

# Humanities Research Centre

## Annual Report

2007/2008



## **Conferences, Lectures and Seminars**

In the course of the academic year, the Centre organised and supported a variety of conferences and events:

### **Constructing Elizabeth Isham**

7th - 8th September 2007

### **Engendering Politics**

Friday 12th October 2007

### **The Women and Community Seminar Series**

Wednesday 17th October 2007

### **Poets Reading Philosophy/Philosophers Reading Poetry**

26th - 28th October 2007

### **Creative Evolution, one hundred years on**

8th - 9th November 2007

### **Beckett and Visual Culture**

Saturday 17th November 2007

### **Uncomfortable Truths: Remembering Slavery**

Thursday 6th December 2007

### **Presentation of the books** "Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa. III. Produzione e tecniche", eds.

Philippe Braunstein and Luca Molà; "Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa. IV. Commercio e cultura mercantile", eds. Franco Franceschi, Richard A. Goldthwaite and Reinhold C. Mueller  
Tuesday 4th December 2007 - University of Warwick in Venice, Palazzo Pesaro Papafava,  
Venice

### **Chillies, Chocolate and Tomatoes: Global Cultures of Food After Columbus**

Thursday 10th January 2008

University of Warwick in Venice, Palazzo Pesaro Papafava, Venice

### **Sites of Change in Reformation England**

Saturday 23rd February 2008

### **Discourses of War in the Roman World from Julius Caesar to Heraclius**

Saturday 8th March 2008

### **Waged Domestic Work and the Making of the Modern World**

9th - 11th May 2008

### **Fashioning Gender: Contexts and Approaches**

Saturday 10th May 2008

### **In the Shadow of Empire - The Post-Imperial Imaginaries of London and Paris**

Saturday 17th May 2008

### **Warwick Network for Parish Research**

Saturday 17th May 2008

**Jacques Rancière**

Tuesday 20th May 2008

**Truth and Falsity: An International Conference on Hegel's Logical and Phenomenological Thought**

29th - 30th May 2008

**Beginnings and Endings in Film, Films, and Film Studies**

Friday 13th June 2008

**Indo-Caribbean Literature and Culture**

26th - 27th June 2008

**Religion and Violence in Early Modern France: the work of Natalie Zemon Davis**

Saturday 28th June 2008

The 16<sup>th</sup> **Donald Charlton Lecture** was given by **Professor Anil Bhatti**, Head of the Centre of German Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and President of the Goethe Society of India. Professor Bhatti has researched and lectured widely in comparative cultural studies, with a key focus on relations between Europe – especially Germany, Austria and Switzerland - and India/Asia. His lecture 'Homogeneity, Heterogeneity, Pluriculturalism; dealing with Diversities in Cultural Studies', touched on questions of migration, exile, multilingualism and syncretism, and on their methodological implications for cultural studies as a transnational interdisciplinary field. In a subsequent seminar for the HRC-funded Warwick Workshop in Interdisciplinary German Studies, Professor Bhatti discussed postcolonial perspectives in German literary studies from Goethe, through twentieth-century exile literature, to contemporary diasporic cultural production. The university is currently fostering further links with Professor Bhatti and his university, JNU.

**HRC Visiting Fellow, Professor Lynn Spigel, Northwestern University, Chicago**

In late May, the HRC and the Department of Film and Television Studies were delighted to host the visit of Professor Lynn Spigel from Northwestern University, Chicago. The department has longstanding links with Northwestern and with Professor Spigel in particular, a leading international television historian. Her work has ranged from a pioneering analysis of the discursive construction of television on its introduction to American domestic space in the 1940s and 1950s in *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (1992), to questions around the television archive and the future of television as a medium in her book, edited with jan Olszen, *Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition* (2005). In *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs* (2001), she also explored the links between television and broader visual cultures, an area in which she has continued to work, her most recent interest being in the relationship between art, the avant-gardes and television.

During her visit to Warwick, she gave two papers, the first of which was the HRC Lecture on 'Warhol TV', in which she examined Andy Warhol's little discussed work for American television, as well as the broader use of contemporary design work in American television in the 1960s and 1970s. The second paper was delivered as part of a symposium hosted by the

Midlands Television Research Group, an inter-Midlands universities group whose home is the Department of Film and Television Studies at Warwick. 'Television, the Archive and the Document' aimed to explore pressing issues in contemporary Television Studies, and brought together key scholars in the field to present and discuss papers on television history. Professor Spigel's paper 'Transfer and Transference', on archiving and television generation, drew on her range of interests, from the history and future of television to its relationship to modernist design and architecture. In addition to presenting her research, Professor Spigel also held office hours and a number of graduate students in the department benefited from discussion with her about their own research. The week was lively, productive and enjoyable, and the department anticipates that the link between the universities will continue to strengthen and develop in the future.

### **The Interdisciplinary Research Seminar**

#### **Censorship**

The seminar series on "Censorship" was convened by Maureen Freely (English). It sought to bring together people in the university working around the issues of censorship, security, and ruptured cultural memory, and to bring these scholars into contact with free expression campaigners within the UK. To this end, speakers in the series included the editor of *Index*, Jo Glanville, and the director of English PEN, Jonathan Heawood. There are plans to develop an interdisciplinary seminar series in 2008-2009 on censorship from within the Warwick Writers' Programme, and to organize a conference on the international free expression movement, with a particular focus on Turkey.

#### **Newsletter**

The 5<sup>th</sup> issue of the HRC Newsletter was published. The Newsletter showcases research being carried out by the arts and humanities community at Warwick as well as advertising forthcoming HRC events. It is mailed out to the arts and humanities departments of every major UK HEI as well as other arts organisations and many overseas institutions.

#### **Doctoral Fellowships**

This year the Centre was able to sponsor four (internal) Doctoral Fellowships. The Fellows contribute to the life of the HRC by organising a one-day postgraduate interdisciplinary conference and are given financial support for their PHD dissertation research. The fellowships were awarded to:

Jonathan Willis/Laura Sangha (History)

*Sites of Change in Reformation England*

Conor Whately (Classics and Ancient History)

*Discourses of War in the Roman World from Julius Caesar to Heraclius*

Susan Aspinall (History)

*Fashioning Gender: Approaches to the study of the Gendered Body through Fashion and Dress*

Malini Guha (Film and Television Studies)

*In the Shadow of Empire: The Post-Imperial Imaginaries of London and Paris*

### **Future Projects**

#### **Humanities Research Fund**

The Humanities Research Fund is now an established source for faculty members. It will now be administered by Research Support Services, but the HRC director remains on the selection committee. The HRC is pleased to have pioneered and consolidated this important initiative for the faculty.

The HRC is delighted to welcome as next year's 17th **Donald Charlton** lecturer Professor Bruce Altshuler, Director of the Museum Studies Program at New York University and a leading authority on museum and exhibition history. Originally trained as a philosopher, Altshuler has worked in a wide variety of museum contexts and has been director of the Zabriskie Gallery (1985-9) and the Noguchi Museum (1992-8). Before joining the faculty of NYU in 2000, he was on the graduate faculty of Bard Center for Curatorial Studies and Director of Studies at Christie's Education, New York.

Altshuler has researched and lectured widely on museum and exhibition history, producing some of the key textbooks on this subject: *The Avant-garde in Exhibition* (University of California Press, 1998) and *Collecting the New: Museums and Contemporary Art* (Princeton University Press, 2005). The first of his two-volume work of exhibition history documentation, *Salon to Biennial* will be published this autumn by Phaidon Press.

Altshuler's lecture, on 20<sup>th</sup> November, will discuss the importance of the history and analysis of exhibitions for the study of art history. Highlighting the various relationships that can obtain between artworks and the exhibitions in which they are displayed, it will employ examples ranging from shows of early modern art through conceptual art presentation practices of the late 1960's and 70's

The HRC **Visiting Fellow** has yet to be confirmed. We have sent an invitation to the writer Khaled Hosseini and hope that he will accept. The committee has decided that in 2008-2009, the Fellow should be an international writer, artist or film/theatre director.

Forthcoming **Conferences** include the Doctoral Fellowship winners:

Arina Lungu and Charlotte Mathieson (English)  
*Women Writing Space: Representations of Gender and Space in post-1850 British Women's Writing*

John Speller (French)  
*Bourdieu and Literature*

Brodie Waddell/Mark Hailwood (History)  
*Plebeian Cultures in Early Modern England: 35 Years after E. P. Thompson*

Next year's **Interdisciplinary Seminar Series**, organised by Margaret Shewring (Theatre and Performance Studies) will focus on **Text and Visual Image**. There will be a series of seven seminars during the academic year with topics exploring, Eighteenth-Century Painting and the tradition of illustration, Cartoon and Caricature, photography, adaptation in relation to film and philosophy, video and the culture of the moving image, scenography and 'Writing the Picture': creative writing inspired by fine art. Each seminar will be chaired by a member of the Warwick staff and each will include a guest speaker as well as an 'internal' paper. Each occasion will conclude with drinks to allow for informal discussions with the speakers.

### **Concluding remarks**

Once again thanks to the generous support of departments within the faculty, and the wider university, we have been effective in supporting and facilitating research throughout the faculty. An initiative that begins in the HRC can lead both to the development of individual research and to wider interdisciplinary bids to sources within the university (such as the IAS) and to national and international funding bodies.

My thanks to Liese Perrin the Research Development Manager for Arts, who has been involved in all aspects of our work and is a font of good ideas, and to her colleague Katie Klaassen. My greatest thanks goes to our secretary/administrator, Sue Dibben, who keeps everything together and running smoothly, with great charm and efficiency.

John King, HRC Director, 2007-2008

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. R. King".