

# Benchmarks

This issue contains four articles derived from presentations at our highly successful joint **GASC-COV&R-JGA (Japan Girard Association) conference in Tokyo in July**, and an article by **Adam Katz**, who didn't make it to Tokyo. The Japan conference idea was originally the brainchild of my former colleague and **Anthropoetics** contributor **Herbert Plutschow**, who after retirement from UCLA's Asian Languages and Cultures Department had become a dean at Josai International University in Japan. Sadly, Herb died suddenly from a heart attack before his idea could come to fruition, but our joint conference was in part a monument to his memory.

What I find particularly impressive about this issue is that all five contributors engage with GA at a fundamental level rather than merely attempt to "apply" it to a text or other cultural artifact. Our group may be small, but its ideas are alive and well!

Two of the articles deal with cultural phenomena that go beyond the textual. **Ian Dennis** uses the occasion of a roadside memorial to ask the fundamental question of how the anthropological structure of tragedy can be applied to the "tragedies" of daily life. **Matthew Taylor's** discussion of the troubling phenomenon of Japanese recluses contrasts the relevance of GA with that of Girardian "MT" in dealing with such social issues. **Edmond Wright's** subtle and witty article on the *Summum Bonum* moves analytic philosophy one more step closer to GA. **Andrew Bartlett's** powerful piece on Apocalypse makes a strong argument for originary thinking, with a number of citations to back up his analysis. And **Adam Katz's** article on antisemitism links "the Jewish question" to Adam's preoccupation with linguistic constructs and the "errors" through which they evolve in a most original fashion.

## About Our Contributors

[\*\*Andrew Bartlett\*\*](#) teaches academic writing and literary criticism at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. He has published poems, book reviews, articles on Joseph Conrad and Cormac McCarthy, and essays in generative anthropology. He is an active member of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion and president of GASC, the Generative Anthropology Society and Conference. His interpretation of the Frankenstein myth in the light of the originary hypothesis, *Mad Scientist, Impossible Human*, is a book forthcoming from Davies Group Publishers. He lives in Vancouver with his partner Joanne and their West Highland terrier, Ceilidgh.

**Ian Dennis** is Professor of English at the University of Ottawa, and was the Chief Organiser of the 2009 GA Conference there. He is Secretary-Treasurer of the Generative Anthropology Society and Conference (GASC). He is the author of four novels, of the Girardian study *Nationalism and Desire in Early Historical Fiction* (Macmillan 1997), and of *Lord Byron and the History of Desire* (Delaware 2009), a work of literary criticism making substantial use of both Mimetic Theory and Generative Anthropology.

**Adam Katz** is the editor of *The Originary Hypothesis: A Minimal Proposal for Humanistic Inquiry*, a recently published collection of essays on Generative Anthropology. He teaches writing at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, and is presently at work on a new book on and in originary thinking tentatively titled *Beginnings in the Middle: Originary Grammar, Remembering Firstness and Retrieving the Ostensive in Modern Semiosis*.

**Matthew Taylor** is Professor of English at Kinjo Gakuin University in Nagoya, Japan. He teaches courses in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), academic writing, teacher training, and culture. He has written and presented on EFL pedagogy, literature, and mimetic theory. He has co-authored textbooks for EFL students, including two for academic writing (Cengage Learning) and one for oral communication skills (Macmillan Languagehouse). His previous articles for *Anthropoetics* explored mimetic elements in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* and the phenomenon of social isolation in Japan. The article for the present issue further explores the latter topic.

**Edmond Wright** holds degrees in English and philosophy and a doctorate in philosophy. He is a member of the Board of Social Theory of the International Sociological Association, and was sometime a Fellow at the Swedish Collegium for the Advanced Study of the Social Sciences, Uppsala. He has edited *The Ironic Discourse* (*Poetics Today*, 4, 1983), *New Representationalisms: Essays in the Philosophy of Perception* (Avebury, 1993), *Faith and the Real* (*Paragraph*, 24, 2001), and *The Case for Qualia* (MIT Press, forthcoming, May 2008), and has co-edited with his wife Elizabeth *The Zizek Reader*, (Blackwell, 1999) and is author of *Narrative, Perception, Language, and Faith* (Macmillan, 2005). Over sixty articles of his have appeared in the philosophical journals. He has also published two volumes of poetry.