

HMU: Dialogues

Harrison Middleton University

5/28/2014

[Edition 1, Volume 1]

Letter from the Editor:

Welcome to HMU's newsletter! We are excited to now offer a bi-annual newsletter for our students. The highlights of our students' activities at HMU continue to add up and now we have an avenue in which to share information about student graduations,

accomplishments listed on these pages. We are here to serve you and, by doing so, you validate our mission too, making this a great partnership! This newsletter celebrates all of us and we want to thank you for being a part of our world. Expect our next

The goods of the mind are information, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. We seek these goods not just in order to live, but in order to live well." ~

Mortimer J. Adler

publications and achievements. This newsletter also allows us to celebrate faculty and staff achievements, which speaks to the quality education that students receive at HMU. Our goal is to serve individual students with a program meant to directly address his/her specific interests. We see the growth of each student's intellectual goals reflected in the activities and

newsletter in the fall. Please email asimon@hmu.edu with suggestions, achievements, and updates. We would love to hear from you! Thank you for your support and for being a part of the conversation!

Thanks! *Alissa*

Reviews and More:



Thanks to HMU Tutor, Gary Schoepfel, for the following film review.

Oedipus Rex, Opera-Oratorio in Two Acts. Composer, Igor Stravinsky. Director, Julie Taymor. Philips, 2005. Film/DVD. Running time: 58 minutes.

Yes, yes, it is likely that you are not one of the 10% who, according to the National Endowment for the Arts, admit they like opera. (The Washington Post notes that only choral glee club has less appeal.) However, there are several good reasons why you might find Stravinsky's opera-oratorio, *Oedipus Rex*, surprisingly entertaining, a visual feast, and an appealing invitation to reflect on a few very important ideas.

(continued on page 6)

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5/28/2014

[Edition 1, Volume 1]

Let's Celebrate:

Congratulations to **Dr. Philip Stewart** who successfully completed the Doctor of Arts program at Harrison Middleton University. Dr. Stewart's capstone project was titled "Virtue is not Virtue: An Examination of Ethics Ancient and Modern" and examined contemporary philosophers' interpretations of virtue ethics as espoused by Plato and Aristotle.

Congratulations to **Dr. Edgar Daniels** who successfully completed the Doctor of Arts program at Harrison Middleton University. For his capstone project, Dr. Daniels created two introductory courses based on Great Books anthologies, *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *The Civically Engaged Reader*, which will be taught at St. Joseph's College this coming fall.

Congratulations to **Dr. Rodney Marshall** who successfully completed the Doctor of Education program at Harrison Middleton University! Dr. Marshall's capstone project was titled: "Classics CourseWare: Making the Tradition New Again. A Business Plan to Expand."

...

The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future in life.

~ Plato

Upcoming and Ongoing Events:

HMU offers continuing professional education units. This valuable resource offers units to educational and other professionals, while also engaging in high level, thoughtful discussions about great ideas and topics. Check in with **Rebecca Fisher** for more information about upcoming continuing professional education opportunities: rfisher@hmu.edu.

HMU holds quarterly discussions that are open to the public and accessible to all. Discussions focus on the Great Books concentrations: Imaginative Literature, Natural Science, Philosophy and Religion, and Social Science. Students often lead discussions. **Peter Ponzio** noted that he "is looking forward to attending and facilitating additional quarterly discussions." We appreciate the support and participation. Our next discussions will be held July 24th and July 26th, 2014. For more information, email asimon@hmu.edu.

HMU: Dialogues

Harrison Middleton University

5/28/2014

[Edition 1, Volume 1]

Presentation and Publication Highlights:

~ **Dr. Ed Daniels** presented at the St. Joseph's College Technology in Education Conference May 16th. The title of the presentation was "3 Ways To Encourage Higher Level Thinking In The Classroom."

~ **Dr. Ed Daniels** was asked by Stony Brook University (NY) to create a 6 hour DASA (Dignity for All Students) workshop so that they might submit it to the New York State Education Department for approval. Dr. Daniels created and currently teaches two of the approved workshops for Stony Brook each month.

~ In September 2012, **Peter Ponzio** represented Harrison Middleton University at the University of Kent in Canterbury, U.K. and presented a paper entitled "Dickens and the Visual: Realism and Mimesis in Sketches by Boz" at the annual meeting of the Dickens Society. The meeting was dedicated to the 200th anniversary of Mr. Dickens' birth and was attended by Dickens scholars from the U.K., Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Germany and the U.S.

~ The Global Journal has published an article, "Dickens and the Visual: Realism and Mimesis in Sketches by Boz," by HMU Doctor of Arts student, **Peter Ponzio**. Congratulations on such a wonderful achievement! Read it here: https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume14/E-Journal_GJHSS_%28A%29_Vol_14_Issue_1.pdf

~ HMU doctoral candidate **Phillip M. Perry** attended the 2014 meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association (www.acla.org) at New York University. Some 3,500 students and professors from around the world filled the hallways and classrooms, most of the attendees presenting papers that expanded on the conference's "Capitals" theme. About a dozen book publishers peddled their wares and hobnobbed with writers. Perry wrote a report on "Publishing Your First Book: Tips from Writers, Editors and Publishers," for HMU's blog. Read it here: <http://www.hmu.edu/blog/2014/5/9/turning-your-dissertation-into-a-published-book.html>.

~ The Association of Literary Scholars, Critics and Writers (alscw.org) held its 20th annual conference at Indiana University, Bloomington, earlier this month. Dedicated to the advancement of quality literary criticism, the ALSCW encourages the reading, writing, and discussion of great books. Among the conference's sessions were "Reading Literature and Learning to Write" and "The Bible and Literature." HMU doctoral candidate **Phillip M. Perry** participated in the conference.

HMU: Dialogues

Harrison Middleton University

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[Edition 1, Volume 1]

Staff Highlights:

Our very own **Dr. Deb Deacon** is hard to reach this spring, and for good reason. Check out her scheduled conferences and presentations. We are lucky to have Dr. Deacon's knowledge and experience! For the 2014 Spring Quarter, Dr. Deacon has participated in the following:

~Invited talk – The Mindful Center, Paradise Valley, AZ;
Title: The Art of Anime

~Invited talk – The Mindful Center, Paradise Valley, AZ;
Title: Women, War and Art

~Invited talk – The Mindful Center, Paradise Valley, AZ;
Title: International Textiles and War

~Invited talk – Department of Visual Arts, The University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL; Title: The Samurai Re-imagined”

~Conference paper – War, Memory and Gender at University of South Alabama; Title: Stitches of War: Women’s Commentaries on Conflict in Latin America”

~Panel member – War, Memory and Gender Conference at University of South Alabama; Veterans Remember

~ HMU staff members participate in various Great Books events throughout the country and abroad. Details about these events will periodically appear on our blog, www.hmu.edu/blog. We hope to see you at one of the events!

Student Corner



~ In May, 2013, **Peter Ponzio** was appointed Editor-In-Chief of the Humanities Directory, an open access international publisher of contemporary scholarship relating to the arts and humanities. The Directory has published three issues, with the third issue dealing with feminist criticism. The Directory can be accessed at: <http://www.humanitiesdirectory.com/index.php/humanitiesdirectory/index>.

~ **Peter Ponzio** recently published a new website devoted to The Odyssey, which can be found at:

www.journeysofodysseus.com/. The website is intended for use by *Odyssey* scholars and the general public.

HMU: Dialogues

Harrison Middleton University

5/28/2014

[Edition 1, Volume 1]

Student Corner (continued):



~ Doctoral candidate **Ellen Iselin** recently traveled to HMU's campus in Tempe and snapped a selfie! Thanks for sharing these photos, Ellen!

Caption: Ellen Iselin, Selfie at HMU! In the desert we are never lonely with HMU!



Great Books Groups:



~ **Dr. Margaret Metcalf**, who started a Great Books reading group in Highland Village, Texas, says: "I am pleased that so many people from the community are now verbalizing the words 'great books' – I have become known, not by my name, but as 'Oh, you are the great books lady!'" If you want more information on this group, email asimon@hmu.edu.



~ In 2008, Doctor of Arts student **Peter Ponzio** founded a Great Books Reading Group located in Mundelein, Illinois. The group meets every fourth Saturday at the Fremont Public Library at 9:00 AM. Mr. Ponzio's favorite meeting was held at his house where members discussed the Hobbit and then watched the movie version of the Hobbit and Lord of the Rings Trilogy (it was quite a long day).

HMU: Dialogues

Harrison Middleton University

5/28/2014

[Edition 1, Volume 1]

Reviews (continued from page one):

We stand on solid ground when we credit the ancient Greeks with having given birth to the dramatic form. But certainty about ancient Greek theater ends with that claim. We have studied and staged their extant plays for several hundred years, but 33 is a small sampling of the total written by the likes of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and many others. Ruins at Athens and Epidaurus are extraordinary examples of Greek theater structures, but they only drop hints about how their plays were produced. Music and choral chants played important roles in the productions, but we are left with only one few-note fragment of music and no choral dance or chanting descriptions. We own some details about costumes and scenery, but our claims about how the plays were staged are speculations.

The unfortunate truth is that the pictures we hold in our minds about 5th Century B.C.E. Greek theater productions are guesses, perhaps well informed guesses, but

guesses none the less. Julie Taymor's (Broadway's *Lion King* and two Academy Award nominations) production of Stravinsky's opera, *Oedipus Rex*, makes no attempt to approximate or even suggest what a Classical Greek audience might have seen. Her talent and energies focus on bringing to life the troubling dramatic action that is the valuable essence of Sophocles' script. No attempt to re-enact. No museum piece here.

Today, we apply the term global to all things business. This production is theater of the world. Stravinsky (*Rite of Spring* and *The Firebird*) is the Russian born composer. Japanese born Seiji Ozawa (Boston Symphony Orchestra and Vienna State Opera) conducts the Tokyo Opera Singers, the Shinyu-Kai Chorus, and the Saito Kinen Orchestra. The script is adapted from Sophocles by Jean Cocteau (French poet, novelist, designer, playwright, artist and filmmaker). The text is translated and sung in Latin by Jessye Norman (American), Bryn Terfel (Welsh), and Philip Langridge (English). Min Tanaka (Japanese) is the Oedipus Dancer.

If you're envisioning obese singers, ridiculous plots, five-hour run times, contrived staging, and ostentatious sets and

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[Edition 1, Volume 1]

Reviews (continued):

costumes, let me assuage your fears. Although this is a stage production, it is shot as a film and it uses a range of cinematic techniques: cuts, unusual camera angles, flashbacks, closeups, and simultaneous action. Taymor's puppetry skills create some of the production's most powerful moments. Although this is a faithful adaptation of Sophocles' script, dashes of Freud add spice to this visual feast. Costume pieces based on Neolithic Cycladic Art allow us to see the two sides of every self, the inside and outside. The staging is stylized, but never stilted. The performers, especially Jessye Norman, complement their singing with movement that is both meaningful and strangely beautiful. An unforgettable mime-like performance is delivered by Min Tanaka as the "Oedipus Dancer."

In transforming the play's dramatic form into an opera-oratorio, music-drama form, Stravinsky and his collaborators did not betray the playwright. A rare occurrence in adaptations. Likewise, Taymor et al. have remained true to both Sophocles and Stravinsky. The plot is intact; the characters are the originals. And, most importantly, the essential issues and questions raised by the original text remain. Some examples: Is the

person you think you are the person you are? What is the cost of self-knowledge? And is it worth the price? Were the ancient Greeks correct in thinking that suffering was not a punishment for wrong-doing; that the innocent suffer as often as the guilty? If we are what we do, then why and how are we responsible when we know not what we do?

It is unlikely that this early 20th Century music will be familiar to the ear, and you'll not walk away from viewing this 58 minute DVD humming. The unfamiliar is not easy. But you'll have been witness to a remarkable feat. It has been approximately 2,500 years since Sophocles penned his masterpiece, a work many consider the most perfect drama ever written. Stravinsky, in Paris in 1927, and then Tamyor and company, in 1993 in Japan, safely, and with tremendous artistic faithfulness, transport a treasure from the ancient world to the 21st Century. Damage has not been done to this treasure. Quite the opposite. Perhaps just enough of the new has been added or woven into its ancient fabric to make it appealing to the modern ear, eye and mind. I urge you to take a look. I encourage you to listen. I invite you think about Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex.

~ Gary Schoepfel, HMU Tutor

HMU: Dialogues

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Recent Great Books Publications:



~ *Standing Down: From Warrior to Civilian.*
This anthology offers a wide view of perspectives from various wars. Created for Great Book Foundation's Talking Service program, it is a valuable resource for those interested in the effects of war.

~ *Consuming Interests: Great Ideas in Economics.* A compilation of key economics texts from Smith to Marx to Mill and more, it traces the evolution of economic ideas that have become vital for today's society.

~ *Immigrant Voices: 21st Century Stories.*
This anthology contains short stories written by recent immigrants to the United States. It includes: Junot Díaz, Edwidge Danticat, Yiyun Li, Aleksandar Hemon, and more.

New at HMU:

~ This spring marks our first Continuing Professional Education classic film series. We are thrilled to incorporate film with these courses and will be offering monthly discussions starting in fall 2014. In addition we will be offering Continuing Professional Education courses for teachers incorporating Great Books anthologies that are aligned with the Common Core requirements. If you have suggestions or questions, please direct them to rfisher@hmu.edu.

Meet the Tutors:

Each newsletter we will highlight a bit of life apart from HMU. We enjoy well-rounded education and the pursuit of excellence can be seen in everything we do. **Rob and Sarah Hammelman**, HMU tutors, also feel this and are showing off their expertise in the world of wine. Recently interviewed regarding the decisions that led them to the Arizona desert can be found in the following article about Sand-Reckoner Winery:

<http://azwinelifestyle.com/featured-winery-sand-reckoner-vineyards/>

