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NINTH ANNUAL
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EMERGENCE RUPTURE TRANSFORMATION

26 FEBRUARY 2009

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CHANGE 10

Emergence, Rupture, Transformation

Ninth Annual Graduate Humanities Forum Conference

Thursday, February 26, 2009

University of Pennsylvania
3619 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6213

a program of the 2008-2009 Penn Humanities Forum on Change

The Graduate Humanities Forum gratefully acknowledges the support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Graduate Humanities Forum

A program of the Penn Humanities Forum, the Graduate Humanities Forum (GHF) was established in 2000 as an interdisciplinary research forum for Penn doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences. The GHF hosts faculty and students in a series of seminars, roundtables, special colloquia, and more informal gatherings.

Penn Humanities Forum

Established in 1999, the Penn Humanities Forum is charged with taking a fresh look at ideas that touch on the human experience. The Forum's goal is to introduce humanistic perspectives to the sciences, professions, and public, and to bring ideas, long confined to the ivory tower, into popular discourse. Addressing a different topic each year, the Forum offers an integrated program of research, teaching, and outreach, which invites students, scholars, the cultural community, and the general public to discover common ground. For 2008-09, the Forum's 10th Anniversary, the topic has been Change, exploring everything from Heraclitean flux and dialect drift to the process of musical composition, human migration, and magical metamorphosis.

For more information: www.phf.upenn.edu

Program

9:00-9:30 | Registration and Coffee

9:30-11:30 | Session 1: Genre

Respondent: Heather Love, M. Mark and Esther K. Watkins Assistant Professor in the Humanities, University of Pennsylvania

Veronica R. Alfano, English, Princeton University
Generic Androgyny in Tennyson's The Princess

Yaron Aronowicz, English, Princeton University
Jacob's Room *and the Biographical Object*

Paul Cox, Music, Case Western Reserve University
Between Music, Dance and Theater: John Cage's Credo in US

Elizabeth Mellon, Music, University of Pennsylvania
The Genre of the Voice: Changes in the Disciplinarity of Song in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

11:30-12:30 | Lunch

12:30-2:30 | Session 2: 1800

Respondent: Emily Dolan, Assistant Professor of Music, University of Pennsylvania

Katherine Matson, English, University of Virginia
Surviving the End: Edgeworth, Scott, and Narrative Survival Around 1800

Martin Nedbal, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester
Germanizing Humanism: Mozart's Maxims and Eighteenth-Century German Nationalism

Jennifer Ronyak, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester
Desecrating Intimacy?: The Early Public Performance of the German Lied

David Russell, English, Princeton University
Around 1800: The Emergence of Tact

2:30-2:45 | Break

2:45-4:30 | Session 3: Subject

Respondent: Kathleen Lubey, PHF Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow; Assistant Professor of English, St. Johns University

Howard H. Chiang, History of Science, Princeton University
The Death of a Metaphysical Style

François Massonnat, Romance Languages, University of Pennsylvania
Shifting the Gender Epicenter: Female Characters in Three Contemporary 'Polars'

Leigh Ann Smith-Gary, Germanic Studies, University of Chicago
Suspension and Caprice: Kafka's Diaristic Acrobatics

5:00-6:30 | Keynote

Stephen Greenblatt, Cogan University Professsor of the Humanities, Harvard Univ
Cultural Mobility: The Strange Travels of Shakespeare's Cardenio

Keynote Address

Cultural Mobility
The Strange Travels of Shakespeare's *Cardenio*

Stephen Greenblatt
Cogan University Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University

February 26, 2009, 5:00-6:30 pm
Rainey Auditorium, Penn Museum, 3260 South Street

Near the end of his career, Shakespeare wrote three works with his younger colleague, John Fletcher: *Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and a lost play, *Cardenio*, a tragicomedy of sexual jealousy and betrayal whose plot he took from part I of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.

Professor Greenblatt, author of *Will in the World* and founder of the critical movement, The New Historicism, has written a modern version of *Cardenio* and instigated several other adaptations in various parts of the world. Join him as he discusses the mobility of plots and themes from artwork to artwork, the core mechanism of cultural change.

Stephen Greenblatt is a theorist, literary critic, and scholar of renaissance literature. He received his B.A. and Ph.D. from Yale, and M.Phil from Cambridge. He has taught at Harvard since 1997, and was named Cogan University Professor of the Humanities in 2000. Before joining Harvard, Greenblatt was the Class of 1932 Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Considered the father of New Historicism, Greenblatt favors the term "cultural poetics" to describe the attentiveness to historical context which he joins to an appreciation of texts' literary qualities. A specialist in Shakespeare, Greenblatt's own play "Cardenio," co-written with Charles Mee, premiered at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2008.

Greenblatt has written dozens of scholarly articles and ten books, including *Will in the World* (2004; a New York Times bestseller), *Hamlet in Purgatory* (2001), *Marvelous Possessions* (1991), *Learning to Curse* (1990), *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988; winner of the MLA's James Russell Lowell Prize), and *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980). He has also edited many major collections and anthologies, including the Norton Shakespeare and the seventh edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (1997 and 2000), *Practicing New Historicism* (with Catherine Gallagher, 2000), *New World Encounters* (1993), and *Redrawing the Boundaries* (1992). He is a former president of the Modern Language Association, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and a permanent fellow of Berlin's Institute for Advanced Study. He is the founding editor of the journal *Representations*.

Abstracts

Veronica R. Alfano, English, Princeton University
Generic Androgyny in Tennyson's The Princess

With the rise of the novel, Victorian poets face a contradictory set of generic demands: they are sage prophets who tell moral tales, yet they are also artless songsters free of prosaic impurities. Many studies name the dramatic monologue as the only Victorian poetic genre that adequately responds to the novel's ascendancy.[1] But Alfred Tennyson also engages with generic disputes by interlacing – and, in the process, gendering – lyric and narrative forms.

Critics urged Tennyson to eschew the too-effeminate lyric and to produce a long poem relevant to the age. *The Princess: A Medley* (1847) is his first attempt at a modern epic. It takes a tongue-in-cheek look at women's education through the tale of Ida, who abandons her all-female college to marry a persistent suitor. Yet Tennyson, even as he attempts to inhabit male-gendered narrative authority, breaks up his blank verse "medley" with haunting lyrics: men tell Ida's story, while women sing songs to amuse them. Implicit is the assumption that the teleological drive of narrative is masculine, while the static effusions of lyric are feminine. In this genre-based war between the sexes, do the women's songs subversively disrupt the men's plot-trajectory? Or are women forced to support the anti-feminist plot, making Ida's surrender more desirable through a series of titillating delays? Does one genre (and thus one gender) triumph? Ida may be silenced within the narrative, but readers value and remember the women's voices above all: Eve Sedgwick points out the ironic fact that Tennyson's poem is "anthologized […] on the basis of its lyrics, its self-proclaimed 'women's work.'"[2]

But *The Princess*, which features cross-dressing men and warlike women, identifies androgyny as the goal of evolution ("the man be more of woman, she of man"). Lyric and narrative also blend into and transform each other – culminating in the pastoral intimacy of the song "Come Down, O Maid," which enters the territory of the idyll. Is generic androgyny possible? Does Tennyson, under pressure to prove his poetic manhood yet unable to renounce lyricism, desperately seek to recalibrate or even uncouple gender and genre? And if these two categories remain inextricably linked, does Victorian poetry – despite the liminal status of the dramatic monologue – suffer a traumatic crisis of gender identity as mid-century novels in verse are challenged by the purified Yeatsian lyrics of the *fin de siècle*?

[1]Dorothy Mermin, in *The Audience in the Poem: Five Victorian Poets*, cites the dramatic monologue as a way for beleaguered Victorian poets to be both socially relevant and sincerely self-expressive.

[2]Between Men: *English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (133). Both increasingly-marginalized poetry and women's work are, in the Victorian era, often figured as merely decorative.

Yaron Aronowicz, English, Princeton University
Jacob's Room *and the Biographical Object*

Biography is infrequently imagined as a genre about emergence. Biographies commemorate the 'great' and establish their posthumous reputation. Likewise, biography is rarely considered as an aesthetic strategy that promotes rupture and fragmentation. My essay reconsiders this genre by exploring Virginia Woolf's use of

biography as a trope in *Jacob's Room*. The perversity of looking for a genre about real people in a work of fiction is mitigated by Woolf's own expansive term –'life-writing' - which she coins in *Moments of Being*, and which includes many genres Woolf was a master of: letters, diaries, memoir and biography. For Woolf, the genres of life-writing were important tools for registering human character's change "in or about December 1910."

I examine how her father, Leslie Stephen, the first editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, shaped Woolf's engagement with biography. Lytton Strachey and Bertrand Russell, who theorized objects as 'biographies', influenced Woolf's critique of Stephen's understanding of biography.

For Russell our sense of the 'whole object' emerges out of the unification of many partial views, which he calls a biography. It is this biographic sense of wholeness that allows us to imagine a table exists when we are not looking at it by granting it continuity. Russell called this whole object the 'public neutral object.' *Jacob's Room* dramatizes the social and epistemic implications of Russell's theory that other people and objects emerge out of the suturing of perceptive gaps. It also questions the neutrality of Russell's public object via a gendered critique of public space. In her third novel Woolf uses the trope of biography to explore 'human character' and fictional character, gender, women's writing, history, and the urban crowd. Finally, she explores the power to and failure of any form of writing to capture a life, to mourn the dead.

Howard H. Chiang, History of Science, Princeton University
The Death of a Metaphysical Style

The mind/body split is arguably one of the most significant developments in the Western metaphysical comprehension of the universal human subject. This paper examines the implicit role of this philosophical frame in the broader historical process of how norms of truth changed in relation to the politics of life over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A decisive feature of this historical trajectory is the normative epistemological contingencies upon which "Westernization" and "modernization" came to represent one another in most of the world. This paper focuses on one particular instantiation where these multiple historical permutations converge: the formations of bio-sexualities in Republican China.

Drawing on two case studies in particular—hermaphroditism and homosexuality—my analysis highlights the ways in which the introduction of Western biology and sexology significantly altered the normative truth claims about Chinese corporeality. If the mind/body split can be viewed as a cultural-intellectual articulation of Western imperialism in the history of the modern world, this paper suggests that inherent in the very project of empire-making resides the seeds to its undoing. This was especially evident in the gradual evaporation of the mind/body gap catalyzed by the global spread of the biomedical "sexualization" of life. In the transition from late Qing imperialism to modern Chinese nationalism, I argue that what accompanied the changing configuration of validity and mode of validation was a more profound transformation in the modality of power relations that governed the meaning of living: from a set of power relations characterized by a *politics of stability* to one featuring a *politics of representation*. It is in this new politics of representation in the twentieth century that we come to see how the mind/body gap has evaporated all over the world on the eve of postmodernity.

Paul Cox, Music, Case Western Reserve University
Between Music, Dance and Theater: John Cage's Credo in US

John Cage composed *Credo in US* for percussion, phonograph/radio, and piano shortly after moving to New York City in July 1942. Composed for a dance-drama choreographed by Jean Erdman and Merce Cunningham, who also wrote the script, Cage's score is composed of disparate musical styles, various acoustic and electric noises, and sampled recordings of "classical" masterpieces. Unique in his output for its personal and political tone, appropriation of popular music, and mix of determinate and indeterminate techniques, *Credo* marks a transition point for Cage, reflecting unsettling changes in both his domestic and aesthetic life. This paper explores the various genres *Credo* inhabits, first, in its original context as a dance-drama, and second, as a published musical work, with its own complex mix of musical genres.

Like a film montage that incorporates snippets of everyday life, *Credo* challenges the boundary between noise and various musical genres by juxtaposing boogie-woogie and cowboy tunes, Stravinskian ostinati, Native-American drumming, and blues melodies against found sounds, including an electric buzzer, clanging tin-cans, and random radio noises.This dizzying array of sound defies easy comprehension yet coalesces into a work that is vibrant precisely for its multiplicity of meanings. As such, Cage's collage sets up a series of oppositions: rural and urban, high and low, acoustic and recorded, mechanic and human. I argue that the dance-drama, itself a hybrid genre--melding dance and theater--influenced Cage's own genre crossing experiments. For example, in *Credo*, Cage infused sound and music with dramatic meaning using phonograph samples as a *deus ex machina*. These samples, however, not only foreshadowed Cage's evolving aesthetic of sound for sound sake, but also sowed the seeds of new genres based on simultaneity and sampling, like the multi-media Happenings *Variations VII* (1966), and *HPSCHD* (1969); and portended the Hip-Hop practice of building works from samples drawn from a wide range of genres. This demonstrates an illuminating connection between the theater and Cage's quest for "more new sounds," and the subsequent challenge these experiments pose to traditional notions of genre.

François Massonnat, Romance Languages, University of Pennsylvania
Shifting the Gender Epicenter: Female Characters in Three Contemporary "Polars"

In 2001, five years after releasing a film on a con Second World War resistant, Jacques Audiard goes back to the "polar," the genre that made him famous. Yet instead of abiding by the rules of the highly codified genre as he (mostly) did in *Regarde les hommes tomber* (1994), he breaks the comfortably misogynistic mould of the crime film and bestows the main role upon a hearing-impaired female character played by Emmanuelle Devos. By disrupting the sacrosanct rule whereby the crime film is a men's world in which unreliable women cannot be trusted and must be kept in their place, Audiard helps re-configure the gender dynamics of the polar and establishes a new trend.

My paper explores the ways in which the choice of a female main character upsets the rules of the polar game and displaces its epicenter. Indeed, when they pick Emmanuelle Devos (*Sur mes lèvres*, 2001), Josiane Balasko (*Cette Femme-là*, 2003), and Mélanie Laurent (*La Chambre des morts*, 2007), Jacques Audiard, Guillaume

Nicloux, and Emmanuel Lot do away with the homosocial paradigm of the polar, as well as with notions of fate, filiation, and betrayal. This gesture not only suggests that the genre had reached a point of sclerosis that demanded the breaking of its core values to make its regeneration possible; it also indicates the assimilation and re-affirmation by the polar of the necessary re-thinking and re-distribution of gender roles in French society.

Katherine Matson, English, University of Virginia
Surviving the End: Edgeworth, Scott, and Narrative Survival Around 1800

The movement in literary studies toward periodizing "long" centuries ("the long eighteenth century", "the long nineteenth century") reveals our discomfort with imagining decisive breaks in history. Yet "around 1800" retains its attractive status as historical and literary watershed: rebellions, revolutions, and wars bookend this particular *fin-de-siècle*, and writers such as Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge tapped into the apocalyptic spirit of the age. However, even these poets lived "in the middest," and we are wise to reevaluate the conventional Romantic narrative of rupture and renewal. As Frank Kermode wrote in *The Sense of an Ending*, "When we survive, we make little images of moments that have seemed like ends; we thrive on epochs."

I explore this counter-narrative—the notion that writers, politicians, and ordinary people indeed "survived" and even "thrived" while the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars raged on—by examining Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800), a peculiar, comic novel-ethnography that implicitly grapples with the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the Act of Union of 1800. Edgeworth's historicizing of individual experience during revolutionary times, which is explored through charting one family's line of descent in Ireland, allows her effectively to see "past the End" (once again Kermode's words), a strategy that challenges teleologically-oriented readings of texts from around 1800. While Edgeworth was unable to predict the results of the endgame of Irish unification, *Castle Rackrent* invites the reader "to see the structure whole, a thing we cannot do from our spot of time in the middle" (Kermode). That is, *Castle Rackrent* acknowledges a historical End while simultaneously envisioning survival (if only through narrative). Walter Scott, deeply influenced by Edgeworth's example, borrows this strategy in *Waverley* (1814), his own groundbreaking tale of historical crisis. I will examine how these texts seem to be seduced into a totalizing narrative of rupture and renewal, but in fact work against this old story of what occurred "around" 1800.

Elizabeth Mellon, Music, University of Pennsylvania
The Genre of the Voice: Changes in the Disciplinarity of Song in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

The term genre presupposes established disciplines, such as music, literature, or art. Yet these disciplines might themselves be considered intellectual "genres" that have been in flux in the West since antiquity. Using treatises on music, grammar, rhetoric, and the liberal arts, this paper will consider the ways in which concepts of song and voice were problematic in terms of intellectual genre in late antiquity, and it will go on to trace the shifts in the disciplinarity of song into the ninth century, when music theorists boldly claimed song for the musical.

Late antiquity viewed song as critically different from other musics in that it was produced by the voice, a non-instrument with metaphysical implications, and that it was primarily a method of verbal delivery. Contemporary writings on music classified singing as intervallic voice, as opposed to the continuous voice employed in everyday speech. This posed a taxonomical problem for song; since singing was defined first and foremost as a type of the voice—not a kind of music practiced by the voice—grammar and rhetoric were connected to song as much as the discipline of *musica*.

While the verbal and metaphysical properties of voice were not directly contradicted in the ninth century, they were deemphasized, with the continuous-intervallic vocal distinction largely disappearing from new writings. The downplaying of mystical properties of the voice allowed the musical products of the voice to be regarded in much the same light as the music of instruments. Music theorists' decreased emphasis on the voice as a special category allowed a specifically musical portion of song be addressed, notated, and analyzed. Finally, the minimization of a vocal link between music and grammar permitted these two disciplines to be analogically compared and may have been a precondition for the first attempts at music notation.

Martin Nedbal, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester
Germanizing Humanism: Mozart's Maxims and Eighteenth-Century German Nationalism

Scholars have viewed eighteenth-century German culture as immersed in the cosmopolitan tenets of the Enlightenment and therefore as disengaged from the exclusivist nationalism that supposedly appeared only during the Napoleonic wars. The unusually strong emphasis on didacticism in the singspiels by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart seems to corroborate such views. In *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782) and in *The Magic Flute* (1791), characters step out of their roles to deliver moral maxims: generalized statements that prompted the audience to emulate exemplary deeds presented on stage. Mozart emphasized these maxims through drastic changes in musical texture and intense word-painting. Most previous interpreters have thought that these edifying moments signified Mozart and his librettists' concern for a universal betterment of human society.

Departing from such opinions, this paper places the moralizing in the two singspiels into the context of eighteenth-century German theater aesthetics. From the 1720s on, writers such as Gottsched, Lessing, and Sonnenfels repeatedly pointed out that French and Italian plays and operas lacked explicit presentations of moralistic ideas and indulged in ambiguous treatment of sexual themes, thus reflecting a purported immorality of the French and the Italians. The aestheticians postulated, furthermore, that German theatrical works should feature numerous maxims in order to elevate the moral sensibilities of the German people above those of their neighbors and, at the same time, reflect an inherent German moral superiority. The unprecedented intensity of the didactic announcements in Mozart's singspiels therefore conveyed not only a humanizing intent, but also a distinctly German-nationalist (perhaps even chauvinist) agenda. Thus the German aesthetics of didactic theater and Mozart's treatment of maxims in his singspiels suggest that exclusive nationalism became an important cultural force in the German-speaking world long before the early 1800s.

Jennifer Ronyak, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester
Desecrating Intimacy?: The Early Public Performance of the German Lied

Friedrich Schlegel wrote of the intimate, Sapphic lyric: "[Such] poems [cannot be] published without desecration." Scholars have steadily understood the German solo *Lied* (art song), defined as the musical setting of lyric poetry for voice and piano, to be similarly intimate in its aesthetic and its performing forces and, thus, designed to be protected by the similarly intimate performance circumstances of the private home or the salon. This central attitude concerning the genre has also limited any research into its early performance that might challenge these assumptions. For example, scholars have explained its relative scarcity on early nineteenth-century concert programs by simply reinscribing its status as a genre too intimate and amateur for the public concert hall.

But Schlegel's literary and critical practices confound his ideal: he himself published intimate lyrics, praised the "private" lyrics of Goethe, and could only pass judgment on Sappho herself through reading a published edition. Similarly, the emerging performance of *Lieder* on public concerts between 1800 and 1830 confuses the established boundary between intimate and public expression that has defined the genre and, hence, limited our perception of its possibilities. This paper focuses on the singing of one Goethe lyric in these contexts: Mignon's "Kennst du das Land" from *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Despite its apparent intimacy, this poem was sung in musical settings ranging from those for a self-accompanying, non-operatic singer to those for dramatic soprano, full orchestra, and spectacular stage effects, in diverse public venues. These previously unexplored *Lied* performances demonstrate that just as the apparently private utterance of the Romantic lyric was subtly entangled with a range of public contexts, the Lied existed on a continuum between the private and the public that unsettles any facile categorization of the genre.

David Russell, English, Princeton University
Around 1800: The Emergence of Tact

Around 1800 the word 'tact' entered the English language from the French, indicating novel practices and experiences of 'feeling one's way' in society. My paper proposes the rise in Britain of both a social and aesthetic ethos of tact as a style that responds to new exigencies of unprecedented urbanization and social change. Tact, I argue, is a response to what modernity around 1800 feels like. What Leigh Hunt termed a 'tact for the alleys' evades coercive power relations and multiplies possible ways of living and desiring in the urban scene. Tact is a new form of social and literary engagement; it offers an ethical alternative of tactile, playful evasion to the established Foucauldian model of the modern subject's constitution in terms of visual, panoptical regimes of power. My paper proposes that tact emerges as much more than a 'tactic' by which power micromanages even the smallest of social relations.

From delineating its wider stakes and claims, my paper analyzes the way tact works by turning to its literary emergence in the romantic essay and the emergence of an 'essayistic' mode of social relation. Tact, I propose, cultivates a 'neutral' or third space of ethical relation between people, which refuses to bind individuals to essential social definitions. I consider Charles Lamb's essays as an expert articulation of tact: in their conscious deviation from the conventions of the eighteenth-century essay tradition, their exploration of new relational possibilities of urban life, and their creative use of the survivals of antiquated social modes ('the precondition of tact is convention no longer in tact but still present', as Adorno has put it). Finally the paper considers Jeremy Bentham's contemporaneous interest in 'neutral' spaces in response to the same social exigencies, suggesting how Lamb both points to and revises this important element of tact in Utilitarian thought.

Leigh Ann Smith-Gary, Germanic Studies, University of Chicago
Suspension and Caprice: Kafka's Diaristic Acrobatics

In the 1910 journal entry which is this paper's point of departure, Franz Kafka thematizes the difficulties of beginning to write or, as he puts it, to 'compose himself', when each such beginning is constrained to emerge, both conceptually and historically, in medias res. The central conceit of Kafka's text is his comparison of the writing subject to an acrobat, who perches precariously on a ladder supported only by the soles of his partner's feet. Kafka maintains that his own 'ladder' is missing even these soles on which to rest. He places himself, in other words, in an impossible state of suspension. After developing this position to a point of the highest tension (he accompanies the text with sketches to illustrate the precariousness of the writer's situation), Kafka performs an apparent sleight-of-hand which simply and suddenly posits a ground on which the writer can stand. By considering the tropes which Kafka selects (acrobatic performance as well as others) to characterize the writer's condition, I claim that (1) Kafka situates his text with specific reference to his time, thereby demonstrating the 'always already' nature of the subject's embeddedness in contemporary discourse, and (2) that these tropes stand in for a more general meditation on the possibilities of narratological form. I argue, namely, that Kafka's text elevates the figures of suspension and caprice to describe the stratagems by which the writing subject grasps himself even as he grapples with the constraints of the modern age.