As chair of the Department of English, I would like to welcome back all of our English and English/Education majors as we look forward to some exciting new academic opportunities. Whether you are a lover of literature or a budding author, we have a place for you to pursue your interests.

This year marks the beginning of two program options: we have an updated literature-based B.A. in English, and a brand new B.A. in English with Concentration in Creative Writing. If you are a new major (rising sophomore) or a transfer major, you may choose between these two programs, either one of which may be combined with an Education major. We also have a minor in Creative Writing that can be combined with any major.

Juniors and seniors do not have to update to the new programs; you may continue with your original program requirements. You have the option to update, but please consult with your department academic advisor about whether this would be an efficient choice. Updating may affect your program requirements and your estimated time to graduation.

If you have not yet registered for spring 2012, we still have plenty of options available. If you need a 300+ elective, you may choose from 19th-century American Literature, 18th-Century British Literature, or PostColonial Literature. As part of our new Creative Writing program, we are also offering courses in Poetry, Fiction,
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What is the correct pronunciation of your name?

A long “ee” on the end – in Italian it means something like “ancient wise one.”

How long have you been teaching at Monmouth University?

At the end of this semester it will be six and a half years – which is hard to believe!

Can you give us a brief history of your life before you came here?

I grew up on Long Island, in Merrick. I was a big reader when I was a kid, though not always what I was supposed to be reading – romance novels, some science fiction, fantasy maybe – whatever I could find in my parents’ basement. Not exactly canonical literature. I got my Bachelor’s in English (Siena College, Albany, NY) and my Master’s in English (St. Bonaventure University, NY) – and then I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to do. I went to a terminal Master’s program because I wasn’t sure.

I went through this stage where I actually returned to reading for fun, where I found pleasure in reading again. I think I had lost a little of it after my Master’s, and I started on this kick with Anne Rice, and John Irving, too. Then I went ahead and completed a Ph.D. in 2004 from Lehigh University. I taught in grad school and at other universities, and before coming to Monmouth I had a one-year gig as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Southern Mississippi, about an hour and a half from New Orleans. So I got to know New Orleans, which is a really nice city.

What made you decide to pursue an academic career?

I started studying for my bachelor’s degree wanting to be a lawyer. I didn’t love English as a field when I was in high school. I wanted to be a lawyer. Then someone told me at a job fair that English was a really good major, so I became an English major, just sort of – haphazardly. I was just saying to one of my classes the other day that I think we are one of the only majors that actually focus on language in such a particular close, attentive way, whether it’s poetry or criticism, or anything. Other majors don’t look at the language so carefully. So I helped my sister with her papers when she was in law school (laughs).

When I graduated college, I missed my English classes so much. I loved writing English papers. I remember one I did as an undergraduate on the Wordsworth poem known as “Tintern Abbey,” contrasting it with this book called The Snow Leopard about Zen Buddhism and a trek in the Himalayas – the Zen Buddhism of William Wordsworth! It was the first paper I was really engaged in and enjoyed writing. That was what I knew I really loved doing, but I wasn’t sure I was capable of being a college professor.

When you were a student in college, did you have a favorite professor, and if so, what did you admire about his/her teaching style? Does it inform your own teaching style?

I had some close relationships with professors as an undergrad and even through grad school. Believe it or not, it was a Philosophy professor. I really loved his classes, for the way they got me so excited and engaged. I loved my English classes, but I love Theory – and he got us to talk, and at the same time it wasn’t just us talking and him listening – it was an active dialogue. He challenged us in ways that some of my English classes didn’t, because the model there was ‘oh, that’s interesting’ and then moving on to the next person – but this professor was present as an intellectual person in the class, and the discussions were so interesting. And yes, I do model on him.

Continued on page 18
Dr. Kristin Bluemel, professor of English, was named the new Wayne D. McMurray Endowed Chair in the Humanities for an initial three-year term, effective July 1, 2011. Dr. Bluemel, who received the strong recommendation of the McMurray Chair Search Committee, specializes in 20th century British and Irish literature. She is the author of *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London*, and *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism: Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage*, and the editor of *Intermodernism: Literary Culture in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain*. Bluemel is also working on a book, *Enchanted Wood: Four Women Wood Engravers and the Twentieth-Century Illustrated Book Trade*. A professor at Monmouth since 1994, she has also published numerous articles on British writers and has served since 2003 as editor of the journal, *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945*.

For over twenty years, Dr. Margaret DelGuercio has published poetry regularly in small press journals throughout the United States. Recently, “Therapy Dogs on Sunday Evening” appeared in *Kaleidoscope*, “Concealed” in *Plain Spoke* and “Widow” in *Creasote*. “The Countries of Africa” is forthcoming in *EDGZ* and “Trained” in the Journal of *New Jersey Poets*.

In the 2012 Spring Semester Dr. DelGuercio will be on sabbatical leave to complete a book of poems, *The Theory of Everything*. This is her twenty-fourth year of service to the English Department. In 1996 she received Monmouth University’s Distinguished Teacher Award. Although her passion for Shakespeare is lifelong, Dr. DelGuercio now enjoys teaching “Introduction to Creative Writing” and “Morality and Community” for Perspectives. She is looking forward to presenting a second seminar on selected poetry, short stories, novels, critical essays and memoirs of the contemporary writer, Joyce Carol Oates.


Jake Hinkson's debut novel *Hell on Church Street* will be published by New Pulp Press on December 20th. His essay "Narrative Dissonance and the Film Noir of Felix E. Feist" will be published in the collection *Film Noir Reader 5*, edited by Alain Silver and James Ursini, published by Limelight Editions next spring.

This past year, his essay "Hell Itself Couldn't Be A Stranger Place: Orson Welles and Film Noir" appeared in *Noir City*, Vol. 6 No. 1, and his essay "The Long Wait of Norman Foster" appeared in issue 72 of *Bright Lights Film Journal*.

Michael Waters is co-editor of *The Pushcart Prize XXXVI: Best of the Small Presses*, published in cloth and paper by Pushcart Press/ W.W.Norton (2012). Waters chose work from approximately 2000 nominated poems. Novelist Rick Moody calls this edition "the most creative, generous, and democratic of any of the annual volumes."

In 2011, Waters published two books: *Gospel Night* (BOA Editions) and *Selected Poems* (UK: Shoestring Press). Publishers Weekly said of *Gospel Night*: "Waters excels at stark-eyed, honest elegies... all rendered in the strong free verse that is Waters's signature." Acumen (UK) said of *Selected Poems*: "The sensuous delineation is often embedded in lines of fascinating music and syntactic subtlety," and The Warwicke Review (UK) called the book "a winning work, vivid, sensual, and fond of risk."
An Afternoon of Poetry with Dr. Michael Waters, November 8, 2011

As part of the Monmouth University Visiting Writers’ Series, our own Michael Waters gave a reading from his newly published poetry collection, Gospel Night, on Tuesday, Nov. 8 at 4:30 in Wilson Auditorium. He was introduced by Robert Rechnitz, professor emeritus and chairman of the Two River Theater Company, who acknowledged Dr. Waters as one of the country’s greatest living poets.

Dr. Waters shared original poems about varied topics such as swimming in a Costa Rican river full of sharks and crocodiles without realizing it; dressing up as a bride for Halloween; listening to a drunk guy in a bar singing “Hello Young Lovers,” the invisible presence of “Dead Iraqis” in American streets and homes; a love poem called “Cannibal”; and a poem about visiting his father’s grave in response to his wife’s encouragement. His poems are intensely personal yet also include political and international themes.

In the question time after the reading, Dr. Waters revealed to the audience some interesting facts about his methods and influences:

He only works on one poem at a time.

He saves all his drafts. He sometimes “overimproves” and goes back to an earlier draft as the final version of the poem.

When asked about whether he prefers to write about sexual or political issues, he says that he does not recognize a difference. He pointed out that sexuality can be political.

He said that it’s much harder to teach people how to write poetry than to write it.

His primary formal interest is the unit of the line; “everything is about the line.”

He is inspired in his poetry by pop songs and jazz from the late 50s and early 60s. Listening to pop music as a young person taught him his first lessons about poetry.

He emphasized the importance of discipline and hard work to the life of a poet; you can dress like a poet, talk like a poet, drink like a poet, but if you don’t have any discipline in writing, you’re not a poet. You have to be willing to be hard on yourself to write good poetry.

...and A Foot in the Door with Dr. Richard Paris, November 16, 2011

On Wednesday evening, November 16th, The Faculty Artists Series, sponsored by FAMCO, hosted a stage reading of Richard Paris’ delightful play, A Foot in the Door. The audience was comprised of faculty and family. The play is a farce, intentionally or otherwise, about a retired, grumpy businessman who is seeking solitude in the outskirts of a country New England town. The focus of the play is the last rehearsal prior to the play’s opening. The underfinanced play, and what the playwright describes as a “marginally disreputable theater,” is the backdrop for an evening of laughter and enjoyment.

Since the theater in the play needs to make the most of its resources, the actors must play multiple parts, resulting in confusion and hilarity. The play within the play engages the audience and creates the funniest situations with cast members fighting over costumes, lines, and roles. Since the cast members in Wednesday evening’s reading played multiple parts, the cast members identified themselves with nametags (on Post-it notes). This sight gag added laughs to the reading.

Among the players were some English Department faculty members. The players were: Michael Rosas as Tom; Nicole Ricciardi as Ruth, Doris, Winnie and others; Jerry Cook as Father Arthur and Cliff; Allison Miller as The Writer; Maggie Del Guercio as the Stage Manager, The Producer and more; and Noel Belinski as Miriam, Julie, Joanne, and others. The cast enjoyed working with Richard and is eager to read more of his very funny plays.
There has been quite a bit of activity in the FYC program so far this year. The FYC committee sponsored an essay contest for essays written in the College Composition I and II courses. This year’s winner and the winning contest are presented in this newsletter as well. The composition committee will also be hosting a demonstration of MyCompLab, an interactive website for students in the composition classes. The composition program, under the direction of Dave Tietge, organized a number of workshops this semester for instructors in the program. The topics for these workshops include moving beyond the five paragraph essay and responding to student writing. The highlight of these workshops was a keynote address from Professor Kurt Spellmeyer on October 18 in Wilson Auditorium. Spellmeyer is the director of composition at Rutgers University and co-editor of The New Humanities Reader, a popular textbook for composition courses. About 200 students and faculty listened to Spellmeyer’s comments on the state of higher education today. He argues that learning has become too specialized and we are no longer focusing on becoming educated in a wide variety of topics, but only focus on topics that are seen as directly related to our chosen careers. The philosophy behind The New Humanities Reader is to show students how to make connections among a variety of fields and topics. A number of students participated during the discussion by answering and asking questions. Cengage Publishing funded the event and even provided delicious cookies and copies of the text were available. Overall, the event was a great success and the First Year Composition Program hopes to organize similar ones in the future.
A Note from the Chair
...continued from page 1

and the Craft of Writing. Although these courses have EN 251 Intro to Creative Writing as a prerequisite, they are also available by the permission of the instructor. If you have not taken EN 251 yet but would like to take a creative writing class, please contact the instructor to see if by-permission registration is possible.

One question that our majors often face is, "What are you going to do with an English major?" To help answer that question, we urge you to take advantage of the excellent resources at the Career Center. There are job fairs and resume workshops specifically aimed at humanities majors looking to enter the workforce. In addition, the English Honors Society, Sigma Tau Delta, will be sponsoring a spring 2012 panel discussion on employment options, featuring graduates with English degrees who made successful transitions to "real-world" work. We will keep you posted about that students get maximum possible credits for the classes they take. More than credits, though, students will gain an experience that will expand their intellectual horizons—as well as their professional and personal borders. Study Abroad also fulfills the Experiential Education requirement.

In Spring 2012, you will receive information via Monmouth email about academic advising procedures in advance of Priority Registration for Summer and Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. The English department requires our students to see a faculty advisor each spring before being unblocked to self-register during Priority Registration. You will receive information about Advising Workshops in March and other advising information from Dr. Lisa Vetere, the English Department Advising Coordinator. Please feel free to contact your assigned faculty advisor (listed at the top of your audit) at any time for advice or information about our academic programs.

Good luck and best wishes for a great semester.

Undergraduate Program
Coordinator: Dr. Susan Goulding
goulding@monmouth.edu

I’d like to welcome all students and faculty back for what promises to be a year of innovation in English studies. With our new undergraduate curricula and a minor in Creative Writing, the English Department is offering a wider range of choices than ever before. In the coming months, I will be working with the Department’s curriculum committee to review our course offerings, ensuring that our courses meet the needs of the new curricula.

In addition, I would like to take a moment to encourage all EN majors—in the Literature or Creative Writing concentrations—to pursue a semester of Study Abroad. Transfer equivalencies are in place, and our department works closely with the Study Abroad office to ensure the time and date. For further examples, check out our "Alumni News" section on our department website: http://www.monmouth.edu/academics/english/alumni.asp.

In Spring 2012, you will receive information via Monmouth email about academic advising procedures in advance of Priority Registration for Summer and Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. The English department requires our students to see a faculty advisor each spring before being unblocked to self-register during Priority Registration. You will receive information about Advising Workshops in March and other advising information from Dr. Lisa Vetere, the English Department Advising Coordinator. Please feel free to contact your assigned faculty advisor (listed at the top of your audit) at any time for advice or information about our academic programs.

Good luck and best wishes for a great semester.
The MA program in English continues to grow, with student numbers going up slowly but steadily, a new appointment to the Graduate Faculty, and the addition of new courses to diversify offerings.

As of this fall, the program has 45 full- and part-time students, of whom 23 are concentrating in Creative Writing, four in Rhetoric and Writing, and 21 in Literature. From our beginnings in 2005 with three courses offered each term in a rotation that only allowed for part-time study, we have grown to regularly offer six graduate courses each in the fall and spring semesters, as well as two in the summer, across the different concentrations.

Dr. Heather Brown, newly appointed this year to the Graduate Faculty in English, has recently developed two new courses. “Writing and the World Wide Web” will count as one of four required courses for students in the Rhetoric and Writing concentration and can be used as the non-literature elective for Literature concentration students. The course is “[a] study of theories and concepts of writing and rhetoric in digital media with emphasis on the uses of verbal and visual media in digital spaces, such as web sites, blogs, and wikis.” The course will include theoretical examination of digital rhetoric as well as practical discussion of how students can use Web writing to advance their professional and academic goals. Dr. Brown’s other new course, “Feminist Theory and Criticism,” will be offered in Fall 2012. Dr. Brown writes: “This course examines the theories and strategies developed and used by feminist theorists and literary critics to explore a range of visual

and written texts. Includes focus on gender-related experiences in literature and culture.” This course will contribute to the core for the Rhetoric and Writing concentration and can also be taken by Literature students to satisfy the Language and Theory requirement.

The MA program regularly schedules a reception in the first weeks of the semester to which faculty, current MA students, and undergraduate students interested in graduate study are invited to attend. “Literature Matters,” a symposium first organized by Dr. Lisa Vetere in conjunction with MU alums Toni Magyar and William Wend, continues to run each year and allows faculty and students the opportunity to share on-going creative and scholarly projects.

In Summer 2011, Sara Van Ness defended with distinction her MA thesis, “William S. Burroughs’ Ah Pook Is Where? Authorship, Textuality, and Contingency.” Portions of the thesis will form part of Sara’s introduction to a book about the art of Burroughs’ collaborator, Malcolm McNeill, *The Lost Art of Ah Pook Is Here: Images from the Graphic Novel*, to be published next year. During Sara’s undergraduate study, also at Monmouth University, she wrote an honors thesis that evolved into a book proposal that was eventually published as *Watchmen as Literature: A Critical Study of the Graphic Novel*. Sara’s director for both theses was Dr. Stan Blair, who has also mentored her in developing her work for publication.
Departmental Honors

Do you have a strong interest in literature? Would you like to develop your own research project under the direction of a faculty member? Do you plan to apply to graduate school? Then consider applying for Departmental Honors. English majors in their junior year with a 3.3 overall GPA, a 3.5 GPA in the EN major, and completion of the foreign language requirement are invited to apply. To receive the Department Honors designation on your final transcript, you must take two courses beyond the requirements for the English major: 1) an additional 300+ level EN elective chosen to complement your research interests, and 2) a 1-semester, 3-credit Independent Study in thesis writing under the direction of a full-faculty member. The thesis paper must earn a B or better. If you are writing a separate Honors School thesis, we are happy to work out a proposal that allows you to do both in one project. If you have any questions or wish to pursue Departmental Honors, please email Dr. Starke, the Department Chair, at sstarke@monmouth.edu.

Writing Awards

Consider saving and polishing your best work for our annual student writing awards for Academic Writing (open to best paper written by an EN major for an English course) and Creative Writing (open to any Monmouth student whose project was submitted to Monmouth faculty either for a course, a workshop, or for Monmouth Review). Papers and projects from Spring 2011 on are eligible. The winners will receive a cash prize at the annual Monmouth University Student Awards Ceremony in April. More information about submissions and deadlines will be forthcoming in February 2012.

The Monmouth Review

Advisor: Dr. Michael Waters
mgwaters@monmouth.edu

The Monmouth Review is off to a great start this semester. Not only do we have an issue scheduled to come out after Thanksgiving, but we are lucky to have new members on the editing staff, including freshmen and students in the creative writing program. As our goal this year is to get more Monmouth students involved in the arts and literature, we are planning several events that are open and free to the school. This past Halloween weekend we held an open mic night at the Inkwell, where students read poems and performed standup and original music. Our next event is a free trip to the New York Public Library on December 3 that is open for all Monmouth faculty and students. The Review staff is also very excited to be attending the AWP Conference in Chicago this year, where we will attend workshops and lectures by writers and national literary magazines. The Monmouth Review continues to support young writers and artists on campus. Any students who are interested in joining the editing staff should come to our meetings every Wednesday at 2:15 in Room 303 of the Student Center. We look forward to having another fun and exciting year.

-Laura Fiorelli, President and Editor of the Monmouth Review
As a child, I always dreamt of becoming a lawyer. I did not even know what the job entailed, but after seeing the movie, *Liar-Liar*, I was inspired. The idea of lying for a living sounded fun and exciting because I was able to be something I was not and would not feel guilty about it. For the past five months, I have been one of the two interns at the Office of the General Counsel at Monmouth University. As a result of working for Grey Dimenna and the rest of the Office of the General Counsel, I have learned very valuable life lessons.

I have always prided myself on knowing my limits. When I first started working at the Office of the General Counsel, I did not know what to expect, whether I was going to be doing busy work, such as filing, or writing legal documents. I learned how to expect the unexpected. I started doing paralegal work for the Director of Compliance (Melissa Dale, Esq.), Director of Affirmative Action and Human Relations (Julian Williams, Esq.), Assistant General Counsel (Charlene Diana, Esq. and Rhonda Rehm Esq.), and Vice President and General Counsel (Grey Dimenna, Esq.).

I never realized how much writing goes into writing legal contracts, memorandums, hold-harmless agreements, and addendums. When I first learned how to write like a lawyer, it was actually quite difficult. A typical English major would cringe at how I could not use many punctuation marks and how I had to make each sentence short and to the point. This actually took time and much needed practice. Writing is crucial as a lawyer because they write different contacts, briefs, and agreements that clients should easily understand. To my shock and amazement, a lawyer needs to write any document as if the client had an eighth grade reading level.

Now, after working at the Office of the General Counsel for five months, I have sat in important contractual meetings, met with union representatives, and listened in on phone conferences. Throughout each of these meetings, I have written notes on my legal pad eager to learn the ways of the law. The Office of the General Counsel comes into contact with many different types of law such as contract, labor, employment, immigration, and intellectual property. There is never a dull day in the office. Every field of law that goes through the Office of General Counsel has caught my interest. I never realized how many activities, events, class scheduling, financial aid, and academic decisions, the Office of General Counsel must review before they are agreed upon anything. As an active Monmouth University student, I saw many events and activities that I was involved with approached on a new level in order to make sure it complied with University Policies. I was excited to experience the legal side of Monmouth because it gave me a chance to explore my school behind the scenes.

I learned to appreciate the law in ways I never thought possible. I went into the Office of the General Counsel every day with a smile on my face and excitement to learn something new. There is never a dull moment about studying multiple types of law. I embraced the challenge and faced my assigned tasks head on.

I am truly blessed with meeting some very remarkable people in the Office of the General Counsel. Each and every single one of them has taught me patience, confidence, and to have fun in the working world. I will never forget the conversations that can range from intellectual contracts to last night’s episode of *Sons of Anarchy*. I have not only met mentors in the legal field, but also mentors for the rest of my life. I enjoy gaining knowledge and advice from each of the lawyer’s experiences.
both in law school and legal field. They also brought out the fun side of me in the professional world and I will always be grateful for that opportunity.

I learned so much about myself in the legal world. I learned all of my strengths and corrected all of my weaknesses. As an English major, I always wondered how I can apply my writing skills and ability to formulate a strong argument and put my researching skills to good use. I believe that everyone can find something they are good at with hard work and determination by using the skills they learned throughout their college career. I found mine in the Office of the General Counsel and hope to one-day work with Higher Education.

Please visit the Alumni News section of the English Department web page to see what our alumni are up to
http://www.monmouth.edu/academics/english/alumni.asp

Experiential Education
Coordinator: Dr. Oty Agbajoh-Laoye
olaoye@monmouth.edu

(Dr. Agbajoh-Laoye is on leave for the Fall 2010 semester)

If you are a rising junior or senior, consider how you will fulfill the Experiential Education requirement in the English major. Experiential Education is designed to take place in a real-world setting that allows students to use the academic skills developed in the major in a work or volunteer capacity. English majors may participate in Study Abroad, Service Learning (working with a non-profit organization) or Cooperative Education (working in a business setting). Recent Ex Ed experiences of English majors have included an internship with a book publishing house in New York, a stint at the National Geographic Society, a volunteer position with the Long Branch Public Library, and an assistantship at a television network. English/Education majors fulfill their Ex Ed requirement through student teaching.

In order to make sure your placement is successful, your completed application with supporting paperwork must be submitted by the third week in the semester in which you wish to do Ex Ed. We cannot guarantee that late Ex Ed applications will be processed.

When you apply, please fill out the two-page application (available from Ms. Diana Smedes, the English Department Administrative Assistant). The first page is the application itself; the second page is the list of learning goals and objectives that the Ex Ed position will fulfill. The second page is needed for both Service Learning and Cooperative Education experiences. An acceptable Ex Ed will require you to use the academic skills acquired as an English major. These may include writing, research, and communication.

To find an Ex Ed experience, consult the Monmouth University database of Ex Ed opportunities, or schedule an appointment to speak to Ms. Kathleen Kennedy (Cooperative Education) or Ms. Marilyn Ward (Service Learning). You must provide a letter on letterhead from the organization for which you will be working, outlining your responsibilities, how many hours you will be working, and who will be your supervisor in the Ex Ed position. You must also find a faculty sponsor in the English department who will assess your Ex Ed and communicate with your supervisor at the site of your work. The departmental Career Advising Planner (CAP) can assist you in finding a faculty Ex Ed sponsor.

For a detailed description of Ex Ed application procedures, please check our department website:
www.monmouth.edu/academics/english/ExEdHandoutForENMajors.pdf
Sigma Tau Delta is the International English Honor Society. The name comes from the Greek equivalents of the letters that begin our official motto, "Sincerity, Truth, Design." The Monmouth University chapter, known officially as the Delta Sigma chapter, was founded in 1983 under the direction of Dr. Prescott Evarts. Its main objectives:

- To confer distinction
- To promote interest in literature and the English language
- To foster the discipline of literary studies
- To promote good citizenship
- To exhibit high standards of academic excellence

Through its activities on and off campus, the Delta Sigma chapter of Sigma Tau Delta encourages camaraderie and professional development among its members, as well as service to the University and local communities.

The national organization was founded in 1924 by Dr. Judson Q. Owen. The society was created to "confer distinction upon outstanding students of the English language and literature in undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies."

The official flower of the organization is the red rose. The colors are red and black.

Although membership in Sigma Tau Delta is offered biannually to English majors who have demonstrated superior achievement both in general academics and in literary studies, the society’s activities are open to all University students, faculty, and staff. Interested students should contact a faculty advisor in the English Department.
Sigma Tau Delta
November 2011 Inductees

Sara Jane Berman
Nicole Cokefair
Michael Fee
Cara Heusel
Alexandra McClay
Chelsea Ogilvie
Lauren Schmidt

Regina Betz
Caitlin Courtney
Kevin Flook
Steven Leonardi
Linda Mulhausen
Ashley Regan
Hannah Tichansky

Erin Carroll
Michelle DeCraene
Andrea Frank
Kristen Malm
Michelle Myers
Kaitlyn Roberts
Kristina Yutko
Laura Fiorelli  
Edinburgh, Scotland

Last July, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to take a two-week course on British and Irish modernism at the Scottish Universities International Summer School in Edinburgh, Scotland. When I boarded my flight with my bags full of books, I was both nervous and excited to find out what the next two weeks abroad would be like. I had no idea that my experiences in Edinburgh would be some of the best of my life!

My studies in Edinburgh introduced me to texts and approaches to modernism that I had been previously unacquainted with. While the course covered seminal modernist works like To the Lighthouse and Dubliners, I also read lesser known, but equally important, texts, like The Return of the Soldier. Daily lectures given by visiting professors from various universities in the UK opened my eyes to the extent to which modernist literature and visual art can be interpreted as a response to WWI and the politics of the early twentieth century. One of my favorite memories of the course was visiting the Gabrielle Keiller Library, where we had access to literary magazines from the Vorticist and Futurist movements.

In addition to the academic components of the course, I really enjoyed meeting students of all ages and backgrounds; my discussion group alone was made up of students from Bosnia-Herzegovina, India, China, and Russia. Although I embarrassed myself trying to speak Italian a few times, all of the students truly became fast friends despite our cultural differences. We had a lot of time after classes in the morning to explore the city together. While I had visited Edinburgh before, I found the city even more beautiful and friendly the second time around. I left Scotland knowing much more about modernist literature and with new friends from around the globe.

Michelle Myers  
Sydney, Australia

Try to See the World Beyond Your Front Door

The day I arrived in Sydney, Australia was indubitably the greatest day of my life. My arrival unlocked intellectual doors that I believed would remain locked forever. Monmouth University helped extend my English education across the Pacific. While at Macquarie University in Sydney, I studied Australian literature among other courses such as Australian Sociology, and Aboriginal Studies. However, upon my departure from Sydney, I came back to the States with an entirely different perspective in life. No longer did I feel that I was a small, narrow-minded American content with a humdrum, mediocre life; for my dreams and desires in life changed entirely. I no longer felt that the major I was in at the time was how I planned to spend the rest of my life. I yearned for a career that would understand, question, and analyze the world, I knew that I aspired to be a writer; a profession that I believed could truly influence, aid, and contribute to people’s lives.

While in Sydney, I realized that I was obligated to break free from my comfortable life. I knew no one, knew nothing of the city, and I felt like I was abandoned. Yet this feeling of abandonment compelled me to meet people from all over the world from every ethnic and religious background. I gained a broader more accepting world view and all the while I was living the dream. While in Sydney, I did things I never dreamed I would have done before like, swimming with sharks and skydiving, and although some condone such activities as reckless,
adrenaline-filled stupidity, I finally had a rupture of identity, and realized who and what kind of person I was meant to become. Departing Sydney was one of the more traumatic experiences of my life and I am grateful for the time I spent there and the knowledge I attained. My experience has become the cornerstone and foundation of my education at Monmouth and will continue to influence me on my path of life.

Every day I woke up more confident to navigate the city, more willing to plan weekend trips and more cultured, after experiencing many pieces of breathtaking art. Having class with professors who were experts in their subjects was an experience I’ll never forget. Their accents and inquisitiveness about the U.S. and our weekend trips around Italy only added to the inviting atmosphere of the classroom.

My education at Monmouth helped me in my studies abroad because I wasn’t afraid to ask questions in a foreign classroom, similar to how class is here. The class sizes at Monmouth are conveniently small and allow more opportunity for class discussion, which is how my classes abroad were. Intellectually, my experiences abroad have made me more spontaneous. Instead of panicking when things don’t go as planned, I’ve learned to accept change and be a leader when the time is needed. I would recommend studying abroad to anyone who is interested. Even if you think you can’t, because of financial reasons or class reasons, use your resources at Monmouth because they are always willing to help; if I didn’t follow my own advice I wouldn’t be writing this today.

Melanie Rowbotham
Florence, Italy

When I made the decision to study abroad, I met with my advisors, picked the classes I would take at Lorenzo de Medici, paid my dues, packed my belongings and suddenly I was on the plane to Florence. I found myself surrounded by beautiful architecture, unbelievable tasting food and a language I couldn’t understand. I was thrown into a world unlike my own and for once, I felt like a responsible adult who could take on anything.
English Majors go to Oxford University

What better way to enjoy the end of the long summer vacation than to travel to England and explore Oxford and London, two of the world’s most stimulating and beautiful cities? This is what twenty-two Monmouth University students decided last August as they enlisted in the English Literature Summer ‘E’ course entitled “Literature of the English Civil War” (EN 398). For ten days this adventurous band of sophomores, juniors and seniors resided in the spacious grounds of St. Hugh’s College - one of the forty-four Colleges and Halls which make up Oxford University - absorbing the intellectual atmosphere and cultural diversity of one of the world’s premier academic institutions. The students wholeheartedly acclaimed it to be a genuinely rewarding experience. After some time at M.U. spent studying English Civil War poetry regarding the gradual emergence of full Parliamentary democracy in England during the 1640s, this merry band departed from Newark for the U.K. in order to contextualize what they had learnt in the original locale of these important historical events.

Oxford is a wonderful city to experience in the summer, and as the famous English folk tale Dick Whittington proclaims symbolically, the streets of London are paved with gold. Our students spent time in both cities, exploring world famous landmarks such as Buckingham Palace, Westminster Cathedral (the location of the recent royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton), the home of the British Monarchy’s amazing Crown Jewels at the Tower of London, and the symbol of British politics - the ‘Big Ben’ clock. A more personal appreciation was achieved by a number of private guided tours, including those to the English Parliament, Oxford’s historic Bodleian Library and magnificent Christ’s Church College, and Blenheim Palace – the home of the British wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Yet there was also time to relax, soak up a foreign environment, meet interesting people, and open one’s eyes to the stimulating diversity of a different cuisine and perhaps even a slightly strange language: English-English! One of the favorite activities while in Oxford was to go punting down the river Cherwell – a traditional waterborne pastime enabling students to soak up the beautiful commingling of lush green fields with medieval gothic architecture, akin to floating down the Venetian waterways in a gondola. Opportunities were available for everyone to explore their own interests. Some students travelled to the neighboring country of Wales, others to Oxford’s ‘twin’ and rival University at Cambridge; trips were made to the Roman natural hot springs at the city of Bath; some students chose to relax at the famous beach resort of chic Brighton on the south coast. Ultimately the experience stimulated the intellectual curiosity of a group of young New Jersey students, whilst also providing them with the opportunity to develop their cultural sensibilities in an exciting foreign environment.

A selection of enthusiastic responses from the students who went to Oxford this year is documented on the page opposite. Pending administrative approval, we hope in August 2012 this course will be offered again to give more students the opportunity to experience and learn from a short study abroad trip. It is open to English majors and to students from other majors who gain the Instructor’s approval, and can be taken as a substitute for the General Education courses EN201/202. If you are interested in belligerent poetry, exploring two of the world’s most magnificent cities, or indulging in a foreign culture, then last year’s experience suggests this should be a great way to close out next summer.
Summer Study Abroad

OXFORD & LONDON
August 2012 (Pending Approval)

- EN 398 Literature of the English Civil War
- Explore great cities of London & Oxford!
- 3 credits. No prereqs. Open to all majors.
- Accomodation in Oxford University

“Going punting down the river and relaxing in the boat and laughing with everyone has been one of my favorite activities so far on this trip, and it can only get better with each day.”

(Soraya Quezada, MU Senior, Aug. 2011)

“I did not want to leave by the time it was over. I feel like this trip took me out of my comfort zone and made me much more culturally aware of my surroundings. Ultimately, this trip was a positive experience that will leave me with long lasting memories. I made many new friendships and learnt and experienced a new culture.”

(Kara Post, MU Sophomore, Aug. 2011)

“We took a tour inside and saw so much history about the Kings and Queens who have lived there. It is amazing that they still use the facilities for living. It is crazy to know that Winston Churchill was actually born in that one specific room so many years ago. I am so intrigued by the history of the building.”

(Dana Alexa, MU Senior, Aug. 2011)

“Westminster and the London Eye Ferris wheel were right there. It was such a great opportunity to get some really great photos of the beautiful city including Parliament and Big Ben.”

(Nicole Fera, MU Senior, Aug. 2011)

If you are interested, please contact:
neraves@monmouth.edu
732-571-3623
Interview with Lisa Vetere
...continued from page 3

What are you teaching now?

I’m teaching two Theory classes. What I like about Theory is that it’s so intellectually engaging. For me, it opened up the relationship between literature and larger social and cultural issues. There was a point when I was working on my Ph.D. when I wasn’t sure of the social value of literary studies. I think everyone has moments like that, when you think, ‘what’s the point of studying this novel or poem?’ because it’s not so easy to see how it’s socially relevant. Theory does that. It opens it up into whether it’s feminist or Marxist, psychoanalytical, etc. It connects it to these larger realms. That’s what Theory did for me, and that’s why I love it.

What do you like about teaching?

I taught at a lot of places. I’ve been teaching for 20 years. I love teaching – not the grading (laughs). I like the conversations in class, the dialogue with students, when the light clicks on in their heads.

What do you want students to get from the study of literature?

As I said before, that attentiveness to language, being more conscious of what is actually on the page. And to be critical thinkers about what they are reading and thinking about, and hearing.

How do you find your students’ writing skills?

Uneven, though I’ve been reading papers from my undergraduate Theory class, and some of them are really impressive. When they’ve nailed down the concepts, it’s really a pleasure; but it’s difficult for them to incorporate what the critics are saying into their papers and enter into conversations with the critics.

You have articles published and a work in progress about Salem Witchcraft – what drew you to that topic?

Maybe growing up Catholic, I don’t know (laughs!) I got into witchcraft when I read Ann Rice. I love Ann Rice, although she’s uneven. I suppose the Academy might not approve, but I just loved The Witching Hour; I thought it was smart, and engaging. It traces a family of witches in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, a legacy of this family that gets passed on. That was one way of linking witchcraft with history. It’s a thousand pages, but it’s really good!

What are you working on now?

All the work I’ve been doing has been spinning off of the dissertation. I have an article that came out just last month, on Charles Upham, a nineteenth century historian of the Salem witch trials. It’s called “Imagining the Mastery of Cotton Mather: antebellum Manhood in Charles Upham’s Lectures on Witchcraft.” It came out in Clio: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History. Another one I’ve been working on that has been accepted is about historical romances of the Salem Witch Trials, titled “The Malefic Unconscious: Gender, Genre, and History in Early Antebellum Witchcraft Fictions.” It’s coming out in the Journal of Narrative Theory next summer. Malefic is a type of witchcraft that actually does harm, as opposed to diabolic witchcraft, which is an alliance with the devil.

You seem to have a historical focus. When did you first become interested in history as it relates to literature – did one interest come first?

History wasn’t really an interest, but it’s funny, now that I think about it, the “trashy” romances I read when I was younger were historical. (laughs) But it’s the way – and I’m indebted to theorist Hayden White for this – the way that you can look at History as narrative. So I’m really interested in the issue of narrative: narrative in witchcraft, in how witchcraft narratives perform, and what kind of cultural work they perform in terms of gender, class, the relationship between popular culture and elite culture – it’s really interesting – it has been interesting enough to carry me for over ten years. I’m not done yet!
What was your dissertation about?

Witchcraft! What I did was an analysis of the historiography and the historical romances, the way that they represented and talked about the Salem Witch Trials in the seventeenth century. My area is 19th century American, and I got interested in how people were talking about witchcraft in that time period. I loved the Transcendentalists when I was in college – Emerson and Thoreau, Whitman, Dickinson, Hawthorne, Melville. I wondered if anyone was writing about witchcraft in that century. I realized there was not much written about that for the time period, and the two things just came together.

What are you reading now, for work and/or pleasure?

I’m reading the Harry Potter books, finally. My nine-year old niece inspired me. We started this summer and I’m trying to keep up with her, but she’s way ahead of me. I’ll catch up with her on the break. They’re good stories, with some interesting issues. It’s like the continuing popularity of witchcraft narrative; just a different type, this time with sorcery. Witchcraft has never been explained, and it’s the mystery of it that keeps people interested in the topic. And maybe a little fear. (laughs) That’s why I’m always careful to say I study witchcraft narrative, not witchcraft.

What are your non-academic pursuits?

Running; meditation. Running in a big way. I’ve run one marathon and three half-marathons. I love it. I’m not the most coordinated person, so it was a sport I could do. It allows time for reflection. I never run with music, which surprises some people.

Talk about your Service profile?

I guess I did follow my interests – Gender Studies, the Writing committee. I follow my passion.

What do you like about teaching at Monmouth?

I love teaching at Monmouth because I’m a first generation college student, like a lot of the students here, and it reminds me of the school I went to, Siena. I don’t think I would be here now if I hadn’t gone to a small school like that – I’m fairly sure, because that was where I got to have those interactions with professors that transformed my life. So, I like it here!
First-Year Composition Committee Announces Essay Contest Winners

The First-Year Composition Committee of the English Department congratulates Carolyn Marrone and Adam Sharkey, this year’s winners of the First-Year Composition Academic Essay Contest. Carolyn’s EN 101 essay, “Assessing the Destructive Realities of the ‘Inspirational’ American Dream,” was nominated by Prof. Dee Bulvanoski. Adam’s EN 102 essay, “Teaching the World to Fish,” was nominated by Prof. Danielle Sansevere. The First-Year Composition Committee sponsors this annual essay contest to recognize outstanding essays written for College Composition I and College Composition II. The students’ essays will also be published on the Writing Center Facebook page and the students will each receive a $100 gift certificate to the Monmouth University Bookstore, courtesy of First Year Advising.

“Assessing the Destructive Realities of the “Inspirational” American Dream”
by Carolyn Marrone

Nicole and Robert Feeney have been married for eight years and have two beautiful children, Brayden and Kristi, ages seven and five, respectively. Robert is an auto mechanic at Bernie’s Auto Repair, making little above minimum wage; Nicole, without a college degree, has not been able to hold a steady job since graduating from high school. The couple struggles to provide their children with everything they need to live happily. Unlike wealthy families, the Feeneys do not have much flexibility when it comes to spending money. Most, if not all, of Robert’s paycheck goes to paying their rent and other living expenses, leaving little extra money for luxury items. Since they cannot afford to send their children to a private school like most of the white families in their neighborhood do, their children must attend public school with mostly poor minority children. Both Robert and Nicole came from families who struggled to make ends meet. Perhaps this is why, as adults, they are having similar problems with their own families. Despite the low economic status that seems to run in both families, Robert and Nicole hope to someday achieve the “American dream” and become successful; however, the likelihood of their achieving their goal seems minimal.

By taking a look at American families today, one can observe that those who have excess amounts of money are able to live more comfortably than those who, like the Feeneys, make just enough money to support their families. Gregory Mantsios, author of “Class in America—2006,” states that “[p]eople do not choose to be poor or working class; instead, they are limited and confined by the opportunities afforded or denied them by a social economic system” (316). The Feeneys seem to be limited by the amount of money that they have to work with. This lack of money forces them to limit their life experiences because they must take care of their main priorities first: food, water, and shelter. The “American dream” advertises that through hard work, perseverance, and dedication, anyone is incapable of achieving happiness, wealth, success and status. People who struggle to make ends meet may never be able to fully improve their current economic status unless their emphasis on material items as well as the economy drastically changes; however, they may still feel that through hard work and fortitude, they will one day live comfortably, just like the wealthy people do. Although meant to inspire people to reach their full potential and achieve success, the “American dream” may actually be destructive by instilling false hope in those who feel capable of achieving success. This sense of false hope may lead the poor to make unwise choices to achieve immediate gratification. With this attitude, the poor will initiate their own demise.

Today “the gap between the rich and poor […] is larger than it has ever been” (Mantsios 309); the poor feel as if they are becoming increasingly inferior to the wealthy. This sense of inferiority should be enough to make the poor realize that their opportunities for success are substantially lower than the opportunities of the wealthy. However, instead of giving up,
many poor people turn to the “American dream” for guidance. According to Harlton L. Dalton, author of “Horatio Alger,” “in order to succeed in life, especially when the odds are stacked against you, it is often necessary to first convince yourself that there is a reason to get up in the morning” (267). The poor may view the guidance of the “American dream” as their “reason to get up in the morning”; however, the guidance they are receiving may be better defined as false hope. Mantsios adds that “[f]ewer than one in five men surpass the economic status of their fathers” (316). It seems like many of the poor people are selectively blind to this startling reality; perhaps the most unfortunate truth is that despite all the hard work and effort they put forth, many of these people will remain poor forever.

The media’s portrayal of the poor seems to add to the poor’s sense of inferiority. The poor are taught that being rich and successful is synonymous with being happy; this lesson leads to their emphasis on material wealth rather than on finding wealth through opportunities. According to Diana Kendall, author of “Framing Class, Vicarious Living, and Conspicuous Consumption,” the media seems to place a high emphasis on the importance of being rich and successful, making those who are of a lower economic status feel left behind (331). Some shows like American Idol turn ordinary people into famous musicians and promote the ideal that anyone can be famous (332); this is obviously an untrue concept. People in the lower class who watch television shows like Keeping Up with the Kardashians, The Real Housewives of New Jersey, or any other show that presents people of wealth may feel that if they work hard and earn a lot of money, they, too, be happy and successful like the families on TV. This idea leads to what Kendall calls “vicarious living” (332), which can be a dangerous habit for those who are struggling to make ends meet.

Kendall suggests that by “watching how other individuals live rather than experiencing life for [themselves]” the poor have adopted vicarious living as a coping skill to support their struggle to achieve the “American dream” (332). Another example of “vicarious living” is illustrated by celebrity endorsement of name-brand products. These advertisements attract poor consumers with false promises of success and wealth (332). Because the biggest group of name-brand consumers is those who buy “beyond their means and cannot properly use [the items] anyway” (339), these people often end up worse off than they started. Perhaps the poor see their purchases at the first steps towards achieving the “American dream”; however, it is well-known that purchasing highly priced material items is not a very sensible idea when one can barely afford to take care of your family as it is. Toni Cade Bambara’s example in her story “The Lesson” echoes this concept. Miss Moore says “[i]magine for a minute what kind of society it is in which some people can spend on a toy what it would cost to feed a family of six or seven” (270). This point is particularly pertinent as the holiday season is rapidly approaching. People of lower economic status may want to provide their children with all of the presents that they have asked for. Although this may this may be unrealistic, during this time of year, many parents seem to put their economic problems aside and purchase these highly priced items anyway. This habit of purchasing items to achieve immediate gratification may compromise any hope one has of achieving the “American dream.” The problem seems to lie in the gullibility of the poor. Whenever they start making progress towards success, something often seems to distract them with false promises of happiness. Whether it is the enticement of the media, their poor money management skills, or their pure ignorance of possibilities, many poor people lack the strength to “lift themselves up by their own bootstraps” (Dalton 227) and achieve success because they choose immediate gratification by investing in material items rather than in opportunities.

Although in many respects the “American dream” has worked against the poor by providing them with false hope, there are a few “rags to riches” stories that oppose this theory. It is important to remember, however, that successful people like Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama, and Bill Gates are the exception, not
the rule. According to Mantsios, “the difference in class [between the rich and the poor] determines where they live, who their friends are, how well they are educated, what they do for a living, and what they come to expect from life” (312). Perhaps the most important component of success is “what [one] come[s] to expect from life” (321). The reason Oprah, Obama, and Gates were so successful is that they had a vision of where they wanted to be, and they did not limit their definition of success to material wealth. They also understood the importance of investing in opportunities to further themselves in the world rather than in just appearing materially successful from the outside.

Unfortunately, the poor seem to have limited opportunities to plan their vision of life because they often have other priorities: being able to put food on the table, clothes on their backs, and a roof over their heads. By having to fulfill these responsibilities, attaining success becomes much more difficult for the poor. Additionally, when the opportunity arises, many poor people spend their time and money on quick-fixes that make them happy at the moment, rather than think about their long-term goals. The “American dream” seems to be destructive to the poor because its sense of false hope often leads to their making unwise choices that derail any hopes of success they may have harbored. Although the poor cannot fully be blamed for their hasty choices, these poor choices, motivated by immediate gratification, may in fact be the main reasons so few poor people ever fulfill the “American dream.”

Essentially, the backbone of Singer’s guilt trip is that we, as a consequence of not changing a reality which he deems we have the power to change, are guilty of its perpetuation. He does this via hypothetical scenario: if a speeding and unmanned train is headed towards a child that is powerless to get off of the tracks, and Bob is standing next to the switch to redirect the train, the redirection of which would cause the train to hit his uninsured exotic sports car, which he has for some reason parked on the tracks, should Bob redirect the train (Singer 310)? Singer argues that we, as a wealthy nation, are in a position where we can pull that wealth have been all but absent from the tongues of both the enlightened and the ignorant. In the past, giving to charity was not as feasible. However, in an age of instant money transference and apparent excess, donating has become more possible than ever before. According to some, the people of the United States and other first-world nations are not taking advantage of these opportunities to spread their wealth. As the people of the impoverished nations of the world struggle to survive on a daily basis, many feel that it is not fair for those of the first world to live in such luxury, suggesting repeated multinational largesse as the only means of bettering the overall global situation. However, while the movement of these funds may serve to provide short-term improvements, a tax write-off, and a warm and fuzzy feeling inside, charity can often be counterproductive in that it makes less apparent the necessity for a nation to develop its own institutions of welfare, and can serve to discourage the creation thereof.

A very vocal minority has been quick to chas- tise the financially stable for not leveling the playing field and donating to charity. As a member of this minority, Peter Singer has gone so far as to claim that the average American family should be donating $20,000.00 to charity per year in lieu of spending money on luxuries (Singer 313). Many other figures for charitable donation are tossed around throughout the essay “The Singer Solution to World Poverty,” which is anything but a solution.

Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.” While often said, the merits of this phrase are rarely examined. The ability to fish, or provide for oneself, is a valuable asset that can create wealth and prosperity. For centuries, conflicts between the rich and poor and arguments about fair and just distribution of

“Teaching the World to Fish”
by Adam Sharkey
switch but instead we choose to protect our wealth (Singer 310). Although there is some merit to the statement, there are many reasons why it is just not that simple.

First, we need to examine why the world is the way it is in terms of rich and poor. The world is colloquially divided into four “worlds” that represent different stages of industrialization: the first world, the second world, the third world, and the fourth world. A first-world country has both natural resources and an economy to support them. A second-world country has one but not the other. A third-world country may have resources but is developing its ability to access those resources and the economy with which to support them. And finally, a fourth-world country essentially has nothing—fortunately, there are very few of these.

The first world consists almost exclusively of European nations and some of their imperial extensions, most notably Australia, Canada, and the United States. The reason for this is simple: with the exception of the First and Second World Wars, none of these countries have really seen significant and prolonged war within their borders, unlike the rest of the world. War causes destruction of infrastructure and slows down the economy by discouraging shopping and commerce. There is also a psychological element of pessimism that comes from living in a war-torn nation. One example, albeit untimely, of a nation that rapidly joined the first world is Japan. In less than a century, Japan went from having a sword-wielding military and an agrarian economy to having the third-largest financial and manufacturing economy in the world, and its international presence is unprecedented. Other examples of rapidly developing nations that have embraced commerce and the international community are China, the United Arab Emirates, and India. In this economic and infrastructural development, tremendous good is being done for the people of these nations.

This good, however, is not a direct consequence of charity. To use India as an example, it took a great deal of national focus after gaining its independence following World War II, combined with the Pakistani identity crisis that formed Bangladesh and full-scale economic reforms in 1991 to create the India that we see today. It is amazing what a country can achieve under good government with a national sense of unity combined with political stability. Another example of a government creating the type of stability necessary for prosperity can be seen in Costa Rica, which eliminated the ground forces of its military in 1949 to avoid the coups d’etat that were so common in Latin America at the time. This enabled the country to focus on creating social institutions of health and education that have made it one of the most peaceful, prosperous, and green nations on earth—take that, Canada.

It is necessary to show that there are logical steps to creating a nation that can sustain itself, which is ultimately superior to a nation that depends on external sources of generosity and charity, and much care must be taken in laying the groundwork for describing exactly why we have hunger and poverty in the nations to be discussed. It is not as simple as donating money, and it never will be. Although resources and money are an important part of developing the third world, throwing money at the wall and plugging one’s ears is not going to accomplish anything.

One of the problems in the third world is a lack of functioning transportation infrastructure. People do not often think about the logistics of how the commercial networks of this country operate, such as those of supermarkets. Trucks cannot teleport to their respective destinations and deliver food—whoever invents that machine will be hailed as a savior by environmentalists and truckers alike—and as such they must drive on the usually intelligent-ly designed highways of the United States. Nations that do not have these sophisticated highway systems, or any at all, and those that have either nomadic or far-flung populations cannot facilitate this type of transportation of food and other goods. This is one of the many reasons why the people of third-world nations are victims of circumstance that can only be helped by the kind of long-term development that comes from unity and stability.
As far as the fortune of certain developed countries juxtaposed to the misfortune of others, the argument of Singer is that we have a responsibility to drag these nations up rather than create an environment in which they can pull themselves up. However, it does them no good to cover the rope in epoxy to make sure they do not fall deeper. Rather, we should allow them to create a government under which they can fill the ditch and never have to fall back in again. Jan Narveson, who in her scholarly article “Is World Poverty a Moral Problem for the Wealthy?” explores the idea that we owe our prosperity to nations less prosperous, believes that any concept of justice in arguing for wealth equality is flawed since “by and large, the world’s poor are not poor because we have made them so” (Narveson 398). This is indeed true, because, although contrary to the beliefs of many, we did not create our wealth necessarily at the expense of other nations.

There are some that believe that this is not the case, and that our wealth does come from robbery and avarice. For instance, the island nation of Nauru – formerly an English colony, then a sort of pseudo-British trusteeship, and eventually an independent island nation – is an eight-square-mile island that had an abundance of phosphates. However, in the 1980s, the supply ran out, and the island had few if any other institutions of production. This ruined the island’s financial position. This pillaging of resources represents a microcosm of what many say is the cause of global poverty. However, in the Nauru example, it should be noted that the phosphates are worth nothing on an island without chemists. The island was no better off before the mining than it was after its resources depleted. In this spirit, the argument is made that no nation after its resources are depleted is any worse off than before the resources were first tapped, and, thus, there is no net effect, even in the worst case scenario.

Many reasons for poverty in Africa come from a lack of unity in third-world African nations wherein many people still identify themselves as tribesmen rather than countrymen. This creates issues of loyalty and segmented populations, and Narveson is “admittedly tempted to ascribe the wholesale vice to the many human groups who devote most of their efforts to warring against their fellows” (Narveson 401). To use Somalia as an example – which may as well be called “Land of the Pirates” – the country is largely in a state of turmoil because it lacks a central government and the tribes are constantly warring with each other. The same is true in Rwanda, both Congos, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and many other nations of Africa. It is especially hard to stop poverty and hunger in a nation with borders analogous to a neon light around a tree full of crushed bee hives where every bee thinks some other hive did it.

The lack of justice in the developing world is often caused by the governments that are created to try and solve them. Many of these countries have “genuine levels of injustice, namely the impositions of kleptocratic taxes and other charges levied on parties to exchange by their typically dictatorial governments” (Narveson 402). Through organizations like the United Nations, the international community can use its resources to develop these countries economically by pressuring them into freer, less protectionist economic systems. A perfect example of this is China. Even though China is technically a communist country, the fact that the global economy has embraced China has created a very cognitively dissonant China that is becoming more capitalistic by the day. As such, the situation has improved enormously in Eastern China – there are still some problems in the West, with situations like Tibet, the nebulous Northern arm of India, and other local issues of assimilation into the Chinese culture – and China has gone from an enormous nation with enormous problems with poverty to having an esteemed standing as the second-largest global economy.

Singer is quick to criticize people who buy “priceless vintage cars” saying that it is a waste to spend so much money on transportation when the difference in the prices between that and a modest sedan could save the lives
of hundreds of children (Singer 311). On the subject of cars, however, there are hundreds of thousands of jobs created by the automobile industry, and the value of this industry comes from the variety. If every single person in the world drove a Hyundai Sonata, it would not be a very valuable car and there would not be as much specialization devoted to the manufacturing thereof. Therefore, that which he deems waste and excess in the automotive industry, and, indirectly, many other industries, actually creates an environment within which more people can be employed, and, thus, more good can be done in terms of creating sustainable and lucrative jobs.

In the same breath, he calls out Americans who dine out, saying that the average American couple could save the $200 necessary to send overseas to support the life of an impoverished child by foregoing romantic dinners (Singer 311). However, the United States has a primarily service-based economy. There are a lot of people that support their own families working in restaurants, and the restaurants would be less profitable if people did not go out to eat. While Singer would say that this logic is overprotective of our wealth, the people of this country are no more and no less entitled to a job than those of other nations in the grand scheme of humanity, so for him to begrudge us of our abundance of restaurants is both myopic and immature.

The overall problem with charity is summed up by Narveson, who concludes that “wealth cannot be fundamentally promoted by charity; production is basic, and showering people with unearned ‘benefits’ is necessarily a sideshow... the multinational corporation is by far a greater friend of the world’s poor than all of the international agencies’ elaborate sets of restrictions, and infinitely more so than the sort of programs that are inspired by ideological calls for ‘social justice’” (Narveson 407). The expansion of companies into other nations is a proven way to create jobs, and American and European companies typically have social and international pressure to pay higher wages than what is typical locally. The ultimate way to assure the people of the world a decent quality of life is to create institutional and political machinery that works in the best interests of the people living under its dominion (Narveson 408). This, however, cannot be brought to fruition without the consent of the people.

A perfect example of a region rejecting its traditionally tyrannical governments is the Middle East. With rioters in Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, Oman, Syria, and Saudi Arabia demonstrating against governments that have been in place for decades, we see a people that have been told for years by the West that they should embrace democracy that are finally developing the social momentum with which to facilitate its implementation. It is difficult for any foreign power to create a government to which any native population would show allegiance, which is why it is so beautiful that these Arab nations have not only demonstrated against their governments, but also that many already have councils in mind to run them until legitimate elections can be held. Once legitimate and supported institutions are in charge, businesses will develop domestically and foster international partnerships that will conjoin them to a full international community, rather than having them maintain a role as the world’s oil factory.

In conclusion, charity will always have its merits and a place in our world, because for as long as we have hearts there will be heartstrings at which to pluck. Charities that raise money for causes like disease awareness and research are great ways to supplement and even surpass the funds from grants. Also, organizations like the American Red Cross have done a tremendous job of raising money during disasters like the earthquake in Haiti and the recent and ongoing tragedy in Japan. There will always be good and decency coming from charities that act reasonably and, well, charitably. However, relying on institutions of charity to institute social change would create a stagnant world in which the poor remain poor and the rich serve no purpose but to patronize and subsidize poverty.