

NANCY RUTTENBURG

Department of English
Stanford University

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Education

B.A. University of California, Santa Cruz (June 1980)
M.A. Stanford University, Comparative Literature (June 1982)
Ph.D. Stanford University, Comparative Literature (March 1988)

Employment

2009- William Robertson Coe Professor of American Literature
Professor of English, Comparative Literature, & Slavic Literatures
Stanford University
2007-2009 Professor of Comparative Literature, English & Slavic Literatures
New York University
2001-2006 Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, English, & Slavic
New York University
1996 -2001 Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and English
University of California, Berkeley
1990-1996 Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and English
University of California, Berkeley
1987-1990 Assistant Professor of English
Harvard University

Major University Service

Stanford University: Director of the Center for the Study of the Novel, 2010 – Present
Conference Organizer: “Is the Novel Secular?” (CSN, April 2011); “Is the Novel Democratic?” (CSN, April 2012); “What is the Nature of Literary Being?” (CSN, April 2013). In addition, I organized last year a New Book Event; the Ian Watt Lecture (J. M. Coetzee) including an onstage conversation with the speaker; and I continued my initiatives: the Stanford-Berkeley Graduate Liaison and the Undergraduate Colloquia

Organized the two-day “Stanford Interdisciplinary Conference on Conscience” (The Europe Center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, November 2012). Participants were drawn nation-wide from law, medicine, philosophy, cognitive science, history, religious studies, political science, journalism, literature, the military, and the arts.

NYU: Chair, Department of Comparative Literature, 2002-2008

Publications

Books

Dostoevsky's Democracy (Princeton University Press, 2008)

Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship
(Stanford University Press, May 1998)

Recent Articles, Special Issues:

“Is the Novel Democratic?” introduction and editor of Special Issue of *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 47.1 (forthcoming Spring 2014)

“The Silhouette of a Content’: “Bartleby” and American Literary Specificity,”
Melville and Aesthetics, eds. Samuel Otter and Geoffrey Sanborn (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011)

Coetzee and His Doubles, “Introduction” to special issue of the *Journal of Literary Studies (South Africa)*, co-edited with Mark Sanders, vol. 25, no. 4 (2009)

“The Human Document,” *Journal of Literary Studies (South Africa)*, vol. 25, no. 4 (2009)

Recent Awards and Fellowships

2012 Development Grant, Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts

2008-2009 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship

2008-2009 National Humanities Center Fellowship (declined)

Works in Progress:

Conscience, Rights, and the ‘Delirium of Democracy’

This study will examine the process of secularization in North America by tracking the reconceptualization of conscience as an inalienable natural right from the colonial through post-revolutionary periods. The convergence of the discourses of conscience and natural right—the paradox of modern democratic subjectivity—is explored in early American literature through a cast of characters who embodied conscience desacralized. Their special vulnerability to the seductions of Jacobin mercenaries—including United Irishmen, Bavarian Illuminati, slave-revolutionaries from San Domingo, and their homegrown sympathizers—illuminated the significance of claims for the transcendent authority of the *vox populi*. The study’s general aim is to propose a “history of inwardness” in the United States by examining the intersection of theology and politics at the revolutionary inception of modern, transatlantic democratic regimes.

Dostoevsky and the Culture of American Democracy

This study will examine a set of intercalated themes in the literature of American democratic modernity through the lens provided by Dostoevsky’s theory of democracy as encompassing oppositional (conceptual and experiential) forms of knowledge. Its aim is to provide an alternative history of our literary modernity as a record of the culture’s fascination with the cipher of commonness, powerfully inflected (though not circumscribed) by the history of race. The chapters will pair Dostoevsky with Frederick Douglass to consider the ontology of character (self-loss and self-making) in fiction and

autobiography; with abolitionist writing, particularly the work of Harriet Beecher Stowe, to discuss sentimental religiosity and the sadistic imagination; with Norman Mailer to examine the conjunction of religion, crime, and masculinity; and with James Baldwin and Marilynne Robinson to analyze race and religious fundamentalism as a matrix for political violence.

Invited Lectures and Keynotes (2000 – Present)

- May 2011 “America and Russia: The Problem of the Paradigm”
The Novel in Russia and America, A Comparative Conference
University of California, Berkeley
- Mar 2011 "The Beggarly Traps of (Literary) Being: The Case of Melville's
Bartleby"
Agency and its Limits: Action, Paralysis, Lethargy, Arrest."
Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages, Stanford
- Apr 2008 “Rights, Conscience, and the ‘Delirium of Democracy’”
Department of English. Stanford University
- Mar 2008 “Comparative Literature: The Problem of the Paradigm.”
Department of English. Pomona College.
- Feb 2008 “The Antinomian Conscience in American Postrevolutionary
Radicalism”
Department of English. Johns Hopkins University.
- Feb 2008 “‘The Image of the Beast’: Problems of the *Prostonarod*”
Department of Slavic. Northwestern University.
- Oct 2007 “Conscience, Rights, and the ‘Delirium of Democracy’: Alien
Inalienability.” William Bennett Munro Memorial Seminar.
Division of Humanities and Social Sciences. California
Institute of Technology.
- May 2007 “‘The Silhouette of a Content’: The Stumbling-block of
(American) Literary Specificity”
Conference: Historical Formalism, or Aesthetics in American Literary
History
The Huntington Library
- Apr 2007 “The Human Document: Coetzee’s *Elizabeth Costello*”
Coetzee and his Doubles: An International Conference
New York University
- Feb 2007 “Cases of Conscience at the Turn of a Revolutionary Century”
American Studies Forum
University of Memphis

- Nov 2006 "The Human Document: A Reconsideration of Narrative Ethics"
Symposium: "Passions and New Ethics: A Symposium on Novel
Studies"
Princeton University
- Nov 2006 Presidential Address
Biennial Conference,
International Charles Brockden Brown Society
New Orleans, LA
- Oct 2006 "Dostoevsky's Democracy: The 'Not That' and the Democrat"
Slavic Colloquium
University of California, Berkeley
- Oct 2006 "Cases of Conscience at the Turn of a Revolutionary Century"
American Literature Colloquium
University of Colorado, Boulder
- Jan 2005 "Simplifying the Novel"
Ian Watt Lecture on the History and Theory of the Novel,
Center for the Study of the Novel, Stanford University
- Oct 2004 "Carwin the Inalienable Alien"
Keynote lecture, International Charles Brockden Brown Society
Conference, NYU
- May 2004 "Dostoevsky's Unconsummated Conversion: Art, Politics, Religion,"
Harvard University, Humanities Center in co-sponsorship with Davis
Center, Literature and Culture Seminar
- Apr 2004 "Democratic Subjectivity: Its Figural Beginnings in the
Transatlantic World of the Late Eighteenth Century"
Vanderbilt University, Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities,
Circum-Atlantic Studies Working Group
- Apr 2003 "Dostoevsky's Unconsummated Conversion"
Slavic Institute, Columbia University
- Apr 2003 "On *Crime and Punishment*,"
Core Curriculum faculty, Columbia University
- Jan 2003 "The Alien Voice: Representations of the Democratic Mercenary
in Federalist America" Departments of History and
English, University of Puerto Rico, San Juan
- Oct 2000 "'The Eulogist of Sincerity': A Theologico-Political Reading of C.B.
Brown's 'Memoirs of Carwin,'" Department
of English, State University of New York, Buffalo
- Mar 2000 "The Inalienable Subject of Voice: Rights, Conscience, and the Delirium
of Democracy in Post-Revolutionary America"

Department of Comparative Literature, New York University

Feb 2000 "Natural Right and the Subject of Voice"
Department of English, UC Santa Barbara

Conference Papers (2001 – present)

Oct 2011 "The Greatest Novels You've Never Read," panelist
Litquake, Book Club of California
San Francisco, CA

June 2011 "Melville/Dostoevsky/Italy"
Melville and Rome: Empire–Democracy–Belief–Art
Eighth International Melville Conference
University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Mar 2011 Panel Moderator, International Conference on the Reception of Hebrew
Literature in Europe and the U.S. Ca'Foscari University. Venice, Italy.

Nov 2009 "The Disciplinary Contribution of William Mills Todd III"
American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies
Boston, MA

May 2008 "The New Epistolarity: Coetzee's *Age of Iron*"
Panel on Ethics and Narrative Form
Narrative Conference, Austin TX

Jul 2007 "Dostoevsky's Democracy"
Dostoevsky in the Context of Cultural Dialogue
13th Symposium of the International Dostoevsky Society
Budapest, Hungary

Nov 2006 "Dostoevsky's Ontology of Crime"
American Assoc. for the Advancement of Slavic Studies Conference,
Washington DC

Mar 2006 "Toward a Comparative Ethics: The *Homines Sacris* of
Dostoevsky and Agamben" American Comparative
Literature Association Conference, Princeton University

Jun 2005 "Bookishness and Literacy: Self and Self-Digression in Douglass's
Autobiographies" Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville: A
Sesquicentennial Celebration

Apr 2005 "Bookishness, Literacy, and the Prostonarod" British Association
For Slavic and East European Studies annual conference, Cambridge
University. Panelist and panel organizer.

Dec 2004 Respondent, "Literature and Democratic Thought in the Antebellum
United States," Modern Language Association conference, Philadelphia

Dec 2004 "Crime, Commonness, Personality: How Norman Mailer Illuminates
Dostoevsky." American Association for the Advancement of Slavic
Studies Annual Conference, Boston

Nov 2004 "Character and the Conscientious Objector in Federalist
America," American Studies Association annual conference, Atlanta

Sep 2004 "'A Literate People, a Lost People, a Beaten People': The
Epistemological Problem of Dostoevsky's *Narod*." Symposium of the
International Dostoevsky Society, Geneva, Switzerland

- Apr 2004 "The Dostoevskiiian 'As If': The Status of Self-Delusion in Confessional Autobiography," Annual Conference, Society for the Study of Narrative Literature, Burlington VT
- Mar 2004 "Partners in Knowledge: Conscience and Radicalism in Federalist America," Annual Conference, American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Boston
- Oct 2002 "The Art of Access: Ormond as Utopian Mercenary, or, Going Nowhere," Atlantic Crossings, Visionary Schemes, and Postnational Contexts: Charles Brockden Brown and His Contemporaries, International conference, Groningen, The Netherlands
- Apr 2002 "Translating Inarticulacy"
Annual Conference, American Comparative Literature Assoc. San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Apr 2002 "Democracy and/in Literature"
Panel Organizer, Annual Conference, American Comparative Literature Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Nov 2001 "Internationalizing the Study of North American Literature and Culture: Identifying Comparative Paradigms"
Panel organizer, American Studies Assoc. Annual Conference Washington D.C
- Oct 2001 "On Dale Peterson's *Up From Bondage: The Literature of Russian and African-American Soul*"
Three Books Conference, Colloquium on Race, Religion, and Nationalism, Amherst College
- Apr 2001 "Dostoevsky's Democracy: Building out the House of the Dead"
Annual Conference, American Comparative Literature Assoc. University of Colorado, Boulder
- Apr 2001 "Internationalizing the Study of North American Literature and Culture: Identifying Comparative Paradigms"
Panel organizer, Annual Conference, American Comparative Literature Assoc., Univ. of Colorado, Boulder
- Jan 2001 "Toward an Ontology of Fiction in Early American Literature," Annual Conference, International Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, Oxford University