



## Spring 2004 Visiting Faculty

# Lisa Freeman

If it ever were the case that all roads can, eventually, lead to Rome—then Lisa Freeman is it. A Visiting Associate Professor in the department for the spring semester, her background includes experiences as wide-ranging as majoring in psychology as an undergraduate and spending a few years as an investment banker before coming home to English. Not that those roads have always been paved or well-marked: her former boss on Wall Street, upon hearing of her decision to go to graduate school, bid her this fond farewell: “You’re not going to make any money.”

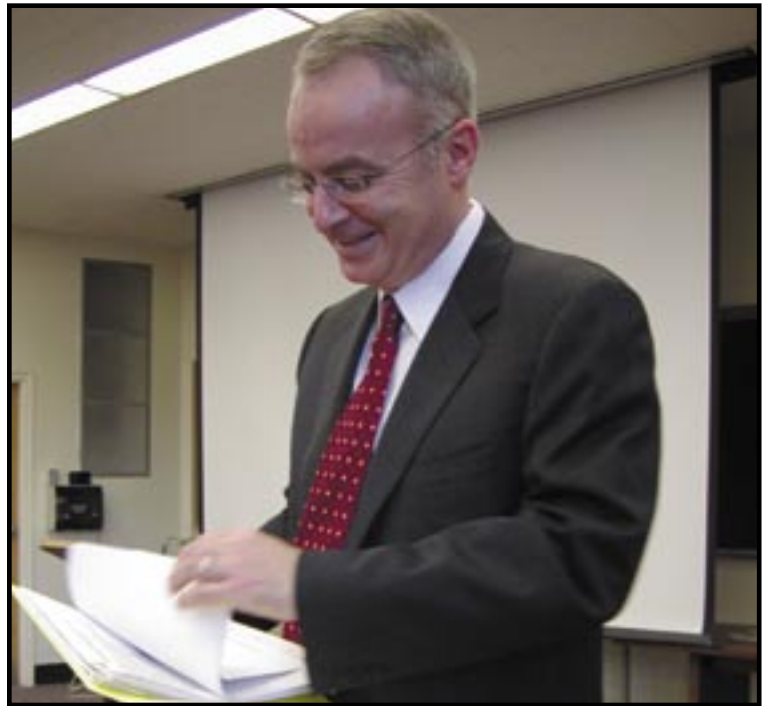
Lisa took that *bon mot* and ran with it, landing happily at Penn with aspirations of becoming a specialist in African-American literature, one of her great passions. Instead, as time, fate, and superb instructors like Houston Baker and Maureen Quilligan would have it, her interests shifted gradually backwards until she woke up one morning with a Ph.D. on the idea of subjectivity in 18<sup>th</sup>-century drama—a topic for which her prior background in the life and motion of the mind had well prepared her.

This past term, when she wasn’t outside relishing the fact that one doesn’t *always* have to wear a coat here, she taught two courses, one on consumption and commercialism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the other, a graduate-level survey of anti-theatricality and censorship from Plato to the NEA controversy. This latter course served as a test forum for her current work-in-progress, a book on individual case studies in the history of censorship. Lisa was thrilled to be at Duke, reuniting with old friends and colleagues and making new ones. We wish her the best as she returns to the University of Illinois, Chicago, where she is Associate Professor of eighteenth-century British literature and culture and Director of Undergraduate Studies.

-- Ben Morris

## Highlighted Speaker: David Clark

On Tuesday October 7<sup>th</sup>, the English Department hosted a lecture by Professor David Clark entitled “Towards a Prehistory of the Postanimal: Kant, Levinas and the Regard of Brutes.” Professor Clark is based in the Department of English at McMaster University, as well as teaches in the Health Studies Program where he frequently offers courses on the discourses of HIV/AIDS. He has edited two significant collections on Romanticism and philosophy: *New Romanticisms: Theory and Critical Practice* (1994) and *Intersections: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy and Contemporary Theory* (1995), as well as the recent work *Regarding Sedgwick: Essays on Queer Culture and Critical*



*Theory* (2002). Professor Clark’s eclectic interests deeply resonated in his lecture, which concerned the abiding presence of animals—the discourse of animality—in the philosophical writings of Kant, Levinas, Derrida, amongst others. Remarking that in Heidegger, the animal, as opposed to the human, is the figure that is denied mortality, Clark investigated the extent to which animality haunts our discussions of otherness and humanity as a melancholic loss, constantly conjured but always defensively disavowed. On the one hand representing the opposite of human identity and an example of what “we” are not, on the other the animal also needfully complements our discussions insofar as it draws attention to the lack of flexibility in our ethical languages. Through an original reading of selections from Kant and Levinas, Clark demonstrated that a recognition of animality doesn’t simply stop at conferring a respectful otherness on the animal, but rather demands a more rigorous interrogation of our understanding of what constitutes an ethical relationship to another species, what discourses we employ to consider the “human” and the “animal,” and what kinds of affective nuances haunt our reception of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment philosophies.

-- Jacques Khalip