research fellow wins Fulbright award

My 2014–15 OHC Research Fellowship played a significant role in the production of my first solely-authored book, *When the Rain Falls*. Drawing on interdisciplinary approaches in science studies and philosophy, the book examines how technologies employed on an individual scale—such as domestic rainwater harvesting—can ultimately reconfigure how public services are provided in developing cities. Set in Mexico City, where water insecurity is high and public services are fragmented or few, the book draws on empirical research to advance a theory of *tools*—such as cisterns, PVC pipes, the rain barrel—as political *forces* for democratic innovation and change.

During my residency at the Oregon Humanities Center, I completed two chapters of my book. Chapter Five, “The Politics of the Barrel,” grapples with the political challenges of transforming the public water supply: how citizens in Mexico City innovate and manage small-scale water technologies, designed to integrate with a networked infrastructure, and the institutional challenges of ‘scaling-up’ such technologies into a larger system as the Mexican state rolls back support for public



services. I presented a draft of Chapter Five during the OHC Work-in-Progress talk series, and received valuable feedback and comments.

I also wrote Chapter Three during my fellowship term, “Infrastructural Coexistence and Constraint,” and recently submitted a modified version of the paper to *Environment and Planning A*, a peer-reviewed journal. Drawing on the results of a household water use survey in Mexico City, the chapter/article examines how and why people use multiple and overlapping systems to provision water, and argues that geography and planning should accommodate models of ‘infrastructural coexistence’ in contemporary urban design and theory.

Support from the OHC Research Fellowship also helped position me to win a 2014–2016 grant from the Fulbright NEXUS Regional Scholar program, a joint initiative funded by the U.S. Department of State and the Brazilian Ministry of Education (CAPES). Unlike most Fulbright awards, where scholars work alone on individual projects, the NEXUS program aims to build multidisciplinary teams of scholars from across the Americas to



collaboratively examine big societal problems such as climate change. In our project, we are studying the human and social conditions through which scientific knowledge about climate change is produced and utilized in trans-disciplinary settings, which include people who fall outside the domain of ‘science’ yet possess valuable knowledge about the environment. If challenges like climate change are fundamentally human, as Steven Hartman and others argue (see futureearth.org), then we hope our study provides insight into the social and cultural roots of knotty and ‘wicked’ environmental problems.

—Katie Meehan
Assistant Professor of Geography

Save the dates!

Thursday, October 22, 2015:
James Braxton Peterson,
English and Africana Studies,
Lehigh University



Tuesday, January 19 (in Eugene)
& Wednesday, January 20, 2016
(in Portland): **Curt Tofteland**,
founder and director, Shake-
speare Behind Bars



Tuesday, February 16, 2016:
Naomi Klein, author, *This
Changes Everything: Capitalism
vs. the Climate*



Associate Director's Note *(continued from page 1)*

ly, she was able to explain it in a way that most non-specialists could grasp, including the 10-year-old future astrophysicist in the audience, who regaled her with his own theories during the Q&A.

In March, Frans de Waal, a primatologist from Emory University who studies the origins of empathy, altruism, and cooperation in non-human animals, charmed an overflow crowd of more than 500 people with his stories of animal behavior. De Waal's impressive expertise was matched by his quick wit and dry sense of humor, and his slide lecture was both highly informative and entertaining. (Because of images he did not have permission to reproduce online, de Waal's lecture is available in audio format only on our site.)

We finished off in May with two thought-provoking lectures by writer and cultural critic William Deresiewicz. Deresiewicz's talks, which focused on current problems in higher education, were well attended, and not surprisingly drew more than the usual number of undergraduate students. Deresiewicz was very generous with his time on campus, and tireless in his willingness to entertain questions during the Q&A. As an added bonus, his visit

gave us an opportunity to try out a lovely new lecture hall on campus, 156 Straub, which we will be using more in the future. This hall seats 500, which in most cases will allow our entire audience to be in the same room as the speaker. We hope that the availability of this new space will improve your experience when you come to campus for OHC lectures.

In addition to hosting our public lecture series, we were fortunate to be one of just a couple of campus units selected for a site visit by the UO Board of Trustees during their quarterly meeting in Eugene in March. In an effort to get to know the University more fully, the Board tours several UO facilities and programs during each of its meetings on campus. The Board met with the staff of the OHC for a 90-minute "tour" and reception. This incredible opportunity allowed us to meet every member of the Board, show them our facilities, introduce them to several of our fellows, and provide an overview of the work we do and explain why it is important to faculty members and students, the campus as a whole, and the greater community.

As if this weren't enough to keep us busy and out of trouble, we also launched two new initiatives this year, including a Books-in-Print (BIP) series, featuring talks with faculty authors about their newly published works. The BIPs featured some wonderful faculty authors and fascinating new books in our Thursday afternoon gatherings. Based on feedback we got from our attendees—and more particularly from those who could not

attend because of scheduling issues—this coming year we're going to try hosting this series at noon on Fridays when we do not have Work-in-Progress talks scheduled to see if that will allow more people to attend.

This was also our first year of hosting an OHC-sponsored faculty symposium, which this year was on the subject of indigenous philosophy. You can read about the symposium on page 2, so I will simply say that it exceeded our expectations in all respects, and was a wonderful addition to the year's academic programming. We were heartened and gratified by the expertise and generosity of the three visiting scholars, the innovative approach ("staged conversations") and rich

content of the presentations, and the robust faculty, student, and community involvement throughout the entire two-day symposium.

During 2014–15 we supported ten faculty research fellows, one teaching fellow, four Graduate Dissertation Fellows, and three Graduate

Research Support Fellows. You can read about the work of two of our recent fellows on pages 3 and 4. We have also been developing a new Humanities Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program, which will be launched this coming fall.

Last but not least, we produced 34 new shows for our taped TV program, "UO Today," including interviews with all of our visiting lecturers, as well as award-winning authors Anthony Doerr, Diana Abu-Jaber, and Phil Klay, urban farmer Novella Carpenter, and hip-hop and African American cultural specialist James Braxton Peterson. Produced by Peg Gearhart and hosted by OHC director Paul Peppis, "UO Today" provides fascinating conversations with a wide variety of UO faculty and guests. You can view past episodes of "UO Today" on our YouTube channel.

None of this would have happened without the creativity, dedication, expertise, imagination, intelligence, and collaborative spirit of the fabulous staff at the Oregon Humanities Center. I wish to thank my OHC colleagues publicly for the incredible work they do so competently yet quietly, day in and day out. We hope you were able to participate in some of our programs during this past year, and we look forward to seeing you during the coming academic year, when we explore the theme of "Justice." We welcome your comments, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. In closing, I'd like to thank you, our generous donors and friends, for your loyal support of our work. You not only make our work possible—you also give us a reason to keep doing it! Thank you.



William Deresiewicz (above) and Frans de Waal (left)

Your gifts support vital humanities research

The University of Oregon is a research university—research is at the core of everything we do here, including teaching, publishing, and professional advancement. That is why support of faculty and graduate humanities research is a vital and essential part of the OHC’s mission. As recounted in these pages, a term off from teaching to focus on research can make a tremendous difference to a scholar’s progress on a book, article, or dissertation.

We receive many more applications for worthwhile research projects from faculty and graduate students than we can fund each year—we are rarely able to fund even a third of those submitted. Each fellowship requires \$12,500 of funding. If you would like to be a part of the ground-breaking work humanities scholars are doing at the UO, please consider making a gift to the OHC in support of faculty or graduate research fellowships. Please use the enclosed envelope, or contact our colleague Michele Kuhnle at mkuhnle@uoregon.edu or (541) 346-8631.

Thank you!



*Courtney Thorsson (above), English and 2012–13 OHC Faculty Research Fellow, made significant progress on her book *Revolutionary Recipes: Foodways and African American Literature during her OHC fellowship. The book examines the ways culinary discourse and the recipe form describe and theorize race, gender, and class in African American cookbooks, poetry, and fiction. She subsequently went on to receive an Early Career Award from the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation—the most prestigious internal award given to junior faculty at the UO. Thorsson was promoted to Associate Professor this past spring.**



Congratulations to Jim Dotson of Eugene! He won a book for completing the OHC survey during our May contest. He chose Maya Lin’s *Boundaries*.

“I’m retired from a family business and feel fortunate to live within walking distance of the U of O. I attend as many of the Humanities lectures as I can. They are intellectually stimulating and timely. Plus, the price is right!”

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Recent publications supported by the OHC

Articles/Chapters

Mark Alfano, Philosophy (2014–15 VPRI Completion Fellow), “How One Becomes What One Is Called: On the Relation between Traits and Trait-Terms in Nietzsche,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2015.

Carol Silverman, Anthropology (2010–11 Faculty Research Fellow), “Balkan Romani Culture, Humans Rights, and the State: Whose Heritage?” *Cultural Heritage in Transit*, Deborah Kapchan, ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Carol Silverman, Anthropology (2010–11 Faculty Research Fellow), “Negotiating the ‘Oriental:’ Roma and the Political Economy of Representation in Bulgarian Popfolk,” *Ottoman Intimacies, Balkan Musical Realities*, Aspasia Theodosiou, Panagiotis Poulos, and Risto Pekka Pennanen, eds. Finnish Institute, Athens, 2014.

Books



Elizabeth Bohls, English, *Slavery and the Politics of Place: Representing the Colonial Caribbean, 1770-1833*. Cambridge University Press, 2014. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



Sonja Boos, German and Scandinavian, *Speaking the Unspeakable in Postwar Germany: Toward a Public Discourse on the Holocaust*. Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2015. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



Mark Carey, Honors College (2012–13 Faculty Research Fellow), *Glaciar, cambio climático y desastres naturales: Ciencia y sociedad en el Perú*. Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos/Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2014. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



Roger Grant, Music Theory, *Beating Time and Measuring Music in the Early Modern Era*. Oxford University Press, 2014. *OHC subvention.*



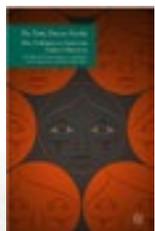
Gina Herrmann, Romance Languages (2013–14 Faculty Research Fellow), and Ofelia Ferrán, eds., *A Critical Companion to Jorge Semprún: Buchenwald, Before and After (Studies in European Culture and History)*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



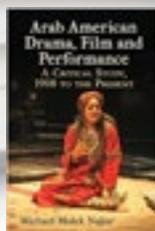
Loren Kajikawa, Musicology and Ethnomusicology (2011–12 Faculty Research Fellow), *Sounding Race in Rap Songs*. University of California Press, 2015. *OHC subvention.*



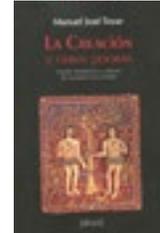
David Luebke, History (2009–10 Faculty Research Fellow), and Mary Lindemann, eds., *Mixed Matches: Transgressive Unions in Germany from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*. Berghahn Books, 2014.



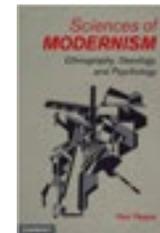
Ernesto Martinez, Women's and Gender Studies, and Stephanie A. Fryberg, eds., *The Truly Diverse Faculty: New Dialogues in American Higher Education (Future of Minority Studies)*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



Michael Najjar, Theatre Arts, *Arab American Drama, Film and Performance: A Critical Study, 1908 to the Present*. McFarland, 2015. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



Manuel José Tovar, *La Creación y otros poemas*. Estudio introductorio y edición de **Leonardo García-Pabon**, Romance Languages (2011–12 Faculty Research Fellow). Plural Editores, 2015. (García-Pabon wrote a 60-page introduction placing the book in literary/historical context)



Paul Peppis, English (1999–00 Faculty Research Fellow), *Sciences of Modernism: Ethnography, Sexology, and Psychology*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.



Alaí Reyes-Santos, Ethnic Studies, *Our Caribbean Kin: Race and Nation in the Neoliberal Antilles (Critical Caribbean Studies)*. Rutgers University Press, 2015. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



Sergio Rigoletto, Romance Languages, *Masculinity and Italian Cinema: Sexual Politics, Social Conflict and Male Crisis in the 1970s*. Edinburgh University Press, 2014. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



Beata Stawarska, Philosophy, *Saussure's Philosophy of Language as Phenomenology: Undoing the Doctrine of the Course in General Linguistics*. Oxford University Press, 2015. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



David Wacks, Romance Languages (2010–11 Faculty Research Fellow), *Double Diaspora in Sephardic Literature: Jewish Cultural Production Before and After 1492*. Indiana University Press, 2015. *OHC/CAS subvention.*



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