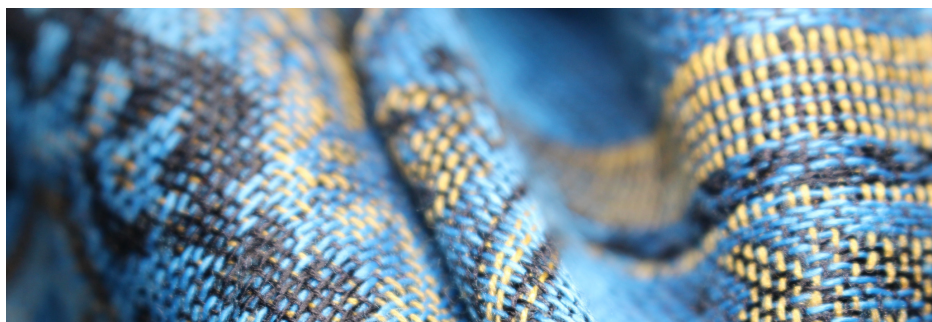


The Mountaineer Musicological Community Presents:

# TRAILBLAZERS AND HELLRAISERS

Perspectives in the Humanities

Saturday • September 15th • 2018  
Creative Arts Center  
West Virginia University



# Trailblazers and Hellraisers: Perspectives in the Humanities

Presented by the Mountaineer Musicological Community with generous support from the  
WVU School of Music, Office of Undergraduate Research, and Humanities Center

## - Program -

- 1:00 **Welcome & Introductions**  
Paige Zalman, President
- 1:10 **Keynote Address**  
Dr. Travis D. Stimeling, “Humanists Among Us: Lessons from Community-Engaged Trailblazers and Hellraisers”
- 1:40 **Break**
- 2:00 **Session 1: Rebuilding and Reforming**
- “What’s in a Word? English Wool, Brooks Brothers, and ‘Lincoln’s Law’ in the Civil War Era”  
*Robert Novak, History*
- “The Magic Wand of the Manufacturer: William Gregg, Graniteville, and Antebellum Reform”  
*Francis Curran, History*
- "You're Too Close: Give Me Some Space! An Exercise in Distance Reading"  
*Morgan McMinn, History*
- 3:30 **Break**
- 3:45 **Session 2: Placemaking and Personhood**
- “*L'Amoureux de la Lumiere*: The Art of Jean-Louis Roumegeure”  
*Elizabeth Wheeler, Art History*
- “Tarnishing the Trophy: Black Lesbianism in *Master of None*”  
*Elana J. Zambori, Literary and Cultural Studies*
- “Rethinking Interaction: Agency and Identity in Performance with *\_Derivations\_*”  
*Jacob Kopcienski, Musicology*
- 5:15 **Break**
- 5:30 **Paper Prize Winner Announcement & Closing Remarks**

Special thanks to the faculty judges of the student paper prize: Dr. Joshua Arthurs (History), Dr. Sharon Ryan (Philosophy), and Dr. Evan MacCarthy (Musicology). We also wish to thank our generous sponsors:



**-Abstracts-**

**Robert Novak, “What’s in a Word? English Wool, Brooks Brothers, and ‘Lincoln’s Law’ in the Civil War Era”**

In 1813, Benjamin Law developed a recycling process for old rags that could be reworked and respun into “new” cloth – shoddy. In a period where people were equally obsessed with innovation and the things that surrounded them, this was a monumental invention. On outward appearance – and depending on the quantities of virgin wool and shredded rags – the fabric looked no different from other English wools and would be used in tablecloths, overcoats, undergarments, and even naval uniforms.

Today, however, “shoddy” is a term used derisively in the United States – a “shoddy” piece of work is one that falls apart easily or wasn’t done right the first time. How did a fabric once praised for its ingenuity fall to an insult thrown at contractors for imperfect work?

This presentation seeks to trace the term “shoddy” from its origins in West Yorkshire to New York City at the dawn of the American Civil War. Prestigious clothing firms such as Brooks Brothers would become villainized for their “shoddy work,” with shoddy, so much so that their store would be attacked by angry mobs during New York’s 1863 Draft Riots. The Brooks brother’s conduct, and trends in wartime manufacturing, would even bring the power of the Federal Government to bear, memorialized in laws that exist today.

This story includes trailblazers and hellraisers, innovators and thieves – and exists with us today in a simple word.

**Francis Curran, “The Magic Wand of the Manufacturer: William Gregg, Graniteville, and Antebellum Reform”**

Over the past two decades, historians have exponentially furthered our understanding of the relationship between antebellum reform efforts and the American South. Collectively, their works argue for the existence of a virulent reform impulse in Dixie in the decades preceding the Civil War. Despite its merits, this body of scholarship has its limitations. For example, historians have often overlooked the relationship between leading southern manufacturers, their mill towns, and reform efforts of the era.

The proposed paper injects leading southern manufacturers into discussions of antebellum reform efforts. It argues that these capitalists were not only idealistic and steadfast reformers, but also some of the most powerful of the period, both North and South. The most famous of these men was pioneer textile industrialist, William Gregg (1800-1867). A native of Monongalia County, Virginia (now West Virginia), Gregg founded the largest and most significant cotton textile mill in not only the state of South Carolina, but the entire South in the late 1840s. Alongside his massive industrial operation, Gregg built a company village for his employees and their families, over which he exercised a powerful and pervasive paternalism. Motivated by the need for a well-disciplined workforce, Gregg erected a free school for the education of his operatives’ children and oversaw the first compulsory education system in the state’s history. He also donated land for the construction of Protestant churches and enforced strict temperance measures in the company village. Workers and townspeople, however, did not passively acquiesce to Gregg’s reformist vision. Rather, they frequently resisted, setting up an epic power struggle. Interpreting Gregg and other like-minded manufacturers as reformers not only adds to our understanding of antebellum reform efforts in the South, but also further complicates our understanding of the social and cultural character of the region as a whole before the Civil War.

### **Morgan McMinn, "You're Too Close: Give Me Some Space! An Exercise in Distance Reading"**

Traditional close reading methods used almost exclusively by Humanists allow us to be up close and personal with our source material, but in consequence alternate reading methods are largely disused or misused. An alternate method is distant reading that is used in the Digital Humanities as an innovative tool to challenge research methods in other disciplines. Distant reading methods can also be used to enhance “traditional” methods of research or even be used as a stand alone method. Within the field of religious history, a traditional approach has been to analyze the lives of monks and nuns through primary sources. Using monastic visitation records, this paper uses the Digital Humanities method of distant reading, alongside gender theory, to support a close reading of those same sources. Using a word frequency generator a list of words was outputted that drove the distant reading. These results were then compared to what I learned from my close reading as an exercise and learning method into the world of distant reading. The expectation was that distant reading would not corroborate with my close reading analysis but rather contradict it. Unexpectedly, this was not the case. My distant reading results of the monastic visitation records supported and enhanced my close reading of the sources, which resulted in an understanding that monks and nuns were treated differently on the basis of their gender.

### **Elizabeth Wheeler, “L’Amoureux de la Lumiere: The Art of Jean-Louis Rouméguère”**

Jean-Louis Rouméguère (1863-1925), a self-taught painter active in southwest France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was a fiercely independent artist who aspired to change and codify the use and understanding of color in painting. Drawn to the fleeting effects of light in nature, Rouméguère tested and perfected his theories of color harmony in naturalistic paintings of the fields and forests of the southwestern landscape. Amidst the crags and peaks of the Pyrenees mountains, he created series after series of miniature studies, capturing rich and varied atmospheric effects through a system of color “scales.” Though Rouméguère’s theories never gained the following that he sought, they did find a measure of success in his own compelling body of work. Some three hundred and fifty of Rouméguère’s paintings are currently held by the Musée des Jacobins in the artist’s hometown of Auch, along with documentation of his life and writings.

On their own, these artworks offer valuable insight into local French art from this understudied region, but Rouméguère’s paintings speak most effectively when paired with his dynamic writings—his published articles detailing his “scientific” method, his description of attempting to launch a career in Paris, and even a biting and detailed rebuttal to one of his critics. This study, for the first time, explores Rouméguère’s paintings and writings within the context of the *fin de siècle* period, illuminating the challenges and frustrations of an ambitious regional artist’s struggle to build a career amidst an art world in flux.

### **Elana J. Zambori, “Tarnishing the Trophy: Black Lesbianism in *Master of None*”**

“Thanksgiving,” the Emmy award-winning *Master of None* episode placing a generation of black women at the centerpiece, explores the intersectional dilemma of identifying as a black lesbian in American society, demonstrates the struggle of admitting sexual orientation to African American family members in fear of the response of alienation or isolation while simultaneously debunking the “angry black woman” stereotype by showing them as multifaceted beings who enjoy humor and political banter. The episode was co-written by Aziz Ansari and co-star Lena Waithe playing Denise, and is loosely based on her own experience growing up in a household of black women. Lena Waithe became the first black woman to win an Emmy for outstanding writing in a comedy series for “Thanksgiving,” as well as being the first black woman to ever be nominated in that category.

The episode covers several different Thanksgivings occurring over a span of twenty years, giving a glimpse of turning moments and terms of realization for Denise and her sexuality while also providing natural emotional reactions from her relatives regarding her lesbianism. When first admitting to Dev that she is a lesbian, she does not feel comfortable with the term and opts for the word ‘lebanese’ instead and shares that she cannot share her sexual orientation with her mother because black children are trophies to their parents and ‘No one wants a lebanese trophy.’ Her mother’s response, “It’s hard enough being a black woman in this world, now you want to add something to it?” echoes Barbara Smith’s suggestion that heterosexual privilege is the only privilege African-American women are granted and maintaining straightness is their last resort. Through the years, Denise’s evolution represents her as an individual player at the intrapsychic level who uses her power to incrementally change her sexual script regardless of the dominant cultural established norms laid out for her by society and demonstrated in her nuclear family.

### **Jacob Kopcienski, “Rethinking Interaction: Agency and Identity in Performance with *\_Derivations*”**

In 2000, George E. Lewis described improvisations with his interactive, improvising computer program *Voyager* (1987/2018) as a musical negotiation between the program and its human counterpart. Lewis argued that these improvised musical interactions sonically establish the identity of the computer and human improvisers. He concluded that these interactions with *Voyager* and other similar technologies do not ask the question, “how do we create [technological] intelligence,” but rather “how do we find it?”

Building upon and responding to Lewis’s question, this paper will present the results of my own auto-ethnographic study of interactions with Ben Carey’s interactive, improvising program *\_Derivations*. Specifically, it will observe how my perception and evaluation of interactions with *\_Derivations* informed how I conceived of the program’s *agency* and *identity*. Analyzing these interactions and conceptions through the lens of Tracy McMullen’s recent theory of the *improvisative*, I will argue that how performers “other” interactive technologies significantly influences their actions in musical performance. Ultimately, I conclude that generously expanding conceptions of *agency* and *identity* of interactive musical technologies leads to new possibilities for musicians and deeper, more socially informed analyses for researchers.