

*New biography reveals major role
for poet's mother*

The mother of poet Marianne Moore once mused that if only Thomas Hardy were to take the Moore family as a subject for a novel, he "might have a ready made story needing no adjustments or additions."

Though a scholarly work is a different creature from a novel, the material that Linda Leavell draws on for her biography bears out the claim of fiction-worthiness. Despite fame that reached popular icon level during her lifetime, Moore lived for many years with her mother in a Greenwich Village basement flat so small that the cooking was done on a hotplate balanced above the bathtub.

"Despite the availability of evidence and the unflagging interest in women's lives among both academic and general readers," said Leavell, a Center Research Fellow and professor of English at Oklahoma State University, "Moore's life has attracted far less attention than it deserves."

Marianne Moore



Linda Leavell

In suggesting an explanation, Leavell quoted a review of an earlier book about the poet: "Moore lived with such sobriety, chastity, regularity, rectitude and sedentariness that perhaps only a Chekhov or Virginia Woolf could have found a way of opening its many dark and narrow alcoves."

As the first biographer authorized by the Moore family, Leavell has dug deeply into archival material, including 35,000 pieces of correspondence that were in Moore's possession when she died in 1972. Among other revelations was the tremendous significance of Moore's mother in her work as well as her life; for the unmarried poet, her mother was her life partner.

"Except for Marianne's four years at college, she lived with her mother her

Continued on page 11

**2008-09 Research
Fellows named**

The Center has awarded ten Research Fellowships for 2008-09, three to visiting scholars and seven to OSU faculty members. One of the visiting Fellows, Matthew Lassiter, will be in residence for the full academic year while the other two, Christopher Phelps and Matthew Rubery, will be at the Center only during fall term.

Visiting scholars receive stipends, while OSU Fellows receive paid release time for one or two terms, although they are considered to be in residence for the full year. All Fellowships come with an office at Autzen House, a computer, and full support services. The next call for proposals will go out in Fall 2008.

VISITING**Matthew Lassiter**

Dept. of History
University of Michigan
The Suburban Crisis: The Pursuit and Defense of the American Dream

Christopher Phelps

Dept. of History
Ohio State University
The Strike: A History of Ideas

Matthew Rubery

School of English
University of Leeds
The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction after the Invention of the News

Continued on page 9

Bad art may have philosophical lessons to teach



Stephanie Ross

When two reputable critics disagree about a work of art, who is right? Neither? Both?

Is there any defensible reason why those who appreciate inferior works of art should try to “train up” and appreciate more difficult works preferred by recognized critics?

For philosopher Stephanie Ross, bad art may help provide answers to such questions.

“Rather than tracking disputes about masterpieces and works clearly in the canon, I will start with bad art and rotten reviews,” said Ross, a Center Research Fellow and professor of philosophy at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

There is no shortage of good material. Her research list includes bad art condemned by recognized critics, the holdings of the Museum of Bad Art in Boston, the conceptual art of Komar and Melamid whose “appalling” paintings were created in response to questionnaires aimed at learning people’s preferences in visual arts, an anthology of bad verse titled *The Stuffed Owl*, and the work of artists such as poet Rod McKuen and painter Thomas Kincaid who are

scorned by the critical establishment.

“Problems arise when we contrast everyday factual statements—‘The cat is on the mat’—with aesthetic claims about works of art—‘That’s a somber portrait,’” said Ross, “The latter claim seems contestable in ways that the former is not, and this raises metaphysical worries about works of art. Do they possess their constitutive properties less securely than do ordinary objects? When two critics disagree about a work of art, how do we decide whom to trust?”

The study will complete Ross’s larger project on ideal critics, which involves a “rational reconstruction” of 18th-century philosopher David Hume’s essay “Of the Standard of Taste.” Hume asserts that there is a standard for judging works of art as either good or bad, and that it is set by the converging judgments of “ideal critics.”

Ideal critics, in turn, are defined by a specific set of essential traits, though Ross argues that several of the traits require real human critics rather than the idealized Humean variety.

Important questions concern not only the role of respected critics and the reception of avant-garde works, but also “the multifarious ways in which lesser appreciators engage less worthy works. In this way, my rational reconstruction of Hume’s theory will illuminate the full range of our encounters with works of art and better show art’s place in our lives.”

The inclusion of ordinary and inept appreciators as well as the ideal opens potentially useful critical ground that lies somewhere between the notion that there is only one standard for right appreciation and the extreme, relativist position that one critical point of view is as valid as another.

Ross is the author of *What Gardens Mean* (U of Chicago Press, 1998), a

leading work in the movement to treat gardens as art worthy of the sort of critical analysis directed toward painting, literature and music. Her book on the nature of aesthetic appreciation will continue to extend the critical terrain—and yes, there’s a place for emotional kitsch.

“I will explore arguments about the merits and demerits of sentimentality,” Ross wrote in her project proposal. “This may call for a trip to the Precious Moments Chapel!”

Rather than tracking disputes about masterpieces and works clearly in the canon, I will start with bad art and rotten reviews.

Brain research raises political questions

The use of the brain scan as a tool for political manipulation is still in the future—though not all that far.

Techniques developed in social cognitive neuroscience (SCN) are already being used in marketing and business, and the trend suggests that application in political campaigning and public influence efforts will follow, said Robert Sahr, a Center Research Fellow and associate professor of political science at OSU.

“SCN techniques have shown, for example, that brain activity defending against challenges to pre-existing views bypasses the ‘rational’ parts of the brain, so that conscious thinking is not even activated. Such developments raise questions, among other elements, about voter political competence in using political information and making political judgments.”

Developments in SCN, originated by psychologists and cognitive scientists, have become tools within marketing, political science and other fields. “In relation to politics, SCN methods, primarily the use of brain scans and related techniques, have been used to more fully measure and describe neural and physiological components of political thinking and action.”

For example, the techniques have illuminated the relationships between preconscious and conscious thinking. Because preconscious thinking occurs prior to, and influences, conscious thinking, said Sahr, these developments undercut the use of self-reports in studying political thinking and public opinion.

While the strategic marketing of candidates and policies is not new, it has been greatly enhanced by the new technologies that allow “micro-targeting.”



Robaert Sahr

“These techniques utilize rapidly burgeoning sets of consumer data to identify and then target individuals, not only as parts of groups—religious, ethnic and so on—but also in terms of very narrowly defined preferences, purchasing patterns, and interests. The increasing ability to do this raises questions of freedom and autonomy on the part of voters.”

It also raises ethical questions for political leaders, who “engage in ‘strategic’ thinking and communication rather than ‘truth-seeking’ thinking and communication.”

Sahr is looking at the implications for three inter-related elements of democratic theory, one involving voters, one involving leaders, and the third involving the interaction between the two.

“Given the increasing ability of leaders to target and influence, possibly even ‘control’ public views, what are appropriate actions and limits on the part of leaders to use those technologies?”

“What questions of democratic competence are heightened by emerging technologies and what are

some implications for democratic theory? And, to return to a traditional question, to what degree should members of the public in a representative political system be expected to make decisions involving policy as against simply selecting leaders to whom they delegate those decisions? And what information ‘must’ the public have for those decisions?”

“What institutional and other changes might best enhance appropriate response to the first two sets of questions?”

Sahr’s object is to “develop a set of reasoned prescriptions that reflect careful thinking about the challenges raised by new developments and about the normative approaches that appear best to respond to those challenges.”

The increasing ability to target voters raises questions of freedom and autonomy

'Freegans' & foragers form new foodways

Freegans" are connoisseurs of Dumpster diving—not for them the trash bins behind McDonalds or Pizza Hut.

"Ideally, they would eat only whole, unprocessed foods," said OSU anthropologist Joan Gross, "but of more importance is whether or not it is 'free.' They prefer to opt out of the economic system entirely, living only on what society throws away, or what they can gather in other people's gardens, in the wild, or by picking up roadkill."

While most Americans think of Dumpsters as dirty places where refuse is thrown, the self-named Freegans regard them as a source of life, said Gross, a Center Research Fellow who is studying alternative "foodways" in rural Oregon. "There is a code of Dumpstering. You don't take more than you can use and you leave the place clean. You never take all the food in case someone else looks after you do."

Gross is researching two groups, the Freegans and the "back-to-the-landers." The Freegan movement formed in reaction to "industrial" eating, that is, consumption of heavily processed, mass-produced foods, while the "back-to-the-landers" aim for self-sufficiency in raising their own food.

"Both groups reject a lifestyle that requires spending the bulk of their time working for money in order to be able to consume material goods. Opting out of modernity, both groups re-connected with foodways linked to subsistence agriculture and foraging lifestyles."

The research project, "Capitalism and its Discontents: Investigating Foodways in Rural Oregon," focuses on the fit between the earlier patterns of subsistence and the ones envisioned by contemporary countercultural groups.



Joan Gross

"But more importantly, I am interested in how past practices, or models thereof, figure into contemporary anti-capitalist ideologies," said Gross. The research draws on extensive interviews in rural Oregon conducted along with fellow OSU anthropologist Nancy Rosenberger and several students, initially investigating low-income people whose food choices were limited by money and time rather than ideology.

"In recent years, there has been a backlash against globalized industrial foods," said Gross. This includes the—now globalized—Slow Food Movement founded in Italy by Carlo Petrini in 1986. "Slow Food's plan is to combat fast food by restoring 'suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment.'"

This contrasts strongly with the low-income lives first researched by Gross and her team typified by a family in which both parents worked at McDonald's. "Dad would bring out bags of food at the end of his shift and they [including children] would scarf down some calories in the car before Mom went in to start her shift."

Americans rich and poor are working longer hours, moving farther away from

slow meals, and buying cheap food when the budget gets tight because, unlike a mortgage or transportation, the expense of eating is flexible.

"I am interested in exploring the foodways of those who consciously attempt to disentangle themselves from the capitalist system and from industrial food," said Gross.

During the 1960s Oregon, along with Tennessee, became prime a site for young back-to-the-landers who wanted to step out of the "rat race" and develop traditional skills. "These young people reversed the common internal migration pattern and moved from urban areas to the countryside, the more remote the better. They brought with them a mistrust of industrially processed food and tried to raise their children on organic vegetables and whole grains."

The Freegans represent a younger counterculture group, though both Freegans and back-to-the-landers favor organic, whole foods when they have a choice, and the Freegans look for Dumpsters behind organic food processors. "Both groups prize 'suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment' of food prepared and consumed communally."

Though neither group is flatly against accepting help from government programs, both are critical of the kind of food that is distributed through emergency food services.

"Both groups pattern their foodways on pre-capitalist practices, but their choice of models differs. Might we say that the back-to-the-landers are motivated by a vision of non-industrial agriculture, and the Freegans by pre-agricultural hunter-gatherers?"

This is the third Center Fellowship awarded to Gross, who is the author of *An Ethnography of Walloon Puppet Theaters* (John Benjamin, 2001).

How to define ‘environmental justice’ in China

Three decades of liberal economic reforms have brought new prosperity for many Chinese but the rapid urbanization and industrialization are taking a heavy environmental toll.

How to assess the situation in terms of environmental justice is the question that interests Bryan Tilt, a Center Research Fellow and OSU anthropologist. Environmental research in the United States and Europe tends to assume that litigation, community activism, and public protest are viable strategies to address environmental justice concerns. This is not the case in China, “where governmental respect for individual rights is poor, environmental litigation is in its infancy, and public protest is often suppressed.”

“China’s government and its citizens thus are confronting new social and political questions about the role of public participation in environmental decision-making, the uneven distribution of harmful environmental effects, and transparency in the environmental oversight process,” said Tilt.

“Environmental justice” is a relatively new term that emerged in the last two decades to describe the uneven distribution of environmental risks among certain social groups, notably racial minorities and the poor in the U.S. Environmental justice research examines how individuals and communities link environmental concerns with struggles for civil rights and social justice.

For the past several years, Tilt has focused on understanding the ecological and health risks from industrial pollution in China, where the annual Gross Domestic Product growth rate hovers in the near double digits, and which is widely expected to become the world’s largest economy within the next two decades.



Bryan Tilt

When Tilt presents his research to other scholars, he said, he tends to hear one of two responses.

“The first is that Chinese people likely don’t care about pollution because they are focused on the immediate need for economic development. The second is that, even if people did care about pollution, public opinion doesn’t matter very much in the context of an authoritarian, single-party government that emphasizes economic development over environmental protection.”

The responses have lead to questions that are guiding his research: Where do successful environmental strategies come from? What cultural values and legal precedents underpin them? In what political contexts have these strategies been deployed? What are the problems and prospects involved in applying the strategies to China?

Though authority and control of information are concentrated in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party, the role of civil society is also significant. Citizens’ groups often find creative ways to accomplish their

goals, using strategies for addressing environmental justice that include lawsuits, petitions, and sometimes open protest.

“There are some signs that these strategies are beginning to bear fruit,” said Tilt. In 2005, the State Environmental Protection Administration stopped 30 major industrial projects for failure to conduct proper environmental impact analyses. Environmental protest is on the rise—as long as it remains local and small in scale—and the Internet is becoming a major tool for information pooling and organization around shared interests.

Tilt sees two major implications for his research. The first is that a better understanding of the constraints operating in China is a crucial step toward resolution of the country’s environmental problems. The second is that, because the study is comparative, it will give insight into the extent to which “an established environmental justice model in the United States, which is predicated on liberal democratic principles such as litigation and freedom of expression, can be applied to a dramatically different cultural and political context.”

Environmental protest is on the rise and the Internet is becoming a major tool

A way of working, a way of being

The success of Pottery Barn and other companies that capitalize on the popular taste for a handcrafted look could seem like a commercial hoax, but the phenomenon has complex roots in our arts and literary history, argues Peter Betjemann.

In his book, *Talking Shop: Craft, Consumption, and American Literature*, Betjemann asserts that the marketing of handicrafts reveals a tension in American culture between a desire for the simplicity and artisanship of an earlier era, and the drive for consumption and mass production on the other.

“To think of this phenomenon primarily in terms of assumed contradictions is, I believe, to impose ironies on a definition of labor and work that for the majority of industrial-era Americans—including some of the country’s best-known writers and artisans—has been fired in a larger cultural kiln,” said Betjemann, a Center Research Fellow and assistant professor of English at OSU.

Betjemann’s book explores relations between literature and skilled labor during the early phases of industrial development in the United States, when handicraft acquired durable associations not just with a way of working, but with a way of being.

“Most broadly, I am interested in how the emergence of craft as an idea about a better lifestyle and as a cogently imagined aesthetic—an effect of certain textures, patinas, and shapes—affected how all kinds of work, from manual labor to literary labor, were conceptualized.”

Talking Shop aims to reverse the common assumption that the ideal of skilled labor was forged in opposition to the practices of industrial reproduction and the habits of consumer culture. “Nor, however, does the book claim that a relentless market simply absorbed, packaged and re-sold



Peter Betjemann

apparently ‘crafted’ items, capitalizing on a vogue for the rustic. Rather, the very definition of skill—the fundamental way in which Americans thought about work of all sorts—was shaped by the industrial stakes of its nineteenth-century invigoration.”

Evolving notions of labor imagined the artisan’s relation to material as a matter of sensitivity and intuition as much as training or technical prowess, Betjemann noted. “John Ruskin’s ‘obviously hyperbolic claim that true artisans ‘care not a whit’ for keeping their chisels sharp represents a curious distaste for technical skill under evolving industrial-age standards of workmanship.”

The leaders of the crafts movement thought of themselves as offering individually handmade objects as antidotes to the forces of industrial reproduction, yet the essential terms of their ideas about craft also turned toward the logic that made handicraft available, as a sensibility rather than a trade, to the mass market.

“To be better than machine-made goods, crafts had to be one-of-a-kind objects of the singularly finest quality. But because the revivalists also

imagined a democratic movement founded on sensibility and oriented to much more than the perfect techniques of tradesmen, they unmoored workmanship from its traditional grounding in reproducible skills.”

While *Talking Shop* considers the writing of Henry James, Edgar Allan Poe, and Edith Wharton, Betjemann considers Poe “the nineteenth century’s best spokesman for literary craft.” Poe’s work also reflects the tensions that were endemic to nineteenth-century notions of labor.

In his account of writing “The Raven” Poe disclaims any effect of accident or intuition, and credits instead the perfection of the writer’s craft. And yet, said Betjemann, the poem is “about the breakdown of language’s efficacy.” It is typical of Poe that “the perfect workmanship claimed by the author in the essays or by the characters in the fiction always somehow, in the end, gives way.”

This “loosening of artisanship” from the enduring model of craft as a set of skills for reliably delivering what you promise represents one of the transformations that renders craft compatible with consumption. “It informs how authors imagine their own work as well as how they depict the work of others.”

Long-time friends share ‘Critical Influences’



Chi Meredith and Kris Daniels in Meredith's studio in the Crees Building. (1980s)

Artists and long-time friends Kristina Daniels and Chi Meredith have teamed up to produce, “Critical Influences,” an exhibit of prints and paintings that reflects their habit of visiting each other’s studios and exchanging critical comments on work. The show will be at the Center through spring and summer terms.

The two women became friends in 1970 when Meredith was a bachelor of fine arts student at OSU and Daniels—who had earned a BFA from Ohio State University in 1967—was a lab assistant in the Art Department’s printing room. Both kept studios in the old Crees Building in downtown Corvallis until that space was leased by a high-tech company, when they moved to studios in different buildings on Madison Avenue within easy walking distance of each other.

The artists say that a shared love of printmaking has sustained the lasting friendship that has deeply influenced their work throughout the years. The show includes twenty-one paintings and lithographs by each artist, including works that draw on the same source materials. This allows a comparison of approaches by the two artists to the same subject.

Meredith works with acrylic, oil and guache while Daniel’s paintings are entirely oil. Both women have exhibited widely, in solo shows and group. Daniels has had several previous, one-woman exhibits at the Center.

“Critical Influences” will be on display April through August at the Center for the Humanities, 811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue. It is free and open weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For information, call 541-737-2450.



Chi Meredith and Kris Daniels in Daniels' studio in the Welsher Building. (2008)

Director Robinson delivers museum lecture

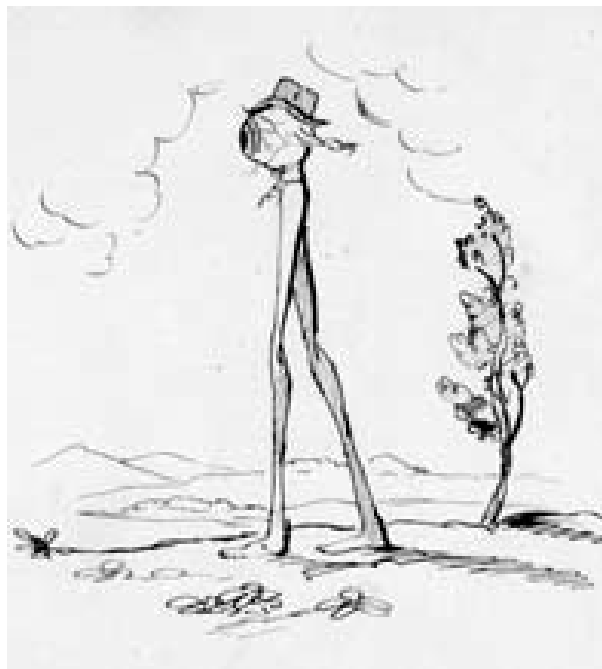
In January, Center Director David M. Robinson spoke on the Transcendental poet and painter Christopher Pearse Cranch at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum in New London, Connecticut.

The museum's curator, Nancy Stula, assembled the first comprehensive exhibition of Cranch's paintings, sketches and manuscripts, drawing from the holdings of several museums, and from materials still in the possession of Cranch's descendants.

A devotee of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Cranch was a poet, essayist, and Unitarian minister, best known for his cartoon-like illustrations of Emerson's first book, *Nature* (1836). Among the drawings is a satirical sketch of Emerson's declaration, "I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God."

Cranch depicts a humorous long-legged, barefoot, eyeball in a top hat, striding through the countryside.

The Lyman Allyn exhibition showed Cranch as an accomplished landscape painter, linked to the 19th Century Hudson River School of American painting. A catalog of the exhibition, including an essay by Robinson, was published in 2008 by the University Press of New England under the title *At Home and Abroad: The Transcendental Landscapes of Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813-1892)*.



*I become a transparent eye-ball; I
am nothing; I see all; the currents of
the Universal Being circulate
through me; I am part or particle of
God*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Storytelling, Buddhist activism conference, literary readings supported by Center

The Center is contributing to a rich range of events this year, from a literary reading about mountaintop mining to a lecture on the creative process of musical composition. The money comes from the Peter J. Copek Fund, named for the Center's founding director.

Support is generally in the form of small grants, but may also include free use of the building for receptions, lectures, conferences, and other events. Following is a list of 2007-08 activities that received some contribution from the Center.

- **Magic Barrel**, a literary reading to combat hunger, Oct. 19.

- **Calyx Gala**, a fundraiser for the women's literary magazine, Oct. 25.

- **David Childs Lecture**, a presentation by the composer and director of the Vanderbilt Opera Theater Program, Jan. 17.

- **The Tcha Tee Man Wi Storytelling Festival**, a celebration of oral tradition, Jan. 31-Feb. 3.

- **Ann Pancake**, reading and talk by the author of the novel *Strange as this Weather Has Been*, Feb. 15.

- **Holocaust Memorial Week**, April 16-April 20.

- **Reception for Sayantani DasGupta**, opening lecturer for the Medicine, Writing, and the Humanities Conference, April 24.

- **Buddhist Activism in Greater China and Beyond**, a conference presented by the OSU History Department, April 25-26.

- **Mary Cullinan Lecture**, talk by the president of Southern Oregon University, April 28.

Spring Calendar

Art Exhibit - April through August

Mutual Influences, Paintings and prints by
Kristine Kennedy Daniels and Chi Meredith

April

21 *Capitalism and Its Discontents: Investigating Foodways in Rural Oregon*. Lecture by Joan Gross, Center Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology, OSU. 4 p.m. Autzen House.



28 *Living with (and Embracing) Change in Public Higher Education*. Lecture by Mary Cullinan, President, Southern Oregon University. 4 p.m. Autzen House.



MAY

5 *What Are We Saying When We Talk About Art? Some Thoughts on Aesthetic Qualities*. Lecture by Stphanie Ross, Center Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, University of Missouri. 4 p.m. Autzen House.



19 *Re-thinking Elements of Normative Democratic Theory in an Age of Social Cognitive Neuroscience and Voter Micr-targeting*. Lecture by Robert Sahr, Center Research Fellow, Department



2008-09 fellowships continued . . .

OSU Fellows

Tracy Daugherty

Department of English
Dante's Astronomer: A Biography of Mary Evershed

Neil Davison

Department of English
A Different Difference: Jewishness, Masculinity, and Zionism from the Modern to the Postmodern

Hung-yok Ip

Department of History
Unbound Identity: Mohism for Nonviolence

Ben Mutschler

Department of History
According to their Abilities: Capacity, Disability, and Citizenship in an Age of Revolution

Mark Porrovecchio

Speech Communication
Building the Perfect Beast: F.C.S. Schiller and the Rhetorical Style of Pragmatic Humanism

William Uzgalis

Department of Philosophy
The Letters of Anthony Collins & Samuel Clarke

Julieta Vitullo

Foreign Languages & Literatures
Fictions of a War: The Malvinas/Falklands War in Argentine Literature and Film

Peter J. Copek Fund



During Peter J. Copek's sixteen years as the founding director of the Center, he regularly made Center money available to support cultural events on campus. In addition to conferences, music festivals, and film series, the Center supported many special and unusual lectures and programs, including visits to OSU by Gore Vidal, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and venerable South African township jazz singer and film star Dolly Rathebe. The level of support for such events has always depended on the state of the Center's finances from year to year. After Peter died suddenly in June, 2001, there was much discussion of how best to keep his name alive so that his impact on OSU intellectual life would not be forgotten. What resulted is the Peter J. Copek Fund, intended to provide more regular and stable support for the same kinds of cultural events that he supported through the Center. In spring of 2003, the campaign to raise money for this fund began with a letter to former Research Fellows. The campaign has turned to a general appeal to Center friends and supporters, plus all those who not only value Peter's work on behalf of the university but would like to see strong, ongoing support for campus cultural events.

PLEASE JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE PETER J. COPEK FUND

Send this form along with contribution to the Peter J. Copek Fund, Center for the Humanities, 811 S.W. Jefferson Ave., Corvallis, OR, 97333-4506

Donor Information:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Gifts made in response to this solicitation are tax deductible to the amount permitted by law, depending on individual donor tax situations. To have contributions deducted directly from OSU paycheck, please inquire in the Center office

Amount \$ _____

Payment Method:

A check payable to OSU Foundation is enclosed

Paying by credit/debit card:

Discover Mastercard

Acct. # _____

Expiration date ____/____

Marianne Moore *continued . . .*

entire life until her mother's death when Marianne was almost sixty. A self-righteous, moralizing mother seems an unlikely companion for an avant-garde writer, and yet partners they were. A full portrait of Moore is not possible without one of her mother, whose curious role of censor and collaborator gave impetus to Moore's art.

"Not only is Mary Warner Moore a powerful storyteller, providing in her letters detailed and witty accounts of the family and domestic life, she is herself a dramatic, almost tragic, character torn between high Protestant ideals and her own dark yearnings."

Moore also was extremely close to her brother, Warner, and was devastated when he "left" the family by marrying.

"I want to present Moore not only within a family context but also within historical and cultural ones . . . Like the exotic animals she admired, Moore adapted to her world, yet her survival strategies could take surprising turns. How to explain, for instance, her various personae, from 'Rat' within the family to the adorable wizened baseball fan of the 1960s?"

Though Moore was among the most innovative of the deliberately

innovative modernists, she was simultaneously a beloved celebrity known for her tricorne hat, her love of baseball and her published correspondence with the Ford Motor Company as she suggested nineteen possible names for cars, at their request. The *New York Times* marked her death with a full-page obituary.

"Her early poems appeared alongside those of T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, H.D., William Carlos Williams, and Wallace Stevens in the avant-garde 'little magazines' that emerged just prior to World War I. Although her readership remained small throughout the first half of the century, among her fellow modernists she was arguably the most esteemed poet writing in America."

During the second half of the century, Moore continued to gain admirers among the next generation of poets—W.H. Auden, Elizabeth Bishop, Sylvia Plath—and won every significant literary honor that America had to offer.

The biography is to be published by Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. Leavell is the author of a previous book about the poet, *Marianne Moore and the Visual Arts: Prismatic Color* (Louisiana State UP, 1995), and it was while reading family correspondence

for that book that she realized that "key events and issues had been misinterpreted or ignored" in earlier work about the poet.

Her proposal to do a biography was received with enthusiasm by Moore's niece, Marianne Craig Moore, and her sister who together manage Moore's estate. The sisters met with Leavell in New York and gave her the full support of the estate as the official biographer. The greatest challenge for a biographer of Moore is not accumulating facts, said Leavell, so much as gleaning from the profusion of facts an imaginative portrait.

"While I do not presume to be a Chekhov or Woolf nor to rival Moore's own ability to transform the quotidian into poetry, it is Moore herself who has taught me most about how to face this challenge. Her poetry insists upon 'relentless accuracy' as a means of avoiding stereotype, of granting one's subject the freedom to be itself. And yet only with imagination can one avoid, in her words, 'the haggish, uncompromising drawl of certitude.'"

Center Program Advisory Board 2007-08

James Blumenthal
Philosophy

Vreneli Farber
Foreign Languages and
Literatures

Gary Ferngren
History

Hua-yu Li, Chair
Political Science

William Husband
History

Lisa Sarasohn
History

Keith Scribner
English

Robert Schwartz
English

Ex-officio
David Robinson
Center Director

Wendy Madar
Associate Director

The Center for the Humanities



The Center was established in 1984 as an outgrowth of the Humanities Development Program, which had been creating innovative interdisciplinary courses since 1977. The Center continues to offer a certificate program in Twentieth Century Studies, but its focus has broadened to a concern for improving the quality of humanities research as well as teaching at OSU. This is accomplished through the awarding of resident research fellowships to both OSU and visiting scholars, as well as by sponsoring conferences, seminars, lecture series, art exhibits and other events. The Center occupies Autzen House, 811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue.

David Robinson
Director

Wendy Madar
Associate Director

Sara Ash
Office Coordinator

Alison Ruch
Office Assistant



The Center for the Humanities
Autzen House
811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue,
Corvallis, OR 97333-4506
(541)737-2450

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Corvallis, OR
Permit No. 200