

HMU: Dialogues

Harrison Middleton University

11/15/2017

Volume 4, Edition 2

Letter from the Editor:

Happy fall! I am not quite sure how we are already in November, but as they say, time does fly. Judging by the content in today's newsletter, students and faculty have been busy this summer. This issue proudly highlights a few publications. First, two former students are announcing their upcoming publications (see page 2). It is with great pleasure that we share their work with you. Harrison Middleton University has so much to offer the novelist or writer. We dedicate a great amount of time and energy in developing your great idea. All of our courses and conversations are intended to help you advance your interests. What could be better fodder for your next book!?

Secondly, the Great Books Foundation is publishing three volumes on popular culture (see *Reviews and More* in today's newsletter for more information on the texts). Please join us for the exciting inaugural **Southwest Great Books Weekend** at the Desert Botanical Garden where we will discuss selections from each. See page 5 to register.

For those who cannot travel, we also have the Winter Film Series and the Quarterly Discussion. These events promise great conversation about a variety of interests. Check out page 5 for more information (or visit hmu.edu).

As always, thank you for your support. Happy holidays! Thanks! *Alissa*

Reviews and More:



Thanks to **Alissa Simon**, Harrison Middleton University Tutor, for the following book preview.

Tube Talk, Double Features, and Sound Bites, three new publications from Great Books Foundation, 2017.

In February, Harrison Middleton University will cohost the inaugural **Southwest Great Books Weekend**.

(<https://www.greatbooks.org/southwest-great-books-weekend/>)

Discussions for this event will highlight three new publications from the Great Books Foundation which include essays about television (*Tube Talk*), film (*Double Features*) and music (*Sound Bites*). Their focus on popular culture offers some timely and important readings worthy of discussion. I was fortunate to grab a sneak preview, and so I wanted to express my enthusiasm for February's event. These essays offer any number of interesting discussions. More than that, however, I think it is vital to take a better look at the culture that we are currently making, promoting and consuming.

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Student Corner:



~ **Dr. Phillip Perry**, Harrison Middleton University alumnus, has a new book coming out. *Catherine Lescault* recently appeared in the *New York Review of Books* Fall Books Issue. It is described as a novel which includes, “alternative incarnations of Balzac’s classic characters from *The Unknown Masterpiece*.” These characters then “enact romances of lunacy and obsession to dramatize their search for the reality of artistic creation.” Expected publication is fall 2017. Find a review here:

<http://cdn.nybooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/independents092817.pdf>

~ **Dr. Peter Ponzio**, Harrison Middleton University alumnus, is publishing a book on Charles Dickens. Expected to be released during the winter of 2018, the book is titled *Themes in Dickens: Seven Recurring Concerns in the Writings*. It is an extension of his doctoral Capstone. Information on the book can be found at: <http://www.mcfarlandbooks.com/book-2.php?id=978-1-4766-7257-1>.

~ **Dr. Ed Daniels**, Harrison Middleton University alumnus, was recently engaged by the Diocese of Rockville Centre’s Department of Education as a consultant, trainer, and coach to help one of its elementary schools move away from a single age classroom configuration to a multiage class configuration of first and second graders for the 2017-2018 school year. This Long Island diocese consists of 43 parish and regional elementary schools; 4 independent elementary schools; 2 parish high schools; 3 diocesan high schools; 5 independent high schools; and 1 Catholic college.

Dr. Daniels also presented at the St. Joseph’s College 8th Annual Teaching and Learning Conference on Long Island this past May. This annual conference focuses on best teaching practices at the college level. The title of the presentation was “How to Become a Constructivist Professor”. The presentation explained how the college professor might structure presentations in a manner consistent with constructivist learning theory.

~ **Dr. Michael Caba**, Harrison Middleton University alumnus, recently published an article examining the meaning of a “Christian nation.” Access that article here:

<http://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/5309474-151/guest-column-examining-the-meaning-of-being-a>

~ Doctor of Arts student **Ann Wagner** was a discussion leader at the Great Books Council of San Francisco’s “Great Books in the Gold Country” mini-retreat. The May 2017 event featured the text and film: *Lady in Gold: The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt’s Masterpiece, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*.

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Reviews (continued):

First of all, these three genres unite in the fact that each medium is meant to be shared. We follow television shows and films on social media, we pick favorite characters, dress in character and create intricate fandoms. We talk about our favorite media at work, in school, on the phone or at coffee shops. Clearly, we want to share our opinions or questions with others. What better opportunity, then, to share our ideas with a group of open-minded individuals interested in the same topics!? The three volumes look at what these personas might tell us about ourselves as individuals, or as cultures. In addition, they include articles of events of such originality that there is literally no word or phrase yet adequate to describe the intricate relationship between show writers, on-screen character and impersonations.

An article from *Tube Talk* discusses one unnamed phenomenon that has been generated by fans of *Mad Men*. As technology continues to evolve, it increases our avenues to connect, but also blurs the lines surrounding reality. For example, Twitter accounts impersonating *Mad Men* characters quickly arose, and though the show stopped after seven seasons, the Twitter accounts continue – in character. I wonder, what enjoyment do we get from assuming the voice of characters in something like *Mad Men*? One blogger says “I try and think like [Roger Sterling], tweet what he might say. It’s creative, and a lot of fun.” This requires a serious engagement with the time period, an understanding of cultural constraints in that society and, of course, a thorough study of the character. The Twitter-author-voice must thoroughly know the character to presuppose what they would do. And of course, in creating an alter-ego, there is the question of losing the alter-ego.

The rise of Twitter in tandem with shows like *Newsroom* and *Mad Men*, which relate to a relatively recent time of American history, has created a different kind of fandom than that of, say, *Star Trek*. Yet the urge to become or live in a fictional skin continues. The introduction to *Tube Talk* claims that “[Television] is the greatest mirror that our global society has ever held up to itself, and even though sometimes we may not like what we see, it is impossible to look away.” I would further say that, not only is it impossible to look away, we should *not* look away. Rather, we should attempt to understand the underlying culture as a way to change what we do not like, or to better understand that which we do not know. For example, in the introduction to *Double Features*, Nick Clement writes, “The collective practice of gathering with a group of strangers in a darkened theater to watch images moving on a screen represents one of the more unusual agreements that human beings can reach.” Funny, but his comment also opens up a number of different questions regarding film culture, human connection and historic trends. *(continued on page 4)*

“All finite things reveal infinitude.” ~ Theodore Roethke

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Reviews (continued):

These books offer some excellent insight into current culture. They are an essential reminder that, for better or worse, we actively participate in a dynamic era filled with mixed media and art forms. It is essential that we realize our involvement in these forms if we have any intention to understand ourselves and our society. If we intend to create the best future for ourselves, our children and our communities, then it is worth our time to understand contemporary art forms. I look forward to discussing these books in February!

Graduation Highlights:



~ **Dr. Susan Dunekacke** successfully completed the Doctor of Arts program at Harrison Middleton University with a concentration in Imaginative Literature. In partial fulfillment of the program requirements, **Dr. Dunekacke** submitted a work of historical fiction titled *Beneath a Brilliant Sky: The Story of Evra Alta Garrison*.

~ **Dr. John Robert Reynolds** successfully earned his Doctor of Education degree. **Dr. Reynolds** submitted the following Capstone in partial fulfillment of his degree requirements: "Developing Better Conversations about Effective Education with High School Students."

~ Congratulations to **Christopher Hutton**, who successfully completed the Bachelor of Social Science program at Harrison Middleton University. In partial fulfillment of the program requirements, **Mr. Hutton** submitted a Capstone titled, "God and Money are Frenemies? Following the Interweaving Threads of Economic and Religious Thought."

~ Harrison Middleton University congratulates graduates **Dr. Susan Dunekacke**, **Dr. John Robert Reynolds** and **Christopher Hutton** on their induction into the Delta Epsilon Tau Honor Society, the premier national honor society for America's accredited distance learning institutions. The Society encourages and recognizes superior student academic achievement, character, and leadership.



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Winter Film Series



Harrison Middleton University invites you to its 2017-2018 Film Series. Participants will discuss the following texts and films in advance of the scheduled two-hour discussion. Discussions are conducted via conference call using a toll-free telephone number that will be provided to participants. Our discussions are open to the public and we invite new voices to listen and participate. Film discussions will be held on Thursday evenings at 5:00 pm PT/6:00 pm MT/7:00 pm CT/8:00 pm ET. To register please contact rfisher@hmu.edu.

November 16th	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i>	(text and film)
December 14th	<i>Dr. Strangelove</i>	(film)
January 18th	<i>1984</i>	(text and film)
March 8th	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf</i>	(text and film)

Upcoming Events:



~ **January Quarterly Discussion:** We invite friends, family and staff to spend a portion of the day in conversation with us. Join our next call on January 25 or January 27, 2018. We will discuss an excerpt from William James. Email asimon@hmu.edu for more information.

~ **Southwest Great Books Weekend:** Mark your calendar for February 16-18 at the Desert Botanical Gardens in Phoenix, AZ. This Great Books weekend will include discussions and presentations on music, film and television. This event is sponsored by the Great Books Foundation and co-sponsored by the Alliance for Liberal Learning, Harrison Middleton University, Great Hearts Academies and Humanities and Sciences Ltd. Register at <https://www.greatbooks.org/southwest-great-books-weekend/>

~ **The Alliance for Liberal Learning conference** will be held on March 23 and 24, 2018 in Chicago. The theme is "Connecting Business and Liberal Learning." To present or register, visit <https://allianceforliberallearning.org/presentations/>.

~ **Great Books Chicago** will be held on May 4-6, 2018. Register at <http://www.greatbooks.org/giving/great-books-chicago/>.

"If I have made any valuable discoveries, it has been owing more to patient attention than to any other talent." – Isaac Newton

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Faculty Highlights:

~ **Gary Schoepfel** traveled down the Caminho once again this year. He led “The Road Less Travelled: Caminho Portugues” in June 2017 for Classical Pursuits. He also led discussions at Toronto Pursuits titled “Benefit of the Doubt”, July 15-21. Finally, Gary led The Stratford Excursion, July 12-14, prior to the beginning of Toronto Pursuits.

~ **Marcus Conley** attended Great Books Pacific Northwest - June 23-25.

~ **Rebecca Fisher** led discussions of *The Alexandria Quartet* by Laurence Durrell at Toronto Pursuits 2017.

~ **Michael Curd** attended 2017 Chief Academic Officer and Chief Business Officer Collaborations: Working Together for Student Success. The event was organized by the National Association of College and University Business Officers & the American Council on Education, held August 7 and 8th.

~ **Marge Metcalf** attended the Houston Great Books 3rd Annual Celebration of Literary Discussion event on October 14, 2017.

~ **Rebecca Fisher** and **Lauren Guthrie** attended the 2017 DEAC Fall Workshop, October 15-17, 2017 in Cary, North Carolina.

~ **Phil Stewart** attended the five-week Commissioned Officer Training at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

~ **Deborah Deacon** was a featured speaker at Phoenix COMICON; giving talks titled “Celebrating the Samurai” and “The Evolution of *Ghost in the Shell*.” She also gave two talks at Arizona State University’s School of Art. The talks were titled “The History of Anime” and “When Japanese Animation Isn’t Japanese: Kubo and the Two Strings.” She served as discussion leader for the songs of Bob Dylan at Philadelphia’s 47th Annual Great Books Fall Institute Weekend event in Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania from November 3-5, 2017. Finally, Deborah attended the Community College Humanities Association National Conference in Baltimore.

Harrison Middleton University is a great ideas, great works, great conversations, distance learning university that offers graduate education in the humanities with concentrations in imaginative literature, natural science, philosophy and religion, and social science. Harrison Middleton University promotes student-faculty scholarship through research, discussion, and the development of collaborative publications.