In 1910, an amateur astronomer sat on a hill in southern India staring at the daylight moon as she grappled with apparent mistakes in a published text.

The astronomer was Mary Ackworth Evershed. The text was Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

“The Ptolemaic structure on which Dante based his universe had long been discredited, but that wasn’t the sort of error that absorbed her,” said Tracy Daugherty, Center Research Fellow and professor of English at OSU. “She wanted to know if Dante was accurate within his conception.”

Was he, as some would claim, “unintelligible”? Or was he, for a man of his time and place, as insightful as one could be about the sky?

Daugherty is working on the first biography of Evershed, who made important contributions to Dante studies as well as to the understanding of sunspots and solar flares. Evershed is the author of *Dante and the Early Astronomers*, “the finest book ever written on Dante’s science.”

*Dante’s Astronomer* will be Daugherty’s second biography. His first, *Hiding Man: A Life of Donald Barthelme*, was published by St. Martin’s Press in February. He also is the author of numerous novels, short stories, and essays.

In Evershed’s time, British women wishing to become professional astronomers faced several barriers. Astronomy was not taught as a stand-alone...
Pragmatism with Schiller more honest & useful

Man is the measure of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not. Protagoras, ca. 490–420 BC

Pragmatism: an American movement in philosophy founded by C. S. Peirce and William James and marked by the doctrines that the meaning of conceptions is to be sought in their practical bearings, that the function of thought is to guide action, and that truth is preeminently to be tested by the practical consequences of belief. Merriam-Webster Dictionary

In the mid-1890s, F.C.S. Schiller failed his doctoral orals at Cornell University and returned to England to take a position at Oxford. Within a year, William James published several books of philosophy that set off a blaze of debate between the defenders of Absolute Idealism and advocates of the new, ethical “practicalism.”

The two men had begun a relationship while Schiller was at Cornell and James at Harvard, carrying on a correspondence that would be of enduring value to both philosophers.

“By the time pragmatism was introduced to the British philosophical public in 1900, Schiller was already well on his way to articulating and defending pragmatism to his peers,” said Mark Porrovecchio, a Center Research Fellow, forensics director, and assistant professor of speech communication at OSU.

Porrovecchio is working on what he describes as a rhetorical biography and intellectual history of Schiller (1864-1937), the foremost proponent of pragmatism at the turn of the century. “This project analyzes, in chronological order, the most substantial and often contested arguments that Schiller engaged in so as to promote, first, Jamesian pragmatism and, secondly, his own pragmatic humanism,” Porrovecchio wrote in his research proposal.

As an early defender of pragmatism, Schiller’s style of argument—repeating key themes, engaging in vigorous and often humorous polemic—was crucial.

“Without it, pragmatism arguably might not have gained the foothold it did against the idealistic strains of philosophy dominant at the time. But that same bold, insistent style proved an irritant to pragmatism’s reputation in the years preceding World War II, and led pragmatists themselves to reject and downplay Schiller’s influence.”

As pragmatism fell on hard times during the 1940s and 1950s, Schiller’s reputation also sank, and even when it was resurrected several decades later, his contributions were relegated to a footnote.

Schiller’s pragmatism was of a very specific sort, said Porrovecchio. His humanism traces back to James’s “subjective-centered handling of the objective world,” and points toward what James called “radical empiricism,” that is, to the role individuals play in comprehending and interpreting the world as they conceive it.

“Having sided with pragmatism, and then with the more expansive

Continued on page 6
Mohist nonviolence requires ‘letting go of self’

Hung-yok Ip

Mahatma Gandhi “embraced the enemy” by moving beyond his own national and cultural identities in order to transform Indian anti-imperialism into a force that would help the colonized and colonizers alike.

His great-granddaughter, Leela Gandhi, writes of marginalized groups in the West achieving cross-cultural collaboration by forsaking their imperialist identities.

Such letting go of the egocentric self, says Research Fellow and OSU historian Hung-yok Ip, “is a malleable mode of self-formation which I would like to call unbound identity.” The question of how to construct such a non-egocentric self lies at the heart of her research into nonviolence and the formation of moral philosophies, specifically, the contributions of Mohism, a school of philosophy founded in China by Mozi during the period 475-221 B.C.

During this era, known as the Warring States Period, opposing regions fought ferociously for control of China. In response, Mozi and his followers “made their mark on ancient Chinese history for their commitment to nonviolence in general and their endeavors to stop aggressive wars in particular.”

An important principle of Mohism is the injunction that regard for the welfare of others ought to spring from a spirit of “impartial concern” that does not make distinctions between self and other—associates and strangers—a doctrine often described simplistically as “universal love.”

Despite the Mohists’ contemporaneous significance, said Ip, the group has been little studied, and much of what has been written about them fails to do the movement justice. Until the 1990s, Mozi was presented as “a crude utilitarian ascetic who sold the concept of impartial love that must benefit.”

Though this image has been debunked by some, “scholars basically accept the view that to implement the ideal of impartial love, the Mohists paid more attention to the control of external behavior than to the inner world from which outward performance derived.”

Though it’s true, Ip agrees, that the Mohists’ discussion of the internal realm is limited, and the nonviolent practitioners were determined to stay committed to their social-political identity, she argues that “they were, when necessary, able to liberate themselves from their position and its intellectual-emotional constraints.”

The most important text of Mohism, the Mozi, represents mainly Mozi’s conversations and lectures, though some scholars speculate that Confucian and Daoist writings are included. In aiming to achieve “unbound identity,” the Mohists emphasized several key themes: commitment to the strictly disciplined cause itself; understanding of and cooperation with societal segments that did not conform to Mohist rules; active communication with and even service to “the Establishment,” which often could not be won over by ideological argument alone.

“And, most importantly, by requiring the Mohists to understand and work with others, including the enemy, they were pressed to develop a great capacity for being other-oriented, which made them walk a fine line between their culture and its opposite.”

It is because of their immense capacity for “other-orientedness” that “Mohism is a welcome addition to the contemporary repertories of nonviolent action, opening a world of imagination regarding how nonviolent agents can relate to outsiders carrying values and living lives different from their own.”

Hung-yok Ip is the author of Intellectuals in Revolutionary China: Leaders, Heroes and Sophisticates (RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).
Every one of us—from those with slight nearsightedness to the totally blind, for example—labors under some level of disability, but it is society’s response that categorizes certain persons as “impaired.”

“Like race, class, and gender, in other words, disability is a socially constructed category of difference,” said Ben Mutschler, an assistant professor of history at OSU. Mutschler is devoting his Center Research Fellowship to a book on the ways in which considerations of physical, mental, and social abilities entered into debates over citizenship rights in eighteenth-century America.

The project grew out of his first book, *The Province of Affliction: Illness in Eighteenth-Century New England* (forthcoming from Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture), which also was supported by a Center Fellowship.

The new book is rooted in the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of disability studies, and will be the first full-length study of its type to focus on the social and political history of early America. “Disability studies turns our conventional notion of a functioning, workaday life on its head,” Mutschler wrote in his project proposal. Rather than identifying a minority of “disabled” persons in a sea of able bodies, scholars examine what it is in our built environment, our economic and political institutions, and our notions of autonomy and freedom that confers “ability” on particular individuals.

“In overthrowing monarchy and the political culture that sustained it, the Revolution raised a new and perplexing question. What qualities might be used in a system of popular sovereignty to differentiate among ‘the people’ and to determine the respective rights, responsibilities, and obligations of the new government and their citizens?”

Beginning in the 1760s and continuing through the turn of the century, Americans engaged in a protracted struggle over the ideal abilities that citizens must possess. “Citizens were commonly expected to exercise self-regulation, virtue, sensibility, reason, elocution, and labor. Each of these qualities was promoted not only in the folk sayings and learned treatises of the period, but also in sharp debates over the most basic issues of governance, taxation, representation, and public service. Who could vote, who might serve in the legislature, who should count in the census—all these issues turned on the question of what one could do.”

Unlike the current singling out of categories of the “disabled” for special attention, during the early years of the nation, physical and mental impairments of all sorts were included among such misfortunes as fire and disease. The book will focus on questions of ability and disability as they emerged during the Revolutionary period, a time when determining the exact qualities necessary for participation in the republican polity arose with urgency.

“Ben Mutschler”

In promoting reason, for example, writers pointed to “idiots,” “lunatics,” and “hysterical” women as incapable of lucid thought. A national citizenry was thus called into being “as much by labeling those unfit for citizenship as it was by articulating the attributes of those qualified for self-government.”
During the 1930s, Oregon Governor Charles Martin sent undercover agents to attend meetings of a new workers’ organization, the Oregon Commonwealth Federation. Martin referred to the group as a “gang . . . of young Jew[s] . . . Communists, C.I.O’s and crackpots!”

Oregon-born activist Monroe Sweetland was executive director of the group.

“The communist charge was pure fiction,” said historian William Robbins. “Sweetland fought assiduously to keep the Oregon Commonwealth Federation free of communist influences. In a telephone conversation in 1998, the deliberative and soft-spoken Sweetland told Martin’s biographer that he still thought Martin was a ‘son-of-a-bitch.’”

A distinguished professor emeritus of history at OSU, Robbins is in residence at the Center for winter and spring terms as an Honorary Fellow while working on a biography of Sweetland. Sweetland’s papers are archived with the Oregon Historical Society Research Library in Portland, and in a rare and generous move, the library agreed to ship fifty boxes of the papers for temporary housing in the OSU Archives so that Robbins can have easy access to them during his residency at the Center.

Reading through the materials is like having a ringside seat at some of the most significant events of a turbulent century.

“Sweetland lived through the cultural revolution of the 1920s, the crisis of the Great Depression, the unparalleled violence of a world at war, and the push and pull of politics in the American state as it moved through hot- and cold-war crises and contended with domestic unrest at home,” said Robbins.

Born in Salem in 1910, Sweetland moved with his family in 1916 to Constantine, Michigan. After earning a bachelor’s degree in history and communication, he studied law briefly, married Lillie Megrath, and the two left school for politics in New York. Lillie as an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and Sweetland to the League for Industrial Democracy.

In 1935, the couple returned west where Sweetland went to work for the new Oregon Commonwealth Federation. With war looming over Europe and Asia, he served as a liaison between labor families and their sons in the military, and helped move labor away from narrow economic interests to broader community-based issues.

“With the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, and the February 12 executive order directing all persons of Japanese ancestry to report to relocation centers, Sweetland took a courageous stand with a few other people opposing the internment of Japanese-Americans.”

A pacifist, Sweetland joined the American Red Cross Wartime Organization and served in combat zones in the South Pacific. Back in Oregon after the war, he became a force in the Democratic Party, and published and edited newspapers in Molalla, Milwaukie, and Newport.

“Elected in the statewide primary to the Democratic Party National Committee in 1948, Sweetland slowly moved Oregon’s conservative and largely moribund Democratic Party in a more progressive direction.”

Continued on page 8
‘Inspired by things earthy and organic’

Paintings by Linda Seigneur are on display at the Center through March. The exhibit is free and open to the public weekdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The following is from the artist’s personal statement:

“I received my BFA degree in printmaking and painting from Michigan State University. Roughly 10 years ago my work shifted from representational to abstract, beginning with mixed media on paper. Mixed media released me from ‘the rules’ to be more expressive, experimenting with broad gestural strokes, text and whatever materials caught my fancy. Currently, the majority of my work is oil and wax on canvas. Using palette and putty knives keeps my work loose and enables me to build layers of texture and reveal fragments of color beneath. I love the sensual, tactile aspect of this style of painting. My work is a visual translation of my observations, experiences and deep inner feelings fueled by a fascination with textures, luminance and the juxtaposition of ‘non-colors’ (extremely muted colors) with more intense hues. ‘Non-colors’ is a term I use to describe a group of colors that one might initially lump together as grays or browns. Given a little time, however, subtle shifts in color begin to emerge. My work is informed by a deep appreciation of natural phenomena, initiated by my grandfather who brought me amazing polished stones and shells from his many trips and who taught me the names of plants on our woodland jaunts hunting mushrooms. To this day I continue to gather and be inspired by seed pods, nuts, leaves, twigs, exotic plants and all things earthy and organic. Whether realistic or abstracted, landscapes are a recurring theme in my work. “

Schiller continued from Page 2

humanism, Schiller set out to demonstrate that the former leads into the latter. To do so, he adopts the exemplar Protagoras and, with him, the dictum ‘man is the measure.’ . . . If James’s psychology provides the mechanism by which to understand the human consciousness, then pragmatic humanism provides the method by which to organize and control its functions.”

James’s death in 1910 forced Schiller to defend the philosopher’s views against competing interpretations, plus he was generally marginalized and considered out of touch with current developments. Following World War I, said Porrovecchio, Schiller’s “studies in humanism have been translated into problems, not just of contingency but of belief. This is a seemingly Jamesian question of the will and what it can accomplish, but there is now an edge to such queries of accomplishment.”

In Tantalus, or The Future of Man (1924) and Cassandra, or The Future of the British Empire (1926) “the pragmatic underpinnings have grown tinny. Humanity’s abilities and the individual’s will are now in doubt. . . Absent the resolve to put forth the potential, or weakened by the shocks of a world in turmoil, the measure of Protagoras is being replaced with the philosopher king of Plato.”

Schiller died in 1937 and soon all but disappeared from the pages of philosophy. “When mentioned at all, he is curtly framed as one who misunderstood pragmatism. When completely ignored, his absence paves the way for a story of pragmatism that is distinctly American and predominantly realist in nature. Both instincts are historically inaccurate even as they have been rhetorically effective.”

Porrovecchio hopes to correct the historical narrative about pragmatism that developed from 1940 through the 1970s by arguing for what Schiller can add if reintroduced to the fold.

“Pragmatism without Schiller has proven, till now, to be a convenient fiction. Pragmatism with Schiller is more honest, more exciting, and more useful.”
Corvallis collector exhibits ‘peasant’ paintings from Xi’an, China

Colorful Chinese paintings from a private collection will be on display at the Center April through June. The collector, Corvallis artist Louise Meadows, bought the ‘peasant’ paintings at a small shop in Xi’an, in Central China.

“Although the Xi’an County region—HuXi’an—in Central China is better known for its famed terra cotta army of the first Chinese Emperor, Qin, it is also home to a concentration of peasant artists noted for their paintings featuring rural life,” Meadows wrote in a statement about the exhibit. “It is generally thought that these artists developed their distinctive style of painting in the 1950s.

“Their paintings are focused on scenes of everyday rural life, including farming, festivals, village traditions, and seasons. These brightly painted, exuberant, naïve depictions came to the attention of government officials during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and, since they conformed to an image of the artist as a humble peasant rather than a highly trained and educated member of the elite, the artists received a certain level of state sponsorship.

“Eventually, art classes were organized, an artists’ cooperative was formed and, with government promotion, the paintings have achieved a worldwide following and have been the subject of many exhibits in China and abroad.

“After designing and completing a painting, the artist will make many individual copies with minor variations from the original. The paintings are then sold at tourist shops in HuXi’an and elsewhere, including eBay. All the paintings displayed in this exhibit were purchased from a shop in the Xi’an Muslim quarter, and selected from several stacks of paintings, produced with varying degrees of skill, by a variety of artists. Surprisingly, when they were examined with more care in preparation for this exhibit, they were found to be mainly the work of just two artists.”

The free exhibit is open weekdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information, call 737-2450.
He served in both the Oregon House and Senate, guiding legislation that helped transform fledgling Portland State College from a small urban campus of extension programs into a metropolitan university, and he led an unsuccessful legislative effort to reduce the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen.

He also tried twice to become secretary of state, and lost a close election to Mark Hatfield for the job. His success as a Democratic campaigner, said Robbins, “is reflected in the 1957 legislative session where Democrats controlled both houses of the legislature, the governor’s office, both U.S. Senate seats, and three of the four congressional districts. Contemporaries also credited him with convincing the brilliant, acerbic Sen. Wayne Morse to switch from the Republican Party to independent status and then to the Democratic Party in 1956.”

In 1965, Sweetland moved to California to work for the National Education Association as political director for the thirteen western states, representing the region in the U.S. Congress until 1975. Here he was instrumental in pushing through pioneering legislation to establish educational programs for students who were primarily Spanish speakers; this became the Bilingual Education Act, which remained in effect for thirty years.

“That law,” Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said on the occasion of Sweetland’s ninety-fourth birthday, “opened the doors of education and opportunity to young people in the West and other parts of the country who are native speakers of Spanish. Oregon and our entire country are a better place because of this good man.”

After retiring from the NEA, Sweetland returned to an early interest in botany. For the last twenty years of his active life, he founded and ran the company Western Wilderness Products, which supplied pine cones, tumbleweed, mosses and other such materials to shops in Chicago and New York.

He combed the West by car with a driver who later recounted: “And all along the way Monroe spread his own seeds, engaging every person we encountered, always checking the pulse of every community—and the nation—through which we passed.”


Comments by Sen. Harry Reid

Monroe lives in Oregon, where he has enjoyed a wonderful life of public service. . . He was a confidant of Eleanor Roosevelt and an ally of President Harry Truman. His home in Milwaukie, OR, which was built in 1878, is a historic landmark. That isn’t just because it is an old house, but also because of the many important people who visited him there. The most famous visitor was President John Kennedy. In fact, I have been told that Monroe’s wife Lillie was the person who suggested to JFK that a rocking chair would ease the pain in his back. Others who visited Monroe and Lillie included Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith, and Senators Wayne Morse, “Scoop” Jackson and Estes Kefauver. Monroe recently turned 94 years old. Although he has been legally blind for several years, he is fond of saying that he has lost his sight, but not his vision.
Winter & Spring Calendar

WINTER TERM
Art Exhibit-January through March
Paintings by Linda Seigneur

Lectures
All lectures begin at 4 p.m. at Autzen House.

January
26 Dante’s Astronomer: Mary Ackworth Evershed. Tracy Daugherty, Center Research Fellow, Professor of English, OSU.

February
9 Philip Roth’s Jewish Gender Trouble. Neil Davison, Center Research Fellow, Associate Professor of English, OSU.
23 Clarke, Collins, and Consciousness: A Debate About the Relation of Mind and Matter in Early Eighteenth Century Britain. William Uzgalis, Center Research Fellow, Professor of Philosophy, OSU.

March
2 Capacity, Disability, and Citizenship in an Age of Revolution. Ben Mutschler, Center Research Fellow, Associate Professor of History, OSU.

SPRING TERM
Art Exhibit--April through June
Chinese Peasant Paintings, from the collection of Louise Meadows

Lectures
April
13 Monroe Sweetland: Seven Decades of Political Activism. William Robbins, Honorary Research Fellow, Professor of History Emeritus, OSU.
20 Suburban Panics: Lost Innocence and Moral Crusades in California Politics. Matthew Lassiter, Center Research Fellow, Associate Professor of History, University of Michigan.
27 The Rhetoric of Repetition: F.C.S. Schiller and the Style of Pragmatic Humanism. Mark Porrovecchio, Center Research Fellow, Assistant Professor & Director of Forensics, Speech Communication, OSU.

May
4 Beyond Engaged Buddhism: Mohism, the Mahayana Tradition, and Nonviolence. Hung-yok Ip, Center Research Fellow, Associate Professor of History, OSU.

Center Program Advisory Board 2008-09

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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

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Astronomer continued from page 1

discipline but rather as a branch of mathematics and physics. At Cambridge, women were allowed to take examinations but they could not earn degrees until 1923, and could not become full members of the university until 1948.

“Women with their head in the stars had no choice but to be amateurs. Among them, sunspots and solar flares were favorite objects of study. Elizabeth Brown, a tireless amateur, suggested that sunspot drawing was a perfect activity for ‘ladies’ because they had plenty of time to devote to it and needed only a dark glass, a pencil and paper to do the work.”

There was also the matter of women’s “delicate constitutions” and threats from the chill night air should they overdo stargazing.

As an amateur star-gazer, Mary Ackworth Orr met the young astronomer John Evershed at meetings of the British Astronomical Association, and love bloomed while they chased eclipses from Norway to Algiers. From 1906 to 1923, the married couple worked at the Kodaikanal Observatory in the Palani Hills of southern India conducting photographic observations of sunspots and flares.

Evershed’s second great interest was poetry, and the poet who thrilled her most was Dante, “Though as a long-time stargazer and wife of an observatory official, she could not look past Dante’s cosmography,” Daugherty wrote in his research proposal.

“The Comedy mentions stars fifty-five times, with numerous references to the moon and planets, the constellations, and seasonal measurements.

“As she watched the day-moon set, she recalled Dante’s little-known Latin treatise, the ‘Questo de Aqua et Terra,’ in which he appeared to make a troubling blunder. In the ‘Questo,’ Dante argues that the moon is always in precise perigee—that is, at its closest approach to earth—near the earth’s southern hemisphere.”

In fact, medieval scientists knew that the moon’s perigee shifted along the zodiac, north and south of the equator. “Dante’s assertion seemed sloppy—in which case, the Comedy’s scaffolding might very well contain loose steps.”

What is it about Dante that inclines readers to take his science seriously? In her notes, and eventually in her groundbreaking book, Evershed put her finger on the poet’s intellectual charm: “Dante’s description of ‘celestial matter,’ she wrote, is ‘one of the finest instances of his faithfulness to the teachings of astronomy as he had learned it.’ In Paradiso 2, using his ‘poetical imagination,’ he examines pearl-like, ‘polished’ ether, a substance ‘soft as cloud but hard as diamond,’ which ‘offers no more resistance to Dante as he enters into it than does water to a ray of light.’

“In passages such as this, Dante uses science and ‘material facts (as he conceived them) to present an allegory of the deepest religious mysteries.’ Time and again, if Dante’s ‘premise be granted, the conclusions are correct. As regards sun, moon, and planets,’ they are often ‘correct even from the point of view of modern knowledge.’

“Dante’s rigor and his insistence on specificity even within a dubious framework seduces readers into casting off what they know, to think in his terms... John and Mary Evershed’s voluminous observation records from the Kodaikanal Observatory provide a fascinating glimpse into the world of professional astronomy just before Einstein’s theories revolutionized our views of the universe. Mary’s notes provide an intriguing record of a late-Victorian mind grappling with the views of a medieval genius determined to redefine the universe for readers of his time.”

Her book, published in 1914, settled certain critical complaints about Dante’s universe.

“Further, the book helped pave the way for academic study of the history of science and advanced the notion that women could be serious participants in the rapidly-expanding fields of theoretical and observational astronomy.”
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.

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