

**Transforming Travel : Rewriting the World as We Know It**  
Sixth Annual Fall Humanities Symposium

**Sunday Nov 11<sup>th</sup>**

6:30-8:30 pm Peripatetic Reading of Travel Writing

Wheeler Humanities Bldg. 209

In what we think may be the first reading of its kind, audience members will travel from reading to reading, moving among “lands” of readers grouped by topic, tone, and serendipity. Readers will be students, faculty, alums, and other interested parties. Set out from the “departure area” on the second floor of Wheeler, outside room 209. [One hour “travel” among the reading sites required for CA convo credit]

**Monday, Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am “By Aventure Yfalle: Travellers and Tourists—we’re all on the road together”

*Maggie Monteverde, Professor of English, Belmont University*

Massey Boardroom

In the Middle Ages, the idea of pilgrimage as a metaphor for life was a wide-spread one, the physical journey standing in for a spiritual one, a metaphor still embodied in many churches today through the stations of the cross. The power and currency of this metaphor derived from the idea that journeys such as these were meaningful, fraught with toil [travail], hard, challenging, rewarding rather than pleasurable. Geoffrey Chaucer, however, I think was using this metaphor in another way, a sense conveyed for him by the phrase, “by aventure yfalle,” a phrase which suggests that the travelers are thrown together by chance, and their stories and adventures are what life is made up of: the funny, the sad, the unexpected, the predictable, in short, all those things that play a part in life, revealing the world to us and us to the world, experiences through which we are transformed and by which we transform the world. In this introduction to the Sixth Annual Fall Humanities Symposium, Maggie Monteverde, who travels a lot but sadly doesn’t write about it as much as many of the featured speakers do (or at least not in any formats anyone would find very interesting) will discuss ways in which travel itself, in all walks of life and in all forms, from the ritual to the extreme, transforms both the traveler and the world travelled in and written about. In the process she also hopes, at least in part, to take on the dismissal of the tourist in favor of the traveler. (AL)

4:00pm “Australia on a One-way Ticket”

*Sandra Hutchins, Professor of English, Belmont University*

Massey Boardroom

Dr. Sandy Hutchins, now back in residence at Belmont, will discuss her time in Australia, where she also directed the Creative Writing Program at University of Melbourne/Victorian College of the Arts, in a lecture based on personal experience interspersed with readings from fiction and creative non-fiction that emerged from becoming “Australian/American.” (CA)

7:00pm “Life and (Cold) Hard Times in Antarctica: Mixing Science and Travel while Unraveling the Frozen Continent’s Climatic and Ecological History”

*Molly F. Miller, Professor, Earth & Environmental Sciences, Vanderbilt*

Massey Boardroom

Antarctica is the coldest, driest, and highest continent. It is also the only continent that is not owned by any country, is effectively governed and fiercely protected by international treaty, and is reserved for scientific research. Rocks exposed in the Transantarctic Mountains (TAM) preserve fossils and features demonstrating that forests and animals thrived 250 million years ago, in spite of the location then, as now, near the South Pole. The TAM document the magnitude of natural earth change, whereas northern Antarctica’s rapid recent warming reflects human effects on the climate system. Finding evidence of life in the remote and seemingly lifeless TAM puts human life in an unique perspective of time and space. (AL)

**Tuesday, Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>**

11:00am "Niagara on my Mind ...: The Issue of 'Gender' in Depictions of Niagara Falls Across the Centuries"

*Stefanie Ohnesorg, Associate Professor of German, University of Tennessee*

Massey Boardroom

In his depiction "Niagara Seen with Different Eyes" (1873), Arthur Lumley suggests that there are various typical ways of how one can approach or view Niagara Falls. This illustration further implies that there are 'typically feminine' ways of viewing these waterfalls. In her presentation, Professor Ohnesorg will analyze whether any such 'gender-specific experience' of Niagara Falls can be traced in documents that range from 19<sup>th</sup> century travelogues by authors such as Ida Pfeiffer (1856), Catharina Migerka (1877) and Clara von Gerstner (1842) to modern depictions in film, art, and advertising. (AL)

3:30pm "The Struggle for Authenticity in a Conflict Zone: Transforming Subject, Reader, and Writer"

*Alexa Smith, freelance reporter/Presbyterian minister*

Massey Boardroom

How do journalists define "fairness" and "objectivity" when subjects are in situations of extreme physical, psychological, and spiritual suffering? When and how should journalism become advocacy? Where and how do religion and journalism coincide, and what are a religious journalist's responsibilities toward each? Alexa Smith, who for 15 years covered international conflicts through the lens of religious communities trapped within them, will discuss these and other questions in a talk on how reporting can transform not only readers and writers, but also subjects: the people whose daily lives are defined by conflict. Smith's work has taken her to Colombia, Israel/Palestine, Guatemala, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere. A Presbyterian Church (USA) minister, Smith contributes to *The Christian Century*, *Christianity Today*, *The U.S. Catholic* and the *Presbyterian Outlook* and holds degrees in journalism, theology, and family therapy. She grew up in the coal fields of western Maryland and now works as an organizer with the Presbyterian Hunger Program. (FD)

5:00pm "The Eighteenth Century Invention of Tourism"

*Douglas Murray, Professor of English, Belmont University*

Massey Boardroom

While travel has always been a feature of Western life, especially when undertaken for practical purposes, the idea of travel as an important component in the development of the cultured mind is a much more recent development. In his "copiously illustrated" presentation, Douglas Murray will examine both the causes and implications of this change which paved the way for the growth of the multi-billion dollar tourist industry today. (AL)

**Wednesday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am "The Travels of Benjamin Franklin"

*David Curtis, Professor of English, Belmont University*

Lue Center for the Visual Arts (LVCA) 117

Though not as famous as his roles as electrical experimenter, international diplomat, or founding father, Franklin's involvement in travel writing was one of his true joys. Franklin was one of the most-traveled people in America, having traveled up and down the American colonies scouting postal routes; making eight ocean crossings during his lifetime; and visiting England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Holland, and other places in Europe. Of these experiences he wrote in one letter: "Travelling is one Way of lengthening Life, at least in Appearance. It is but a Fortnight since we left London; but the Variety of Scenes we have gone through makes it seem equal to Six Months living in one Place. Perhaps I have

suffered a greater Change too in my own Person than I could have done in Six Years at home.” From his own journeys, he left us many travelogues in the forms of journals, letters, and even travel hoaxes; Franklin also read and corresponded frequently with the great naturalists and travel writers of his day. (AL)

4:30pm *See the World: Study Abroad Art Show Opening with readings* LCVA gallery

Join us for the opening of the Study Abroad Art Show. As part of this program, attendees will help to select prize winners for the show, and listen to selections from the humorous travel essay competition. Whet your appetite to travel to the exciting places Belmont students and faculty have visited in the past year through our many study abroad opportunities on six of the seven continents! (CA)

6:00pm Reception for Symposium Speakers LCVA lobby

7:00pm “From Mariscos to Mariachis to a Murder Trial: How a Central American Freelance Jaunt Became a Literary and Legal Nightmare”  
*Tony D’Souza, journalist and author of Whiteman, recipient of the Best First Fiction Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.* LCVA 117

In October 2006, freelance journalist and author Tony D’Souza left Florida in his Ford Ranger pick-up with two fishing poles and a loose assignment from *Outside Magazine*. His ensuing six month adventure south of the border saw him happen upon both the storming of the zocalo by government troops against the peaceful protesters in Oaxaca, Mexico, as well as the totality of the Eric Volz murder trial and guilty verdict in Rivas, Nicaragua. Tony will talk about crossing 15 borders (including one by canoe) in his truck, driving through the hectic Central American cities, reporting from the very front of political violence, and staying on a story despite intimidation, threats, a dwindling budget and flagging morale. Tony will also open for discussion the responsibilities of a travel writer to the people who inhabit the landscapes he writes about, what it means to be caught in the middle of a tv media feeding frenzy, as well as how (or if) to leave a tragic story behind once the copy has been filed. (AL)

#### **Thursday, Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>**

11:00am “In Search of an Identity: Robert Canzoneri and Other Contemporary Italian American Writers Who Traveled to Italy to Understand Themselves.”  
*Francesca Muccini, Department of Foreign Languages, Belmont University* Leu Gallery

Italian American literature offers a deep insight into the becoming of Italian American identity. Particularly in the last 15 years or so there has been a publishing abundance in terms of novels. The reason is, as many authors say, it took years before they decided to break the wall of silence. Gay Talese declared that he had started to write Unto the Son, the novel about his fathers’ life, in 1955, and interrupted his writing because he was afraid the book could interfere with his father’s full integration into WASP society. The writings of second and third generation Italian Americans reflect a search for understanding rooted in the recognition that one’s place in the world is related to familial origins. For many of the Italian American writers the search for cultural origins, continuities, and differences often climax with a journey to the Old Country. In order to reconcile the conflict between past and present, they must travel. For the second and later generations Italian Americans, the visit home is frequently seen as a rite of passage which leads to a transformation in their identity. Essentially, the journey traces the development of a clearer Italian American identity. The work of Robert Canzoneri, a second generation Italian American from Mississippi, is precipitated by his visit to Sicily. Canzoneri plunges into the world of his ancestors in an effort to understand himself. Particularly, the book A Highly Ramified Tree (1971) investigates his dual heritage and focuses upon the changes in himself and around him after his visit to Italy with his father. (AL)

3:30pm "Passion and Profession, the Art of Making the Two Meet through Adventure Travel Writing and Photography"  
*Brice Minnigh, Belmont Alumnus and Freelance Travel Journalist* Massey Boardroom

Brice Minnigh, former editor of the *Vision* and reporter for the *Tennessean/NashvilleBanner*, three years ago left behind the daily stress of a 15-year journalism career in Russia, Lithuania, China and Hong Kong, for another kind of stress: the life of a freelance travel writer. Brice will discuss the "fine art" of trying to make a living writing about your passions, in his case going on extreme expeditions and trying to make them pay for themselves. He will also discuss how to salvage stories when things go wrong, as, for example, being hit by a truck while cycling in Tibet and having to spend the better part of a week getting yourself out of China. Brice will also talk about his two new books, the *Rough Guide to Taiwan* and the new *Insight Guide to Southern China* (which will be in bookstores this month). (CA)

6:00pm "The Traveler in Venice: Moving through Space, Time, and Change"  
*Margaret A. Doody, John & Barbara Glynn Family Professor of Literature, University of Notre Dame* Massey Boardroom

Dr. Margaret Doody, renowned critic, novelist, holder of the endowed John and Barbara Glynn Family Professorship of Literature at the University of Notre Dame, will speak on a subject close to her heart as a traveler and scholar: the city of Venice and its place in the Western consciousness. In her recently published book, "The Tropic of Venice," Doody, in attempting, as she says, "to puzzle out why I love Venice," expands her inquiry to larger questions which she will also address in her lecture: "What exactly is Venice? Why is Venice so important to us? [Why is it] irreplaceable in the Western imagination" (17). In the process of considering these questions, she will also examine art and literature produced about and by residents of this city once known as "La Serenissima." (AL)

### Friday, Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>

10:00am Panel Discussion on Freelance Writing and Travel featuring Tony D'Souza, Brice Minnigh, and conference participants Multi-media Hall

For this panel discussion, several of the symposium's featured speakers, who will also be serving as the workshop leaders later in the afternoon, will discuss issues pertaining to the processes, challenges, rewards and responsibilities of freelance writing, especially in connection with travel. Questions from the audience are encouraged! (AL)

1:00-4:00pm Freelance/Travel Writing Workshop WHB 2nd floor  
Lead by Tony D'Souza, Brice Minnigh, Thom Storey, Linda Quigley, and Sandra Hutchins

Members of the Belmont community are invited to join published authors and freelance journalists for a workshop on freelance journalism and travel-inspired writing, journalistic, personal, and creative. Contact Meghan Henry at [henrym@mail.belmont.edu](mailto:henrym@mail.belmont.edu) for registration information.

### Sunday, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>

6:30pm Salsa, chips, and snacks, a prelude to the film LCVA Vestibule

7:00 pm *Motorcycle Diaries*,  
Film with discussion to follow, lead by Natalia Pelaz, Department of Foreign Languages.  
(CA)

### Monday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>

10:00am "What have we learned from the Symposium?" MC 100  
*Symposium Committee*, Panel Discussion

The Symposium's coordinators will convene a closing panel discussion examining the issues raised by the week's presentations on travel and the transformation of both the traveler and the world through travel writing. (AL)

5:00pm "Travels in Asia" LCVA gallery  
*Jessica Acuna and Micah Stover, M.A. in English Program, Belmont University*

Master's student Jessica Acuna and alum Micah Stover will read selections of their writing inspired by travel to Asia. (CA)