

# Philosophy Bulletin

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MIAMI UNIVERSITY PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

## Translating the Canon at Miami

### Miami hosts 6th annual *philoSOPHIA* conference

**LAST APRIL**, Miami's Philosophy Department was honored to host the 6th annual conference of *philoSOPHIA*, A Society for Continental Feminism whose founding members include our own Drs. Emily Zakin and Elaine Miller. The conference, which took place April 12-14, brought scholars from the US and Canada together for three days of intellectual exchange, dialogue, mutual inspiration, and a dance party! (With playlist specially curated by Miami alum and feminist philosopher of music Robin James (UNC Charlotte); see page 8.)

The theme of the conference, *Translating the Canon*, wove through panel discussions on Friday and Saturday, and was explored in a series of thought-provoking and illuminating keynote addresses from Elissa Marder (Emory University), Angelica Nuzzo (CUNY Graduate Center), and Karmen MacKendrick (Le Moyne College).

Why 'translation' as a theme? As Dr. Elaine Miller said in her welcoming remarks to conference attendees, "Translation, as we conceived of it for this conference, is a much broader concept than the transposition of one language into another." *philoSOPHIA* exists to promote work at the intersection of feminism and continental philosophy: two intellectual traditions with non-identical canons and methodologies. Feminist theorists in particular, Dr. Miller noted, "often work liminally, between or across disciplines, and this means

confronting divergent assumptions and discourses and considering how best to move between them." Thus, the conference conceived translation as "translating across disciplines, genres, traditions, texts, historical epochs, and languages...as taking place between aesthetics and politics, between science and philosophy, between beauty and morality, and between the body and language."

With an enthusiastic crowd of participants (and plenty of hard work from organizers Dr. Miller, Dr. Zakin, and MA student Amanda Holmes '12), the theme of translation made for a rich and rewarding conference. Fifteen panels were organized around topics including feminist epistemology, the ethics and metaphysics of life across the biosphere, the politics of sexuality and sexual difference, and the work of Beauvoir, Foucault, Spivak, Cixous, Freud, Kant, Irigaray, and Kristeva, among others. Some panels were organic wholes, with a high degree of coherence across presentations. For example, *Translating*

*Ethics Across the Biosphere* was conceived as an interrogation of Life and Eros from different disciplinary perspectives, by presenters Lynne Huffer, Deboleena Roy, and Cynthia Willett of Emory University. *Ethics and Embodiment*, in contrast, consisted of two complementary but quite different papers. Erin Tarver (Georgetown College) spoke on the creation of selfhood through participation in the linguistic communities of sports fandom. Sarah Hansen (Rhodes College) spoke on the role that conceptions of fetal pain play in rhetoric concerning abortion.

As Dr. Zakin and Dr. Miller conclude their tenure as the inaugural editors of the *philoSOPHIA* journal, we at Miami are thrilled to have been part of the continuing development of this thriving intellectual community. Thanks to the many scholars, including many Miami alums and current faculty and students, who helped to make the conference such a success!



Elaine Miller and Gaile Pohlhaus of Miami with Alum Katherine Schweitzer '08 of Emory University at the *philoSOPHIA* conference, April 2012.

# Letter from the Chair

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to our new annual newsletter! Some of you may remember a previous incarnation of the Philosophy Department newsletter, which went into hibernation with the retirement of its long-time editor, Michael Goldman. The department has experienced a few changes in the interim, but we remain a vibrant community with excellent undergraduate and graduate programs. We hope that this inaugural edition of our rejuvenated newsletter will give you some sense of what we've been up to and where we are headed.

Our current faculty may have some unfamiliar names and faces. A number of our long-time faculty have retired or are in the process of retiring: in addition to **Michael Goldman**, who taught his last class in 2008, **Peter Schuller** retired in 2011 after 41 years of service. **Rick Momeyer** is teaching his last class for the department in the fall of 2012, after teaching at Miami since 1969. **Rama Rao Pappu**, who joined the faculty in 1968, will teach his last semester in the spring of 2013. And **Asher Seidel** will fully retire at the end of 2013.

Meanwhile **Keith Fennen**, previously a Visiting Assistant Professor, was made a permanent Lecturer in 2010. **Pascal Massie** and **Gaile Pohlhaus** both received tenure (in 2010 and 2012, respectively). **Lara Mitias** joined us as a Visiting Assistant Professor in 2009. And our newest addition is **Kristina Gehrman** (our esteemed newsletter editor!), who joined us as an Assistant Professor in 2011.

As Miami philosophers, one of the things we treasure most is our engaged intellectual community, which brings together faculty and students in a variety of contexts. This past year we once again had a lively colloquium series, with highlights including a lecture by alumna Amy Allen, class of '90 (now Parents Distinguished Research Professor in the Humanities at Dartmouth College). The faculty also initiated a works-in-progress series, where we present current research to our colleagues and students.



*What does  
philosophy  
contribute  
to liberal  
education?*

We've recently seen a real increase in undergraduate research, with four Undergraduate Summer Scholars and two Dean's Scholars awarded to students to conduct sustained independent research in philosophy. The Master's program is also flourishing, with all three of our graduating MA students starting Ph.D programs this fall! We are proud of our majors and graduate students, and all of their accomplishments! In the following pages, we'll report in-depth on

some of the other exciting activities going on in our community.

As the University begins to revise its long-standing liberal education curriculum, we find ourselves reflecting on what philosophical study contributes to liberal education. As a department, we remain committed to teaching philosophy with our own special blend of innovation, pluralism, and historical rigor. We aim to educate students in the rigorous pursuit of critical, creative, and independent thinking, preparing them to grapple with any life context – personal, professional, or civic. We would like to hear from you, our former students and fellow philosophers, about what your philosophical training has meant to you, and how it has affected your life post-Miami.

I'd like to thank all of you who have generously supported our programming efforts with gifts to the department. I'd also like to thank my colleagues, whose energy and commitment sustain our philosophical community, and our students who motivate, rejuvenate, and inspire us. And special thanks to Kristina Gehrman, our newest faculty member, for undertaking the editorship of this newsletter.

We would like to keep in touch with all of our former students. Send us an e-mail at [philosophy@miamioh.edu](mailto:philosophy@miamioh.edu), or find us on Facebook, and let us know how you're doing!

*Emily Zakin  
Chair*

# Dr. Peter Schuller Retires from Philosophy Faculty after 42 Years

Sebastian Orlander interviews Dr. Schuller about his life as a Miami philosopher and his advice for young philosophers.

**SO:** When did you begin your job as a professor at Miami University? What was it like here at that time?

**PS:** I began teaching at Miami University in 1970. The Philosophy department back then was a full-dimensional intellectual and social commune. Faculty were available to students all day long, and the students all loved practicing philosophy. The seminars were a less formal affair, more profs being present at the meetings often and sessions being held sometimes at teachers' homes.

The Governance doctrine (by which the department managed itself and its activities) at the time was: "To discover The Good in a situation and then do it". Failing that, the doctrine was: "We will do what is The Probable Good". Failing that, we resorted to majority vote.

**SO:** What do you most enjoy about teaching philosophy? What do you find most rewarding about studying philosophy? Most challenging?

**PS:** The joy in teaching philosophy is seeing when students have revolutionizing leaps in their thoughts, and in how they are to live their lives. The reward is making the world better (which I measure based on the students that have kept in touch with me since 1973 and onwards). The challenge is when the project of the teacher (that is, myself) becomes different from that of the students.

**SO:** Do you have any particularly vivid, defining memories from your time at Miami that you wish to share?

**PS:** The memory I would like to share is of a time in the mid-1970s when an FBI-investigation (discovered through

the Freedom of Information Act) labeled me a potential violent overthrower of the United States Government for my opposition to the zero-growth economic policy of the time and my pro-Lyndon LaRouche position.

starting point in the study of philosophy, what would it be and why?

**PS:** Plato's *Phaedo*, because it is deep, beautifully composed, and, since Plato does not give us a final answer, but



Dr. Peter Schuller

*If you had to recommend a single text to young philosophers, what would it be and why?*

**SO:** What do you plan to do now that you will be retiring? What are you most looking forward to about retirement?

**PS:** Getting more enlightened and helping others.

**SO:** Do you agree with Socrates that the unexamined life is not worth living?

**PS:** YES, anyone who disagrees is a sophist and not a philosopher. However, one must not be a philosopher to examine your life. That is, you don't need a degree proving that you are a philosopher. Socrates didn't have one!

**SO:** If you had to recommend a single text to young philosophers, as their

leads us in a fruitful direction, it is a wonderful heuristic for an individual to continue on his or her own path.

I want to give a final word of thank you to my students, who pushed me to teach better and to think more Platonically, including the ones who did not start off or end up agreeing with me. Like Jacob wrestling with the Angel, it builds "soul-muscle".

*Sebastian Orlander is a Senior majoring in Philosophy and English Literature. He took Metaphysics & Epistemology (PHL 221) and the Seminar on Marx (PHL 460) with Dr. Schuller.*



# Philosophy Student Life at Miami

## MUTs Examine Life

Socrates had a questionable pedigree, but he was damned good in a fight. How fitting, therefore, that the founders of Miami's new undergraduate philosophy club have decided to call themselves the MUTs, or the Miami University Thinkers, for long. MUTs co-founder and "Executive Thinker" **Jacob Turnbow ('14)** and his partners in examination have discussed a range of subjects this fall, from the aesthetics of Kim Kardashian to the ethics of human relationships with other animals. Their second meeting of the year was a **Philosophy Jeopardy** competition featuring questions about such topics as *bizarre philosopher deaths* and quote-attribution. One recent MUTs meeting, featuring **Dr. Pascal Massie** presenting on his new book manuscript, was even featured on the Miami University Television News! We're very excited that the MUTs are creating more opportunities for faculty, graduate students,

and undergraduates to talk philosophy and get to know one another.

## Hall Prize

The Hall Prize in Philosophy is an annual competition for the best undergraduate essay in Philosophy. This year we had a record number of submissions of truly top-notch caliber, and the Hall Prize was awarded jointly, to **Sam Burgess ('12)** and **Colin McCullough-Benner ('12)**. Sam, who plans to pursue a career in Architecture, wrote a lovely essay entitled, "On the Imperfection of Language and its Consequences for Philosophy". Colin, who is currently completing a Master's degree in Philosophy at the Central European University in Hungary, wrote an equally lovely essay entitled "What Can Be Up To Us? The Physical and Logical Bases of Epictetus' Ethics". Both papers greatly impressed the faculty with their clarity, elegance, and philosophical rigor. In fact, we were quite blown away by the quality of the submissions overall, and we're looking forward to reading next year's entries already. Congratulations to Sam and Colin!

In addition, senior philosophy majors **Steven Lakin** and **Sebastian Orlander** were named **Dean's Scholars** for the 2012-2013 academic year. Sebastian is completing a thesis project in philosophy of mind under the supervision of **Dr. Lara Mitias**. Steven is completing a thesis on animal minds and the ethics of human-animal interactions under the supervision of **Dr. Kristina Gehrman**. The Dean's Scholar program is sponsored by the Dean of the College of Arts and Science, and is intended to promote independent scholarly activity in students' senior year.

Steven Lakin was also awarded the department's **Linda Singer Scholarship** for the 2012-2013 academic year. The Singer Scholarship is awarded annually in honor of Linda Singer, thanks to the generosity of her parents **Eugene and Vivian Singer**. The scholarship supports the continued study of an outstanding undergraduate philosophy major (or, in Steven's case, a triple major in Philosophy, Zoology, and Microbiology!). Congratulations to our exceptional undergraduate researchers!

*Are you a  
philosopher  
who's not an  
academic?*

Are you a philosopher who's not an academic? We'd love to hear from you! We're always looking to showcase different ways to live an examined life for our current Philosophy majors. So write in and tell us what you're doing with (or in spite of) that Philosophy degree: [philosophy@miamiOH.edu](mailto:philosophy@miamiOH.edu).

## Undergraduate Research Excellence Awards

As part of Miami's commitment to undergraduate research, the University awards a limited number of competitive summer scholarships each year, to undergraduates who will conduct independent research projects under the supervision of a faculty mentor. This summer *four* students received **Undergraduate Summer Scholarships** to conduct original philosophical research: **Christian Black, Elizabeth Colucci, Steven Lakin**, and **Alex Shillito**. (Christian is currently completing his Master's degree in Philosophy through our joint BA-MA program.)

## Regional Campuses Form New Division

In a significant institutional change, Miami's regional campuses in Hamilton and Middletown became a new division this year. As Jim Kelly noted, "what this will mean in terms of hiring, promoting, and tenuring new faculty members" at the regional campuses is not yet decided. But Dr. Kelly will certainly be the one to ask, since he will be chair of the new Division's Academic Policy Committee this year, which he remarked "may prove very interesting."

## Graduating MA Class of 2012 Join Doctorate Programs, MA Classes of 2013 and 2014 Swell Department Numbers

Our Master's Program in Philosophy continues to flourish, with an incoming class of *five* and a continuing class of *seven*. The seminar room can get pretty packed these days! Our distinctive joint undergraduate-graduate seminars continue to be a centerpiece of the Philosophy program at Miami, offering undergraduates a chance to participate in a graduate-style seminar, while giving graduate students the opportunity to develop their research interests in depth. Graduate students continue to participate in a faculty moderated grad-only Research and Writing Seminar each spring. In the Research and Writing Seminar, MA students workshop papers they produced in Fall seminars, preparing them for publication, presentation, and/or submission as graduate admissions writing samples.

This year, several of our MA students including **Ryan van Nood** and **Dave Antenasio** will present work at the an-

nual **Graduate Research Forum** here at Miami. Last year, MA students **Matt Wester** and **Amanda Holmes** teamed up with former MA student **D. Cole ('11)** to hold a group session of the **Radical Philosophy Association** at the Central Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association in Chicago in February. Their topic was *Arendt, Politics, and Judgment: Conceptualizing Freedom*.

We're sad to say farewell to the wonderful MA class of 2012! At the same time, we're very happy to be sending all three members of our most recent graduating class off to PhD programs around the country. **Kyle Koeppe**, **Amanda Holmes**, and **Matthew Wester** will all continue their studies at the doctoral level. Kyle joins the Cultural Studies PhD Program at George Mason University. Amanda is now pursuing a PhD in Philosophy at Villanova University. And Matt is pursuing a PhD in Philosophy at Texas A&M University.

## Miami a Strong Presence at SPEP

The annual meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy is always well-attended by members of the Miami philosophy community, past and present. This year's meeting took place in Rochester, NY on November 1-3, in spite of Hurricane Sandy. And, as usual, Miami philosophers were there in force. **Dr. Amy Allen ('90)**, currently Parents Distinguished Research Professor in the Humanities at Dartmouth College, is Executive Co-Director of SPEP. **Drs. Zakin** and **Miller** presented papers at the conference, and also hosted a *philoSOPHIA* panel with 4 speakers: Ros Diprose, Ewa Ziarek, Elizabeth Rottenberg, and Vanessa Rumble (a fifth panelist, Gregg Horowitz, was

prevented from attending by Hurricane Sandy). MA student **Amanda Holmes ('11)** was scheduled to moderate the session, but her trip was delayed also due to Sandy. (The determined and enthusiastic Amanda did, however, battle through the storm to attend part of the conference!)

Other Miami Alums on the SPEP program giving papers included **Kristin McCartney**, **Perry Zurn**, **Joe Weiss**, and **Robin James** (as well as **Sara McNamara** and **James Manos**, whose planned presentations were thwarted by the storm). As usual, a number of current Miami students also attended the conference, including **Sarah Gorman**, **Daniel Allen**, and **Jonathan Wirth**.

Hey, check out our Facebook page! (Yeah, we know the stock is worthless but the kids are all using it these days.) We're currently updating the Miami Ohio Philosophy Department Facebook page on a weekly basis, to share information about exciting events on campus, undergraduate and graduate philosophy conferences, and other news and philosophy-related opportunities. This year, we'll also be opening several threads for alums and current students to share stories about philosophy at Miami, engage in philosophical discussion, and talk about what to do with that degree in philosophy. Please check in and say hi!

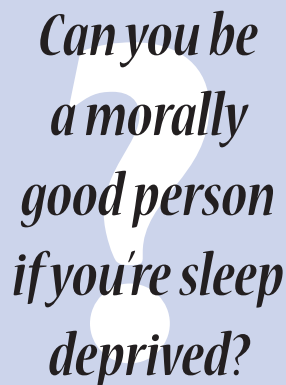


# Faculty Notes

We asked a few of our faculty members to give us an update on their current research and other projects. This time around we'll hear from Keith Fennen, Bill McKenna, and Pascal Massie.

## Keith Fennen

As of 2010, Keith has now joined the department faculty on a permanent basis as a Lecturer in Philosophy, after spending some time as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Keith is an indispensable member of the department community, not least because of the dry humor he regularly brings to his introductions of colloquium speakers! In addition to coordinating the annual colloquium series, Keith is also the pre-law advisor to undergraduates, and recently received a major Miami pedagogy grant for targeted course redesign. Keith's recent publications include



Can you be  
a morally  
good person  
if you're sleep  
deprived?

"Descartes on Indeterminate Judgment and Great Deeds" (*International Philosophical Quarterly* vol. 52). He is currently working on a paper that addresses the transformation of natural law and charity in Descartes' *Passions of the Soul*. The paper will examine how natural law and charity are grounded independently of a strong theological base via physiology and self-reflection in Descartes' philosophy. Upon completing that essay Keith plans to co-author a paper with his two young children, on the connec-

tion between sleep deprivation and loss of virtue.

## Pascal Massie

Pascal's research pace has been particularly brisk in the recent months, proving that tenure does not sound the death knell for scholarly productivity. His book, *Contingency, Time and Possibility, An Essay on Aristotle and Duns Scotus*, came out last year with Lexington Press. Pascal especially wishes the editors to note that the work makes an excellent present for birthdays, Bat Mitzvahs, and the always popular Saint Barbara's day (actual Patron Saint of fireworks).

Pascal also wrote a chapter entitled "Happiness as Tranquility in Hellenistic Philosophy", initially planned as a contribution to the *Continuum Companion to Ancient Philosophy*. The project is now under review with Northwestern and should appear soon. However, again Pascal notes that the volume has been billed as 'forthcoming' for the last three years.

Meanwhile, not one to wait around by the phone, Pascal completed two essays: "Touching, Thinking, Being: Aristotle and the Sense of Touch" and "From Epoché to Ataraxia: The Story of Apelles in Sextus Empiricus." The latter paper was presented to the Miami community of philosophers at the inaugural faculty Works-In-Progress Colloquium in the Fall of 2011. Pascal reports that both papers are currently under review with the rejection committee of some philosophy journals. However, we who were in the audience when Pascal presented the second essay are confident that the improvements we proposed will make it a shoo-in.

Pascal has also graciously agreed to mentor the newest member of the department, Kristina Gehrman. Mentoring junior faculty mostly involves explaining how to have a wildly successful research career and get tenure without breaking

a sweat, so Pascal was a natural choice for the job. Pascal is presently working on a book manuscript entitled "The Secret". Obviously he cannot tell us what it's about. But we gather it has something to do with masks.

## Bill McKenna

Bill will soon have seniority in the Philosophy department, when the impending retirements of Asher Seidel, Rama Rao Pappu, and Rick Momeyer make him its longest-standing member. Since that will make Bill the last remaining repository-in-residence of a great deal of institutional knowledge, including untold numbers of philosophy jokes, the editors have decided that Bill will not be permitted to retire. Fortunately, we are confident that he will not mind this too much, since his love for philosophy clearly continues unabated. Last year, Bill was the faculty member in charge of the Graduate Research and Writing Seminar; the semester-long centerpiece of the Philosophy MA program. He also continues to teach seminars on Kant that make the faces of graduate students light up even as their brows wrinkle. A major current research project of his is to write a monograph on conflict resolution, drawing on the resources of phenomenology and other traditions to propose a concept of truth that encompasses both culturally relative truths, and absolute truth, as species of a more general kind. Meanwhile, Bill treated the Miami Philosophy community to a Works-In-Progress Colloquium on Value Theory this fall, in which he invited us to ponder whether an act could be right without a good outcome, or wrong without a bad outcome. For example: could having an abortion sometimes be the right thing to do, but also be an act that has a genuinely bad outcome? What about killing another living thing for food? Could a morally wrong act have a clearly good outcome, such as assassinating Hitler, or lying to a would-be murderer?





Philosophy Department faculty. Front row: Emily Zakin, Gaile Pohlhaus, Asher Seidel, Rama Rao Pappu. Back row: Keith Fennen, Bill McKenna, Pascal Massie, Elaine Miller, Kristina Gehrman, Brian Domino. Not pictured: Rick Momeyer, Lara Mitias, Jim Kelly.

## Colloquium Profiles

Last Spring we were very fortunate to welcome Miami Alum **Dr. Amy Allen ('90)** as a colloquium speaker. Dr. Allen, who just concluded a term of service as Chair of the Philosophy Department at Dartmouth College, spoke to a crowded house on "The Necessity of Madness and the Possibility of History: Reason and Power in Foucault's History of Madness". She is now Parents Distinguished Research Professor in the Humanities at Dartmouth College.

This Fall, we were once again grateful to the Robert T. Harris endowment for enabling us to host the 2012 Harris

Lecturer, **John Lysaker** of Emory University. For this year's Harris Lecture, Dr. Lysaker delivered a talk on October 18 entitled "Consider This: On Art's Solicitations". He also participated in a roundtable discussion of his work with faculty and students on Friday, October 19. Dr. Lysaker's wonderful sense of humor, gift for teaching, and infectious interest in his subject matter made for a particularly lively roundtable discussion.

In addition to the Harris lecture, the department also welcomed **Rachana Kamtekar** of the University of Arizona, **Rocio Zambrana** of the University of Oregon, and of course our very own **Bill McKenna** (see page 6) as Fall Colloquium speakers. Professor Kamtekar delivered a talk on Plato's view of punishment, and his belief in the possible reincarnation of formerly-human souls as non-human animals. In one particularly memorable moment, she deftly fielded a question from a student who stood up and politely demanded to know what the market applications of Plato's theory might be. The editor does not remember precisely how Professor Kamtekar answered this question, but she does remember that the answer was both sincere, and informative.

*Can an act be  
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## Introducing Patsy Day

The Philosophy Department is very happy to report that the wonderful Patsy Day joined us as Administrative Assistant in August 2011. Before joining the philosophers on the second floor of Hall Auditorium, Patsy worked in Miami's Development Office, and before that, as a substitute teacher and substitute postal employee and full-time wife and mom.

We were already aware that Patsy is vital to the success of much of what goes on in the department. But we wanted to know what else she does when she's not bailing out confused junior faculty, so we asked Patsy what her favorite and least favorite aspects of her job are. She said, "I enjoy helping the students and faculty when they are doing 'extra' projects. I like learning new skills and doing tasks I have never done before." And her least favorite? "My least favorite part is any accounting/budgeting tasks. I'm not an accountant." (To which we say, hear hear!)

We asked Patsy to tell us a little bit about herself. It turns out that she has been married for 21 years to her 3rd grade crush! She says, "We have three children. Tyler is a senior in high school and plans on attending Miami in the Fall of 2013. Our second, Alex, is a high school sophomore and will be driving soon. Both my sons are wrestlers and they enjoy fishing and hunting. Callie, our youngest, is a 6th grader. She is a cheerleader and enjoys doing gymnastics. We have a Chihuahua, two cats, five chickens, two hamsters and a turtle (a small zoo)."

Patsy also supervises our two student workers. Addy Tomlin, who has worked in the department for three years, is a senior majoring in Speech Pathology. Connie Huff, who has been here for two years, is a sophomore Business major.

If you're in town, we hope you'll stop by and say hi to Patsy, Addy, and Connie, along with the rest of the department. (And by the way, just in case you need an extra incentive, Patsy always has a bowl of candy out for visitors.)

# Thoughts from Miami Alumnae

## Robin James

**Robin James**, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina, Charlottesville, reflects on the Miami – and Oxford – roots of her own novel blend of philosophy and musicology.

### Upstairs, Downstairs

It's sort of uncanny that I got my philosophy degree from probably the only philosophy department housed in a music performance venue. My first experiences in Hall Auditorium were on stage, as a musician: with my high school wind ensemble, and with the Miami University Wind Ensemble and Symphony Band, I got to know the basement and first floor of Hall Auditorium before I ever knew philosophers worked and held classes behind the sound booth.

I started college as a music major—I chose Miami because I wanted a liberal arts education, which I couldn't get at a conservatory like CCM or Oberlin. And that was a wise choice, as I would eventually figure out that I didn't like playing music so much as thinking about music. I was a decent oboe player, but a better philosopher of music (and I didn't have to whittle away at bamboo (to make reeds) to do my philosophy homework!). Luckily, it was easy for me to combine my interests in philosophy with my studies in music theory and history.

I was particularly taken with Nietzsche's work on music—an interest that has continued throughout my career, including a chapter on Nietzsche in my book, *The Conjectural Body: Gender, Race, and the Philosophy of Music*, and a forthcoming article in *Hypatia*. Taking Elaine Miller's classes on 19th century German aesthetics along with my music history courses, I developed an interest in the role of

Kantian aesthetics in composer Arnold Schoenberg's musical works and writings on music theory. And, as a junior, I read what I now realize was "the revolutionary book"—that eye-opening, earth-shattering, world-changing book that sparks your brain and ignites your passion, the one book that changes your life. It wasn't a philosophy book, but a musicology one: Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (which was about six or seven years old at the time). I learned that patriarchy, normative gender roles, white privilege, orientalism, all

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of these were not just things expressed in music, but, more fundamentally, they were present in the theories and structures of Western art music itself. And, all the Irigaray I read with Drs. Miller and Zakin helped me more fully understand and critique the patriarchal, Eurocentric assumptions at the heart of most Western art music theory and practice.

So, my studies at Miami definitely bridged the first and second floors of Hall Auditorium—and sometimes I had to do this literally. There were a few evenings when I had to excuse myself from a philosophy seminar, run downstairs, and either participate in a dress rehearsal or listen to the MUSO play something so I could write more circumspect program notes for their upcoming concert.

I went straight from my BA at Miami into the PhD program in philosophy at DePaul. This past spring I was tenured and promoted; I'm now an Associate Professor of Philosophy at UNC Charlotte. The thing that has come to define my career is the interdisciplinary mix of continental philosophy, musicology, and feminist theory that I first started experimenting with at Miami. And it's because of the intellectual environment at Miami, both in the philosophy department and in the university as a whole, that I was able to develop this research program. "Continental feminist philosophy of music, with some critical race theory in there too" is not a common or recognized subfield in the discipline. In philosophy, there are a number of defined subfields or specializations (e.g., epistemology, ethics, ancient, aesthetics, philosophy of science, etc.), and lemme tell you, that ain't one of 'em. What I appreciate so much about my studies at Miami is that they allowed me to more or less invent a new approach, to carve out a new niche in continental philosophy, aesthetics, and the philosophy of gender and race. The faculty didn't force me into a pre-defined box—they let me build my own box.

### The WOXY Years

In my doctoral studies, I became increasingly interested in popular music, especially early feminist punk, post-punk, and electronica. I never had any formal coursework in popular music studies, but I did receive a top-notch, diverse, and well-rounded education in various indie



and alternative musics by growing up listening to 97X. I learned about the history of punk, post-punk, 80s British indie, goth, industrial, early house and techno (XTRABEATS was my favorite program on 97X), and listened along as grunge, Madchester, Wax Trax bands, and all the other 90s music trends developed. (I also remember all the zany in-house ads for places like Sentiments Rock City and Jungle Jim's.)

*The thing that has come to define my career is the interdisciplinary mix of continental philosophy, musicology, and feminist theory that I first started experimenting with at Miami.*

## A Philosophy-Themed Playlist from Miami Alum, Philosopher, and Musician Robin James

*Robin compiled a short philosophy-themed playlist for us. For more Oxford and WOXY-specific songs, check out her blog, [its-her-factory.blogspot.com](http://its-her-factory.blogspot.com). Thank you, Dr. James!*

**Note:** if you're reading a hard copy, check out the online version of the newsletter for links to audio and video: <http://www.units.muohio.edu/philosophy/>

**"It's Her Factory," Gang of Four.** Their album *Entertainment!* album is basically a lesson in Marx with a little Foucault thrown in to boot. I'll pick out two tracks. In this song, the line "In a man's world/because they're not men" is the best, most efficient summary of Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* I've ever heard. <http://youtu.be/QEwk6yWVYjQ>

Second from Gang of Four is **"To Hell With Poverty!"**. This is one of their best songs, and with the line "To hell with poverty/let's get drunk on cheap wine," it makes a pretty good anthem for philosophy students...it certainly speaks to my experience as a philosophy student... Here is the studio version: <http://youtu.be/QRjjVFC-oG4>, and here is a pretty good live version: <http://youtu.be/sPJHQmJAiKA>

**"She Is Beyond Good and Evil," The Pop Group.** Keeping with the

70s post-punk, this track references Nietzsche in a way that doesn't entirely misconstrue him. <http://youtu.be/sL-0tYowblxE>

**"Stronger," Kanye West.** "Th-th-th-that that don't kill me/will only make me stronger" is also a line from Nietzsche; with this 2008 Yeezy track, and Kelly Clarkson's 2012 "Stronger," it's also a really trendy line to drop in contemporary pop. <http://youtu.be/PsO6ZnUZI0g>

**"I'm A Problem," Kanye West (Featuring Lil Wayne, TI, & Jay-Z).** Yeezy likes to cite philosophers. Here, he reworks W.E.B. Du Bois's famous question, "How does it feel to be a problem?" [http://www.last.fm/music/Kanye+West/\\_/I%27m+A+Problem+%28Feat.+Lil+Wayne,+T.I.,+Jay-Z%29](http://www.last.fm/music/Kanye+West/_/I%27m+A+Problem+%28Feat.+Lil+Wayne,+T.I.,+Jay-Z%29)

**"People Are Still Having Sex," La Tour.** I actually use this song to teach Foucault's concept of the repressive hypothesis in *History of Sexuality vol 1*. Both the song and the concept point out that attempts to repress sex actually incite it. This song is also based on samples from Bach's *Tocatta & Fugue in D Minor* and the film *Evil Dead II*. <http://youtu.be/ShTjhhYN04Y>

**"Knowledge," Operation Ivy.** Readers of Plato's *Apology* should recognize the wisdom in the line "All I know is

that I don't know nothin', and that's fine." <http://youtu.be/5HtUnubXAO4>

**"Master and Servant," Depeche Mode.** Master and servant may be "a lot like life," but Hegel would argue that it's only a moment in the movement of the Notion towards Absolute Spirit. Dave Gahan's mullet nearly steals this video: <http://youtu.be/lsvfofclEIQ>, but this 12" mix is better: <http://youtu.be/yUN7fxvVEKI>

**"The Robots," Kraftwerk.** This is off their album *The Man Machine*. Can a computer convince someone that it is a human being? That's what is famously known as the Turing Test, which is a well-known problem in philosophy. <http://youtu.be/VXa9tXcMhXQ>

**"Cold War," Janelle Monae.** I've written about this song here. Basically, Monae argues that 21st century racism is not a "hot" but a "cold" war—it might be less overtly destructive, but its effects are more insidious. This is how Foucault describes racism in *Society Must Be Defended*. <http://youtu.be/lq-mORiHNtN4>

**Robin adds:** On my blog, [its-her-factory.blogspot.com](http://its-her-factory.blogspot.com) (now you know where I got the name), I've done a series of Oxford and WOXY-specific songs. You can find them under the "Music Geek-Out" series.

# Thoughts from Miami Alumnae *continued*

## Katharine Schweitzer

**Katharine Schweitzer '08** (pictured on page 1 with Dr. Elaine Miller and Dr. Gaile Pohlhaus) shares her thoughts on choosing a career in philosophy.

My name is Katharine Schweitzer, and I received my BA in Philosophy from Miami University in May 2008. This fall I entered my fifth year in the PhD program at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. My areas of research specialization are ethics and social and political philosophy. This spring I intend to defend my dissertation, in which I argue that compromise is a normatively desirable strategy for resolving disagreements about justice. A successful defense means that the 2012-2013 academic year will be my last as a student!

I first studied philosophy as a junior in high school because the curriculum in-

cluded Plato, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Bertrand Russell. I enjoyed reading and discussing these texts so much that I decided to take a college-level philosophy class at a summer institute at Ashland University. There I learned that one can teach philosophy to others and write about philosophical topics for a living. I couldn't—and still can't—imagine a more enjoyable way to exercise my curiosity and to utilize my talent for communicating with others. Much to the surprise of my parents and my high school teachers, I returned home with the desire to become a philosophy professor.

As an undergraduate philosophy major at Miami, I glimpsed what professional philosophers and graduate students do. I heard professors from other universities deliver papers at Friday colloquia. I spent free time talking about philosophical questions with my friends, many of whom I met through philosophy courses. I also accompanied the MA students on a road trip to a philosophy conference in Philadelphia. Miami's philosophy department afforded me many opportunities to learn, to develop my philosophical interests, and to have fun doing philosophy.

The setting in which I learned and grew the most were 400/500 level classes. Here I had a taste of what studying philosophy at the graduate level would be like: difficult and intense. I experienced the frustration of not understanding the assigned text on the first (or second, or third) reading and of not knowing the answer to a question posed by a professor in seminar. At times I worried that I did not have original insights to articulate in class discussion and in writing assignments. But I also experienced the satisfaction of understanding a dense and complex argument. I marveled with pride at final drafts of seminar papers that I did not think at the beginning of the semester that I would be able to write.

The 400/500 level classes that I took as an advanced undergraduate at prepared me well to survive and to flourish in my six semesters of graduate coursework at Emory.

*What do  
Plato,  
Friedrich  
Nietzsche,  
and Bertrand  
Russell have  
in common?*

Miami's philosophy department was to me a community of learners. This was most apparent during colloquia. Seeing everyone in the Green Room of Hall Auditorium listening to the speaker and engaging with the argument in the Q&A always pleased me. A unique set of participants were coming together to pursue understanding. When I began teaching Emory undergraduates, I realized that I had the capacity to facilitate this kind of engagement in my classes.

I'd love to hear from Miami undergraduates who are interested in pursuing graduate study in philosophy and who would like advice or encouragement. My e-mail address is [kjschwe@emory.edu](mailto:kjschwe@emory.edu).

*Miami's philosophy department afforded me many opportunities to learn, to develop my philosophical interests, and to have fun doing philosophy.*

## In Memoriam: Mrs. Peggy Harris

Robert T. Harris was the chair of the Philosophy Department from 1958 to 1969. During that time he built the department from two professors and one major to a faculty of eight and over 100 majors. His late wife, Mrs. "Peggy" (Mary Margaret) Harris, died this summer on August 2, at the age of 91. Dr. Rama Rao Pappu visited Mrs. Harris shortly before her death, and reports that they talked together for almost two hours, and had tea which Mrs. Harris "made and served herself." An obituary in the August 3 *Boston Globe* on stated that "Those of us who knew Peggy will miss her warmth, compassion, intelligence and humor. She was a dedicated and loving mother and grandmother, a talented writer and a voracious reader. She cultivated close friendships throughout the US and in many parts of the world." On behalf of the philosophical community at Miami, we extend our condolences to the family and other friends of Dr. and Mrs. Harris, and once again express our gratitude for the many ways in which the Harrises have enriched the intellectual life of our department.



*Dr. Pappu and the late Mrs. Peggy Harris, at the home of Mrs. Harris during the summer of 2012*

# Celebrating Upcoming Retirees

## Call for Contributions

**Drs. Rama Rao Pappu, Rick Momeyer and Asher Seidel will be retiring in the coming year.** We'd love to hear from you as we prepare to celebrate their immeasurable contributions to our community over the past several decades. Especially welcome are any memories you may have of how these teachers touched your life as a student. Also especially welcome are photographs or other hard evidence documenting the behavior of the sage scholars in the days of their hasty youth, doing such undignified things as playing touch football, engaging in protests, wearing flowers in their hair, push-starting finicky vehicles, or participating in public debate. This is an excellent opportunity to let them know how much they mean to us. It may also be our last chance to tease them in public.

To get you started thinking back on your time at Miami and your memories of Drs. Momeyer, Pappu, and Seidel, here are some snippets from the faculty updates of 2005, as published in the last Michael Goldman Newsletter (of August 2005).

The youthful Asher Seidel of 2005 remarked, "It seems a short while ago I came to Miami on the good side of 'don't trust anyone over 30'. I remember the touch football we played outside the office, and the administrative warning that such conduct was unbecoming faculty. ... You all have memories. If you want to share them with me, I'd enjoy hearing from you (unless it's to remind me what a rotten s.o.b. I was when you knew me)." In light of Asher's qualification, the editors remind the audience that we reserve the right to censor memories prior to publication, but that we will do so as sparingly as possible.

In 2005 Rick Momeyer reported the following about his intensifying garden-

ing habit: "I do confess to finding the ongoing project of transforming this acreage from a tangle of honeysuckle into a mini-arboretum very rewarding. Come by and see for yourself. And if you are one still reading philosophy, I will invite you as well to help prune my library of the books I will not read again, but that you well may!" The current editor can vouch that the Momeyer garden is a wonder to behold, especially in spring, and especially since it is well-barricaded by miles of electrified deer-proof fence. Those interested in Dr. Momeyer's books can apply to the philosophy department for information about the whereabouts of both garden and library.

Finally, apparently in August of 2005 Rama Rao Pappu was MIA from Miami. Editor Goldman reports, "As we write this Rama Rao is somewhere on the planet, but we cannot be more specific." However, the editor was able to report that the annual Vedantic conference would be taking place that year as planned. Fast-forwarding to the present, you will be relieved to learn that Dr. Pappu did materialize eventually, and that he hosted two more meetings of the International Congress of Vedanta at Miami between 2005 and 2007. In next year's newsletter we look forward to telling you more about the Annual Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture, which continues to draw a large crowd each year at Miami.

**Do you have a  
story you want  
to share about  
Dr. Pappu,  
Dr. Momeyer,  
or Dr. Seidel?**



## Linda Singer Memorial Lecture Series Continues

This spring the Miami Philosophy community will continue to celebrate the memory of late faculty member Linda Singer, with the 2012-2013 Linda Singer Memorial Lecture. This year's Singer Lecturer will be Elizabeth Wilson of Emory University. Professor Wilson's current research aims to give "a feminist analysis of biomedical theories of depression"; she will speak to us on April 18, 2013.

The Linda Singer Memorial Lecture Series is funded by an endowment established in her honor after her very early death in 1990. The Series brings speakers to the Miami Campus to talk on a range of topics related to Linda Singer's research interests, including feminist theory, political theory, aesthetics, and social activism. Last Spring's *philoSOPHIA* conference, *Translating the Canon*, was supported in large part by funding from the Linda Singer Memorial Lecture Series.



Linda Singer

## We'd love to hear from you!

Alums and friends of the department, we'd love to know how you're doing! Send us an update, tell us how philosophy continues to play a role in your life, whether within the ivory tower, on the ground, or even someplace we've never imagined. Send updates for publication in next fall's newsletter to: [philosophy@miamiOH.edu](mailto:philosophy@miamiOH.edu), or give us a shout on Facebook (at Miami University Ohio Philosophy Department).