

I N S I D E

- 2 FROM THE DEAN
- 3 JAZZ IMPROVISATION
- 4 IN PRINT
- 8 FROM THE ARCHIVES
- 10 REVIEW:
 - Cartesian Aesth/Ethics
 - Writers Counsel
- 22 CLASS NOTES

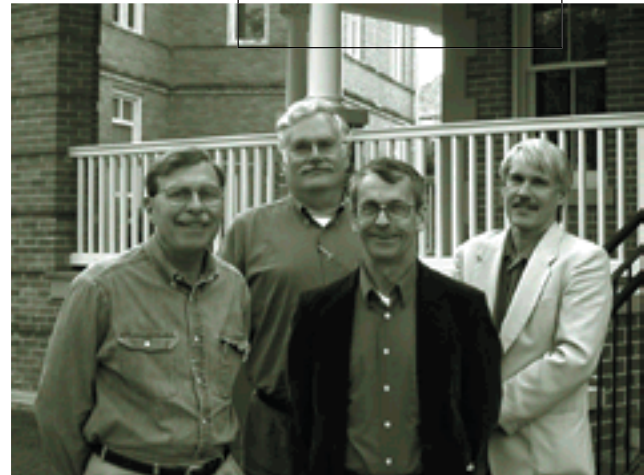
Professorship Promotes
New Ways to Know

TERRORISM. NUMEROLOGY. EPISTEMOLOGY.

Each year classes related to these and other interdisciplinary subjects are taught in Cudd Hall as part of the William L. Duren '26 Professorship Program at Tulane College. The program was established and endowed in 1999 with a generous gift from Professor **William L. Duren '26, M.A. '28, Ph.D., LL.D. honoris causa '59,** professor emeritus of mathematics and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Virginia.

Members of the Faculty of the Liberal Arts and Sciences who are chosen to serve as Duren Professors are provided with additional resources that permit them to adopt distinctive pedagogies and to engage students in nontraditional experiences with liberal arts subjects. Some have used a team-teaching approach, as in the Freshman Honors Colloquium spearheaded by Deans Bernstein and Lowenthal; the course will be offered again next year in collaboration with the Honors Program. **Ilan Roth '09** felt that “the interdisciplinary nature of the course was its biggest advantage. The professors taught five completely separate topics, but as a whole were able to teach reading and writing methods that would allow us to derive more from our college education.”

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
John Doe '98, John Doe '97, Peter Cooley '97, John Doe '97



continued on page four

A Letter from the Dean:

TROUBLE WITH IVAN

Normally, I might use this column to describe the most recent Dean's Colloquium. Unfortunately, Hurricane Ivan threatened to visit the week we scheduled the fall colloquium. Even more unfortunately, our scheduled speaker, William Futrell '57, the former national president of the Sierra Club and the founder of the Environmental Law Institute, had left for the airport by the time it was clear that Tulane was closing. Luckily, we were able to contact him before we evacuated. We sent a car to pick him up at the airport and take him to his hotel, where he spent a pleasant couple of days (as Ivan changed his mind) visiting with friends and family who had decided to ride out the storm. He was a wonderful sport about the whole thing, and we hope to schedule a return visit sometime soon, preferably not during hurricane season.

I wasn't here to help Bill because I was already trying to get out of town. I have to confess that I am the wimp in our family. My wife, Rose, a New Orleans native who survived Betsy and saw Camille and Georges turn east at the last minute, was inclined to stay. We aimed to go to Houston (where some foresighted neighbors had made too many hotel reservations and so gave us one). But as soon as we got to Jefferson Highway, the traffic stopped. From there, we crawled along the Airline Highway to Baton Rouge in five and a half hours—quicker, believe it or not, than those who took the interstate. It took us twelve hours to get to Houston, the shortest time I've heard from evacuees I've spoken to. (Our helpful neighbor, who left later than we did and took US 90 through Cajun country, took eighteen hours, and a student I know who went to Austin took twenty-six hours.)

Once in Houston, we spent a lovely day shopping at the Galleria (where we ran into lots of people from New Orleans) and going out to dinner with an old nursing-school classmate of Rose's. The next day, we returned to New Orleans, taking back roads whenever we hit a bottleneck. Unlike the trip out, it was relatively low-stress, but it still took us nine hours to get home. Rose swears we aren't budging next time, but I look at Orange Beach and Pensacola, and I wonder.

Luckily, we're not expecting hurricanes next week, when Roy Flukinger '69, curator of photography and film at the Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, will be our colloquium guest. We'll report on his visit in the next issue.

Yours,



George L. Bernstein

THE TULANE COLLEGIAN

is published by The Office of Tulane College Student and Alumni Programs,
Steven P. James, Director, Sarah R. Doerries, Assistant Director.

Editor

Sarah R. Doerries

Contributors

Sarah R. Doerries

Steven P. James

Art Director

Adam J. Newman

Žande+Newman Design

Designer

Gaby Tillero

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

George L. Bernstein, Ph.D., University of Chicago
Dean of Tulane College and Professor of History

Tara Allison Hamburg, Newcomb '95, M.B.A., Tulane University
Executive Assistant to the Dean

Anne W. Normann, Newcomb '72, M.A.T., Ph.D., Tulane University
Development Officer

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

Dave D. Davis, M.Phil., Ph.D., Yale University
Associate Dean of the College

Robert A. Carrier, M.B.A., J.D., University of Illinois
Assistant Dean of the College

Trina J. Beck, B.A., Yale University
Senior Academic Adviser

John V. Halbrooks, M.A., Ph.D., Tulane University
Senior Academic Adviser

Emma J. Deem, B.A., Tulane University '99
Academic Adviser

OFFICE OF STUDENT AND ALUMNI PROGRAMS

Steven P. James, M.A., M.Phil., Yale University
Director

Sarah R. Doerries, Newcomb '92, M.F.A., Louisiana State University
Assistant Director

Adam J. Newman, B.Arch., Tulane University '90
Communications Consultant

Tulane College
Administrative Offices
Robert C. Cudd Hall
New Orleans, LA 70118-5698

The Offices of the Dean and Associate Dean may be reached at
504.865.5720 telephone
504.862.8740 telefacsimile
tulane@tulane.edu

The Office of Student and Alumni Programs may be reached at
504.865.5728 telephone
504.862.8757 telefacsimile
tcprog@tulane.edu

PRACTICING THE ART OF IMPROVISATION



ABOVE: Hamid Drake on drums.
Photograph by Stefania Errore.

It's lunchtime on a beautiful fall Friday, and a mixed bag of students, faculty, and staff trickles into Rogers Memorial Chapel. Many carry large black instrument bags over their shoulders: silhouettes of guitars and basses. Drumsticks peak out the back pockets of two students. They've come to see four jazz luminaries—Hamid Drake, Jemeel Moondoc, William Parker, and Steve Swell. The quartet, known as Fire into

Music, will be playing later at the refurbished TwiRoPa Mills at a show cosponsored by the Tulane College Office of Student and Alumni Programs and WTUL. Today they're holding an interactive workshop where students and local musicians can practice their improvisational skills.

It may seem odd that Tulane College and WTUL would need to support jazz concerts in New Orleans. The city is, after all, the birthplace of jazz, and Tulane itself is an important part of jazz history. But as New Orleans has focused on keeping its valuable traditions alive, this striking, revolutionary music has continued to evolve elsewhere. In jazz clubs in cities as disparate as Chicago and Oslo, Norway, pioneering musicians have been pushing the

limits of the genre, and to sometimes astonishing effect. It is this most modern and almost completely improvised form of jazz that has been underrepresented in this greatest of jazz cities.

Each year, Tulane College makes a small pool of funds available to its students and student organizations to design and initiate programs of their own. In recent years, students have used these funds to bring notable speakers to campus, to enhance Homecoming, to set up a rape-response hotline, to start a classics club, and to launch mock-trial and debate teams. In the spring of 2004, some Tulane College students and alumni used some of the funds to launch a concert series that brings important but unsung jazz musicians to Tulane and to New Orleans.

continued on page six

“THEY’VE COME TO SEE FOUR JAZZ LUMINARIES—HAMID DRAKE, JEMEEL MOONDOC, WILLIAM PARKER, AND STEVE SWELL. . . . TODAY THEY’RE HOLDING AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP WHERE STUDENTS AND LOCAL MUSICIANS CAN PRACTICE THEIR IMPROVISATIONAL SKILLS.”

NEW WAYS TO KNOW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

"The Duren Professorship has allowed me to get up close and personal with poets that I would have otherwise only admired from afar."

—POWELL KINNEY (E '06)

The program has attracted diverse literary luminaries, from the narrative traditional poet and former editor of *The Southern Review* Dave Smith (pictured) to the experimental poet Hank Lazer, editor of the U of Alabama Press's Contemporary Poetry Series.



Professor of Philosophy O. Harvey Greene and former dean Tony Cummings and his teaching partner, Linda Carroll, have used the funds to bring in outside speakers. Greene held a series of lectures that were video taped and used in a second offering of the course. Professor Peter Cooley has used Duren funds to host a series of literary readings at the college (see the Review, page 16) similar in their purpose to the Zale and Arons programs at Newcomb, which bring women writers to campus. The program has attracted diverse literary luminaries, from the narrative traditional poet and former editor of *The Southern Review* Dave Smith to the experimental poet Hank Lazer, editor of the U of Alabama Press's Contemporary Poetry Series. Powell Kinney (E '06) commented that "the Duren Professorship has allowed me to get up close and personal with poets that I would have otherwise only admired from afar." And English Professor Dale Edmonds will use funds next year to augment his already popular course on literary New Orleans, in which students participate in the Tennessee Williams Literary Festival.

Following are the catalog descriptions for a few notable Duren courses: **Bruce Brower, *Philosophy***; **Bruce Fleury, *Ecology and Evolutionary Biology***; **George Bernstein, *History***; **David Mullin, *Cell and Molecular Biology***, **Cynthia Lowenthal, *English: "Freshman Honors Colloquium: Ways to Know"***

This five-part honors colloquium introduces students to the liberal arts by asking the question, "What does it mean to know?" A philosopher, a historian, a literary scholar, and two scientists explore the problem of "knowledge" in each of their areas. What questions are asked? What evidence is used? Can ambiguity be resolved? Can certainty be established? How is it possible to "know"?



MY CROW, YOUR CROW

BY PETER COOLEY

Crow light: I call it that at dawn
when one wing, then this other, bursts in flame,
catching the sun's rising. The stupid bird,
dipping his hunk of bread into the water,
doesn't know the Mississippi is my friend:
it disgorges in the gulf the frozen states I came from.
Mississippi! She was a grade school spelling word
in Detroit for me. I spelled well. Now, forty years later
I jog beside her interchange of gold and silver lustres,
always too much in love with any surface of the world.
But the crow: I know it's not the same bird
morning after morning. Still, the dipping of his beak
into this water, softening a breakfast for his gullet
demanding, like mine, daily satisfactions
lets me pretend every day's the same.
On one chunk of that bread some day up ahead
my last day is written, clear as the printing
on my birth certificate on file in Michigan.
Crows dip their bread. Daily, I run for breath,
hoping to extend my distance, even a little.
The Mississippi muddies, clears, according to the factories
up North, the local, snarled measures against its dying.
Slowly, even the river is passing from us while I run.

This poem first appeared in The Nation.

Frank Tipler, physics: "The Omega Point Theory: Integrating Science and Religion"

Why is there something rather than nothing? What is "free will," and is it consistent with physics? Why to the most fundamental laws of physics require the final state of the universe—the Omega Point—to be omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and transcendent to space and time? This course explores through modern cosmology the mind as a computer; the Turing Test of personhood; resurrection versus the immortality of the soul; and heaven, hell, and purgatory as a virtual reality in the computers of the far future.

O. Harvey Greene, philosophy: "Terrorism"

Comprehending and coping with the attacks of September 11, 2001, and other widespread incidents of terrorism is a challenge of paramount importance to us. Answering this challenge requires the resources of a range of disciplines, including philosophy, law, psychology, history, and political science. We will address questions about the nature of the wrong of terrorism and the parameters of ethical response; the relation of terrorism to crime and to war; the motivation of the terrorist; lessons to be learned from the history of terrorism, and the possibility of political solutions to the problem of terrorism in the international community.

Ray Taras, political science: "The Boundaries of Political Belonging"

In what ways have the reputed culture wars—and even the clash of civilizations—that have followed the end of the Cold War been connected to culturally differentiated understandings of political belonging, defined as a sense of membership in a particular political community? This course will examine culture as a factor affecting political development, and the politics of nations as a factor in the making or breaking of an emergent global culture. 🌱

IMPROV

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

Led by **Nick Lynton '04** (then WTUL concert director) and **Garnette Cadogan '00** (then WTUL jazz director), and with the support and direction of **Stephen Miles '04** (then WTUL executive director), WTUL proposed a partnership with the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans, led by **Jay Weigel '81**, to bring one of the world's

most acclaimed free-jazz groups, the Peter Brötzmann Tentet, to New Orleans for a performance. In order to enter into the agreement, though, the students needed a small amount of money over and above their normal concert budget because of the stature of the musicians involved. So, in return for the college's support, WTUL and the CAC arranged for an on-campus appearance by two members of the group.

Ken Vandermark, multireedist and MacArthur "Genius" Grant winner, and acclaimed drummer Paul Nielson Love came to the campus's Rogers Memorial Chapel to discuss their work and the state of experimental jazz in general. They backed up their words with music, each performing improvised pieces that illustrated a line of thought. The event was moderated by the Hogan Jazz Archive curator, Bruce Rayburn, who quizzed the two about their musical backgrounds and about their approach to improvised music. That night, the group performed at the CAC to a packed house that included many Tulane students, faculty, staff.

That first program was so successful that students have proposed similar ventures for this school year, including the workshop with Fire into Music. Steve Swell, a career music educator,

was particularly instructive as he led the participating students and the audience through various approaches to improvising music collectively. Again, the group played to an enthusiastic crowd at that night's concert.

The students organizing these programs have themselves become improvisers of a sort. For example, in an effort to make ends meet, they usually arrange for the musicians to stay in on-campus housing. "It's kind of crazy to see people you think of as the greatest living jazz musicians walking around Monroe Hall in their slippers," said Lynton.

Building on this success, plans are in the works for a campus appearance by saxophonist Kidd Jordan, New Orleans's premier free-jazz artist, along with long-time collaborator Alvin Fielder, a percussionist and one of the original members of Chicago's storied Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians.

It's fitting that funds intended for improvised programming would support programs that feature musical improvisation. Allowing students to design and implement programs is an important way to encourage creativity on campus. In the case of these programs, that has proven to be quite literally true. 🌱



As many of you know, Tulane kicked off its \$700 million capital campaign, “Promise and Distinction,” on March 17 and 18. One of the principal aims of the campaign is to push the endowment, currently at around \$760 million, over \$1 billion. Tulane College’s campaign goal is just under \$20 million, nearly all of which is for endowment.

One of the principal focuses of our campaign is an endowment for student and alumni programs. We will be highlighting all our campaign goals in more detail in the next issue of the Collegian and Review, but many alumni have been making endowment gifts since I became dean, during the “quiet phase” of the campaign. I wanted to use this space to give you some examples of what has been happening. Michael Corasaniti ’87, Alan Lawrence ’87, and John Argenti ’89—fraternity brothers at Tulane who all now live in New York—and Pablo Mateu ’81 of Geneva, Switzerland, all have created endowments that promote international experiences for students, broadly defined. There is no need, however, to define a specific purpose in this way when creating an endowment. Kent Smith ’73 of Houston is setting up a fund whose income can be used at the dean’s discretion, while Andrew



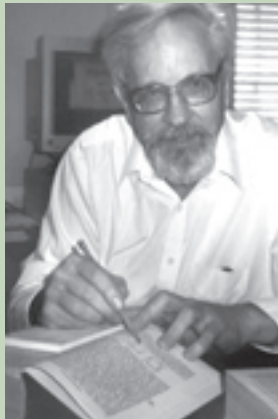
IN PRINT . . .



Steven E. Weil '80 started collecting vintage western wear when he decided to hang some classic shirts made by his family’s company, Rockmount Ranch Wear, in the lobby of its Denver headquarters. Soon he had an improvised museum, and collecting western shirts of all brands became an obsession. His new book, *Western Shirts: A Classic American Fashion* (Gibbs Smith 2004), showcases his dazzling collection while providing an entertaining history of American western wear. Weil and his coauthor, G. Daniel DeWeese, trace not only the evolution of fashion trends—prints or solids, stylized or simple yokes, pearl or enamel buttons—but also the evolution of the business of making and selling western clothing, which has often had to chase a fickle market. Finally, though, as Weil concludes, “there is a deeply rooted appreciation of the western shirt as part of true Americana. . . . These shirts remain on the street, vibrant and popular worldwide.”

You can order the book, and western clothing and accessories, from Rockmount Ranch Wear at www.rockmount.com, by mail at 1626 Wazee St., Denver, CO, 80202, or by phone at 1-800-7-ROCKMO. 🌱

FROM THE ARCHIVES: PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR CELEBRATES FIFTIETH REUNION



DONALD LEE '55, G '58, PH.D.

Associate Professor of Philosophy Donald Lee '55, G '58, Ph.D., is celebrating his fiftieth A&S/Tulane College reunion this year. Professor Lee, who earned his B.A. and M.A. at Tulane and his Ph.D. at Yale, has been teaching at Tulane since 1964, when he joined the A&S Department of Philosophy. He had been teaching at Washington University in St. Louis, but Tulane made him a better offer, and he missed his friends in New Orleans. Professor Lee is an expert in symbolic logic, the philosophy of science, and pragmatism. His undergraduate experience at Tulane led him to his career as a professor. "My major in mathematics made me interested in symbolic logic, which I took as an undergraduate and which I now teach. Adding to the influence on my future career was a course in anthropology and two courses in social and cultural philosophy, and my exposure to science courses in chemistry and physics."

Kyle Wilson '04, L '06, took symbolic logic and advanced symbolic logic with Professor Lee, who, he said, "is one of the most understanding and giving professors I've ever had. He was always willing to speak with me regarding matters in class or out of class, always giving of his time. He's the kind of professor that makes Tulane such a great place to study."

Sarah Doerries (N '92 and editor of this publication) was a student of Professor Lee's her freshman year. "I imagined that the study of logic would be interesting, but little did I know I was stumbling onto a subject I would fall in love with. I went on to tutor logic at the Educational Resource Center, and I took up tutoring it again while I was in grad school. Saying I once tutored logic sometimes gets me the upper hand in an argument—at least in my own mind.

"I remember Professor Lee as the quintessential philosophy professor—his wonderful thick white hair and full beard and his general aura of having a mind that was always in at least two places at once. And I'll always be grateful that he introduced me to a subject that I became so passionate about."

We agree with Kyle Wilson that "Dr. Lee is more than deserving of Tulane's recognition and appreciation." We look forward to celebrating with him and the rest of the class of 1955 at this year's commencement.

Monroe's success at WDSU unlocked opportunities at a national network. He was offered a chance to run the Chicago or Washington, D.C., news bureau of NBC News, and accepted the latter. He continued his role as an administrative journalist, but also worked on air for NBC. As a correspondent for NBC's *Today Show*, then moderator of *Meet the Press*, Monroe conducted groundbreaking interviews.

Monroe's achievements at NBC have had a lasting impact. "For nearly a decade Bill Monroe set a standard for excellence as moderator of *Meet the Press*," said current host Tim Russert. *Meet the Press* continues to be the highest-rated program of its kind.

Monroe credits Tulane with playing a major role in his intellectual development. "I feel a lot of intellectual progress can be made only when you shed prejudices, and I was prejudiced against science," Monroe said. "Philosophy was where my interest lay. When my philosophy professor explained that philosophy was similar to science in that they were both concerned with finding the truth, he captured my attention. He explained how the two worked well when studied together, and that sparked an interest in science I've had for my entire life."

PROMISE & DISTINCTION

As many of you know, Tulane kicked off its \$700 million capital campaign, “Promise and Distinction,” on March 17 and 18. One of the principal aims of the campaign is to push the endowment, currently at around \$760 million, over \$1 billion. Tulane College’s campaign goal is just under \$20 million, nearly all of which is for endowment.

One of the principal focuses of our campaign is an endowment for student and alumni programs. We will be highlighting all our campaign goals in more detail in the next issue of the *Collegian & Review*, but many alumni have been making endowment gifts since I became dean, during the “quiet phase” of the campaign. I wanted to use this space to give you some examples of what has been happening. **Michael Corasaniti '87**, **Alan Lawrence '87**, and **John Argenti '89**—fraternity brothers at Tulane who all now live in New York—and **Pablo Mateu '81** of Geneva, Switzerland, all have created endowments that promote international experiences for students, broadly defined. There is no need, however, to define a specific purpose in this way when creating an endowment. **Richard Cummings '75** of Chicago is creating a fund to support student programs; **Kent Smith '73** of Houston is setting up a fund whose income can be used at the dean’s discretion; and

Andrew Dreskin '91 and **Mark Schwartz '80** are establishing endowments whose purposes will be determined later.

There are many ways to benefit students with an endowment.

Constantine Georges '77 and his family have established an endowment honoring his father, which brings to campus a distinguished speaker on some aspect of Greek culture; **Ernest Sneed, '86 M.D.** is creating an endowment to fund a prize in African and African Diaspora Studies; and **Wilson Magee '77** is establishing a scholarship fund. Endowments can be created by planned gifts. **Bowman Trumbo '78** of Orlanda and **Kenneth Sadowsky '84** of Worcester have included Tulane College in their wills, while a bequest from the late **Jonathan Ching, '75** will be used to establish an endowment to support student programs.

Tulane College has many friends who have supported it over the years, including all those who contributed to the renovation of Robert C. Cudd Hall in the late 1990s, many of whom have continued to support the college in the current campaign. It is impossible to highlight all of these supporters, but it is gratifying to know, as we move into this new and more ambitious campaign, how many alumni are joining them in their commitment to Tulane College. 🌱



Tulane kicked off its \$700 million capital campaign “Promise and Distinction” on March 17 & 18.

**CARTESIAN AESTH/ETHICS:
THE CORRESPONDENCE
WITH PRINCESS ELISABETH OF
BOHEMIA**

BY EREC R. KOCH

In the fifth objections to the *Méditations*, Pierre Gassendi's critique of Cartesian metaphysics explores the encroachment of corporeality into the realm of the thinking subject. Gassendi asserts that the body may in fact subtend and corrupt the purity of thought ("Cinquièmes Objections," in *OP*, vol. 2, 712). Descartes's forceful response was aimed not so much at his adversary's misunderstanding of *res cogitans* (that which thinks) but of *res extensa* (that which is extended; that is, material substance). Descartes, recognized as the founder of modern philosophy of mind, also constructed a distinct philosophy of body. That philosophy is developed extensively in his scientific and later philosophical texts, most importantly in his correspondence with Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia and the treatise *Les Passions de l'âme*. Recently, the Cartesian body has been granted more critical attention, such as in Dalia Judovitz's study *The Culture of the Body*, whose analysis focuses principally on Descartes's earlier metaphysical writings.

Unlike Judovitz and others, I will contend that Descartes does not simply elaborate the mechanical functions of an alienated body but foregrounds a theory of corporal sensibility that necessitates an ethics.¹ It is to the latter theory that I allude in the first half of the title of this study, for, as we know, the term "aesthetics" did not circulate in its post-Kantian connotation during the seventeenth century, but only in its etymological sense; that is, as a theory of sensibility and sensation. The promise of the conjunction of aesthetics and ethics is prob-

ably best summarized by Descartes's preface to the French edition of his *Principia*, which, significantly, he dedicates to Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, and where he establishes the generic unity of mechanics, medicine, and ethics. Physiology and the mechanics of the body, of the sensory and sensible machine, converge with and are necessary to ethics. I argue that Descartes displaces contemporary ethics of stoicism and ascetic piety, which were grounded in the mastery of the will and self-mastery, and constructs instead an ethics founded on the regulation of the body and its sensory and sensible responses.

The correspondence of Elisabeth of Bohemia² and Descartes took place with varying frequency over the course of seven years, from 1643 until shortly before Descartes's death in 1650; it is the source of Descartes's systematic analysis in the *Passions de l'âme*. The role each correspondent assumes in the exchange summarizes the very stakes of the debate by articulating mind and body, ethics and passions, and private and public. An active participant in society, Elisabeth speaks on behalf of passion and the body. She repeatedly underscores her activities in the public sphere, both as an explanation of the preoccupations that occasion her silences and as the topological source for the discussion of sensibility and the passions. Descartes, by his voluntary isolation, represents *res cogitans*. He associates his self-styled exile from life in society with the minimization of passions and the affects and effects of the body (Letter of May, 1646, *OP*, vol. 3, 653–4). This self-representation replays the scene of the *cogito in the Discours de la méthode*, in which Descartes's withdrawal to the heated chamber mimics the contemplative mind turned in upon itself and sheltered within the warm recesses of the body. The correspondents' roles also define a therapeutic relation. The princess repeatedly interpellates Descartes as a metaphorical physician of the soul bound by the Hippocratic oath to dispel her ignorance (Letter of May 6/16, 1643, *OC*, vol. 3, 662). The force of this honorific extends to his prescribed treatment of the affective ailment from which she suffers: namely, melancholia. She repeatedly implores this physician to assist her in reforming her emotional life, and consequently her

interactions in the public sphere. The correspondence results in a chiasmic exchange—symbolically between mind and body, reason and passion—that promises a new wholeness, a new unity that would reconcile contradictions.

The correspondence with Princess Elisabeth opens with an inquiry on the articulation of mind and body. In asking the question that has haunted metaphysical dualism since its inception, namely, how such radically different substances interact, Elisabeth is expressing her surprise that the passions she experiences are, as Descartes asserts, in some way corporal. Descartes's response is to review the philosophy of body and mind and to construct a model of the body as the site and source of sensation and derivative passions, a model that draws from the posthumously published treatise *De l'Homme* and other scientific writings. According to Descartes, sensation and passion are primarily the involuntary products of external forces at work on the body. The passage from material action on the body to experienced sensation or passion illustrates the interaction of the two substances.³ The point of mediation of the two domains is the *sens commun*, housed by the pineal gland, which unifies the material impulses and reactions of the body and delivers them to the human subject in representational idea-sentiments (*De l'Homme*, *OP*, vol. 1, 448, 450; letter of May 21, 1643, and letter of June 28, 1643, *OP*, vol. 3, 18–23 and 43–9). The *sens commun* is a direct reference to Aristotelian theory of the soul and the faculty that unifies “aesthesis,” or sensation (*De Anima*, III, 1, 425a, p. 111). *Sens commun*, as it appears here and elsewhere in Cartesian texts, extends not only to sensation but also to consequent emotions—unlike the Aristotelian source—and Descartes associates both with practical reason. *Sens commun* is, therefore, both a physiological and ethical category.

Descartes's strategy in these early letters is twofold. On the one hand, he asserts that the articulation of mind and body can best be known through corporal, sensory representations. Descartes also asserts that the body, as a sensory or aesthetic machine, is the source and site of the passions, and that these passions regulate practical life by imposing ethical

values on sensation. The task of ethics is to adjust corporal passions so that pleasure and pain can be brought into line with the order of good and evil. The Cartesian subject enters the space of the ethical public sphere by means of the aesthetic body and its physiological functions.⁴

The introduction of passion and ethics into the metaphysical question of mind and body accounts for the rapid diagnosis and treatment of Elisabeth's affective malady, namely melancholia. This discussion begins with a review of one of the traditional cures for such maladies in the example of Seneca's *De Vita beata*, a text that is in line with the contemporary vogue of neostoicism. Senecan stoicism advocates spiritual or psychic reform and regimentation, a reshaping of the will, disposition, and personal comportment in social space. Descartes acknowledges Seneca's ethical goal to live happily, which he recasts as a “contentement d'esprit” that is allied with virtue (Letter of August 4, 1645, *OP*, vol. 3, 588). Descartes's subsequent recasting of his *morale provisoire* from the *Discours de la méthode* (*OP*, vol. 1, 592–8) is consistent with the stoic tradition and the reform of the will. His third and final point is a clear example of this: it articulates an acceptance of one's social condition, which restricts the power to effect change in the circumstances of one's life (*OP*, vol. 3, 589). Descartes's reference to Seneca, however, also represents a desire to circumscribe the limits of the wisdom of the ancients precisely because it does not address the corporal (and involuntary) source of Elisabeth's moral malaise. Here the Princess's invocation of Descartes as a physician capable of working a therapeutic cure is especially important and revealing. The moral cure and regimen that this physician will prescribe does not simply involve

Descartes,
recognized as the
founder of modern
philosophy of mind,
also constructed
a distinct philosophy
of body.

the will but deploys the body, acts on the body, and regulates the play of forces in the functioning of the aesthetic machine. Descartes begins by noting that the body can impede happiness; that is, reason and the will alone do not suffice against the power of the body or the forces that act on it (Letter of September 1, 1645, *OP*, vol. 3, 599-600). Descartes presents a more assured statement of this position in the *Passions de l'âme*, where he notes that ethical programs like Senecan stoicism are not effective because the will cannot reform passion, which is the involuntary product of external forces at work on the body (*OP*, vol. 3, art. 28, 974). Ethics, Descartes will argue, is a corporal matter that must be worked through the aesthetic body.

Descartes's first prescription for curing the princess is a regimen to regulate the sensible, aesthetic body, a regimen that will alter the reception of passion in the mind. It is in acting as a physician that Descartes begins to fulfill the mandate of the *moraliste*. He asks Elisabeth to incite in the aesthetic body sensory experience that produces, generates, and correlates with productive passions (Letter of May or June, 1645, *OP*, vol. 3, 571). One must turn the imagination to objects "qui pussent apporter du contentment et de la joie" (*OP*, vol. 3, 572). Those actions on the body will rehabilitate it, retrain it in the production of positive and appropriate passions and emotions. By making present, whether actually or by effort of the imagination, objects that would elicit different, appropriate passions, Elisabeth would create new associations between ethical situations and emotions. These sensations would provoke the flow of animal spirits and, correlatively, begin to inscribe in the pineal gland the new passion. This process in turn would elicit physiological responses as well as public dispositions and actions. Such regulation of the body would produce the passion of contentment that is vital to the health of the organism; it would also enable the understanding (and reason in general) to function more effectively and efficiently. Descartes encourages Elisabeth to imitate those who stand in admiration before the spectacle of nature "en regardant la verdure d'un bois, les couleurs d'une fleur, le vol d'un oiseau" (*OP*, vol. 3, 573).

This exercise requires relinquishing command of the rational faculties and the will and simply allowing the sensory body to work on the mind to produce the appropriate passions.

These prescriptions are more than a seventeenth-century self-help manual's invocation to think positively. Descartes destabilizes moral models of the time, which relied on a voluntaristic view of the passions and on acts of the will to reform them. In articles 44 and 46 of the first part of *Passions de l'âme*, Descartes reiterates that the presence of the same object at different times will provoke the same sensory representation and affect. It will also produce the same reflexive action of the body or disposition of the body (*OP*, 987-8 and 989). This is the product not of a spiritual or emotional disposition but of the play of material forces upon and within the body. Moreover, this causal chain can be altered only by corporal action, by physiological processes of the aesthetic body—not by the will. Descartes argues that habitual passion-experience begins in the fetal stage, when affects are transmitted by the mother's blood and are bound with corporal sensation (*OP*, vol. 3, art. 136, 1051). From that stage forward sensations are linked with the primary passions of pleasure and pain by similarity to previous sensations. It is this process of lifelong habituation that Descartes attempts to undo by establishing new associations and creating a new habit, or ethos, of the body.

At this point in the *Passions de l'âme*, Descartes reverts to the discourse of the moralist, for reason must intervene to restore the appropriate association of good and evil with pleasure and pain. Referring to the power of those passions to distort the value of their objects, Descartes asserts that the emotional associations with good and evil are frequently a lure and are in error. Reason and experience must intervene and restore the true order of values (*OP*, art. 138, 1054). Once again, this correction is not simply a one-time act of the will but a matter of disciplining, correcting, and modifying the will through the body over time. The process Descartes had reviewed with Elisabeth requires the inscription of a new association of affect and idea, a substitu-

tion of sanctioned for unsanctioned passion. This discipline is neither the asceticism of piety nor the self-abnegation and acceptance of stoicism but a discipline that will recondition the body to produce the right material manifestations of the passions. This regulation also directs the body into social action, as the will, prompted by new valorizations, moves the body to perform acts that are consistent with the true and the good. It is on this basis that Descartes advocates the ethos of *générosité* in part III of the *Passions de l'âme* as a disposition created and fortified by physiological habit.

In article 50 of the first part of the *Passions de l'âme*, Descartes asserts that the habitual link between a representation and a passion may be reconditioned. He compares this process to the acquisition of language, in which sound and meaning can be disjoined and recombined in different ways (*OP*, vol. 3, art. 50, 994). In language, the habitual link of signifier and signified appears to be a natural conjunction; however, a new signified can be assigned to the signifier, and this linkage will be reinforced, and ultimately naturalized, by repetition. Similarly, passions are linked with certain sensuous representations of objects and situations and are reinforced by repetition, but that affective association too is conventional and habitual. Other links can be insolubly forged by habit. In this way, the aesthetic body can teach the subject an affective language that corresponds with the true ethical order.

The remedy that the physician Descartes prescribes to Elisabeth requires the regulation of the body, the process of mastering and redirecting its actions in response to the forces of the outside world that provoke sensibility. These same forces can be redirected, and the aesthetic body disciplined, to produce new affective associations. The disciplined subject will experience the appropriate affect and disposition to action and will perform the right actions in the public realm. By the proper regulation of the sensory machine of the body, the individual fulfills the mandates of ethics and the quest for happiness presented in Seneca's *De Vita beata*. For Descartes, ethics is first a philosophy of the body, of the aesthetic body.



NOTES

1 Judovitz argues that the spectral nature of sensation in the *Méditations* reduces the body to illusory, unreal, and virtual status (esp. 82–107). Through this “erasure” and “dehumanization” (106) of the body, it ceases to be an integral part of the definition and existence of the thinking subject. Judovitz conflates epistemological consequences of Cartesian metaphysics and ontology: the unreliable epistemological status of sensation in the *Méditations* is unproblematically projected by Judovitz onto the being of the body. Descartes’s argument clearly undermines the truth value of sensation but not the fact of sensation. Judovitz’s exclusive focus on the *Méditations* and metaphysical texts neglects Cartesian recuperation of the body and the articulation of the body and ethics. The primary function of the body is not epistemological but pragmatic and practical. Judovitz’s argument is also structured by valorizations that I call into question. For example, the “dehumanization” of the body is based on its loss of epistemological value, an almost nostalgic judgment in favor of the organicism that Montaigne represents in her text. Judovitz’s analysis also effects a retrojection of

postindustrial values: the association of “machine” and “inhuman” is the consequence of more recent history (as are Judovitz’s references to “virtual” bodies). When in *De l’Homme* Descartes refers to the body as a “statue ou machine de terre” (*OP*, vol. 1, 379), the intent is not to dehumanize the body any more than its biblical source does but to distinguish it from mind while still asserting, as he does later in that passage, the sensory and sensible functions of that machine. Foucault too subscribes unproblematically to the model of the Cartesian body as machine: his is a representative interpretation of the mechanical and alienated body in Descartes. In the pivotal chapter of *Surveiller et punir*, where he presents the docile body that populates disciplinary societies, there is one reference to the place of Descartes and Cartesian philosophy in that development. Descartes is signaled as the inaugurator of the anatomo-metaphysical body that will in modernity be subject to technologies of power that will utilize, manipulate, transform, and perfect the body (138). Foucault goes on to remind us that this Cartesian model of the body will culminate in La Mettrie’s man-machine in the eighteenth century, the model that perfects the philosophical and technico-political construction of the docile body. Foucault’s positing of an axis that leads from Descartes to La Mettrie is revealing of the dynamic of power in *Surveiller et punir*. Foucault argues that power applied to targeted object-bodies displays a dependence on physical force and coercion, which operate with the necessity of the mechanics of material causality. The body-as-machine is the appropriate target and instrument of the coercive, forceful, and violent manifestations of this microphysics of power. This is an important example of the complicity of knowledge and power: knowledge makes the praxis of technologies of power possible, and that praxis makes knowledge necessary. For a related account of corporeality in Descartes, see also Deneys-Tunney (esp. 31–69).

2 Born in Heidelberg in 1618, Elisabeth of Bohemia was the eldest daughter of Frederick V, elector of the Rhine Palatinate from 1610 to 1623, and King of Bohemia in 1619 and 1620. After her father was deposed in 1620, Elisabeth spent the remainder of

her life in exile. Her mother maintained a court in exile in the Hague, where Elisabeth spent most of her life. She was tutored along with her brothers and demonstrated exceptional aptitude in mathematics and natural philosophy. In addition to her exchange with Descartes, Elisabeth corresponded with van Helmont and the philosopher Henry More. In 1667 Elisabeth became the abbess of the Lutheran abbey of Hervorden in Westphalia, which also offered refuge to early feminist and philosopher Anna Maria Schurman of Utrecht, who had also been a friend of Descartes. Elisabeth died at the abbey of Hervorden in 1680.

3 See Daniel Garber’s important study on mind-body interaction. Garber notes that Descartes’s argument is elucidated by his claim in those early letters to Elisabeth that we have primitive ideas of mind, body, and the union of mind and body. The primitive idea of the union of mind and body is based solely on sensory ideas (324–6). For a related analysis, see Mattern (218–22).

4 In his review of the humanist tradition, Gadamer notes the evolution at this time of “sensus communis” from biological term to ethical term, signifying “sense that founds a community” (21). His analysis suggests that by synecdochal totalization, common sense turns from its bio-physiological sense to an ethical sense by turning sensations and valorizations from the individual to the community. The Cartesian model of the body makes this development possible because it incorporates passion and consequent valorization. Significantly, “_____,” the substantive derived from the adjective “_____” (shared, common), signifies “public domain” or “res publica.” See also Armogathe’s analysis of the conflation of “sens commun” and “bon sens,” both terms connoting (ethical) opinion, in two citations from the *Discours de la méthode* and the *Principes* (181–3). See as well Merlin’s analysis of *sens commun* and *sentiment commun* in the *querelle du Cid*. Merlin argues that those terms connote both aesthetic (in the modern sense) and moral judgment (181–8).

WORKS CITED

Aristotle. *De Anima*. Trans. and ed. Robert Drew Hicks. New York: Arno Press, 1976.

Armogathe, Robert. “Les Sens: inventaires médiévaux et théorie cartésienne.” *Descartes et le moyen âge*. Eds. Joël Biard and Roshdi Rashed. Paris: Vrin, 1997. 175–94.

Deneys-Tunney, Anne. *Ecritures du corps: de Descartes à Laclos*. Paris: PUF, 1992.

Descartes, René. *Œuvres de Descartes*. Eds. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery. 13 vols. Paris: L. Cerf, 1897–1913.

———. *Œuvres philosophiques*. Ed. Ferdinand Alquié. 3 vols. Paris: Garnier, 1963–73.

Foucault, Michel. *Surveiller et punir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

Garber, Daniel. “Understanding Interaction: What Descartes Should Have Told Elisabeth.” *René Descartes*. Ed. Vere Chappell. Vol. 1. New York: Garland, 1992. 323–40.

Judovitz, Dalia. *The Culture of the Body : Genealogies of Modernity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.

Mattern, Ruth. “Descartes’s Correspondence with Elizabeth: Conceiving Both the Union and Distinction of Mind and Body.” *Descartes: Critical and Interpretive Essays*. Ed. Michael Hooker. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978. 212–2.

Merlin, Hélène. *Public et littérature*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994.

Senault, Jean-François. *De l’Usage des passions*. 1641. Paris: Fayard, 1987.

St. Thomas Aquinas. *Aquinas Ethicus: the Moral Teaching of St. Thomas, a Translation of the Principal Portions of the Second Part of the Summa Theologica*. Ed. Joseph Rickaby, S.J. Vol. 1. London: Burns and Oates, 1896.

Talon-Hugon, Carole. *Descartes, ou, Les passions rêvées par la raison: essai sur la théorie des passions de Descartes et de quelques-uns de ses contemporains*. Paris: Vrin, 2002.

The task of ethics
is to adjust corpo-
ral passions so that
pleasure and pain
can be brought into
line with the order
of good and evil.

WRITERS COUNSEL

INTERVIEWS WITH ROGER

KAMENETZ, REGINALD SHEPHERD,
& MICHAEL WATERS

As part of Professor Peter Cooley's Duren Professorship creative-writing class, visiting authors met with students to critique their work and discuss the writing life in general. Following are class interviews with three of these writers, which were recorded by Jonathan Stroud (E '04).

RODGER KAMENETZ, poet, essayist, and religious thinker, is the author of eight books, including *The Jew in the Lotus* and *The Missing Jew: New and Selected Poems*. He has been called "one of the most formidable of the Jewish-American poets." He is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in literature. His latest book of poems is *The Lowercase Jew*.

Q: *What's your favorite poem that you've ever written?*

A: Some different favorite poems. Two poems come to mind. One I wrote when I was about twenty-two. I've been writing poetry since I was sixteen, in college at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. The first real poem I had written—when you write a real poem and are real excited about it. I sent a copy to my congressman, my two senators, and Iris Murdoch. She was a wonderful novelist, a sexual profiteer who was not too choosy about who she slept with. She said, "nice poem." I had a friend that worked for a senator; he said my mail was classified as "nut mail."

Q: *Why did you send it to them?*

A: I didn't have any background or understand about poetry's place in the world. I thought, that is what you do to make your work public. I was at Johns Hopkins in the writing program. I think the poet, I think poetry can be viewed from the outside

or the inside. For me its most important function is inner. The poem as an individual struggle from within ourselves. I think that is the most important thing that poetry does. There are very few ways or possibilities. It is hard to capture something as elusive as the inner dimensions of your life. Art in general. Poetry for me is the way I know how to do it.

Q: *Why is poetry more "inner" than fiction?*

A: I don't know if it is. That's what they call a thing of logic: you've conceived a premise in the question. I'd say . . . there is a theory that . . . I think poetry deals with images and stories deal with narrative. Which is more primal? An image does not take place in time. It partakes of dimensions of time which our human brains are not used to conjuring. There is a dimension of time where before and after, it is not so. A story, it is an unfolding of a single image. I just make that distinction. But they both could portray the inner life. When you write a poem or a story, there is a moment where you have the whole poem. You have to lay it out in a linear way. The real poem and the real story are not linear. There is a moment when you have it all.

Q: *When one is writing to discover, that is not always so.*

A: I know what you are talking about; you may just have an intuition or an itch. I'm talking about the level of consciousness where the idea takes place. Ever heard of [Edwin A. Abbott's] *Flatland* [A romance of many dimensions]? A big sphere comes through Flatland, and they can't understand it at all. As the sphere intersects a plane it becomes bigger or smaller. As it becomes bigger you see a wider and wider sphere; you get confused. The sphere is the whole poem. Flatland is how you think. You may only have an intuition of what it is as something comes through. I don't know that a good poem can come with the dry-heave method, where nothing is going on. I don't know if that's productive in any dimension.

Q: *Do you have a favorite poet besides yourself?*

A: I think every writer or poet has a council, a committee of people that sort of sits with you and

that changes . . . sometimes you retire the members of the board . . . but the poets that have moved me are William Blake; when I was young, very young, some people that really engaged me were Whitman, Arthur Rimbaud, T. S. Eliot. These are all visionaries. Except Eliot—he was too religious to be a visionary.

Q: *You said you started writing when you were sixteen; any reason?*

A: For girls. At least one. I won't go into who.

Q: *"A real poem": What does that mean?*

A: I don't know, you write this, you like it, whatever, it gets workshopped and you hate it. But a poem you write, you just know. A poem can come to you . . . like a little bit of the future on paper. Like you are somehow cognizant of who you are going to be, not just who you are. It just seemed like a different order of control or image or voice than anything I had done before. I couldn't decide externally why.

Q: *What has a poem done for you?*

A: Depends on the poem. I think I like to work hands-on: you write a poem, you retype it. Part of it feels like you just fix the errors. Just moving things around so that it ends with the strongest image. Poems come with tails at both ends. You just finish the poem but you don't know it yet. Sometimes a stronger image is somewhere else in the poem. Fooling around with the words and changing it. It's just more by hand, isn't it? There is no knowledge, you just fool with it until it is right. I've spent ten years on some poems.

Q: *Do you write poems in ten minutes?*

A: Yes, sometimes. I wrote one and threw it away; a friend fished it out of the trash—now it is my favorite poem. I don't think knowing what you are doing is any help at all. All you can really know is what other people say you ought to be doing.

Q: *Do you sit down and write or do you wait for inspiration to come along?*

A: I'd say yes to both but I prefer the inspiration idea. Some of these poems in this book I wrote deliberately, I did research, and I set out to write them. Other times I used the other method. But I prefer the other method.



Q: *Is there a way that you find your voice? Is there such a thing as good poetry or bad poetry?*

A: I don't know what you mean by "find your voice," exactly. I think you have to listen to yourself and hear yourself and respect yourself in the morning. I don't think good or bad are good terms to use ever. I think what am I trying to say is, I don't think judging yourself by some abstract is acceptable. The judgment thing can come later. Even if it is a "bad poem," it might be good for you, there might be something in there that needs to be heard that makes it good for you. Awkwardness—a lot of times what people object to in your poems is that—but it contains a lot more for your personality. You have to start with your awkwardness and respect it.

I'll say it: What others dislike in you, you should cultivate. I have a lot of Jewish people in my head; they talk to me and they talk to each other. I hear a lot of Jewish voices, I think it is fairly simple. I've tried to stop it; I just write it down.

I think publishers like books that are worth reading. And worth selling. A thousand copies of a poetry book is a lot. The average book will sell that in its entire lifetime. Well, I've sold a lot of poetry books. I have written a number of prose books in between, and one of the project poems was to write poetry about Eliot and [Ezra] Pound. I thought it was important to me: the anti-Semitism that was explicit in their work needed to be explored. We

sit in a workshop and criticize every word that is written. Every word counts. Surely if Eliot decided to use the word Jew with a lowercase j, it wasn't an accident. Does every word count? If they all do, then what does it mean? Anti-Semitism is a complicated subject. It has a life of its own. I mean, Poland had 3 million Jews; then they had a handful. There is anti-Semitism where there are no Jews. Anti-Semitism has a life of its own. It is a subject I wanted to address as a poet, speaking to other poets.

Q: *One more question: Where do you think anti-Semitism stands in America?*

A: I think we are the least anti-Semitic country in the world. By and large, it's not that prevalent, it's not that powerful a force, it's not a big issue in this country in the year 2003. That's what I would say. Partly it is because Jews are so assimilated, everyone has a relative who is Jewish. I'm teasing, but I don't see it as an issue. I really don't see it.

REGINALD SHEPHERD is the author of four books of poetry, *Some Are Drowning*; *Angel, Interrupted*; *Wrong*; and *Otherhood*. Among his many honors are a National Endowment for the Arts grant and a "Discovery"/The Nation Award.

Q: *When did you start writing?*

A: In the ninth grade, in a modern American fiction class. We read [T. S. Eliot's] "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." It made an incredible impact on me. The voice.

I wanted to have that affect, the affect that poem had, on other people. I wrote poems in his style, very badly. I imitated other poets, badly. Wallace Stevens—the way he used mythology and history in his poetry. I thought I could emulate his style, perhaps not as well, but attainable. Eliot? Stevens? I did not understand the poems, but they had a very large emotional impact to me. The fact that they were hard was to draw me to them. It got me interested.

Q: *Not understanding Eliot—does that make him fascinating?*

A: A mystery—I thought I had a connection to it,

but I didn't know it, and I wanted to know more.

Q: *In ninth grade? Did you know how much you didn't know?*

A: No. I wouldn't have tried.

Q: *Is it hard to break away from imitating those poets? Is it hard to justify your own style?*

A: For me, I was trying to write about my experience in a way that to me seemed to really be poetry. What is poetry for me? In some tiny, tiny way, I wanted [my poems] to match up to the people I read. I imitated constantly to try and figure out how others did the things they did.

Q: *For us—poem after poem used mythology to prop up the poem at first, in our first workshop. You're known for mythology and footnotes.*

A: The world of Greek mythology is ruled by beauty and power. The Greek gods are not good or evil—they are just forces that impinge on our lives. Random forces . . . just sort of have an impact on us. I've been fascinated by beauty and also the dangers of beauty. It's very powerful and very dangerous. I was interested in using mythology as a greater context for my emotions and experiences, to connect to other people's experiences, so it wouldn't just be a diary, or a journal, but an objective structure that allows others into our poems.

Q: *Who influences you still?*

A: Wallace Stevens—the way he can take ideas and make them concrete and specific—embody them in images and scenes, the things that can come through. W. H. Auden's earlier poetry has these ominous landscapes; they are projections of mental states. It kind of takes a mental state and makes landscapes out of it. Joy Brown's earlier work, very influential on me. She, like Stevens, took ideas and made them concrete. In general I read a lot of poetry, and a lot of my inspiration comes from reading. That's why I wrote in the first place—they are completely linked up, reading and writing.

Q: *Mechanics: once you have written the final word—what do you do?*

A: I revise less now than I used to, but I have had poems that have taken ten years to get to their final form. This is the shape this poem is to have. I

come back to it, fiddle with it, it wasn't quite there. Ten years later I see what the poem needs again. Reading and writing are inseparable; writing and vision are inseparable. Even as I write I am looking back at what I have written. Does this piece of this poem really belong here? I've started a poem with a line, and then finally cut that line off. I have had lines that wander around for years until they find a poem they really belong to.

Q: *How many pieces do you have in the works?*

A: I carry around a pen and a piece of paper and write down phrases that pop into my head, street signs, interesting street names—Saint Charles, the streets named after the Muses. I have a pen and a little lamp by my bed so I can write stuff down at night; it's like writing down your dreams. . . . The point is to pay attention to stuff in your head, collect it. Often when I am writing a poem it is because I have a critical mass of lines and phrases in my head, and writing a poem is like putting them on paper. I have various pages of crumpled things here, shapely things here; I'm always fiddling with things.

Q: *Do you ever write fiction?*

A: I have published fiction, and thought I was better with fiction at first.

Q: *Fiction writers don't have this fiddle. They don't fiddle [like poets].*

A: All the good fiction writers I know, who are serious about it, they fiddle always. [I knew a fiction writer who] would get up and spend all day writing; at the end of the day, he would insert a comma, at the end of the day, he would take the comma out. Poets don't always do that either.

Q: *Do you experiment with different forms? Or do you stick to a style?*

A: I'm always trying to do different things and try different things: I have a certain style, but I always try to get away from that. I used to write always in strict forms, and I haven't done that in a long time. It was very good training for my ear. Hearing the relationships for the words and the patterns that you made. I've been trying to do different things in each book, and I definitely have a different style—I'm trying to go against my style, so I

am writing a poem I haven't already written.

Q: *How would you approach something we [students] are given, like we have one week to write about a topic we are given?*

A: When I am teaching, I tend to be very sort of editorial, to focus on, Is this the right word or the right phrase? Open up this, or say this. Poem to poem. Some cry out so—like, this stops before it starts, or if you polish this up it will find its shape. Some are unbalanced. My poetry is generally as specific as possible, actually what is on the page, but I try to use that to open up discussion of larger possibilities. Anything that should happen with poems will happen because of each individual word.

Q: *When you have ideas you have picked up, when you sit down and have enough to write about, do you sit through and try and write everything you can think about and then clean it up later, or do you leave things, little by little, and then make it better?*

A: Recently, I lay down a few bricks, run out of bricks and mortar, then leave, then come back when I have more. I very rarely start a poem with a sense of what it will be when I finish it. I don't now really tend to sit and write it all. I've sort of streamlined the process a little bit. A poet should write every day. I don't normally do that now, but doing that was a very good practice. As something that you do, as this ongoing process, you get better at it by doing it all the time.

Q: *It really is a skill like anything else. You need to practice. Poetry is a wonderful conception. But you have to work; the Muse doesn't just land on your page and, poof, it is there. I like what you said about words; it's very pedestrian.*

A: I don't think it is pedestrian.

Q: *Well, I mean, like the sense of walking into your poem, like it continues and grows. By walking you can fly. If a student wanted to feel creative but not take the class, not write, he shouldn't take the class—go feel creative on your own! What do you think is your greatest poem, and why?*

A: Today, at least, I can't answer that question. I don't really have a favorite.

Q: *[Do you think] Eliot [had a favorite]?*

A: He probably did; I don't know.

Q: *Why do you write?*

A: That is actually a good question. For a number of reasons . . . to feel egotistical. I want to continue existing, I want some part of me to live out independently of me. I want to create new editions to the world. I want something I did to have an impact on other people, like the poems I read did me. Because I am good at it. I enjoy it. People tend to do things they are talented at. I got patted on the head a lot, you know.

Q: *I like that—you want the same impact. What is that impact?*

A: I really feel that some of the poems I have read have changed the way I look at the world. When I read “Prufrock,” I really felt that Eliot had taken my feeling of alienation and made it beautiful. It changed what those feelings meant and made them easier to live with for me. Reading a lot of William Carlos Williams. Paying attention to the world, the things that seem trivial or insignificant, has made me think about how valuable every minute is. I know it is hard to live that way, but it has made me more determined to lose as few minutes as possible. Those poets have changed me.

Q: *Any advice for these young writers?*

A: Read all the time! Nothing in particular. The “great poets” are a good place to start, but read things you are not “known” to be interested in. Things you originally think you do not have an affinity for. You can learn about things you don't want to do; you can learn about things that others do that you don't like; you can see that in yourself. You can see things you do like that you might have missed, or things you wouldn't have thought you would like. Read “The canon.” Some of it is very boring, but if you approach it with an open mind, it is much more interesting than it seems. Read very widely, so you can relearn and use things as sources of your own poetry. And write, write and rewrite, revise, and try to measure your work against their work. There will never be pure objectivity. The more you have read, the more you can take what you have written and put it in a context of others.

MICHAEL WATERS is professor of English at Salisbury University on the eastern shore of Maryland. His recent books include *Parthenopi: New and Selected Poems* and (with his co-editor, the late A. Poulin Jr.) the popular anthology *Contemporary American Poetry*. His other books of poetry include *Green Ash*, *Red Maple*, *Black Gum*; *Bountiful*; and *The Burden Lifters*.

Q: *How did you start writing?*

A: My sixteen-year-old girlfriend broke up with me. I was hurt into poetry. The lyrical impulse comes from some traumatic moment, like the death of a parent, a tragedy—I was terrifically interested in poetry, in writing and lyrical words. I started by listening to the beat poets, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac; I listened to Bob Dylan, and I loved the fact that I didn't understand the lyrics in this pop song. The first time I ever heard of Ezra Pound.

Q: *Have you kept the spirit of your adolescence in your recent poetry?*

A: What does that mean?

Q: *You know, your attachment to Dylan and Ginsberg—have you kept the same kinds of techniques?*

A: Certainly not. The more you learn about how to write a poem, the harder it is to write that poem. When you start learning a few things, it gets quite a bit harder. Adolescent romance, that comes up in some of these poems, our great nineteenth-century American writers. My schooling was in nineteenth-century literature. The work of Hawthorne or Poe might come into some of these, certainly. Those concerns of rebellion, rock, revolt. I was raised as a Catholic, but my father married a Jew; she converted and had to agree to raise me as a Catholic. My rebellion was against the war and the government but also against the Church. That is still being worked out today. In terms of the technique, you are always learning what you don't know—revision, revision. The act of writing is more process than product; the poem reveals itself from its form.

Q: *A lot of poets begin with an image or a scene and go from there. How do you start?*

A: It might be great to have some sort of musical phrase bouncing around in your head; it might be a line or a phrase that comes to me that I want some sort of context for. Often I start with absolutely nothing, having the page blank, the mind blank. [The poet Theodore] Roethke said, “I learn by going where I have to go.”

Two quick stories: Right after 9-11 my friend sent a letter out to poets, asking how they felt and what they thought. [The result was a collection of poems on the subject.] One was by Donald Hall. I bought the book; had come home late. I just paged through it quickly. The first line of his poem was so startling: “I was born in the mouth of a bull.” I didn’t read the rest of poem. When I woke up in the morning and looked at it, I found I had misread it. I had that idea for a long time, and then finally wrote a poem with that line. I was helping my friend; he had this line, “My fingers winged with jewelry.” It was a misprint [for ringed], and he left it the way it was. Serendipity plays a part sometimes.

Q: *How often do you write?*

A: Peter [Cooley]—I envy him. He gets up every morning and has his writing time. I have nonwriting time for like two or three months. It makes me very antsy. I hurt my back by spending so much time at the desk, for three or four weeks, eight hour days, and then I have four or five poems. I feel comfortable in notebooks, writing things out, writing a fresh version. I can fill up that big black and speckled notebook with two poems, just over and over and over again. Now I work on a computer; I will have eighty to one hundred pages of a poem. Maybe I have just changed a piece of punctuation or a word, but it piles up and piles up until I feel it is finished. Only one at a time. I’ve tried different things, they just haven’t worked. I seem to be one of those people that has to plod. I have friends who always have four or five things going. When I am done with a poem, I often think, Where did that happen? What was that? Will I ever write another poem again?

Q: *You said you wrote a few stories but didn’t entirely care about it. What were your stories like?*

A: I’ve been to some of these writers’ colonies,

and I’ve been like, I will do something different. I will do something for two days, and I will realize I will start lines, like a poem. I am not interested in the way sentences work. The sentence is the intricate unit of prose. If poetry doesn’t have lines, it’s not poetry. A prose poem—that is extreme nonsense in American literature. I think they are paragraphs. Poetry is written in lines. I love the way a line functions in a poem. I think every line should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. It should move forward by ear as well as in terms of image. Each line should move them forward, and then foreshadow.

Q: *When you write about one topic, do you write about the exact same thing, and how do you go about that?*

A: Of course. I think we all do. Go back to the early twentieth century—those people wrote the same stories over and over and over again. You have this idea. Most of these major writers have one idea that they keep rewriting over and over and over again. I’m not a range poet—I have a few things, a narrowly focused vision.

I was nineteen years old. Every week in school there was a poetry reading, and every week I would come back and think, Whoa, I want to write like that. This guy asks his friend to stand up and recite a poem. He looked like he had wandered in off the streets—food stains, big guy. But he recited a poem, swaying back and forth, and I heard, not every word, but the whole poem, every line.

Walt Whitman. The poem was written by the gay newspaperman Walter Whitman, and for the rest of his life, this guy was trying to write like Walt Whitman And who can write like Walt Whitman?



I really feel that
some of the poems
I have read have
changed the way I
look at the world.

—Shepherd

TULANE COLLEGIANS: CLASS NOTES

1940s

Dr. George Robert Hugman Jr. '47 wanted to let everyone know that he has nine grandchildren, not nineteen, as was reported on this page in the last issue. (Though surely they have the strength and smarts of nineteen!)

1950s

Frank Tornabene '50, cofounder of Scafa-Tornabene Art Publishing, passed away in February in Tucson, AZ.

1960s

J. B. Vella '61 was appointed vice-president of investments at Stifel, Nicolaus & Co., Inc. He recently completed a program in investment decisions and behavioral finance at Harvard University.

Hilton S. Bell '64 is serving as assistant secretary of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce.

1970s

Harold Sylvester '72, who has been on campus this semester teaching students about filmmaking, is cochair of Hollywood South Board, which the city created in order to capitalize on the region's burgeoning film industry.

Charles "Rick" Drummond III '73 has finally found the love of his life. They got married ("yes, for the first time") on the beach in Negril, Jamaica, in March 2005.

Dan Fishbein '76 joined Behavioral Health Concepts, Inc., in Colombia, MO, as chief operating officer.

1980s

Stephen W. Jordon '81 is a captain in the U.S. Navy currently serving in Brussels, Belgium at NATO headquarters as a Naval delegate. He and his wife, Elena Wheatley of Louisville, KY, a pediatric nurse practitioner, have four children.

Douglas E. Armstrong '84, who works in the management team of WestMonroe Partners in Chicago, is teaching strategic and digital marketing courses at Northwestern and DePaul University.

Bryan Nash Gill '84 was commissioned to create a sculpture for the American pavilion at the World's Fair in Aichi, Japan. His work was recently featured in a traveling show called "The Forest," which deals with issues of global deforestation.

Dr. Todd Michael Goldberg '85 was recently appointed as chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Memorial Hospital West in Pembroke Pines, FL. The hospital, which is a division of the Memorial Healthcare System, performs about 5,500 deliveries per year.

1990s

Philip A. Cooper '90 and his wife, Karen, welcomed their first child, Dylan Richard Cooper, into the world on December 2, 2004.

Michael E. Hollingsworth II '92 has been named partner in the Atlanta office of Kilpatrick Stockton LLP, a law firm of more than 470 attorneys practicing in 7 domestic offices, as well as London and Stockholm. Michael and his wife, Rebecca, are expecting their second child in May 2005.

ALUMNI LINK ONLINE

The Alumni Association's new on-line community is up and running at **WWW.TULANECOMMUNITY.COM**.

The site allows you to customize information about yourself that you would like to share with fellow alumni, and to search for fellow alumni using a wide array of parameters: name, class year, college, major, even student activities and current profession. If you're not already in the system, contact the Alumni Association at

504.865.5901 or toll-free at

877.4TULANE for a log-on ID.



TULANE COLLEGE is the university's liberal arts division for men and its historic undergraduate college. Of the university's six undergraduate divisions, Tulane College alone dates from the beginnings of the university. The college was founded in 1847 by the act of the State of Louisiana that founded the University of Louisiana. The act provided for "faculties...of the natural sciences, and...letters, and a college proper or academical department," which today is Tulane College, and departments of law and medicine, which today are the Tulane Law and Medical Schools. The already-existing Medical College of Louisiana, which had been founded in 1834 as an independent institution, became the university's department of medicine.

The university was renamed "The Tulane University of Louisiana" in 1884 in recognition of the generosity of millionaire philanthropist Paul Tulane, who had provided the institution with an endowment. The "college proper or academical department" was renamed Tulane College at the same time.

Throughout the 1880s and '90s, the administrators regularly discussed the inadequacy of the campus on Common Street in downtown New Orleans, where the university had been located since its founding. They began the purchase of the property along St. Charles Avenue that eventually became the uptown campus. In 1894, the university was relocated to its current site, and Tulane College was relocated to Gibson Hall, now the main administration building, which had been constructed specifically for the college. The same

year, courses in engineering and applied science were removed from the curriculum of Tulane College, and a separate College of Technology (now the School of Engineering) was founded. Tulane College was renamed the College of Arts and Sciences at that time.

In 1988, the separate faculties and curricula of the College of Arts and Sciences and the H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, the university's liberal arts division for women, which had been founded in 1886, were merged. Today, men and women attend class together and are taught a common curriculum by a single faculty, the Faculty of the Liberal Arts and Sciences.

In 1993, the university's board of administrators voted to restore the college's historic nineteenth-century name, Tulane College.

The college now enrolls 1,600 men pursuing the bachelor of arts, bachelor of fine arts, and bachelor of science degrees. Its living alumni number some 21,000, the largest number of any of the university's schools and colleges; among them are some of the nation's and the world's most accomplished and distinguished professionals in a remarkable variety of fields.

In the 150 years since its founding, Tulane College has subscribed to a few basic principles: a belief in the enduring value of a liberal arts education, a conviction about the importance of extracurricular activities and accomplishments, and a justifiable pride in the achievements of its talented students and distinguished alumni.

DROP US A LINE!

We want to hear from you! Please fill out this form so we can keep your classmates up to date on developments in your lives; we welcome photographs of alumni and their families.

NAME

first middle or initial last class year

HOME

street city state zip

BUSINESS

title company email

street city state zip

NEWS

e.g., career, activities, family, achievements

Please send me information about supporting The Tulane *Collegian & Review* and other Tulane College Student and Alumni Programs.

Mail to: The Tulane *Collegian & Review*, Tulane College, Office of Student and Alumni Programs
Robert C. Cudd Hall, New Orleans, LA 70118-5698

“ . . . You have to work; the muse
doesn't just land on your desk
and, poof, the poem is there.”

POET PETER COOLEY, DUREN PROFESSOR AND PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH



Tulane College
Robert C. Cudd Hall
New Orleans, LA 70118

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
NEW ORLEANS LA
PERMIT NO. 25

THE TULANE

collegian
REVIEW

Tulane University