

UNDERGRADUATE HUMANITIES FORUM

Eighth Annual Research Conference



→ Travel



2006-2007

→ **TRAVEL**

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

MARCH 29-30, 2007

9:00 AM-5:30 PM

3619 LOCUST WALK

www.phf.upenn.edu



2006-2007 PHF MELLON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWS

Gisele Aris

Sarah Breger

Sharon Cantor

Megan Curtiss

Michael Ellis

Sheira Feuerstein

Sara Gorman

Rachel Han

Di Hu

Gerard Leone

Andrew Meyer

Kojo Minta

Ellen Mossman

Sabina Pendse

Andrea Felber Seligman

Justin Tackett

Leonard Tso

Cheryl Yang

UNDERGRADUATE HUMANITIES FORUM

Special Thanks to

Joseph Benatov, Chair, Graduate Humanities Forum
Jennifer Conway, Associate Director, Penn Humanities Forum
Leslie Delauter, Director, College Houses & Academic Services
Mark Liberman, Faculty Director, College Houses & Academic Services
Catriona MacLeod, Director, Undergraduate Humanities Forum
Sara Sherger, Administrative Coordinator, Penn Humanities Forum
Wendy Steiner, Founding Director, Penn Humanities Forum

The Undergraduate Humanities Forum Fellows also thank the following faculty, administrators, and Graduate Humanities Forum members for their immeasurable guidance and support throughout the year:

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Charles Bernstein | Phoebe Kropp | Neil Safier |
| David Buchta | William Labov | Susan Shifrin |
| Lee Cassanelli | William LaFleur | Peter Stallybrass |
| Camille Charles | Susan Lepselter | Jamie Taylor |
| Renee Fox | Jeehyun Lim | Fayyaz Vellani |
| John Ghazvinian | Catriona MacLeod | Lance Wahlert |
| Sarah Gordon | Kobina Ofosu-Donkoh | David Wallace |
| Sheldon Hackney | Barbara Riebling | Sue Weber |
| Jan Jaeger | Paula Sabloff | Michael Wiedorn |
| Arthur Kiron | | |

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Conference Keynote

Robert Irwin

Historian and Broadcaster

The Arabic story cycle of the Thousand and One Nights is Indian in origin, Sinbad's adventures reflecting real-life Indian, Persian, and Arab maritime commerce. Like all tales of marvels in faraway places, it served pious purposes as well. Distinguished historian and public intellectual Robert Irwin follows the fortunes of this storied traveler and explains the modern transmutation of Sinbad from a cautious merchant into a swashbuckling sailor.

Robert Irwin read modern history at Oxford and taught medieval history at the University of St. Andrews. He has also lectured on Arabic and Middle Eastern history at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London. He is the director of a small publishing company and is also Middle East editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Robert Irwin is the author of *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (Penguin, 1994), *Islamic Art* (Laurence King, 1997) and numerous other specialized studies of Middle Eastern politics, art, and mysticism. His six novels include *The Limits of Vision* (Penguin, 1986), *The Arabian Nightmare* (Penguin, 1988), *The Mysteries of Algiers* (Penguin, 1989), *Exquisite Corpse* (Dedalus, 1995), and *Satan Wants Me* (Dedalus, 1999). His most recent book, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents* (Overlook, 2006) is a passionate defense of the work and scholarly achievements of Western scholars of the Orient against postcolonial critiques following the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

Program

March 29, 2007, 17 Logan Hall

5:00p | Conference Keynote Address

Robert Irwin, Historian and Broadcaster

Sinbad the Traveling Salesman: His Ancestry and Progeny

March 30, 2007, 3619 Locust Walk

9:00–9:10a: Welcome

Catriona MacLeod, Director, UHF and Associate Professor of German

9:15–10:30a | Poetic Travel

Chair: David Buchta, PhD Candidate, South Asia Studies

Sharon Cantor, College '08, English, Comparative Literature

Treading the Abyss: The Distressing Journey in Kierkegaardian Faith

Sheira Feuerstein, College '08, English, Theater Arts

Me Mout' Haf Fe Sympat'ise Wid Somewhe: Dialect-Poetry of Ambivalence in the Postcolonial Caribbean Context

Andrew Meyer, College '07, Philosophy, Religious Studies

"The Journey Itself Home": Wandering Poets of Japan

10:30–10:45a | Break

10:45–12:00p | Modernisms

Chair: Michael Wiedorn, PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature

Giselle Aris, College '07, African Studies, Diplomatic History

The Power and Politics of Dress in Africa

Gerard Leone, College '07, Art History, Philosophy

The Suburban Jeremiads: Critical Dialogues on American Suburbia

Ellen Mossman, College '07, History, Economics

Charming Charleston: Elite Construction of an Idealized History in Twentieth Century Tourism

12:00–12:30p | Lunch

12:30–1:45p | Tourism

Chair: Lance Wahlert, PhD Candidate, English

Michael Ellis, College '07, Linguistics

Di Hu, College '07, Political Science, Anthropology

Wonderlands: Through the Traveling Lens

Sabina Pendse, College '07, Environmental Studies, Philosophy, Politics and Economics

Traveling to Save Farms: A Look at Agritourism

Leonard Tso, College '09, Philosophy, Politics and Economics
*National Variations of a Socialist Bloc Symbol: Foreigners-Only
Facilities in Four Cold War Era Communist Capitals*

1:45–1:50p | Break

1:50–2:45p | Explorations

Chair: Neil Safier, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Penn Humanities Forum

Megan Curtiss, College '07, Arts and Society in the Middle Ages
*West into East and East into West: Maps, Merchants, and the
Mediterranean World of the High Middle Ages*

Andrea Felber Seligman, College '07, African Studies, World History
*Traveling African Ambassadors and Encountered Hospitality: A
Dimension of African-European Diplomatic Relations in the
15th–17th Centuries*

2:45–3:00p | Break

3:00–4:15p | Immigration

Chair: Jeehyun Lim, PhD Candidate, English

Rachel Han, College '08, Economics, Health and Societies
*The Backlash of Immigration on Health: A Study of the Malay and
the Chinese in USA*

Kojo Minta, College '09, History, Classical Studies, Religious Studies
The Reverse Diaspora: African Immigrants and the Return Home

Cheryl Yang, College '08, Biology, Economics
*Doctors' Flight, Patients' Plight: The Catch 22 of Health Care in
Developing Countries*

4:15–4:20p | Break

4:20–5:35p | Religion

Chair: Susan Shifrin, PHF Mellon Research Fellow and Assistant Professor,
Ursinus College

Sarah Breger, College '07, Jewish History, English
Sentenced to Marriage: "Chained Women" in Wartime

Sara Gorman, College '07, English, Psychology
*"Sche knelyd upon hir kneys, hir boke in hir hand": Manuscript
Travel, Devotional Pedagogy, and the Textual Communities of The
Book of Margery Kempe*

Justin Tackett, College '07, English, Philosophy
*"What matter where?": Epic Geography and the Defense of Hell
in Milton's Paradise Lost*

Abstracts

Gisele Aris, *The Power and Politics of Dress in Africa*

In different ways, power is represented, constituted, articulated, and contested through dress. A compelling political language, dress is comparable in eloquence and potency to the words of the most skilled orator, or the writings of the most persuasive propagandist. How does moving across time and space change the meanings of a particular item of clothing? Why is fashion never a universal language? How, specifically, has the role of dress in Africa been shaped by encounters created by travel?

Sarah Breger, *Sentenced to Marriage: "Chained Women" in Wartime*

Under Jewish law, a woman may only remarry if she has received a valid bill of divorce or if there is proof of the death of her husband. Without one of those conditions, the woman becomes an 'Agunah' or chained woman, unable to remarry for fear her children will be classified as Mamzerim (bastards) and forbidden to enter the congregation of Israel (i.e., marry a Jew) for ten generations. How valid is the pre-conditional bill of divorce in wartime? What does the U.S. experience in wartime reveal about what happens when the husband never returns home?

Sharon Cantor, *Treading the Abyss: The Distressing Journey in Kierkegaardian Faith*

Between 1841 and 1843, Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard left his fiancée, traveled to Berlin twice, and wrote three groundbreaking works. His personal reflections on travel amid love and loss gave way over time to a complex conception of Christian faith as an unremittingly taxing journey to reconcile, overcome, and even incorporate opposing forces such as doubt and despair. With particular attention to **Fear and Trembling** (1843) and **The Sickness Unto Death** (1849), I will consider developments and continuity in Kierkegaard's use of travel imagery. I hope to contextualize his innovative and challenging conception of faith.

Megan Curtiss, *West into East and East into West: Maps, Merchants, and the Mediterranean World of the High Middle Ages*

The Crusades often were seen as the conduit through which western Europe was exposed to the rich intellectual and cultural traditions of the Byzantine and Arab worlds. Yet merchants were active in the eastern Mediterranean before the crusades. Where, when, and why did these merchants travel? What goods did they bring back and from where? How were those artifacts, texts, and ideas understood and expressed in the art, writing, and actions of those who received them?

Michael Ellis and Di Hu, *Wonderlands: Through the Traveling Lens*

Travel photographs are a hallmark of modern tourism. It is well known that people with different purposes for traveling take different pictures. Yet no one has systematically analyzed that difference. What do photos reveal about the reasons why people travel today—business or pleasure, conquering places or self-discovery? This survey and exhibition will consider what such things as the size of the subject in the photo, where the subject is situated, and how it is oriented can reveal about those differences.

Sheira Feuerstein, *Me Mout' Haf Fe Sympat'ise Wid Somewhe: Dialect-Poetry of Ambivalence in the Postcolonial Caribbean Context*

The postcolonial era has incited both backlashes against colonial education and attempts at assimilation from the once colonized peoples of the Caribbean. With language and education often at the center of the struggle for identity, Anglophone Caribbean poets write poetry in dialect and in forms that reflect their multiple origins and hybrid identities. In response to the polarization of postcolonial Jamaica, dialect poet Louise Bennett exemplifies 'Ambivolance,' an ambivalence of her own volition, and pride in her complicated and hybrid identity. How did Bennett's use of dialect and form characterize her articulation of Jamaican identity in the wake of its colonization?

Sara Gorman, "Sche knelyd upon hir kneys, hir boke in hir hand": Manuscript Travel, Devotional Pedagogy, and the Textual Communities of The Book of Margery Kempe

The Book of Margery Kempe, a fifteenth-century mystical work written by an illiterate lay woman from King's Lynn, has often been considered a generic anomaly. This project proposes that the transmission that the manuscript's marginalia suggests indicates that Margery Kempe's *Book* should be taken as a piece of devotional pedagogy inscribed in a community of similar manuscripts. In anticipating the travel of the manuscript, both within and outside the monastery walls, the monastic annotators associate the *Book* with particular manuscript communities in late medieval England.

Rachel Han, *The Backlash of Immigration on Health: A Study of the Malay and the Chinese in USA*

How does travel, specifically immigration, affect the epidemiology of chronic disease? For Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) immigrants, an unusually high rate of diabetes is puzzling, given the group's relatively low rate of obesity and other typical causes of diabetes. The unique mix of AAPI patients in a free health clinic of Philadelphia's Chinatown (half Chinese, half Malays) is the basis for this study of how immigration affects health and lifestyle.

Gerard Leone, *The Suburban Jeremiads: Critical Dialogues on American Suburbia*

The theme of travel often lends itself to highly exotic topics. Yet the ubiquity of the American suburb belies its important relation to travel. Travel is bound by the idea of location, and in the debate about suburbia we have a fascinating, largely unanalyzed discussion about the nature of the locales and daily travels of half the population of America. What can books and periodicals from the past 15 years tell us about the implicit messages of the nature of those locales and travels?

Andrew Meyer, "The Journey Itself Home": Wandering Poets of Japan

In traveling, the journey itself is conventionally conceived of as a means to an end—a process that would not be chosen but for the destination,

which is always in mind. For the Japanese poets Saigyō (1118–1190) and Bashō (1640–1694), the act of traveling was much more than a disposable means. For them, the journey itself was an end, each fleeting moment a Mecca in their quest to realize and embody spiritual truth. In what ways was travel integral to the life and work of these two brilliant artists and spiritual wayfarers?

Kojo Minta, *The Reverse Diaspora: African Immigrants and the Return Home*
Among African immigrants to America, there is a belief, sometimes uttered, sometimes not, that eventually they will return to Africa. Why is there this urge in the African immigrant community to return to their country of birth, to “return home”? How actualized is this urge? Is it some fond yet quixotic longing to return to what was remembered as old and familiar? Or is it the product of a more deep-seated nostalgia, one supplemented by careful planning and serious intent? To answer this question I set out to craft a survey in which the questions, and answers, would provide insight into why these immigrants to America, many who are citizens, many who have been in the US for decades, would decide to leave and return to places they departed long ago.

Ellen Mossman, *Charming Charleston: Elite Construction of an Idealized History in Twentieth Century Tourism*

Tourism boards, preservationists, and residents all play important roles in shaping tourism and travel. One particularly rich example of this is Charleston, South Carolina. This antebellum city’s ‘historic charm’ was carefully crafted in the early twentieth century by a group of elite Charlestonians who refashioned history into a happy story between races and classes. This rosy image is what continues to draw tourists to the city today. What role has this false vision created in “preservation” served in the development of tourism in Charleston and in the construction of the Southern Identity?

Sabina Pendse, *Traveling to Save Farms: A Look at Agritourism*

By exploiting the public’s desire to travel, communities, as well as entire countries, benefit from the money spent. Building on this desire to travel, farmers not only can remain profitable but also save a fading industry and pastime and, most importantly, enhance their nation’s economy. What do different models reveal about the positive implications of agritourism in North America and the possibility for success in the developing world?

Andrea Felber Seligman, *Traveling African Ambassadors and Encountered Hospitality: A Dimension of African-European Diplomatic Relations in the 15th–17th Centuries*

The 14th through 16th centuries were an era of unprecedented discovery for the Portuguese and other Europeans as they traveled for the first time along the coast of Africa. This analysis of the existing body of Portuguese travel narratives, court records, and letters, along with available African records will shed light on the nature of encounters between African diplomats and Europeans. What do they reveal about specific African foreign policy goals and experiences while traveling for diplomatic missions?

Justin Tackett, *“What matter where?”: Epic Geography and the Defense of Hell in Milton’s Paradise Lost*

In *Paradise Lost*, we are presented with a vision of Hell that is both complex and purposeful. On the one hand, Milton follows the classical tradition of the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* by saturating his descriptions with geographical references and toponyms. On the other hand, his Hell is a distinctively seventeenth century one that highlights interiority and the psychological torment of the damned. How has Milton transmogrified the classical tradition and previous conceptions of Hell? What does the physicality of his “Hellscape” have to say about the religious beliefs (and heresies) of his contemporaries?

Leonard Tso, *National Variations of a Socialist Bloc Symbol: Foreigners-Only Facilities in Four Cold War Era Communist Capitals*

During the Cold War (1945–1990), traveling to the Socialist Bloc was an exciting experience for many western tourists. However, their experiences were colored by the careful crafting of the “Communist Impression,” one that restricted what tourists would see by channeling them into “for foreigners only” hotels, shops, and restaurants. What did those places look like? While such facilities were special icons of the Socialist Bloc, the various countries did differ in their places, architecture, and policies toward foreigners. What were those differences and how can we relate them to the broader context of cultural and political differences between countries in the Socialist Bloc?

Cheryl Yang, *Doctors’ Flight, Patients’ Plight: The Catch 22 of Health Care in Developing Countries*

The basic health care needs of many people in developing countries remain unmet because of a shortage of skilled physicians and nurses. A major cause of this shortage is “brain drain,” the exodus of health care professionals to other countries in search of a better life. What are the migration experiences of foreign-trained health care workers in Philadelphia? What economic, social, and political reasons influenced their decision to emigrate? How did their medical career influence that decision?