

## Editors' Preface

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The Fall 2011 issue of *Expositions: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities* could be subtitled, "Past, Present, and Future." Much of this issue's content focuses on the world of ancient Greece, while other pieces explore such topics as the origins of Islam and nineteenth-century German aesthetics. Alongside these contributions are provocative meditations on the personality of Adolf Hitler and the present-day struggles of women in what are called "developing countries." Some readers of *Expositions* may be inclined to read only those pieces which fall into their own fields of interest; something is here for almost anybody. But it is the juxtaposition of such works that makes *Expositions* what it is: a journal that, in its insistent interest in our common humanity, refuses to privilege any particular discipline, discourse, or ideology.

We have published numerous pieces on art and music – both of which require interdisciplinary approaches and are thus perfect for *Expositions*'s mission. In this issue, we are proud to present our feature article, Joseph E. Morgan's "Reference, Autonomy, and Nationalism in Early German Romantic Art," which considers the interplay of ideas, history, and aesthetics. In a different key, Edward Green's daring and original essay, "The Mind of Adolf Hitler: A Study in the Unconscious Appeal of Contempt," applies aesthetic ideas back into history and psychology.

Few books could be as timely as *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. In our Academic Roundtable, our varied interlocutors, in light of their own expertise and experience, commend the book's intentions and overall mission while considering its omissions, prejudices, and evasions. Meanwhile, Jack Tannous's review of Fred M. Donner's *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* considers the historical and theological blind-spots in a controversial work of recent scholarship (again, while still finding much to praise). These contributions cannot help but have contemporary resonance.

As one reads through this issue's Interviews or Overheard in the Academy, one finds that the central concern throughout is not in conserving or preserving or resurrecting the works of the ancients but in keeping them available and continuing their conversations. Classics, as a discipline, has been pronounced dead many times over, just as now all the Humanities are said to be dying (or are in the process of being murdered), and yet students continue to respond to good teaching, scholars continue to produce good work, and new technologies present us with new ways of reading and thinking about classical texts. Aristotle – simultaneously one of the greatest and most difficult of ancient thinkers – is perennially the center of scholarly debates (and an

unacknowledged participant in many political debates) and in this issue we present interviews with Susan D. Collins and Mark Shiffman, two scholars who have labored intensely to bring his work to Greek-less readers. Meanwhile, in our Overheard in the Academy on “The Future of the Classics,” Fellows from the Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, DC reflect on their discipline – yes, its past, present, and future – with freshness, insight, and a diversity of approaches. (Go to <http://vimeo.com/channels/chsfellows> for original versions of these pieces, presented at the Center for Hellenic Studies on April 2, 2011.)

Special thanks must be given to Sally Scholz for her initiative on the Academic Roundtable and to Don Lavigne for doing all the real organizational work on the Overheard in the Academy.