

GENERATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY SUMMER CONFERENCE 2009

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Baeriswyl, Raphaël

"Romantic Lie': Some Thoughts on the Representation of Political Violence"

My "Use and Perception of Violence : A Girardian Approach to Asymmetric Warfare" was a first attempt at applying Girardian anthropology in the field of strategic analysis. It described – in relation to both armed conflicts and political violence – how the "asymmetric adversary" manages to cash in on the violence that it provokes and suffers, and offered a new key to understanding why asymmetric strategies are successful.

"'Romantic Lie' : Some Thoughts on the Representation of Political Violence" now proposes a more fundamentally Girardian analysis of political violence. It combines the Girardian idea of "romantic lie" (ontological illness / false transcendence) with the research of British historian Michael Burleigh on violence ("Blood and Rage: A Cultural History of Terrorism") and, on this basis, tries to assess the extent to which the discourse of politically violent movements on their own violence is untruthful.

This analysis brings support to the following claims:

- Political violence (which often causes the death of a – suspiciously Girardian – single victim) is not symbolic. It thrives on all sorts of well-intentioned lies or self-deceptive claims and assumptions. Accounts of political violence are mythical.
- Such contemporary accounts of political violence offer some elements of proof – or at least clues – that myths too are no fairy tales but similarly serious (and similarly untruthful and clumsy) attempts at explaining and excusing violent events that have really occurred.
- The human being is the only species that is obsessed with the cause of its problems, for which it cannot help seeking metaphysical explanations. All human societies or human groups lie about their own violence and tend to justify their hatred by the call of some sacred duty.
- Despite all indications to the contrary, the fact that violence has to be systematically lied about is a sign of hope. It shows that the aspiration for justice and peace is a universal and genuine concern of mankind.

Bartlett, Andrew*"Postmodern Frankenstein: Replicant and Human in Blade Runner"*

In the critical literature on Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner*, the nearly unanimous opinion emerges that the android creatures genetically engineered by the biotechnology tycoon Eldon Tyrell are fully or finally "human." My argument challenges this idea not so much by refuting the substance of the claims made about the replicants' human-like qualities as by situating all the claims in the context of the victimary thinking contemporaneous with the postmodern aesthetic. A taxonomic account of the human might conflict with an originary one. Meanwhile, in the postmodern era, the Frankenstein myth imagines a new version of the monstrous meta-human as beautiful victim: the human / artificial human difference is limited to the single, seeming non-difference of historical priority or firstness.

Bertonneau, Tom*"Wagner and 'Post-Wagnerism'"*

Because Richard Wagner (1813 - 1883) intended his mid-Nineteenth Century innovation of music drama to instigate a thorough renewal, not simply of art, but rather of the human situation writ large, his work required a theoretical basis incorporating a notion of cultural origins - that is to say, it necessarily began in an explicit anthropology.

Wagner worked out this anthropology, borrowing vocabulary and some few notions from Arthur Schopenhauer and Ludwig Feuerbach, in essays and pamphlets in the 1840s and 50s; in these documents, Wagner prescribed the musical, scenic, and dramatic parameters that would body themselves forth in *Tristan und Isolde*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Das Ring*, and *Parsifal*. These operas - or rather *Gesamtkunstwerke*, as their author called them - would recreate an "earliest utterance of consciousness" and, by so doing, inaugurate a new "breaking loose from unconscious life," to quote from Wagner's post-Idealist terminology. In the power of its dramaturgical-metaphysical logic, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* would lift "Error" (the collapse of esthetic judgment into commercial crassness, the collapse of the ethical generally into mere economic pragmatism) out of its deficiency by reconnecting the object present with the generative potency inherent in "the myths of primal ages."

One might identify a strand of Platonism in this argument, as well as traces of Hegelian egophany and Illuminist millenarianism. No doubt but the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a kind of opus, in the mystical sense, intended to transform both subject and object of the exercise. But by providing a new benchmark of form and rightness, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* would also permit radical re-judgment of prevailing cultural trends culminating in a rejection of cheapness and un-seriousness in the arts. While Wagner's own achievement comes close to fulfilling the mission he established for himself, the salvation of high culture that he foresaw never occurred. Thus most of chronologically post-Wagnerian opera conforms to what Wagner himself, in "Art and Revolution" (1849), characterized pre-Wagnerian opera as being in the first half of the bourgeois century: "a chaos of sensuous impressions jostling one another without rhyme or reason, from which each one may choose at will what pleases best his fancy."

My essay will explore the question why Wagner had no successors and the related question whether transcendence is possible after the collapse of the Late Romantic.

Dennis, Ian

"The Uses of Romanticism"

Abstract pending—

Dowdsewell, Chris

"Transcendent cognition: A theological examination of the cognitive science of religion"

One of the key challenges to the relationship between science and religion today in the west is the popular perception that science is necessary, religion unnecessary. At least in a small way, the intellectual reasoning of the "New Atheists," such as Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, have contributed to this trend. Dennett has argued that religion is akin to a cognitive virus that exploits weaknesses in human thought patterns for no other reason but to replicate itself, along the way consuming vast quantities of human energy that could otherwise be directed towards ends more "useful".

Scholars in the fields relating science and religion, on the other hand, have seen in aspects of traditional religious forms something that makes an unmistakable contribution to the quality of life on earth. While these scholars have drawn evidence for this position from recent scientific studies of human evolution and development, the field of the Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR) has yet to be fully recognized for the theological contributions it stands to make. Drawing on this recently established field, I will argue that traditional religious forms are not only "useful" to life on earth, but are actually essential, and I will suggest some of the theological implications of this position.

An early debate in the field of CSR has been whether or not religious cognition is the result of direct evolutionary adaptation, or rather a kind of evolutionary "spandrel," in that it is the byproduct of other cognitive systems that were directly selected for. The byproduct hypothesis has garnered the greatest following in CSR, with the common response being that it somehow devalues or (as a recent encyclopaedia entry on CSR put it) "deflates" religious cognition. I will argue, apropos of Stephen Jay Gould, one of the coiners of the term "spandrel," that non-adaptations, a character whose origin cannot be ascribed to the direct action of natural selection, can be coopted for a later, evolutionarily-beneficial, use. Hence, I propose that religious cognitions could have historically originated as a byproduct of other cognitive systems, but since their development they have been coopted for numerous evolutionarily-beneficial purposes, as described by the research findings of CSR.

I will conclude the paper by suggesting some epistemological and theological implications of accepting religion as cognitively adaptive. First, I will argue that this conclusion (religion as being evolutionarily-beneficial) is a long-overdue outworking of the cognitive revolution itself. Second, I will suggest that a

theology that seeks to integrate itself with cognitive science will necessarily privilege personal religious experience and a theology of community in its epistemology, and that such privileging will have distinct implications – some of which I will outline – for the doctrines of revelation and divine interaction with the world.

D'Souza, Mario

"Gans and Maritain: The Human Person and Culture"

Jacques Maritain's neo-Thomistic philosophy includes works on education and culture. However, what grounds and unites Maritain's philosophy is his distinction between the person and the individual; the person who exhibits transcendence and freedom, the individual who exhibits the circumscription of materiality. Nonetheless, the human being is a unity of these two metaphysical dimensions.

The paper will examine Maritain's philosophy of culture and education as it pertains to transcendence and the kinds of expressions that are contained in this call to transcendence, expressions verbal and contemplative, communal and personal, material and metaphysical.

Eshelman, Raoul

"Transcendence and Ethics in Performatist Narrative"

My proposed paper will treat the paradoxes arising through the use of authorially empowered "dense" narrators, as exemplified by Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. The article will further attempt to apply the Levinasian concept of separation developed in *Totality and Infinity* to this and comparable narratives and categorize different modes of transcendence occurring in performatist narrative.

Fashbaugh, Martin

"Reconstructing and Re-evacuating the 'Originary Scene': Jealousy and Genre Interplay in Robert Browning's 'Andrea del Sarto'"

In this paper, I will be explaining how the dramatic monologue is an ideal literary genre for application of Eric Gans's theory on the origin of the literary sign. The dramatic monologue that I will discuss in this paper is Robert Browning's "Andrea del Sarto," a work that epitomizes the genre's ability to showcase the tension between poetic and narrative discourses, which arguably comprise all literary works.

My argument is that Browning's poem depicts the process that the jealous, resentful subject goes through to distance himself or herself from the Originary Scene and, as Gans would put it, "memorialize" the object of desire as a sign of the aborted gesture of appropriation. In Browning's poem, the eponymous subject's clear inability to commit to this process of lyrical separation from the scene of

mimetic rivalry results in a vacillation between lyrical and narrative discourses, in which case the lyrical discourse attempts to remove the sign from its temporal context while narrative discourse puts it right back in the scene of mimetic rivalry.

Moreover, we can argue that through the dramatic monologue Browning can stage a scene in which the jealous subject serves as a poetic surrogate who represents the Victorian poet as an alienated figure at a time in which the literary marketplace was reflecting a rise of demand for prose and diminished interest in poetry. The jealous subject's dilemma of having to choose between competing for the object of desire or retiring into the recesses of his or her imagination where he can produce a sign of the aborted gesture of appropriation is representative of the Victorian poet's own dilemma of having to choose between the options of competing with the novelist for cultural capital in the literary marketplace or stepping outside the circle of conflict to produce more esoteric poetry.

The dramatic monologue becomes a material manifestation of a compromise, in which case the poet defers from choosing between one option or the other and instead metafictionally represents this dilemma through active genre interplay between poetic and narrative discourses. As a consequence of defending my thesis, I hope to illustrate the strong contribution that Generative Anthropology can make to literary genre studies, encouraging future GA forays into this area of literary studies.

Featherstone, Mark

"Utopia and Apocalypse: Transcendence and Violence in Western Thought"

In this paper I offer an apocalyptic reading of the central principle of generative anthropology, which I take to be the emergence of culture from the collective renunciation of the central object of desire, in order to suggest that Gans' (2007) theory of the origins of language, religion, and culture should not simply be taken as a theory of anthropological genesis, but must rather be understood in terms of its political and sociological relevance to contemporary global society.

My interpretation of generative anthropology as an apocalyptic theory turns off the Derridean (1984) insight that every origin presupposes the existence of an ending and that every ending presupposes the existence of some new beginning. I take the view that the core thesis of generative anthropology conforms to this insight in the sense that Gans' (2007) notion of the origin of humanity relates back to a primal state of nature from which language, religion, and culture emerge and presupposes some futuristic state where the effectiveness of language as a machine for sublimation begins to collapse under the weight of a radicalised form of mimetic desire that can no longer easily be sublimated into symbolic form in order to maintain the utopic condition of human civilization.

The crux of my thesis turns off looping these two imagined points, which I take to be the pre-historic state of proto-humanity and the post-human condition of uncivilized man, together in order to generate an apocalyptic interpretation of generative anthropology relevant to the present social, political, economic, and culture scene. That is to say that my thesis is that the technologies of sublimation embedded in language are under severe pressure in contemporary global society, that this is

threatening to drag humanity back to some minimal state of culture on the cusp of the state of nature, that the return of the originary sign, God, to mainstream politics in the west is an effect of this condition, and that generative anthropology, a theory concerned with the origins of humanity, is essential today, in the age of globalisation, when humanity is on the verge of transforming itself into post-humanity through the manipulation of the originary sign system of life itself, DNA code.

Fleming, Chris

"Cultural Transcendence: Originary Economics and the Genesis of Advertising"

Using the insights of generative anthropology and writers in the new Girardian economic tradition, this paper inquires into the origin of economics and advertising. In so doing, it opens up for re-examination some of the most fundamental axioms of economics, such as scarcity and the law of demand. We follow others in concurring that these, on further investigation, turn out to be appurtenances of desire rather than outward manifestations or entailments of the kind of rational-choice models that are an economist's theoretical stock-in-trade. Hence the link we make to advertising: From an originary anthropological point of view, advertising emerges as the proper and most original site of object-desire-in-practice, and as such is perhaps part of a scene more originary than economics itself.

Because of its own uncertain place within the academy, the discipline of advertising has not yet dared to model desire on its own terms (though it understands it well enough in its work-practices). The apparent failure of that discipline to grasp its own originary and ongoing significance should not detain us: this failure is a product of older, naive understandings of the interrelationship of art, commerce, and culture. In this still-prevalent interpretation, advertising is merely a domain of the market place, only incidentally related to culture when it generates something striking or memorable.

While such views are widely held by critics and practitioners alike, we contend to the contrary that originary desire is part of the scene of the origin of human culture. Just as the market is--and always was-- a cultural force that transcends the violence of the originary scene by deferring it through a mechanism of exchange, its counterpart, advertising, is the site of production of desire for objects through processes of representation of them as desirable not in themselves, but as desirable and actively desired by others--and hence, desirable for oneself. From this re-positioning of the two fields within a wider conception of the transcendent force of exchange structure as culture, we conclude with some tentative speculations on how our conceptions of the ethics of the market place, and of advertising itself, might be re-conceived.

(Joint presentation with John O'Carroll, Charles Sturt University, Australia)

Foshay, Raphael*"A Generative Anthropological Reading of Plato's Republic"*

The tension between the anthropological modes of interpretation of René Girard and Eric Gans can be located, in Gansian terms, in the transition from the model as subject to the model as object, from the rivalry focused on persons to the rivalry mediated, through language, by the object. In Girardian terms, the emphasis, within the subjective modelling of desire, is on the difference between internal and external mediation of rivalry.

In *Originary Thinking*, Gans observes of our fundamental theoretical orientation to inquiry: "The coherence of the whole, its power as an anthropology, cannot be measured from a fixed vantage point outside it. We can only assess it as a heuristic. . . . The ultimate criterion of these discoveries is our originary intuition, the sense of rightness" (25). In other words, our relation to the theoretical object of an originary hypothesis is what Gans characterizes as a "deferral" of the internal rivalry, one that mediates infinite regress in representational form, positing an interior regulatory principle that is itself non-discursive.

The challenge of finding an ethical and epistemological "rightness" internal to the esthetical deferral of rivalrous violence has been the task of metaphysics and of theory. I would like to explore the way in which Plato pursues that task in the most extensive and intensive of his dialogues, the *Republic*. David Roochnik has located what he argues is a tripartite structure in the *Republic*, one that frames the key metaphysical arguments in Books V to VII, as in fact a digression from the overall ethical argumentation of the dialogue. Roochnik's interpretation has implications for the interpretation of the classic opposition in the *Republic* between the esthetical and the ethical, between poetry and Plato's understanding of philosophy as the pursuit of the good. If indeed our relation to the object of theory is heuristic, I would like to pursue a heuristic encounter between Gansian generative anthropology and the argument of the *Republic*, such that these two theoretical inquiries into the ethical criterion mutually inform and illumine one another.

Friedlander, Keith*"Language and Blake's Private Model of Transcendence"*

The poetry of William Blake is often considered to be emblematic of Romantic transcendentalism. Perhaps the most popular example of this is to be found in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* where Blake refers to the cleansing of the doors of perception. Yet, as often as these lines are quoted as a mantra of transcendental idealism, those who cite them rarely pause to consider the author's own convictions. When read in the larger context of his poetic canon, it appears doubtful whether or not Blake believed such a cleansing was humanly possible. Indeed, Blake's later works are filled with losing struggles to transcend the limits of physical senses. In *The First Book of Urizen*, the genesis of the human form becomes an ongoing process of inescapable confinement, and in *Jerusalem* the artisan Los's cyclical struggles to restore divine order to the fallen, physical world are concluded only by the poem's apocalyptic conclusion. Far from simply promoting a transcendentalism based on the priority of spiritual

perception over physical reality, Blake's poetry examines the paradoxical endeavour of superseding the limits of finite subjectivism.

Despite the seeming impossibility of this endeavour however, it is often presented as the only salvation from the sources of repressive control that colour Blake's work. Various authoritarian figures, taking guises as angels, monarchs and deities, all share a singular crime: attempting to dictate the meaning of the world within the limits of their own perspectives. Yet, rather than simply oppose such figures, Blake goes so far as to suggest his own involvement in this form of tyranny. While Los' proclamation that he "must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans" announces his independent vision as an artist, it simultaneously identifies him as a potential tyrant. The prophet and the artist alike are potentially violent and domineering figures, asserting their voices over others and reifying the infinite potential of their imaginations into flawed utterances. For Blake then, transcendence promises the ability to defy the limits of the written word and the finite expression, both inherently corrupt, and escape becoming a tyrant himself. Needless to say, it is a project with a markedly grim outlook on the potential of language and communication.

I am interested in exploring how the drama of Blake's poetry, especially Jerusalem, comes to revolve around cyclical, paradoxical attempts to combat the static nature of his own medium. Critics such as Molly Anne Rathernberg and V. A. De Luca have suggested ways in which the language and textuality of these poems succeed in defying singular readings. While I will consider the validity of these approaches, rather than endeavour to vindicate Blake's project, my focus will be to investigate the impetus and objectives that inform this notion of transcendence. To this end I will compare his idea to Eric Gans' conception of transcendence as the result of language and communication bridging the isolation of the individual subject. I will write a conference paper that uses Gans' theory to question Blake's ideas regarding solipsism and that attempts to account for the sources of this pessimism.

Gans, Eric

"Language as Transcendence"

The most accessible manifestation of transcendence is not God but *language*. Every aspect of language evolves in time, but the intentional relationship between a sign and its meaning is not subject to mortality. The ontology of the sign is the reverse of that which obtains in nature between a species and its individual members. The species is *our* construct, whereas the sign as an intention or *type* preexists its tokens, just as God preexists his creation. Whether we take *just as* to mean that God created man or that man created God cannot be decided by either logic or empirical discovery.

The emergence of transcendence in the world of immanence is the birth of human intentionality, which is necessarily conscious of itself. Humanity cannot have been born unawares; becoming-conscious is an *event*. Natural science ignores this event, yet every religion offers an account of it. Generative anthropology's *originary hypothesis* is the first non-theistic attempt to conceive the origin of transcendence as the event of human language.

Goldman, Peter

"Shakespeare's Turn to Romance"

I will examine the logic of Shakespeare's turn to Romance in his final four plays, using *The Winter's Tale* as my main example, and how this shift reflects the emergence of Modernity and new models of transcendence.

Goodhart, Sandor

"From the Sacred to the Holy: René Girard, Eric Gans and Emmanuel Levinas"

This paper will treat the relation of the work of René Girard and Eric Gans to that of Emmanuel Levinas in terms of the difference between the sacred and the holy. It will focus upon language and in particular the dire (the "to say") as opposed to the dit (the "said") as a way of opening access to transcendence.

Hudson, Bob

"'En ce temps, je ronsardisais': Imitation and the Poetics of Romantic Irony in Nerval's Les Chimères "

Building on my anthropological explanation of the primacy of the sonnet as the ideal lyrical form (some of my previous research has theorized Petrarchism in the French Renaissance using GA and other socio-anthropological theories), in this paper I will explore Gérard de Nerval's choice of the sonnet as the sole lyrical form for his 1854 poetic masterpiece, *Les Chimères*. In his youth, Nerval penned a laudatory essay on the poets of the French Renaissance, composed his own Ronsardian odelettes, and freely recognized the influence of these poets in his own verse. However, over the next two decades, he would, in various places, seek to divorce himself from his past models to the point of adopting the Malherbian insult: "*En ce temps, je ronsardisais* ["At this time, I was imitating Ronsard"], only to, at the end of his life, take up the most Ronsardian of verse forms in *Les Chimères*.

Beginning with a brief summary of my anthropological theory of the sonnet, this paper will focus on examining Nerval's early resistance to imitation that would ultimately give way to his espousal of more transcendent—even *sacred*—models of the past in his final verses. Analyzing a selection of these sonnets, I plan to demonstrate how Nerval's modern adaptations on this lyrical form—composed in the wake of the failed revolution of 1848—establish him as the poetic voice to communicate the irony and lost illusions of his generation of Late Romantics.

Katz, Adam

"From Habit to Maxim: Eccentric Models of Reality and Presence in the Writing of Gertrude Stein"

Gertrude Stein's project as a writer seems to have been to create an originary experience of grammar. We might think about this project in terms of a desire for an ostensive gesturing toward linguistic

elements that simultaneously models what is iterable and unrepeatable in language. We might think about it as a productive resentment toward grammatical normativity, with its ties to Western metaphysics. We might, finally, think about it as a desire to be nothing but writer within a writing defined as the generation of models for innovative writing; and, in this form, Stein's project is also to create herself as center, as literary celebrity, as pole of attraction, contempt and ridicule, but above all attention. In all these cases, for Stein the linguistic act is always an irreducible event, an interruption of history by freedom.

My paper will argue that the concept of "originary grammar" enables us to construct a continuum associating Stein's most hermetic, private and innovative works (*How to Write, Useful Knowledge, Stanzas in Meditation*, among others) with her more accessible public lectures ("Poetry and Grammar," "Composition as Explanation," etc.) and popular autobiographical works (*The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, Everybody's Autobiography, Wars I Have Seen*) which will show how her work constitutes a new way of thinking grammatically.

I will articulate this continuum by reading Stein's work as a process of generating maxims out of habits, with "originary grammar" as the mechanism converting the latter into the former. Stein's inquiry into and enactment of the relation between human mind and human nature and the essence of the timeless work in *A Geographical History of America* will provide my central focus on Stein's originary grammar which, in the end, is an innovation to create iterations of the originary scene.

Khan, Amir

"Echoes of Modernism in Early Twentieth Century Canadian Novels"

Abstract pending—

Koper, Peter T

"Text/Dialogue, Sacred/Periphery: Plato's Treatment of Rhetoric in The Georgias and The Phaedrus"

The Socratic Plato was more interested in the everyday language than in transcendent forms. Plato's early work focuses on the capacities of language to organize a community. He rejects the work of contemporary rhetoricians in very specific ways, the most important of which is any claim to have access to a center of meaning adequate to organizing the polis. Lectures (macrologia), virtuoso displays of fluency (*epideiknumi*), and written texts have related problems: they do not rely on the circulation of meaning through a community of interlocutors that Plato's Socrates argues is the only way to detach language from its inherent but arbitrary, perhaps even accidental, emphasis on a represented center, whether mythic or otherwise. Plato's dialectic is a model of the circulation of ideas in an exchange system that generates community on the periphery of the scene of representation, thus minimizing the truth-distorting conformity and violence-provoking exclusiveness of communal efforts to organize around versions of identity made available by sacred history.

Lee, Bong Deock

"Eric Gans' Theory of Signs, René Girard's Anthropology, Emmanuel Levinas' Metaphysics"

Despite its non-sacrificial view of God, Girard's theory has been read within the western time-framework, and thus, dragged to what it never meant, i.e. to a sacrificial theology, because, in the western concept of time, which gives a privilege to the present, everything, including God, is inevitably reduced to a coherent system of being or the same that shows itself to itself. Therefore, if Girard had clarified the temporal passivity in the Bible, which is already implied in his theory, his theory would not have been involved in the sacrificial controversies because the temporal passivity, or diachrony, within the Judaic-biblical time-framework, is the only mechanism against human projection of violence to the other or God.

Based on this distinction between the western and Judaic-biblical time-framework, I suggest that Eric Gans' theory, which depends on the mental representation of the object, is still sacrificial because, in the mental process of representation, the object is already appropriated by violence and assimilated into a system, due to the lack of diachrony that functions as the only defensive mechanism against human violence. That is, despite his critique of Girard's victim mechanism, Gans, who depends on the western concept of time, cannot free his theory from the victim mechanism because, within the western time-framework, the object is inevitably affected by violence and assimilated into the community, just like the Girardian victim.

Ludwigs, Marina

"Group Destiny and Zionist Ethics in George Eliot's Daniel Deronda"

My presentation explores the topic of intergroup ethics, claiming Zionism to be a distillation of Judaic values that are an important (and, perhaps, the first) instance of intergroup ethics. Generative anthropology traces the emergence of ethics to the originary moment of the deferral of violence. The ethos of sharing puts an end to mimetic conflict by replicating the desired object linguistically and thus making it shareable.

But the original area of applicability of ethics is at the level of intragroup interactions. An ethical gesture is valid for group members within the symbolic context of the historically shared moment of origin. Intergroup interactions are principally different. Anthropological studies indicate that the early guiding principles of primitive warfare were those of infinite expansion and war of attrition. In contradistinction to this, Judaism injects ethical self-limiting into its "from Nile to Euphrates" guidelines that extrapolate the intragroup model to that of the intergroup one by conferring group membership to all nations, so that each nation's claim to a share in the world's resources and territory is accorded legitimacy.

Another part of my argument concerns the originary status of territory as the ultimate source of all appetitive objects. I speculate that the originary act of naming grounds the symbolic system by yoking

together the designation of the people and their territory under one transcendental signifier (such as, for instance, Israel - the name of both the people and the land). This homonymy enshrines territoriality as a collective right by "hard-wiring," as it were, the signifier to the signified and thus naturalizing the symbolic act of the communal arrogation of resources. I argue that naturalizing that the idea of group destiny is unthinkable outside territorial thinking and constitutes, in one form or another, a narrative of coming into possession of one's terrestrial heritage. I bring these discussion to bear on my analysis of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*.

McKenna, Andrew

"Art and Incarnation: Oscillating Views"

As a more exacting reformulation of René Girard's Mimetic Theory, Eric Gans's Generative Anthropology opens up new vistas on esthetic experience and its cultural manifestations. Gans's originary scenario defines this experience as the emergence of uniquely human attention that is constrained to oscillate between signs shared by the desiring community and the object or referent whose mimetically deferred appropriation lends it a sacred aura, a salutary, transcendental significance. The explanatory power of this analysis will be essayed in terms of the singularly Incarnational tradition in Western theology and iconography through its successive (and regressive) disenchantments: from Renaissance Annunciations of human divinity (Fra Angelico et al.) through its very recent manifestations in the contemporary exhibit *Traces du sacré* (Paris, Beaubourg, May-August 2008), art progresses from a fecund confidence in transcendence to ironic and aggressive self-dismemberment, with indelible traces of originary violence.

Meeker, Stacey

"Literacy and Utopia: An Originary Analysis of the European 'Documentalist'"

This paper examines the European "documentalists" and the fact that they've been rediscovered recently only to be labeled as prescient but "utopian." Underlying the epistemology of the documentalists and their current critics is a "belief" in the value of some kind of literacy as an engine for positive social change. This quasi-religion is a phenomenon that lends itself well to originary analysis and can lead in a number of different directions (socio-political or in the direction of cognition/ knowledge structures/ classification, or even memory) that might coordinate well with other "utopian" presentations.

Nixon, Greg

"Education and Transcendence"

I would like to explore education that had or has transcendence as its aim and end. To do so, I will do a brief historic review and then question what the assumed meaning might be of the transcendence for which the education is taking place. No doubt this assumed meaning will vary with time, place, and

culture, but it may be wondered if there is a comparable, perhaps universal, semiotic to transcendence as a concept.

Certainly education taking place within the realm of certain religions can be seen to have self-transcendence and spiritual awakening as its goal, but oftentimes a more earthly sort of transcendence is assumed but not elaborated in more secular educational systems too. It certainly seems that transcendence is no longer present as aim in any of our current public school systems (which seem to have become devoted to social training, intellectual specialization, and functionality), but we may find transcendence is still sought by voices on the periphery.

O'Carroll, John

"Cultural Transcendence: Originary Economics and the Genesis of Advertising"

Using the insights of generative anthropology and writers in the new Girardian economic tradition, this paper inquires into the origin of economics and advertising. In so doing, it opens up for re-examination some of the most fundamental axioms of economics, such as scarcity and the law of demand. We follow others in concurring that these, on further investigation, turn out to be appurtenances of desire rather than outward manifestations or entailments of the kind of rational-choice models that are an economist's theoretical stock-in-trade. Hence the link we make to advertising: From an originary anthropological point of view, advertising emerges as the proper and most original site of object-desire-in-practice, and as such is perhaps part of a scene more originary than economics itself.

Because of its own uncertain place within the academy, the discipline of advertising has not yet dared to model desire on its own terms (though it understands it well enough in its work-practices). The apparent failure of that discipline to grasp its own originary and ongoing significance should not detain us: this failure is a product of older, naive understandings of the interrelationship of art, commerce, and culture. In this still-prevalent interpretation, advertising is merely a domain of the market place, only incidentally related to culture when it generates something striking or memorable.

While such views are widely held by critics and practitioners alike, we contend to the contrary that originary desire is part of the scene of the origin of human culture. Just as the market is--and always was-- a cultural force that transcends the violence of the originary scene by deferring it through a mechanism of exchange, its counterpart, advertising, is the site of production of desire for objects through processes of representation of them as desirable not in themselves, but as desirable and actively desired by others--and hence, desirable for oneself. From this re-positioning of the two fields within a wider conception of the transcendent force of exchange structure as culture, we conclude with some tentative speculations on how our conceptions of the ethics of the market place, and of advertising itself, might be re-conceived.

(Joint presentation with Chris Fleming, University of Western Sydney, Australia)

Parry, D.A.

"Gods are what gods do"

The contemporary polemics over the existence of God is seen to result from two epistemological shifts without a commonly accepted theory to provide the categories of a resolution: a suitable theory is provided by Generative Anthropology.

Generative Anthropology is seen to depend on imitation as a condition for the emergence of the sacred. Features of imitation, directed by other human drives, seen as ordered by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, are seen to be formative factors in the evolution of both individual faith and organized religion. A defining feature, clearly expressed in the singular critical event is that of the sacred controlling a particular domain, in that instance, human behaviour and emotional response. A particularly effective feature of imitation is the drive for a better state which is seen to evolve into the differing utopian visions of faith and religion. The existence of 'gods' is resolved in the positive and the emphasis is placed on the role of 'gods' and their associated, evolving utopian visions in the ongoing development of human individuals, families and societies.

Peacocke, Emma

"Staying Ahead of Oneself: The Byronic Model"

William Hazlitt confessed himself baffled by Byron's *Don Juan*; why, he asked, would anyone work so hard to invert and mock his own legend? Generative Anthropology offers some of the strongest and most fundamental insights into the enigmatic *Don Juan*. Byron explodes epic traditions to remove suffering from a Byronic central victim and to relocate it in segments of the population previously exiled from the centrality that Gans defines. For instance, women's prominence (through Julia and Leila) is vital to *Don Juan's* grand reappraisal of the Romantic traditions of suffering and victimhood. While Generative Anthropology provides an excellent framework to understand *Don Juan*, *Don Juan* also stretches Generative Anthropology. Generative Anthropology draws on Judeo-Christian traditions of representation and of sacrifice; *Don Juan* engages with Islam through the Siege of Ismail. *Don Juan* is a productive topic for a Generative Anthropology conference not only because of the theory's analytical power, but for the poem's ability to increase the theory's range.

Redekop, Vern

"Transcendence, Spirituality, and Morphogenic Fields: The Complexity of Reconciliation"

Discourse around transcendence and spirituality involves the tropological use of language as metaphors of metaphors are used to signify abstract and transcendent concepts. One example is the concept of a *morphogenic field* in which "field" as land without trees morphs in to electrical and gravitational fields, to fields of inquiry and endeavour, and, finally, to non-local information fields. This use of language has heuristic and hermeneutical dimensions; that is, there is an intellectual passion directed to discovery

and interpretation for particular ends. Within the context of reconciliation there is an orientation to blessing; that is, the process of inquiry and reflection is directed toward mutual understanding, empowerment and sustenance. Examples of resultant teachings of blessing include a reinterpretation of the Hindu concept of Karma and social teachings in the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox traditions.

Schneider, Matthew

"The Beatles and the Boxer: Pop Culture and the Onomastics of Generative Anthropology"

On February 18, 1964, the Beatles, while in Florida for an appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show, paid a visit to boxer Cassius Clay, then training for his first match with reigning heavyweight champion Sonny Liston. The meeting brought together—for the first and only time—arguably the five most famous and historically representative celebrities of the 1960s, the decade when the mechanisms of modern pop stardom emerged. When John, Paul, George, and Ringo met the Louisville Lip at his training camp outside Miami, however, neither they nor most of the world suspected that, if victorious over Liston, Clay was planning to rename himself in accordance with his recent conversion to the Nation of Islam; and on February 26, after beating Liston by technical knockout the night before, Clay announced that he would henceforward be known as Muhammad Ali.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits," says Matthew 7:16; but the pop culture celebrities of the contemporary era are known by their names: John, Paul, George, and Ringo; Ali, Britney, Brangelina. What can Generative Anthropology, a theory that posits the hypothetical origin of the linguistic sign in a collectively experienced event, tell us about the surprising degree of ontological significance that names today apparently possess? This essay's examination of the curious parallels between the evolutions of the Beatles and Muhammad Ali will help illuminate the particular character of celebrity in the contemporary world, where name and being seem to have intertwined to a greater degree than ever before.

St. Amour, Jessica

"Crossing Gender Boundaries: Mimetic Desire in Charlotte Dacre's Zafloya"

Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* reveals how stable identities like gender ideologies become un-stable when cross-gender rivalries are produced by internally mediated desires. Dacre's novel is what René Girard refers to as a "network of mimetic entanglements". This paper aims to unravel these entanglements and thereby reveal Dacre's intuitive anticipation of Girard's theory of mimetic desire. *Zofloya* demonstrates how triangles of desire can be used to describe the interaction between individuals in a competitive society. Dacre was aware of the social competition for personal centrality, indeed, for a new form of secular transcendence, and foresaw how this competition produces violence and rivalry. The relationships between the characters in the novel reveal how difficult it is to bring these desires under control in a market system that promotes a freedom of desires. As a result, the novel illustrates what Dacre considered to be the illusory quality of freedom and the general mayhem of modernity.

Title, Miles

"Building a Sacred Alphabet: The Tarot of Eliot, Williams and Calvino"

My paper explores the evolving role of tarot cards as signs of the sacred in literature, both in a religious and secular sense. Eric Gans speaks of "religion, art, and language as manifestations of a single as yet unexplained faculty of representation", and for T.S. Eliot, Charles Williams, and Italo Calvino, tarot cards are able to function as hybrid representations of this single faculty. The cards are an iconic code that has become an expression of our quest to negotiate a role for the divine in modern existence.

Three aspects of the Tarot as it was encountered by the twentieth century authors allow this: the creators in Northern Italy in the early fifteenth century drew on a wide and eclectic variety of religious, mythological, secular and folk sources which grounded the symbolism in the culture and history of Europe as perceived by Catholic Quattrocento eyes; Antoine Court de Gébelin's intuition in eighteenth century France that the cards held an ancient and disguised code of pagan hermetic meaning, which was expanded a century later by Eliphas Levi to include complex associations with alchemical, cabbalistic and astrological symbolism; and lastly, the Rider-Waite deck of 1910, designed and illustrated by Arthur Edward Waite and Pamela Coleman Smith, which recreated the cards as a sacred alphabet, "a visual sequence of Christian poetry" (Currie), and popularized them as a tool of cartomancy.

Each author draws on different properties of the cards. In *The Waste Land* (1922), Eliot adapts and redesigns Waite's cards, understanding them "poetically rather than by means of a rigid occult or emblematic hermeneutic". Charles Williams' novel *The Greater Trumps* (1932) gives an immanent form to the transcendent Tarot: dancing miniatures that correspond to the Arcana, and shape all reality by their movement. Eliot then uses these dancing figures in *Burnt Norton II* (1935), identifying them with the blessed souls in Dante's heavenly Empyrean and thus situating the Tarot incarnations at the "still point" or centre of creation. Finally, Italo Calvino's *Castle of Crossed Destinies* (1973) makes the Tarot an "oulipe"-style arbitrary/symbolic machine that is used to replace speech, and yet returns the cards' function to the time and place of their formation, rewriting folklore and history as a "finite number of elements whose combinations are multiplied to billions". In each instance, the author uses the cards as a sacred alphabet of morphemes, a "combinatorial game" owing something to their origin and symbolism, but with equal power arising from intuition and a transcendence of rational or predetermined meaning, mingled to form "both a new world/ And the old made explicit".

van Oort, Richard

"Doubt, Compromise, and Doublethink: Transcendence in a Secular Age"

I take my title from Ernest Gellner who writes that "a free order is based in the end not on true and firm conviction, but on doubt, compromise and doublethink." Gellner is speaking here against the Enlightenment idea that freedom is inversely proportional to religious belief. Even modern "secular" people cannot do without the shared beliefs that sustain them and the communities in which they live.

The difference is that these shared beliefs are worn for the most part ironically. Like Hamlet at his uncle's court, we have "that within which passes show" but are nonetheless condemned to wear the customary suits of our peers—which is to say, of the particular cultural groups that define us. How do we reconcile our indubitable sense of personal uniqueness with the homogenizing influence of the larger culture? What, in short, is the function of culture in modern society?

This paper will draw on Gellner's theory of modernity in order to understand "transcendence in a secular age." A philosopher-turned-anthropologist, Gellner interprets ideas in terms of the types of society in which they are born. He is an excellent example of what Eric Gans calls "originary thinking."

Van Schepen, Randall

"Where the absence of language begins': Transcendence in Modern and Contemporary Art"

The goal of many modern artists was to use the materiality of their work to express the transcendent, non-material, spiritual reality of the new modern age. Artists as varied in approach and time as Kandinsky, Delaunay, Malevitch and Rothko participated in this strong stream within the development of modern art. But more evident in modernist critical discourse was the articulation of these same works and artists as contributing to the formal development of modernist artistic language. The formalist critics often denied the spiritual roots of the artistic approaches, even as they drew from spiritual and transcendent language to express its significance. Modern artists themselves understood their use of formal abstraction as a manner of articulating the ineffable or spiritual, but formal critics such as Roger Fry and Clement Greenberg understood these same developments as isolating art from the influence of other forms of expression, morality, and subject matter in general.

Despite the formalist critic's desire to view the work as a virtual Leibnizian monad—a claustrophobic sealed-off space distinct from any contingent influence, focussed on itself—much of the language of formal criticism derived from theological concepts. By its very nature, criticism is drawn to this source, as one of the most obvious spheres of critical discourse about the transcendent meaning of material experience. The present paper addresses such spiritual pretensions, often unacknowledged, in the writing of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, with particular focus on Fried's articulation of Minimalist sculpture using language and concepts derived from the Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards.

Vessey, Mark

"Was Augustine an Anthropologist?"

When early modern (Renaissance "humanist") rhetoricians and defenders of poetry narrated the genesis of civil society, their recycling of classical stories of the original bringers of culture to a sub-human population was complicated by rehearsals of a Christian-biblical myth of primitive human perfection, original human fault and subsequent divine regeneration, for which Augustine's writings were the ultimate authority. The result was a far-reaching narrative and conceptual incoherence that

Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment theories of culture—empirical, idealist, postmodernists, etc.—would struggle to resolve and that has apparently not been resolved yet: consider the current contest over evolutionary-cognitive approaches to the humanities. How much of this confusion of cultural-foundational idioms can be fairly laid at Augustine's door?

Augustine's reflections on language, the arts and the institutions of human society span his oeuvre from the early philosophical dialogues, to the quasi-systematic treatise *De doctrina christiana*, to the final mythographic synthesis *De civitate dei*. They combine Graeco-Roman philosophical antiquarianism in the tradition of Cicero and Varro, Stoic theories of language and society, Platonic vision of the divine unity of the cosmos, and a conviction of the special providence of the god of the Old and New Testaments.

Watson, Simon

"Richard Dawkins's The God Delusion: Another Front in the War of Fundamentalisms?"

Despite his arguments to the contrary, Richard Dawkins is a secular reflection of the religious fundamentalists he sets out to criticize in his book *The God Delusion*.

For my paper I will argue that this book is a rhetorical document, no different than a religious tract in its intent to convert its reader to atheism. Presented is a monolithic and oversimplified strawman of "religion," which is belittled and denigrated. Dawkins argues that he is not a fundamentalist because he does not prescribe violence, yet he uses disease imagery to describe religious believers and ridicules those who do not succumb to his proselytization. Like the religious fundamentalist, he thinks in dualisms, perceiving the world in binary hues of black and white, good and evil, healthy and diseased. As opposed to "irrational" religion, which Dawkins argues is delusional if not insane, science and reason are unlimited in their potential to discern the truth and set the human race in a moral direction: "the existence of God is a scientific hypothesis like any other"; "Either he exists or he doesn't. It is a scientific question; one day we may know the answer."

Therefore, like the religious fundamentalist who believes that he knows and carries out the will of God, Dawkins fails to recognize human limitations and demonstrates a dangerous lack of self-awareness in the discrepancies between his claims ("I am not a dualist") and the reality of his text. The danger is that Dawkins's dualisms and intolerance will stoke the fear that feeds religious fundamentalisms. My paper will conclude then, that *The God Delusion* formulates atheism as yet another front in the escalating war of fundamentalisms.

Wright, Edmond

"Faith and the Basis of Language"

In this paper I wish to draw together two aspects of the philosophical theory I have proposed in my book, *Narrative, Perception, Language, and Faith* (Macmillan, 2005). One is the assumption in a dialogue

on the part of both speaker and hearer of there being a common referent about which information is to pass from one to the other, and the other is that a proper faith, and not a blind trust, should uphold this assumption, a faith ethically incumbent on both, though in no way necessary to the intersubjective process. This approach sees the evolution of language as in itself containing nothing normative; in this respect the view is at odds with any claim, such as that of the early Habermas, which tries to embed in the nature of language a bias toward truth, sincerity and objectivity. It is at the origin of language that the interconnection of the two aspects of the philosophical theory, mutual assumption and mutual trust or faith, can be seen to be implied.

Zurawski, Nils

"Talking Violence' as a Way out of Violent Conflict"

Although violence in political conflicts often has horrendous consequences, it can also be a stabilising factor. In Northern Ireland violence was part of a communal system of mutual deterrence between catholic and protestant communities and at the same time a key element to each sides's dynamics of identity formation. Lacking a common experience - an originary scene in terms of the conflict which could lead the two parties back to a common history - there was no solution to end the conflict that could be based on understanding, as antagonism was the only unifying element.

However, to actually meet the points subscribed to in the Belfast agreement of 1998, the IRA had to come to terms with a politics of non-violence, without risking to openly dismiss the option of radical engagement and violent self-defence. Throughout the peace process Sinn Fein and the IRA were employing a strategy that was based on a language of violence. Ten years later these rhetorics have paid off for all communities, catholic and protestant.

Given the latest attack - the first after 12 years - on military personnel by an IRA splinter group, the question arises: if this endangers the peace process and if so how? In this paper I would like to sketch out the strategy of transcending violence through narrative forms in violence conflicts as a solution of these conflicts and why the Real IRA attack from 9th March does not disturb the peace process as it is. Using aspects from the Girardian body of thought I will offer thoughts for a discussion about violent conflicts, the importance of violence and strategies to overcome its fatal consequences, e.g. in Palestine/Israel or other conflicts.