JOHNSON ALUMNI SEMINARS!

By Pat Harrigan (“Literature and Writing, 1994)

On President’s Day weekend 2013, a group of nine JC alums returned to Redlands to spend three days together reading David Mitchell’s novel *Cloud Atlas*. The alums were joined by current JC faculty and students, and a few honorary Johnstonians—seventeen of us in all. This unusual seminar, organized by professor emeritus Bill McDonald, Matt Gray (JC ’05) and Pat Harrigan (JC ’94), was part of JC’s ongoing efforts at alumni outreach. It follows an even more ambitious week-long seminar on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, held in June 2012; further seminars are being planned, including one in summer 2014 on Lawrence Durrell’s *Alexandria Quartet*.

It’s far from usual that over a dozen busy working adults would travel (in some cases halfway across the country) to discuss a book that they could easily chat about with their local book group. What brought these people together wasn’t the book itself, or even the opportunity to see old friends (or else why not just wait till next year’s Renewal?). No, what brought them to Redlands was… (here it comes) community.

Bear with me while I make an analogy, please: In Dickens’ novel *David Copperfield* there is a character named Mr. Dick, a childlike adult who is prey to some unspecified form of mental disturbance. Mr. Dick is forever trying to write the biography of some British peer, and has been doing this for some years. But inevitably, at some point in his writing, he discovers that he has strayed from the topic and has begun to write about the execution of Charles I. So there’s no choice but to start the project over, but soon enough he’s writing about Charles I again, and the ruined pages join the piles and piles of Charles-infested pages that already litter his room. Eventually he and David start making the paper into kites.

I submit that the word “community” is Johnston’s “head of Charles I”—that none of us can talk too long about another subject with finding ourselves inadvertently returning to the topic.

For me this is a point of profound irritation. I thought I had left behind all the interminable discussions of community when I graduated. But like Al Pacino in *Godfather III*, just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in! So here we are again, and “community,” like some sort of endlessly reproducing organism, has now grown to encompass my life as an alum as well.

But this time, and sort of surprisingly, I’m having a great time with it. This is because, in many ways, the JC alumni community is just in the process of getting started. JC’s history extends back to the 1970s, but up until now there haven’t been consistent,
serious efforts to integrate JC alums with the current community. It’s only in recent years, with Johnston’s outreach events, and the opportunities afforded by Facebook and other social media, that some of us find ourselves reconnecting.

As one of the *Cloud Atlas* organizers, this was a terrific opportunity for me to re-engage with the JC community. Certainly I had the chance to see familiar faces and meet some of the current JC generation, but it was also a joy to see in just what ways JC has both changed and retained its continuity.

What’s new seemed to me mostly positive: the campus (and the town as a whole) seemed generally improved—more attractive, they offer more amenities, etc. More importantly was the feeling that JC was now fully integrated into the wider University: in the early ’90s there was a low-level distrust between JC and CAS, an “us-against-them” attitude that could sometimes get in the way of mutual understanding. I was glad to hear that those attitudes have largely vanished.

(I’ve also been told that JC community meetings now run smoothly and less contentiously—an amazing outcome that I cannot believe until I see it myself!)

But what I enjoyed most were the moments of continuity: sitting in on Bill’s “Books That Make You Want to Read” class as they discussed *Cloud Atlas* and realizing that these smart, engaged students would have fit right in with the smart, engaged students I knew 20 years ago; learning about the students’ interesting, sometimes eccentric coursework and emphases; hearing their wit and charm and lively intelligence in familiar accents but from younger minds.

So it’s thrilling to think that we can, right now, expand the idea of our JC community even further, by building all sorts of new events and channels of communication between alums and the current community—and next year’s community, and the next year’s, so on so on. Already we’ve had Ovid and *Cloud Atlas*, and this summer Kevin O’Neill will be leading a seminar on death(!). We have the JC Facebook pages—Renewal planning, Buffalo Grazes, Buffalo Books—and the Coz McNooz. But I’m sure much more can be done. What else? I have no idea—tell me!

Hm, I had intended to write a lot more about the structure of the *Cloud Atlas* seminar, its logistics and so on. Sorry about that. Lost my head.

**Summer seminar with Kevin O’Neill**  
**Death in Philosophy and Popular Culture**  
**June 21 - 28, 2013 • Aldersgate Retreat Center, California**
$660 per person (shared accommodations)
- Requests for private accommodations will be considered, however, there is a $300 extra charge
- For more information, go to:

Course Description: For philosophers death has always posed a problem, not least because, as Shakespeare tells us, in Hamlet, it is “The undiscover’d country from whose bourn no traveller returns” (Hamlet 3.1). Then again, in the very same Hamlet, there is his father’s ghost, who does return ...

Death is a limit, a border, an end - but is it also a journey, a passage, a goal, someplace to go? Does death lead us anywhere, or is it the step that cannot be taken, the absolute non-journey from which we cannot return because there is nowhere from which to return?

We will ask these questions, and discuss what some major modern thinkers -- Freud, Heidegger, Aries, Derrida and Butler -- have said about them

As a counterpoint we will also study what we Americans have said about death. Traditionally, American popular culture has answered, and is answering, the philosophical questions with a resounding affirmative. For most Americans, whether they are traditionally religious or not, death does seem to be a passage, a journey, a telos, and is only rarely represented as the end of everything. Americans see the boundary between the living and the dead as essentially permeable, as our ongoing fascination with end times theology, spiritualism, vampires, ghosts, zombies and other revenants and shape shifters attests. For many Americans, death appears to be a country from which one can quite easily, return, and a place to which one can go back when one’s work is done.

The seminar will examine this provocative split between philosophical skepticism about death and American optimism about it. To get the philosophical picture we will read selected essays and sections of books. To see the American optimism about death in action, we will visit Forest Lawn in Glendale to see how the funeral industry works and to see and how death professionals believe the dead and the bereaved, are best served. We will also tour Hollywood Forever
cemetery, which has been a pioneer in putting death and mourning online, offering a new form of virtual life after death through the medium of bio-pics of the deceased. We will also watch films and TV shows, and try to calibrate the philosophical texts with the American images to assess where each of us stands with respect to the question – is death a journey or a “dead” end?

University of Redlands appoints Dr. Kathy Ogren as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
From the University of Redlands Website:

REDLANDS, March 6, 2013 — Dr. Kathy Ogren has been appointed Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at University of Redlands. The announcement was made by David Fite, Vice President of Academic Affairs. Ogren has served as interim dean of the College since June 2011. “Throughout her role as interim dean, Dr. Ogren has offered extraordinary leadership and worked closely with the faculty and administration on initiatives central to curriculum development, faculty support, student learning outcomes and university re-accreditation,” said Fite. “She will promote curricular and interdisciplinary excellence and innovation, assessment and improvement of educational effectiveness, excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and creative activity,” Fite said. Ogren will provide leadership for the College of Arts and Sciences, including more than 2,500 undergraduate students and 177 full-time faculty. Ogren has taught at the University of Redlands since 1985, primarily in the Johnston Center for Integrative Studies, Department of History, and Department of Women’s and Gender Studies. She served as director of the Johnston Center from 1999-2007 and as chair of the Academic Assembly in 2010-11. Ogren held the Virginia C. Hunsaker Distinguished Teaching Chair from 2005-2011. Her other accolades at the University include the Outstanding Research Award (1990), Outstanding Teaching Award (1996), and the Armacost Award for Faculty Service from the Alumni Association (2001). Ogren received her bachelor's degree in American studies and humanities from Scripps College. She holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in history from The Johns Hopkins University. Ogren is a highly regarded teacher and scholar whose publications include The Jazz Revolution: Twenties America and the Meaning of Jazz and Hard Travelin’ and "Still Havin’ a Good Time: Living and Learning in the Johnston Center 1979-2003, co-edited with Bill McDonald.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALISA SLAUGHTER AND KAREN DERRIS ON THE PUBLICATION OF THEIR NEW BOOKS!
Good stories destabilize a reader’s view of the world. And when this happens, the experience is exciting and mystifying. Bad Habitats is just such a remarkable read. Startling in its ambition and stunning in its achievements, the amalgamation of the animal and human leave us with serious questions about who we think we are and who we want to be.

Dana Johnson, Judge

BAD HABITATS

The Party Skunks of the South Bay

When the conventions come to town there’s chicken sometimes, sandwich shards among the square planters and the white-trunked ficus, reflecting pools that reflect and colored jets that fling chlorine drops of amethyst and amber. Maybe it’s the disinfectants or whatever

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Alisa Slaughter
The conversations between Johnston students and his Holiness the 17th Karmapa have finally been published! We’re so proud of this book, our students, and particularly Professor Karen Derris, who beautifully co-edited this book. Below is a description of the book from Shambala Press’ website.

*If you are inspired to take up his challenge, the Karmapa offers a path for participating in a global community that is based on compassion. In these chapters, he shares his vision for bringing social action into daily life, on a scale we can realistically manage through the choices we make every day—what to buy, what to eat, and how to relate honestly and bravely with our friends and family and coworkers. His fresh and encouraging perspective shows us that we have the strength to live with kindness in the*
midst of the many challenges we face as socially and environmentally conscious beings. Because he sees the world through the lens of the interdependence of all beings, he sees that humans can change social and environmental problems by changing their attitudes and actions. And so, he shows ways that we can change our world by changing ourselves—by examining our own habits of consumption and by being willing to look into how our food reaches our table and how the products we buy are made. In his chapter on gender, he points out that we don’t have to label others according to a social construct.

If his viewpoint seems optimistic, it is—and it’s also demanding. The Karmapa calls on us to open our mind and heart to the innumerable connections we share with others—in our families, communities, social systems, and on our planet. Thanks to the depth of his spiritual training, and the breadth of his curiosity about the world and his love for it, he presents a relevant framework for understanding what it means to be human now—and why it’s imperative that we concern ourselves with the well-being of all others. He points to a world we can create through our own effort, using a resource we already have in abundance—the basic nobility of our human heart.

Johnston Students REPRESENT at the 5th Annual Women’s and Gender Studies Student Conference!

This year the Women and Gender Studies Program hosted its 5th Student Conference on Friday, March 22, 2013. The primary goal of this conference is to provide a forum for students to present their work in Women’s and Gender Studies. Among the students presenting were a bevy of Johnston students. Below are the names and papers of the Johnston students. Congrats to all of them for a job well done!

Dillon Dobson: “Gender Relations in Traditional Pacific Northwest Indian Societies”

Maggie Ruopp: “Domestic Disturbance: The Personal and Professional Lives of Lucille Ball”

Sarah Vilardo (Johnston Resident Hall Coordinator): “Butch/Femme: Gender Dynamics Within Female Non-Heteronormative Relationships”

Addie Davidove: “Womyn’s Political Body”

Victoria Beckley: “A Study of Safety, Queer Safety, and the Assimilation of Queerness at the University of Redlands through Survey, Interview, and Analysis


Matthew Clapp: “The Truth About Being Transgender in America”

Cristine Lovato: “Media bias of the 2012 Presidential Candidates’ Spouses”

Joseph Taylor: “Nationality Through Gendered Time Structures: Kahlo Challenges Detroit Industry”

A Johnston Student’s Study Abroad Images Make the News!

Rose Gunson, a junior who studies empowerment and leadership through media, spent her study abroad working on journalism projects in Morocco. Partnering with a fellow student, Rose researched and developed a story about the rise of Spanish immigration in North Africa. We congratulate Rose and her partner for getting this story published in the March 21, 2013 online edition of The Christian Science Monitor. Story by Karis Hustad, images by Rose Gunson. For “The world upside down: The rise of Spanish Immigration to Morocco,” see: http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2013/0321/The-world-upside-down-The-rise-of-Spanish-immigration-to-Morocco?nav=87-frontpage-entryNineItem
Attention, Johnston Film-Lovers!!!

Trevor Lincoln ('04) and his production company Windcast Pictures are currently preparing to make a new short film! You might remember Trevor’s Agent X films that he made as a student at Johnston, and even the acclaimed short film Have A Nice Day, which won second place at the 2007 Orange Juice Film Festival.

And now, Trevor is preparing to direct Rosco The Flying Rhino, a high-soaring adventure about a baby rhino who seeks to fulfill his dream of flying. Written in 2010, Trevor’s original screenplay for Rosco has already received a number of accolades, including the semi-finalist award at the 2011 Rhode Island International Film Festival’s Screenplay Competition. In order to get the film made, Trevor and Windcast Pictures are hosting an online fundraiser for their entire production budget! And they need your very generous and greatly appreciated help!

For more information on how you can support the film, earn some handsome rewards, and even become part of the Rosco production family, simply go to http://igg.me/at/roscotheflyingrhino or www.windcastpictures.com.

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Sadath Omar Garcia beloved son, brother, uncle, friend, and activist, passed away on January 9, 2013. Sadath was born on April 3, 1982 in Chicago, Illinois. He attended The Latin School of Chicago where he was a Daniel Murphy Fund Scholar. Among his many accomplishments there, Sadath co-founded the school’s Gay/Straight Alliance and Latin American Student Association, participated in the About Face Youth Theater Project and appeared in numerous school productions, volunteered at the Contact Chicago 24-hour crisis hotline, and helped to coordinate assemblies about diversity as a participant at the National Association of Independent Schools’ People of Color Conference. As a senior, he received the GLSEN Chicago inaugural Barajas-Reese Latino Youth Scholarship. Sadath remained involved as an alumnus, returning often to speak to students about diversity, sexual orientation and transitioning to college. Sadath then went to the University of Redlands Johnston College for Integrative Studies, where he designed his own major focusing on history and media studies with a minor in race, religion and ethnic studies, graduating with a B.A. He was a leader in residence life, student government, and was accepted into the school’s prestigious Proudian Interdisciplinary Honors Program. During college, Sadath also spent semesters abroad in Salzburg, Austria and Cape Town, South Africa, where he cemented his foundation as a global citizen committed to human rights. He also continued to work on behalf of the National Association of Independent Schools’ Student Diversity and Leadership Conference as a faculty member.

Sadath was determined to use his passion for film as a vehicle for progressive social change. He leveraged a university internship experience at Paramount Pictures as a springboard to earn a position at Participant Media, where he worked to create social action campaigns around such movies as An Inconvenient Truth and The Visitor. After leaving Participant, he helped launch Cause & Affect and later worked at the Fox Sports Network. In addition to his professional career, Sadath also served on the board of FAIR, a non-profit organization of young leaders working to support the movement for marriage equality. During this time, he worked tirelessly towards his goal of attending law school; in 2011 he was accepted to the UCLA School of Law and was awarded a California Bar Scholarship. At UCLA he was enrolled in the David J. Epstein Program in Public Interest Law & Policy as well as the Critical Race Studies Program.

During the summer of 2012, Sadath was accepted into the prestigious and highly competitive White House internship program as part of the Communications Office, where he was involved in the announcement of President Obama’s shift in policy regarding Dream Act immigrants. He took a leave from law school in Fall 2012 to serve as a policy advisor on the successful campaign of Elizabeth Warren for election to the United States Senate. Sadath had just recently returned to Los Angeles to continue his legal education at UCLA.

While Sadath’s accomplishments were disproportionate to his abbreviated life, it is the way he lived that had the greatest impact on those who knew him. He inspired others by dreaming and achieving big things; he embodied kindness in the way he openly welcomed both strangers and friends into his life; he taught the importance of individual Garcia-memorial-fund action through his work on social justice; Sadath is survived by his mother and father (Maria and Jose), two brothers (Adam and Oscar), sister-in-law and niece (Yvie and Natalia), and many family members and friends. In lieu of flow-ers, donations can be made to help with expenses at: http://fundly.com/sadath-fice, and love of the environment and the arts; and he taught us the importance of friends and family through the way he prioritized his life.

Remarks by Denise Davis, Assistant Director of Johnston, at the Sadath Garcia memorial service, January 12, 2013.

When John Walsh asked me yesterday to speak to you all today, my first thought was “How could I possibly write a speech without Sadath, the person who has been there to edit every single important speech I’ve ever given?” I would typically send him drafts in word documents, hoping he would change a few lines here and there and send it back. No, of course not. The Sadath we knew and loved would always pick up the phone and call me, no matter how late it was, and go line by line with me until it was perfect. I always marveled at how much time he spent helping me succeed in my life, while never ceasing to greatly exceed all expectations in his own.
I vividly remember my first encounter with Sadath. It was in 2003 during RA training at the University of Redlands. My first thought was, “Wow, who is that cute guy?!” I waited a few minutes and mustered up the courage to go and talk to him. I was trying so hard to flirt with him, all the while he kept looking at men passing by, asking me if I knew their names. It was in that moment where I thought, “Oh...I see...we are just going to be friends.” And that we were. The best of friends for the past 10 years. He quickly became the big brother I never had and a shining example of what it means to live a truly genuine and authentic life.

The fact that he was out in college in the early 2000's was an inspiration to many, especially me, in our own journeys out of the closet (a lot happened between meeting Sadath and the year that followed...). He introduced me to the West Hollywood scene, to LA Pride, and into a community that always manages to be a source of love and strength, even in the midst of those protesting against us on the street corners. His tireless advocacy and activism on behalf of marginalized and oppressed communities, both those he belonged to and otherwise, was a constant source of inspiration. It was always very clear to me and likely to all of you that Sadath’s main mission in life was to change the world. And that he did.

One of Sadath’s favorite quotes was “It is never too late to be what you might have been.” While there is no doubt amongst us that Sadath left this Earth far too soon, I think we can all agree that Sadath achieved “what he might have been” and certainly what he wanted to be in the past year and a half. To say he worked hard to get into law school is a gross understatement. He was tireless and wouldn’t stop until he made it into a program that he respected. He then set his sights on The White House and Elizabeth Warren. The conversations we had after finding out he was hired on for both were some of the most exciting moments in our friendship. I take comfort in knowing that his confidence was higher than ever after having these experiences in the last year. He fearlessly pushed himself to achieve the biggest dreams possible and inspired us all in the process.

His passion for life, his deep love for his friends and family, his drive to make the world a better place, and that famous giggle are all things we will treasure when remembering him. As you well know, Sadath could bring people together like no one else. He was such a dynamic and magnetic person that many of my friendships in this room are based solely on mutual love and admiration for Sadath. I was grateful for that on Tuesday night at the hospital and will undoubtedly appreciate this wide community of support as we navigate the tough road together without him.

The outpouring of support this week has been tremendous. A photo I posted of Sadath on Facebook received the following comment by a University of Redlands, Johnston Center alum: “I only knew Sadath briefly, but he was extremely decent to me, and I was often impressed by him.” The comment was striking to me in that it seems to capture him so well. He was an extremely decent and impressive man to those who only knew him marginally. For those of us lucky enough to know him well, he was perhaps the most magnificent human being we’ve ever known.