

# Benchmarks

This issue brings together a couple of our original and most stalwart collaborators, **Tom Bertonneau** and **Matt Schneider**, veterans of the original 1987 **GA** seminar and founding editors of ***Anthropoetics***, and two of our most faithful more recent contributors, **Raoul Eshelman** and **Dawn Perlmutter**. All four deal with intellectual landscapes close to their heart. Tom's leisurely meditation on irony touches on late Antiquity in the person of Lucian of Samosata; Matt deals with the Wordsworthian origins of the American popular ballad; Raoul pursues his elaboration of the performativist esthetic in the literature of Eastern Europe; and Dawn explores once again the intersection of the criminal and the sacred, this time in the all-too-timely world of Islamic terrorism. The reader is warned that her article contains some graphic descriptions, and above all that the links to decapitation videos should not be investigated by the faint-hearted.

## About Our Contributors

**Thomas F. Bertonneau**, teaches at SUNY Oswego. He is a regular contributor to *Modern Age*, *Intercollegiate Review*, and *The University Bookman*, as well as to *Praesidium* and *Anthropoetics*. His "Threading the Labyrinth" appears in the current *Intercollegiate Review*; his study of Ayn Rand appeared in *Modern Age* in Fall 2004 under the title "From Romantic Fallacy to Holocaustic Imagination." With Kim Paffenroth of Iona College, Bertonneau has written *The Truth is Out There: Christian Faith and the Classics of TV Science Fiction*, forthcoming from Brazos Press and available for prepublication purchase at Amazon.com.

**Raoul Eshelman** (Ph.D. University of Constance 1988, Habilitation Hamburg 1995) is a Slavist and Comparatist specializing in modern and postmodern literature. He is presently teaching at the Dept. of Slavic Literatures at the University of Munich, and is working on a book on performatism.

**Dawn Perlmutter**, Director of the Institute for the Research of Organized and Ritual Violence, is the author of *Investigating Religious Terrorism & Ritualistic Crimes* (CRC Press), *Reclaiming the Spiritual in Art* (SUNY Press), *Graven Images: Creative Acts of Idolatry* (UMI dissertation), and numerous publications on ritual violence in contemporary culture. She regularly trains law enforcement agencies throughout the United States, has advised Police Departments and Prosecutors' offices on numerous cases of ritual homicide, and presented expert witness testimony on ritualistic crimes. As the subject matter expert on ritual murder she has been interviewed for many documentaries, newspapers and newscasts including The O'Reilly Factor, the Fox News Channel, NBC, CBS, The Learning

Channel and the BBC. She is currently working on another book for CRC Press titled *Blood Rituals* (forthcoming 2007). She holds a Doctor of Philosophy from New York University and a Masters Degree from The American University, Washington, DC.

**Matthew Schneider**, a founding member of the GA seminar (who has managed to attend some portion of the seminar every year it has been given), holds an MA from Chicago and received his PhD in English from UCLA in 1991. The author of *Original Ambivalence: Violence and Autobiography in Thomas De Quincey* (Peter Lang, 1995), Schneider has also published essays on Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, William Blake, critical theory, and Biblical exegesis. He is associate professor of English and Comparative Literature at Chapman University (Orange, California).

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