It is a bit of a stretch—but only a bit—to blame the Wild West’s Buffalo Bill for German cultural censorship early in the last century.

In 1905, a fictional version of the Western hero became a quick hit in Germany through an illustrated pamphlet series called *Buffalo Bill*. It was so popular that other such serialized tales soon appeared, triggering official condemnation of the new “trash” publications.

It was the beginning of decades of censorship that lasted through three political regimes—Imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic, and the Third Reich—a tale that will be told in Kara Ritzheimer’s book *Buffalo Bill: Commercial Culture, Censorship, and National Identity in Early 20th-Century Germany*.

The censorship, Ritzheimer argues, began with local protests against the cheap publications as well as the blooming film industry.

“Regional activists campaigned against the ‘trash’ and lobbied first state and then federal authorities to create censorship laws targeting these media,” said Ritzheimer, a Center Research Fellow and faculty member in OSU’s School of History, Philosophy, and Religion. “By the 1920s, they had achieved their goal when the Reichstag adopted both a film law and a publications law.”

Ritzheimer’s analysis challenges a propensity among historians to view pre-1933 censorship laws through the lens of Nazi suppression, in many cases diagnosing Germany as plagued by a predisposition toward authoritarianism or a limp embrace of democracy.

Germans first encountered *Buffalo Bill* stories in stationery stores and watched films in neighborhood cinemas that were often renovated shop fronts. Early consumers found the new entertainments to be “transformative, particularly when retailers displayed colorful and graphically illustrated pamphlet stories in their front window cases.”
Boxing ring redefined Catholic Men

The sport of boxing made “American men” out of Catholic males and opened their way to social whiteness and middle-class respectability, all while affirming their connection to the church.

In short, pugilism was a powerful force within the American Catholic community from 1880 through much of the twentieth century.

In her book "Rosaries and Rope Burns: Boxing and Manhood in American Catholicism," Amy Koehlinger will argue that boxing reinforced Catholic ideas about the redemptive value of physical suffering while offering an effective means of assimilation to male Catholic immigrants. A Center Research Fellow and faculty member in the OSU School of History, Philosophy, and Religion, Koehlinger is the author of "The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s" (Harvard UP, 2007).

Boxing was long among the most popular sports in the United States, right up there with baseball in drawing crowds and media attention. “Though the American obsession with boxing was present in most classes and immigrant groups,” said Koehlinger, “it was especially popular among immigrant Catholics.”

In contrast with longstanding anti-Catholic stigmas that associated Catholic manhood with feminization, passivity, and deviance, the sport of boxing offered Catholic men opportunities to participate in a form of manhood that was not only culturally sanctioned but omnipresent in the church. Parishioners encountered it in church boxing clubs, fundraisers, sermons, education programs, and Catholic periodicals.

Catholics took pride in devout titleholders like Rocky Marciano and Floyd Patterson, while priests served as trainers at all levels, some working with such legendary champions as Sonny Liston and Joe Louis.

Quite apart from its social potency, the sport’s appeal had deep roots within Catholic devotional culture.

“For Catholics formed within a religious economy that equated physical suffering with spiritual redemption, a boxing match enacted the central spiritual mysteries of the faith. The ‘imitatio Christi’ personified in a boxer’s willingness to endure suffering for a greater cause. The Stations of the Cross in his perseverence through round after round of punishment. The stigmata in the gashes and abrasions that collected on his body. Christological death and resurrection recreated each time a boxer was knocked down and managed to rise to his feet.”

While the ethnic origins of champion boxers tended to correlate closely with patterns of ethnic succession in the church, connections between the sport and Catholic identity were rarely this simple, said Koehlinger.

“Whereas boxing sharpened ethnic components of identity inside Catholic enclaves, in the larger culture the sport served as the vehicle for Catholic aspirations for economic and social assimilation.”

By mid-century, the importance of boxing to Catholics plummeted, in part because the sport was tarnished by organized crime but also in response to changing aspirations toward American assimilation.

“Catholic writing and sermons at the turn of the century touted the sport’s capacity to instill public virtues like masculine vigor and ethical discipline in practitioners. As boxing’s status declined, and as Catholics rapidly joined the ranks of the middle class in the 1960s, an increasingly strong voice emerged in the American Church challenging the compatibility of the sport with Catholic principles of peace and the Christian prohibition against murder.”

The sport instilled public virtues like masculine vigor and ethical discipline
When literary animals ‘refuse’ to follow the plot

Hidalgo County, New Mexico, 1941. Young Billy Parham traps a pregnant wolf that has crossed the border into this country after the last resident gray wolf has been killed. Rather than shooting the wolf, which has attacked his family’s cattle, Billy heads for the border to return the animal to the wild. Things do not go well on this mission.

The setup is from Cormac McCarthy’s *The Crossing*, a novel at the center of Raymond Malewitz’s investigation of the nature of animal literary agency.

“I address a central question in the new interdisciplinary field of animal studies,” said Malewitz, a Center Research Fellow and faculty member in the OSU School of Writing, Literature, and Film. “How might humanists view, understand, and engage with the animal world in ways that break from conventional anthropocentric perspectives?”

In a movement spurred by such prominent thinkers as Donna Haraway and Jacques Derrida, some contemporary cultural theorists have begun to step away from traditional humanities perspectives that see absolute division between human and non-human subjects. For these scholars, said Malewitz, the division “obscures both the biotic continuities between animals and humans and the ways in which animals express their own agencies as they enter into dynamic networks with other humans and non-human actors.

“But given our status as human beings embedded within a deep tradition of humanism, how can we collect and share information about nonhuman agents from a nonhuman point of view? How can writers lend animals a full-blown subjective agency when writing from a human perspective?”

For answers, Malewitz looks outside Animal Studies to “thing theory,” a complex way of trying to understand human-object interactions. Stated simply, objects—including animals—become most clearly evident when they break free from their expected position or role, or “stop working for us.”

A broader form of this view, Malewitz suggests, employs the notion of “misuse” or repurposing. In other words, “an animal might gain a temporary agency and legibility at the moment when it has ceased to function as a useful entity . . . by refusing to participate in productive human work or, in the case of literature, by refusing to advance some anthropocentric plot.”

Animal subjects in literature often begin by exhibiting an anthropomorphized character that then changes during the narrative to take on some other—but still anthropocentric—value. The crucial moment, said Malewitz, is the point of change in the story when the animal is in as-yet-undefined transition between the two anthropomorphic states.

Malewitz hopes to test the strengths and weaknesses of this model of animal literary agency through his analysis of McCarthy’s *The Crossing*, which dramatizes the conflict between the industrial and agricultural development of the American southwest and the natural wildness such development displaces.

The conflict is framed through the campaign to eradicate the gray wolf. After trapping the pregnant wolf, Billy Parham “misuses” it through his ill-fated attempt to return it to the wild, thereby causing the shift in the wolf’s expected role.

“For the father, the wolf represents an economic problem. For Billy, the wolf symbolizes wildness. As for the wolf, it becomes increasingly domesticated despite Billy’s determination to keep it wild.”

The “energy” in this quandary, Malewitz argues, comes from the narrative’s failure to resolve the conflicting values ascribed to the wolf. The disjunction between how Billy perceives the world and how the narrator describes the wolf suggests that “the conflict that generates literary animal agency is visible only when the wolf resists its function as a symbol of wildness. I will conclude that literary animals, like their real-world counterparts, assume agency whenever they cannot be resolved into stable human systems of value.”
Animal ‘performance’ tells human truths

Referring to an aging female tortoise as a “kept woman” is the sort of touch that makes Elena Passarello’s essays crackle with originality. The tortoise in question is Harriet who sailed—or maybe did not sail—on the Beagle with Charles Darwin. At the time she was known as Harry. According to one account, Harry/Harriet traveled to England from the Galapagos Islands, then to Australia on a transport ship, then survived two floods and a few decades on the grounds of a mental hospital before ending up in a zoo on the Gold Coast to finish out her venerable 175 years.

“My essay takes these ‘wonky’ facts of the Harriet timeline further, pairing them with even more research from related areas,” said Passarello, a Center Research Fellow, faculty member in the College of Literature, Writing, and Film, and author of the essay collection Allow Me to Clear My Throat. Her book-in-progress, Up, Simba! will include essays on thirty famous animals, like Harriet, that have captured attention through work, rescue, or spectacle.

There is Barry, a dog that saved the most human lives of any dog at St. Bernard’s Monastery and is now stuffed and mounted in a Swiss museum. There is Mike, a headless chicken that is commemorated by its hometown of Fruita, Colorado, with a statue made of axe blades. There is Jiggs, the chimpanzee that played Cheeta to Johnny Weismuller’s Tarzan and lived to be 80.

“I see this project as a lyrical study of how humans use ‘fame’ to bring other creatures closer to their own understanding of experience,” said Passarello. “Wittgenstein is probably right in assuming that if a lion could talk we would not understand it, and this is perhaps why it is more delicious to do the talking for the animals via the constructs of fame that we devise for them.”

The thirty famous animals on Passarello’s list may include, among others, an elephant, a cloned sheep, a giraffe, a tiger, a sperm whale, a rooster, and a pair of penguins. The animals occupy many different pockets of human experience: politics, the 1940’s sideshow circuit, the 19th-century French court, the whaling industry, behavioral science labs, outer space.

“Though the pieces will vary widely in tone and approach, each draft begins with a named creature, one well-documented in human record,” said Passarello. “This beginning leads to research into the biological facts of each animal and the historical realities surrounding its fame. These known facts, both human and animal, then serve as scaffolding to create the unknown, the much more speculative or lyrical viewpoints that fuel the music and scope of each essay.”

The essay about Harriet appeared last year in Passages North. In testing the claims made by the zoo that ended up housing the tortoise, Passarello reconstructed scenes from Darwin’s letters and autobiography, fleshed out the sea voyages with facts about how tortoises fared on shipping and whaling boats, and explored accounts of the great Bribane floods.

“This discrete course of research was used not just to prove Harriet’s connection to Darwin but to reposition her as the central character in an essayistic melodrama—as a ‘kept woman’ who, in her travels from the Galapagos to London to Australia, develops her own revolutionary theories on science and love.”

Just as the essays in her first book began with an infamous voice that then led to an exploration of a particular moment of popular culture, the current collection will use information about each animal to examine the cultural space it inhabits.

“In working through the ways in which we discuss, and later remember, the ‘performances’ of animals, we see more of a reflection of ourselves than of the species that fascinate us. I want the essays to use the particular facts of each animal’s famous moment to highlight this transferred understanding, and I hope the lyrical nature of the prose will amplify those unique places where facts and imaginative spaces meet.”
German censorship . . . (continued from page 1)

and early movie theaters transformed
the urban landscape of communities
large and small.”

Rather than obliterating regional
identities, said Ritzheimer, pulp
fiction and film helped to reinforce
them, in part by providing
entrepreneurial filmmakers and
cinema owners with an effective
marketing tool, and in part by
encouraging proponents of stricter
regulations to find a solution at the
regional level.

“Because Germany’s strong
system of federalism permitted
municipal and regional authorities
to develop a regulatory response,
critics worked hard to identify
‘trashy’ films and commercial fiction
as a local problem requiring a local
solution.”

In other words, censorship
enjoyed wide support in German
society, both prior to and after
WWI, because proponents
succeeded in characterizing state
regulation as a form of social
protection rather than a violation of
civil liberties.

“In identifying that which is
appropriate, societies articulate
and defend key norms and values,”
said Ritzheimer. But censorship
is also a vehicle by which the
state can further social agendas.
For example, anti-trash activists
successfully pushed for stricter
regulation as a form of youth
protection.

“In limiting what youth could
consume, censorship proponents
hinted that state authorities might
influence their maturation into
hard-working and appropriately
gendered citizens.”

Censorship also emerged as a
tool for reviving Germany’s moral
center following defeat in WWI,
and in the construction of national
identity.

“Censorship advocates
characterized state regulation of
the film and print industries as a
means by which Germany could
resuscitate its reputation as a
‘kulturstaat,’ present itself as a
global pioneer in youth protection,
and nurture a new identity rooted
in traditional definitions of
masculinity and femininity.”

Awards . . . (from page 1)

Michelle Inderbitzen
School of Public Policy
Changes Come from Within:
Coming of Age in Prison

Stephanie Jenkins
School of History, Philosophy, and Religion
Disabling Ethics: A Genealogy of Ability

Tim Jensen
School of Writing, Literature, and Film
Our Common Sensorium: Rhetoric,
Pathê, and Movements of the Social

Jon Lewis
School of Writing, Literature, and Film
Mapping the Hollywood Transition,
1947-1967

Christopher Nichols
School of History, Philosophy, and Religion
Republican Revival: Ike, Taft, the
Election of 1952, and the End of
Conservative Isolationism

Ehren Pflugfelder
School of Writing, Literature, and Film
Communicating Mobility and
Technology: Advancing a
Kinaesthetic Rhetoric

Center Advisory Board 2013-14

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Center Advisory Board 2013-14

Harman took close look at Latour’s latest

In February, influential writer and philosopher Graham Harman explored a
recent shift in thinking by prolific French theorist Bruno Latour as part of The
Critical Questions Lecture Series at OSU.

Harman is Distinguished University Professor at the American University in
Cairo and the author of many books, most recently Bells and Whistles: More
Speculative Realism. His OSU lecture examined principal features of a new
philosophical system as detailed by Latour in his recent book An Inquiry Into
Modes of Existence.

Latour’s influence within the social sciences is extensive, and with this new work
he has solidified a growing presence within philosophy as well. Harman’s lecture
focused, in part, on whether Latour’s new theory also carries implications for various
other fields touched by his work. The lecture was sponsored by OSU’s School of
Writing, Literature, and Film, the School of History, Philosophy, and Religion, the
Horning Foundation, and the Center for the Humanities.
Recent books by Center Fellows

Stacey Smith, History Faculty, OSU
*Freedom’s Frontier: California and the Struggle Over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, & Reconstruction.* (University of NC Press, 2013)

Barbara Loeb, Art Faculty, OSU
*The Woman Who Loved Mankind: The Life of a Twentieth-Century Crow Elder.* (University of Nebraska Press, 2013)

Nicole von Germeten, History Faculty, OSU
*Violent Delights & Violent Ends: Sex, Race, and Honor in Colonial Cartagena de Indias.* (University of NM Press, 2013)

Linda Leavell, English Faculty, Oklahoma State University
*Holding on Upside Down: The Life and Work of Marianne Moore.* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2013)

Adam Rome, History Faculty, University of Delaware

Nancy Rosenberger, Anthropology Faculty, OSU
*Dilemmas of Adulthood: Japanese Women and the Nuances of Long-Term Resistance.* (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2013)

Nancy Rosenberger, Anthropology Faculty, OSU
*Seeking Food Rights: Nation, Inequality and Repression in Uzbekistan.* (Wadsworth/Cengage, 2013)
Mina Carson, History Faculty, OSU
Ava Helen Pauling: Partner, Activist, Visionary. (OSU Press, 2013)

Tracy Daugherty, English Faculty, OSU
Just One Catch: A Biography of Joseph Heller. (St. Martin’s Press, 2011)

Gary Ferngren, History Faculty, OSU
Medicine & Religion: A Historical Introduction. (Johns Hopkins UP, 2014)

Peter Betjeman, English Faculty, OSU

David Bernell, Political Science Faculty, OSU
Constructing U.S. Foreign Policy: The Curious Case of Cuba. (Routledge, 2013)

Sebastian Heiduschke, Foreign Languages Faculty, OSU
East German Cinema: DEFA and Film History. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)
Tara Williams, English Faculty, OSU
*Inventing Womanhood: Gender and Language in Middle English Writing.* (Ohio State UP, 2011)

Mark Porrovecchio, Speech Communication Faculty, OSU

Andrea Marks, Art Faculty, OSU

William Uzgalis, Philosophy Faculty, OSU
*The Correspondence of Samuel Clarke and Anthony Collins, 1707-08.* (Broadview Press, 2011)

Marjorie Sandor, English Faculty, OSU

Keith Scribner, English Faculty, OSU
*The Oregon Experiment.* (Knopf, 2011)

Aaron Wolf, Geosciences Faculty, OSU
Marisa Chappell, History Faculty, OSU
*The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America.*
(University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011)

Nabil Boudraa, French Faculty, OSU
*Francophone Cultures Through Film.*
(Focusing Publishing/R. Pullins Inc., 2013)

Jon Lewis, English Faculty, OSU
*Essential Cinema: An Introduction to Film Analysis.* (Cengage Learning, 2013)

Karen Holmberg, English Faculty, OSU
*Axis Mundi, poems.*
(University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2013)

Evan Gottlieb, English Faculty, OSU
*Walter Scott and Contemporary Theory.*
(Ashgate Publishing, 2013)

Susan Rodgers, English Faculty, OSU
*Ex-Boyfriend on Aisle 6.*
(Press 53, 2012)

Rebecca Olson, English Faculty, OSU
*Arras Hanging: The Textile That Determined Early Modern Literature and Drama.*
(University of Delaware Press, 2013)

Julie Green, Art Faculty, OSU
*The Last Supper: 500 Plates.*
(Exhibition Catalog: Corvallis Arts Center, 2013)
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 sponsored through the Center. More recent examples of efforts that have received support from the Fund include OSU’s Asian Studies Program and the Center for Latin@ Studies and Engagement (Cl@se), the annual Magic Barrel reading to raise money to combat hunger, and the OSU Holocaust Memorial Program.

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WINTER & SPRING CALENDAR

Art Exhibits: January-March, Drawings & Collages, by Jamie Newton
April-June, Theatre Design, Barbara Mason and George Caldwell curators
Lectures are at 4 p.m. at Autzen House

February

10  Questions of Resistance in Neoliberal Society: Organic Farmers in Japan
    Nancy Rosenberger, Research Fellow, Anthropology Faculty, School of Languages, Culture, and Society, OSU.

17  Biography and the History of Science. Mary Jo Nye, Center Guest, Professor Emerita of History, School of History, Philosophy, and Religion, OSU.

March

3  Reclaiming Women’s History: Patricia Burke Brogan’s Eclipsed and the Ongoing Story of the Magdalene Laundries. Charlotte Headrick, Center Guest, Theatre Arts Faculty, School of Arts and Communication, OSU.

10  How the Duel of Honor Attenuated Violence and Promoted Civility in Western Europe.
    Robert Nye, Center Guest, Professor Emeritus of History, School of Language, Culture and Society, OSU.

April

14  Up, Simba! A Famous Bestiary. Elena Passarello, Research Fellow, English Faculty, School of Writing, Literature, and Film, OSU.

21  Can Literary Animals Have Agency? Raymond Malewitz, Research Fellow, English Faculty, School of Writing, Literature, and Film, OSU.

May

5  Rosaries and Rope Burns: Boxing and Manhood in American Catholicism, 1880-1970. Amy Koehlinger, Research Fellow, History Faculty, School of History, Philosophy, and Religion, OSU.

    Kara Ritzheimer, Research Fellow, History Faculty, School of History, Philosophy, and Religion, OSU.

19  Objects of Correction: How the Book Fashioned the Household in Late Medieval England.
    Myra Seaman, Center Guest, Professor of English, College of Charleston.
The Center for the Humanities
Autzen House
811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue,
Corvallis, OR 97333-4506
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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’s 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 supporting initiatives such as the Asian Studies Program, and sponsoring conferences, seminars, lecture series, art exhibits and other events. The Center occupies Autzen House, 811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue, Corvallis, OR, 97333.