

Humanities Research Institute Annual Report 2011

A Message from the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research



It is my privilege and pleasure to have the opportunity to comment, in this rather belated annual report, on the research activities of the Faculty of Humanities at Brock University in 2011.

The text of the report provides the necessary information to deliver the essential message: Humanities at Brock continues unstoppable in research and creative activity. Building on our success in 2010 (the year in which our faculty alone received more SSHRC grants than some entire universities), our researchers achieved impressive grant successes in 2011.

A list of these awards appears in the report, but I would like to highlight the very impressive feat of Prof. Adam Dickinson of the Department of English Language and Literature. Dickinson is the only person I know to receive two SSHRC grants in the same year. We are very proud of this distinction.

Success in granting competitions, while impressive and attention getting, represents an investment in research utures. A list of the investments made by the Humanities Research Institute (HRI) in 2010-2011 is also included within this report. The researchers in the Faculty of Humanities have also excelled in research and creative roduction. We have included in the report the very impressive list of the books published by members of the faculty in 2010-2011.

Granted, the publication of books is not the sole, or even necessarily the major measure of research and scholarly activity in the faculty. A goal for the coming year is to find ways to acknowledge the broader range of activity by our faculty members; this is especially necessary for the work done by members of our creative departments, who can so easily be overlooked. In an attempt to address this situation for the moment, we have included a report by Prof. Derek Knight on the activities in the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts.

In 2011, the HRI expanded its membership in order to serve the growing contingent of graduate students in the Faculty of Humanities. A category of membership, Graduate Student Associate, was created. This status is not automatically conferred, but is an adjudicated honour, and those who are successful in gaining this status are invited to HRI events, such as our December and April symposia. They are also eligible to apply for travel funding to present their research at professional conferences; this kind of investment in the work of our scholarly apprentices helps to bring the name of Brock Humanities to the attention of the scholarly community, and showcases the work done in our various graduate programs.

As of 2011, there were seven programs, as our first doctoral program, the PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities, enrolled its first cohort of students in September. Our eighth program — an interdisciplinary MA program in Canadian-American Studies to be offered jointly with the University of Buffalo — received provincial approval in June 2011 and New York State Department of Education approval in December 2011. We expect to receive the program's first students in 2013.

I would like to thank the members of the advisory board of the Humanities Research Institute for their service. Especially, we should acknowledge four long-time members of the HRI board whose terms ended in 2011: Professors John Sainsbury, Christine Daigle, David Hayes and Catherine Parayre all served for several years on the board and their contributions are much appreciated. They were replaced by three members elected in the spring 2011: Professors Carmela Colella, Rajiv Kaushik and Felipe Ruan. They were elected for a two-year term and have been participating in the various adjudications and events of the HRI for the past few months. I thank them for their willingness to serve and also the other candidates in the HRI elections. It is gratifying that there is enough interest in the research life of our faculty that HRI needs to hold elections.

In this report, in addition to some impressive lists of achievements (books, SSHRCs and HRI grants), we have included reports by faculty members on their work and the conferences and colloquia that brought scholars to Brock to experience what we have to offer, here in the faculty where we know what *Surgite* means.

Carol U. Merriam, PhD
Associate Dean,
Graduate Studies and Research



Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts

Planning continues on new facilities for The Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts in the historical downtown core of St. Catharines.

After initial consultations, Diamond + Schmitt Architects are at the schematic drawing stage in adapting the Canada Hair Cloth Building, a late-19th century textile factory. This multi-purpose, state-of-the-art facility will house art studios, praxis spaces, digital labs, music practice rooms, production facilities and a stand-alone theatre.

Among new programming initiatives introduced in the fall of 2011, the Centre for Studies in Arts and Culture will welcome its first year of students into the Concentration for Cultural Management, jointly offered with the Faculty of Business. New courses include

interdisciplinary study in Producing the Performance Event, Creating Social Value from Material Culture and Contemporary Phototextuality in collaboration with the Rodman Hall Art Centre.

The Department of Visual Arts will introduce a new major in Art History and Visual Culture, allowing students the opportunity to take courses that not only examine the development of artistic styles as well as the critical and aesthetic issues that these styles bring into play, but that look at the interaction of art with other forms of visual culture.

Faculty achievements Dramatic Arts

Prof. Joe Norris' new book *Playbuilding as Qualitative Research: A Participatory Arts-based Approach* merged the research and drama fields to illustrate the genre playbuilding within arts-based qualitative research.

Drawing from his experiences as director of Mirror Theatre, a theatre-in-education troupe in Canada, he detailed dramatic methods used to generate data and the theatrical approaches used to disseminate research that can be used by researchers and artists.

He documented the history of Mirror Theatre over 10 years from his directing of actors, researchers, and teachers (A/R/Tors) in devising and performing vignettes on a variety of themes including sexuality, gender, substance abuse, bullying, and prejudice using compiled voice collages, readers theatre, narrated-mime, gibberish and other theatrical devices to their interactive workshops with audiences.

In doing so, he questioned the definition of knowledge and the concepts of analysis and data interpretation, considered the participatory aspects of research and acknowledges that research is a constructed narrative.

Playbuilding as Qualitative Research: A Participatory Arts-based Approach was the winner of the American Educational Research Association's Qualitative Research SIG's 2011 Outstanding Book Award.

Kakali Bhattachary, commenting for the jury, wrote: "This book not only met all the criteria for the award, it exceeded every criteria. Norris bridges arts-based research, qualitative inquiry and playbuilding grounded in rich theories and created dialogue for various social justice issues."

The Viking Age

Andrew McDonald, Department of History and Angus Somerville,
Department of English Language and Literature

McDonald and Somerville were asked by University of Toronto Press to follow up the astonishing success of *The Viking Age* (U of T Press, 2010) with a companion volume, which is now nearing completion. *The Viking Age: A Companion* is an introduction to Viking studies.

A comprehensive survey of current scholarship in the area is accompanied by a detailed introduction to the nature and use of available resources. All areas of Viking Age civilization are represented. The *Companion* also contains the first complete English translation of the *Life of St. Findan*, which is the focus of an extensive case-study on the handling of contemporary sources.

The Viking Age was the product of five years collaboration and has been widely adopted in the United States and Canada (for example, Yale and Toronto) as a text in Viking culture, history and mythology courses.

McDonald and Somerville are also engaged in producing a new edition of the Icelandic *Leiðarvisir* (Pilgrim Diary) of Abbot Nikulás of Þverá, who travelled from Iceland to Jerusalem in the 12th century. As well as a new edition of the MSS, the book will include an extensive commentary and the first complete English translation of the text. The translation is largely finished, and the MSS were examined in the spring of this year. The writing of the commentary will occur next summer.

[The Icelandic MS is from AM 194 8vo in the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, Copenhagen, and shows the ending of *Leiðarvisir* (Pilgrim Diary) of Abbot Nikulás of Þverá]





Commotion at Brock University

Gyllian Raby, Department of Dramatic Arts

I started *Commotion* in 2006, little knowing that it would take over my life for the foreseeable future.

The ingredients were a partnership with Pablo Felices-Luna (artistic director of Carousel Players Youth Theatre) and the umbrella youth group TALK Niagara (Teams of Adults Listening to Kids), willing high school drama teachers, funding from the Laidlaw Foundation and a Brock University internal SSHRC.

I wanted to pursue several goals: to study the relationship of group dynamic to creative process while developing a body of theatre created by teenagers, at the same time as developing a community interested in what young adults have to say.

Then, three years of support from the SSHRC Creative Research program and a multi-year commitment from my community partners made it possible to extend *Commotion* through December 2011. To my amazement, we have involved about 200 participants in the process and a documentary video is in the works, thanks to collaboration with Four Grounds Media.

Commotion is a tri-generational program, which maximizes its community impact. Pablo and I train recent graduates from the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts to work with high school seniors in high-octane, twice-weekly sessions over a 12-week period.

The process, inspired by Laurence and Anna Halprins' creative approach RSVP, is designed to cycle personal expression into group collaboration into community exchange. Participants alternate their creative strategies between four compass points of resource exploration (R), scored improvisation (S), evaluation of the cultural assumptions in their work (V), and participation with the surrounding community (P).

In *Commotion*, participants sponsor moments they find theatrically powerful for further exploration by others, so that ownership of the work is shared. Midway through the process, community members from a cross-section of backgrounds offer feedback that helps them to find the collective expression particular to their group.

Content emerges gradually as the interests and concerns common to the group unfold, rather than topics proposed by external forces. In

the last two weeks of the program, the groups "weave" their material into one-act plays and rehearse for production.

The fact that the play script arrives so late can be nerve-wracking, but the final production is enabled by the trust the participants develop in their work and in one another, as well the professional artistic support provided by Carousel in the culminating production at the Court House Theatre.

Commotion challenges a widely held view that adolescents lack the maturity to create original play scripts and should rather be organized with topics, focused on themes and disciplined by grades. Many educators reflect with Baudrillard (1994, 30), that youth expression is so heavily mediated because TV isn't even a medium, "it is now intangible, diffused, and diffracted in the real..."

Nonetheless, we have observed that, in *Commotion*, youth enjoy using different creative strategies precisely because it enables them to sidestep media expectations. Their topics have ranged widely: homophobia in the home, internet violence, 'invisible' bullying, economic stressors on single parent families, the relationship between fantasy and pop culture, the impact of wearable technology on inter-personal relations, stress in the workplace, families divided by divorce, the immaturity of adults, abuse of authority by adults and the disintegration of friendships associated with life passages.

At post-show chat sessions, the students speak confidently about their intended statements and their group process, due to their ownership of both.

The participants have taught us a great deal about collaborative processes, ownership and creative practice. They have also broadened reductive perspectives on adolescents as being "emotionally immature, peer identified and youth at risk."

I am convinced that *Commotion's* key strategies can reposition youth consumers as embodied producers of dramatic narrative, who recognize, reassess and reformulate media imagery. The youth can use improvisation to create intelligent plays that do not replicate but question the stereotypical assumptions of the media by which they are inundated.



Two Days of Canada

Gregory Betts, Department of English Language and Literature/Centre for Canadian Studies

The Centre for Canadian Studies hosted its annual Two Days of Canada Conference (with HRI funding support) on Nov. 3-4, 2011.

Organized by Marian Bredin, Scott Henderson and Gregory Betts, this year's version of the conference was special for many reasons, including the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the conference series.

Appropriately, the event featured 25 conference presenters from 10 Canadian and American universities, all meditating on the general theme of "Canadian Studies, Canadian Stories: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Pedagogies."

Papers addressed a wide range of relevant topics, including Canadian science fiction, poetry, regionalism, heroism, memorialization, tourism and more. National events from the Highway of Heroes to the Vancouver 2010 Olympics to the Somalia Affair were discussed for the complex interrelationship of official state policy and applied ideology.

We were also delighted to host Prof. Munroe Eagles, the director of the Canadian Studies Program at the University of Buffalo, to discuss the forthcoming new Masters program in Canadian-American Studies, jointly offered by Brock and SUNY Buffalo. Every session of the conference was packed to capacity with scholars and students.

Douglas Gibson delivered the keynote presentation for the conference. His talk, entitled "Stories About Storytellers," spun a delightful narrative thread around his half-century of experience as editor and publisher of McClelland & Stewart. With each author he highlighted, Gibson transformed the Pond Inlet into a tapestry of exceptional Canadian lives lived and the stories of the production of their stories.

Next year's Two Days of Canada Conference will focus on the theme of the War of 1812. In Dean Douglas Kneale's opening address to this year's conference, he highlighted the wide range of activities that will take place at Brock over the next year in recognition of the 200th anniversary of the war. We hope that you will join us for this important conference next November.



Faculty achievements

Visual Arts

Prof. Keri Cronin published two books in 2011. *Manufacturing National Park Nature: Photography, Ecology and the Wilderness Industry of Jasper National Park* (UBC Press, 2011) is a thematic exploration of the ways in which visual culture shapes understanding of, and ultimately, behaviours towards nonhuman species. By drawing on such material as photographic postcards, films and other visual ephemera related to the tourist industry, this book asked how and why plants and animals have been represented in Canada's Rocky Mountain region.

Imagining Resistance: Visual Culture and Activism in Canada (co-edited with Kirsty Robertson, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011) was an edited volume that offered a series of case studies, each a different glimpse into the intersection of forms of resistance and image culture. This book explored how artists

have used their work as a form of political voice and how activist movements have adopted specific types of imagery.

Prof. Duncan MacDonald investigated the corporeal sensorium and its commodification through transdisciplinary methodologies of art making. A comprehensive list of recent exhibitions includes: *Little Revolutions* (Rodman Hall Art Centre), *Babble* (p|m Gallery), *Small Feats* (The Niagara Artist Centre), *The Main Event* (Rodman Hall Art Centre), *The Good Host* (Metro Hall, Toronto), *Natural Frequencies* (CRAM Art Gallery), *Work, work* (In The Soil Arts Festival) and *Summer Show, Part 1* (p|m Gallery). Concurrently, MacDonald received several grants, including a FedDev ARC pre-commercialization grant (\$75,000), a BSI seed SSHRC grant (\$4,000) and a Humanities Research Institute grant funding the *Musicbox Revolving Door* (\$2,085).



Interacting with Immersive Worlds June 13-14, 2011

Martin Danahay, Department of English Language and Literature/Centre for Digital Humanities

Funding from the HRI helped support the third "Interacting with Immersive Worlds" conference organized by the Centre for Digital Humanities.

This biennial conference brought together over 70 university researchers and industry practitioners who gave papers in four different streams: Innovations in Immersive Worlds, Critical Approaches to Immersion, Immersive Worlds in Education and Immersive Worlds in Entertainment. There were four keynote speakers in addition to a wide variety of high quality papers in the theory and practice of digital and immersive media.

Dejan Momcilovic, who is head of the motion capture department of Weta Studios, New Zealand gave a talk on the use of motion capture in such movies as *Lord of the Rings*, *King Kong*, *Avatar* and *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*.

Under the directorship of Peter Jackson, Weta Studios has become the leading special effects studio in the world in the area of motion capture technology. Momcilovic showed clips from the making of *Avatar* and other movies to illustrate his talk.

Unfortunately, due to a non-disclosure agreement with Weta studios, we were not able to tape his talk.

The clips he showed featured proprietary, cutting-edge techniques used at Weta and gave those in attendance a privileged insight into the uses of motion capture technology in one of the world's leading movie studios.

Momcilovic's talk was followed by a tour of the Generator at One, 1 St. Paul St., and a demonstration of the state-of-the-art motion capture studio, the most advanced of its kind in Canada.

After the tour, the conference banquet was held at Stella's Restaurant, where Prof. David Benyon delivered a keynote address on the latest developments in immersive and augmented reality technologies.

Benyon is director of the Centre for Interaction Design at Edinburgh Napier University, where he conducts research on human/computer

interactions and ways of navigating the information space. His speech complemented Momcilovic's talk in that he is particularly interested in the way that new technologies are allowing users to navigate immersive environments using the body and gestures rather than keystrokes.

Dr. Jon-Paul Dyson, vice-president for exhibit research and development at Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, N.Y. delivered a talk on the history of play and its relationship to current video games. His talk stressed the continuities between imaginative play in the past and current genres of online and interactive games for children that draw upon the same imaginative elements as games from the 19th century.

Finally, Michael Schmalz, president of Digital Extremes based in London, Ont., addressed the challenges facing game designers in the video game industry. He gave an overview of the current state of the video game industry and the ways in which a successful company, such as Digital Extremes, must strategize in order to survive in the turbulent and fast-paced environment of the video game industry.

Schmalz also acted as a judge for a video game competition run by Tamer Thabet and IASC students. They had to prototype a video game in 24 hours after being given an assignment by Schmalz.

In addition to the papers by attendees and keynote speakers, there was a roundtable discussion on creating an undergraduate video game program. The participants included Dean Ben Cecil, Linda Roote and Peter Vanscoy from Niagara College, Jean Bridge and Dave Hughes from Brock and Louis-Martin Guay from the University of Montreal digital media department. In addition to being a faculty member, Guay has also worked for Ubisoft, a video game company, thus bridging industry and academia.

Overall, the conference was a huge success, continuing a string of innovative and exciting conferences. "Interacting with Immersive Worlds" in 2013 will certainly continue this tradition.

Research Projects Supported by the Humanities Research Institute, 2010-2011

Sandra Beckett (Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures)
Revisioning Red Riding Hood

Fanny Dolansky (Classics)
Rome: A Sourcebook on the Ancient City

Veena Dwivedi (Applied Linguistics)
Understanding Number

Corrado Federici (Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures)
Translation Projects

David Hayes (Applied Linguistics)
English language teaching in context: The lives and career of non-native speaking teachers of English in Thailand

Leah Knight (English Language and Literature)
Text Life of a Renaissance Woman

Duncan MacDonald (Visual Arts)
Music Box Revolving Door

Andrew McDonald (History)
Isle of Man

Merijean Morrisey (Visual Arts)
The Navigator: etchings

Olatunji Ojo (History)
Gender Chaos, Hair Fashion and Marriage in Igbo Society

Carmela Patrias (History)
Jobs and Justice: Fighting Discrimination in Wartime Canada

Angus Smith (Classics)
Excavations at Gournia

Angus Somerville (English Language and Literature)
Translation of Abbot Niklaus' Itinerary

Linda Steer (Visual Arts)
Found and Borrowed Photographs in French Surrealist Periodicals

Maria del Carmen Suescun Pozas (History)
Latin American Art and Visual Culture

Ning Wang (History)
American Trained Scientists in Mao's China

Sherryl Vint (English Language and Literature)
Science Fiction: A Guide to the Perplexed

Barbra Zupan (Applied Linguistics)
Nonverbal (NV) cues of emotion

Grants

SSHRC SRG Grants

Sandra Beckett
The Art of Recycling Stories for All Ages

Keri Cronin
Do Not Refuse to Look at These Pictures: Visual Culture and 19th Century Animal Welfare Activism

Adam Dickinson
Poetry as Science, Science as Poetry: Pataphysics, Biosemiotics, and Postmodern Environments

David Hayes
The Role of School Language Education in the Development of Respect Amongst Ethnic Communities in Sri Lanka and its Impact on the Development of the Foundations for Social Harmony in the Country

SSHRC: Aid to Research Workshops and Conferences in Canada

Renée-Claude Breitenstein
Le choix de la langue dans la construction des publics à la Renaissance en France

SSHRC Insight Development Grants

Leah Knight
What Anne Read: The Text Life of a Renaissance Woman

Joseph Norris
Reuniting form and content: Generating, Mediating, and Disseminating Social Science Research and Arts-based Performance Genres through Digital Media

SSHRC: Research/Creation in Fine Arts

Adam Dickinson
Anatomic: Semiotic Bodies, Chemical Environments

Other Major Grants

Duncan MacDonald with Fourgrounds Media
FedDev ARC Pre-Commercialization Grant

Gregory Betts
Ontario Arts Council Writers' Works in Progress Grant

Conferences & Colloquia Supported by the Humanities Research Institute, 2010-2011

Gregory Betts (Canadian Studies/ English Language and Literature)
— Two Days of Canada: Canadian Studies, Canadian Stories: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Pedagogies

Martin Danahay (Digital Humanities/English Language and Literature) — Interacting With Immersive Worlds

Corrado Federici (Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures)
— Image & Imagery VI: Silence and the Silenced

Allison Glazebrook (Classics) — Feminism and Classics VI: Crossing Borders, Crossing Lines

Susan Grouchy & BUAS (Classics) — Pride & Prejudice: BUAS Scholarly Symposium

Cristina Santos (Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures)
— From Mentoring to Collaboration and Beyond

Books Published by Faculty Members in Humanities, 2010-2011

Michael Berman & Rohit Dalvi (edd),
Heroes, Monsters and Values: Science Fiction Films of the 1970s,
Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Gregory Betts,
Psychic Geographies and Other Topics, Quattro Press

Gregory Betts,
BLASTogenesis, No Press

Leslie Boldt, Corrado Federici, Ernesto Virgulti (edd),
Rewriting Text, Remaking Image, Peter Lang Publishing

Tim Conley (ed),
Joyce's Disciples Disciplined: A Re-Examination of the
'Examination' of 'Work in Progress,' University College Dublin Press

Keri Cronin,
Manufacturing National Park Nature: Photography, Ecology and the
Wilderness Industry of Jasper, University of British Columbia Press

Keri Cronin (ed with Kirsty Robertson),
Imagining Resistance: Visual Culture and Activism in Canada,
Wilfrid Laurier University Press

Thomas S. C. Farrell (co-authored with George Jacobs),
Essentials for Successful English Language Teaching, Continuum Press

Allison Glazebrook (ed With Madeleine Henry),
Greek Prostitutes in the Mediterranean, University of Wisconsin Press

Mathew Martin,
Edward the Second by Christopher Marlowe, Broadview Press

Jane McLeod,
Licensing Loyalty: Printers, Patrons and the State in Early Modern
France, Penn State University Press

Jean B. Ntakirutimana,
Désambiguisation de la synonymie adjectivale: Pour une
lexicomatque contextuelle, Sarrebruck: Éditions universitaires
européennes

Cristina Santos (ed with Laura Davis),
The Monster Imagined: Humanity's Re-Creation of Monsters
and Monstrosity, Inter-Disciplinary Press

Elizabeth Sauer (ed with Peter C. Herman),
Paradigms Lost and Found: The New Milton Criticism, Cambridge UP

Angus Somerville & Andrew McDonald,
The Viking Age: A Reader, University of Toronto Press

Carole Stewart,
Strange Jeremiahs: Civil Religion and the Literary Imaginations of
Jonathan Edwards, Herman Melville, and W. E. B. Du Bois, University
of New Mexico Press

Sherryl Vint,
Animal Alterity: Science Fiction and the Question of the Animal,
Liverpool UP

Sherryl Vint (ed with Mark Bould),
The Routledge Concise History of Science Fiction, Routledge

Sherryl Vint (ed with Graham Murphy),
Beyond Cyberpunk: New Critical Perspectives, Routledge

Elizabeth Vlossak,
Marianne or Germania? Nationalizing Women in Alsace,
1870-1946, Oxford University Press

Faculty achievements

Music

At the annual meeting of the Canadian University Music Society, held June 3-5, 2011 at Mount Allison University, **Prof. Brian E. Power** was elected chair of the standing committee of institutional members, a body charged with consulting and advising on new university music programs in Canada, monitoring existing program, and providing nationally recognized guidelines for best practices in university music curriculum and administration.

Prof. Harris Loewen has continued his work as conductor of multiple choral ensembles at Brock University and in the local community.

Most performances take place under the heading of the Viva Voce Choral Series, which is organized by Loewen and supported by the Department of Music and the MIWSFPA. The university men's and women's choruses, as well as the Tremain Singers, a small ensemble of select singers, were engaged in

six performances, including several benefit concerts for Japan relief as well as the Bella Voce Women's Choir Festival.

The Niagara Vocal Ensemble, a community-based women's chamber choir celebrated its 20th anniversary season, concluding with premieres of several new works, including the Hymn for St. Cecilia by Prof. Peter Landey.

The Avanti Chamber Singers — a mixed chamber choir now in its fifth season — gave three concerts, including performances (many of them premieres) of over 20 works by Niagara-based composers.

Most of this Niagara repertoire is in the process of being recorded for eventual release on CD. In addition, Loewen remained active as a choral clinician, baritone soloist (classical and jazz), composer and arranger.