

Curriculum Vitae

[revised: Jan 9, 2021]

Name: David Thorburn
Address: 18 Spaulding Lane, Newton, MA 02459
Email: Thorburn@MIT.EDU

Current Position: Professor of Literature and Comparative Media; MacVicar Faculty Fellow; Director Emeritus, MIT Communications Forum.

Major Interests: Romantic and modern literature; film, media, popular culture; American television; cultural history; American studies; curricular reform in literature and humanities; the role of teaching in higher education.

Education: Princeton University, A.B., cum laude, 1962
Stanford University, M.A., 1965
Stanford University, Ph.D., with highest distinction, 1968

Academic Positions:

Teaching Fellow in English, Stanford, 1963-65
Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor of English, Yale, 1966-76 [on leave 1973-74]
Visiting Associate Professor of English, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1973-74
Faculty, Bread Loaf School of English, 1975, 1976 [summers]
Associate Professor of Literature, MIT, 1976-84
Professor of Literature, MIT, 1985-
Visiting Professor, Department of Speech and Drama, George Washington University, Summer, 1981
George A. Miller Visiting Professor, University of Illinois, 1985-86
Fulbright Lecturer, Univ. of Utrecht, the Netherlands, 2007
Visiting Professor of English, Univ. of Amsterdam, 2010

Fellowships and Awards:

Newspaper Fund Fellowship, 1961
The Manners Prize (Princeton English Prize), 1962
Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, 1962
Leverhulme Fellowship (declined), 1965
Fulbright Fellowship (declined), 1965
Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship, 1965
Morse Fellowship, 1970
Paskas Fellowship (Jonathan Edwards College, Yale, award for excellence in teaching), 1971-73
American Council of Learned Societies travel grant, 1974
American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, 1976
Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, 1977
Annenberg Scholar, 1984-
Miller Visiting Professorship, Univ. of Illinois, 1985-86
MacVicar Faculty Fellow, MIT, 2002-
Wm. Evans Visiting Fellow, Univ. of Otago, New Zealand, 2005
Senior Fulbright Fellowship to the University of Utrecht,

The Netherlands, Spring 2007
Visiting Professor, Dept. of English, Univ. of Amsterdam,
Spring 2010

Publications

Books:

- Initiation: Stories and Short Novels on Three Themes*, edited with an introduction (Harcourt Brace, 1971; second edition, 1976).
- Romanticism: Vistas, Instances, Continuities*, co-edited with Geoffrey Hartman (Cornell University Press, 1973).
- Conrad's Romanticism* (Yale University Press, 1974; second printing, 1975).
- John Updike: A Collection of Critical Essays*, co-edited, with an introduction (Prentice Hall, 1979).
- Democracy and New Media*, co-edited with an introduction with Henry Jenkins (MIT Press, 2003).
- Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition*, co-edited with an introduction (MIT Press, 2003).
- Media and Popular Culture*, General Editor, book series (HarperCollins, seven volumes, 1988-92).
- Media in Transition*, General Editor, book series (MIT Press, 2003-08).
- Masterworks of Twentieth Century Fiction*. DVD Lecture series. (The Teaching Company, Chantilly, VA., 2007; revised edition, 2009). 24 lectures.
- Knots*. A book of poems. Spuyten Duyvil Press, 2020.

Essays:

- "Reading Fiction: Joyce's 'An Encounter,'" *Fourteenth Yale Conference on the Teaching of English* (1968). 22 Pp.
- "Reading Fiction: John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*," *Fifteenth Yale Conference* (1969). 20 Pp.
- "The Artist as Performer" [on Norman Mailer] *Commentary* 55 (April 1973) 87-93.
Reprinted, *Contemporary Literary Criticism* (Detroit, 1974).
- "Conrad's Romanticism: Self-Consciousness and Community," in *Romanticism: Vistas ...* (1974), 221-254.
- "A Dissent on Pynchon," *Commentary* 56 (September 1973) 68-70.
Reprinted, *Contemporary Literary Criticism* (1974).
- "Evasive Candor: Conrad as Autobiographer," *Journal de Centre d'Etudes ... Victoriennes et Edouardiennes* (Montpelier, France, 1975), 223-38.
- "Fiction and Imagination in *Don Quixote*," *Partisan Review* 3 (1975) 431-43.
- "Art and the Masses," *Commentary* 59 (May 1975) 83-86.

- "Television Melodrama," *Television as a Cultural Force*, ed. Richard Adler (Praeger Publications, 1976), 77-94.
Reprinted, *Television: The Critical View*, ed. Horace Newcomb (Oxford University Press, 1979; 1982; 1984; 1986, 1999).
Reprinted, *Understanding Television*, ed. Adler (Praeger, 1981).
- "Realism Redux" *Yale Review* (June 1977), 584-91.
Reprinted, *Essays on Updike* (G.K. Hall, 1983).
Reprinted, *Modern American Literature*, (Frederick Ungar, 1984).
- "Is TV Acting a Distinctive Art Form?" *New York Times*, August 14, 1977, Arts Section, p. 19.
Reprinted, *The Television Book*, ed. Judy Fireman (Workman, 1977).
- "Learning in California, or The Story of X," *Parent's Choice* (Sept-Oct 1978), 13.
- "Television Without Guilt," *Parent's Choice* (Nov-Dec 1978), 12.
- "The Fiction in Our News, The News in Our Fiction," *The Classroom and the Newsroom*, ed. Robert Schmuhl (Bloomington, Indiana, 1979), pp. 46-64.
- "A Juror Comments," [readings of films entered in the Banff TV Festival] *Broadcaster* August 1985, 30-31.
- "Imagining Women," [recent tv films] *Broadcaster*, October 1985, 32-34.
- "Dialogue: TV Criticism," *Cinema Journal* 25 (Spring 1986), 71-84.
- "The Made-for-TV Movie Malady," *Channels of Communication* (Feb. 1987) 67-68.
- "Television as an Aesthetic Medium," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 4 (1987), 161-173.
Reprinted, *Media, Myths, and Narratives*, Sage Annual Reviews of Communications Research, ed. James Carey (Sage Publications, 1988).
- "Poetry Comes to PBS," *Boston Review*, February 1988, 9-11, 26.
- "The MIT-James Joyce Connection," *Technology Review*, April 1993, 24-25.
- "Interpretation and Judgment: A Reading of *Lonesome Dove*," *Critical Studies in*
Mass Communication 10 (1993) 113-127.
- "Discovering the Rosenbergs" and "The Rosenberg Case: A Primer," *Boston Review*
xx, 1 (Feb-March) 1995, pp. 27-30.
- "The Rosenberg Letters," *Secret Agents: The Rosenberg Case, McCarthyism and Fifties America*, eds. Garber and Walkowitz, Routledge, 1995, pp. 171-82.
- "A Short History of the TV Detective," in the *Museum of Broadcasting Encyclopedia of Television*, ed. Newcomb (Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, Chicago, 1997), pp. 331-340. Revised, second edition, 2004, pp. 690-696.
- "The Name of the Game," *Encyclopedia of Television* (1997), pp. 660-61.
Revised, second edition, 2004, pp. 1589-1591.

- "Web of Paradox," *The American Prospect*, Sept-Oct. 1998, 78-80.
Rpt. *Rethinking Media Change*, (2003) eds. Thorburn and Jenkins, pp. 19- 22.
- "Toward an Aesthetics of Transition," *Rethinking Media Change* (2003), pp. 1-16. Co-author, Henry Jenkins.
- "The Digital Revolution, the Informed Citizen, and the Culture of Democracy," *Democracy and New Media* (2003), pp. 1-17. Co-author, Henry Jenkins.
- "The Sopranos," in *Encyclopedia of Television*, second edition, 2004, pp. 2134- 2137.
- "Television Aesthetics," in *Encyclopedia of Television*, second edition, 2004, pp. 40-44.
- "Who Are You, Mr. English Professor?" *Pedogogy* 4:2 (2004), 344-48.
- "The Sopranos," in *The Essential HBO Reader* (Univ. of Kentucky Press, 2007), ed. Gary Edgerton. Pp. 40-49. [Expanded version of encyclopedia essay listed above.]
- "Mother De Groot: An American Visitor's Reflections on Holland," *NASA-Nieuwsbrief*, vol XVI, 2 (2007), pp. 19-20.
- "James Carey: In Memoriam," *Cultural Studies*, v. 23, no. 2 (March 2009)287-88.
- "A new approach to TV studies: the single-series monograph," *Cinema Journal* 50, no. 4, Summer 2011, 194-201.
- "David Milch's Depraved Saints," *In Medias Res* [on-line journal] April 2012.
- "Unstable Platforms: TV in the Digital Age," *Critical Studies in Television* 2019, Vol. 14(2) 160-169
- Poems in magazines:**
- "Two Dubliners," *Four Quarters* 22 (Spring 1973) 46.
- "June 19, 1952," *Threepenny Review* (Winter, 2005)
- "The Man I Killed," *Slate* (March 28, 2006).
- "Lise," *The Atlantic Monthly* (October 2007) p. 104.

Reviews:

- A Hall of Mirrors* by Robert Stone, *The Nation* (1 April 1968), 452-53.
- Wyndham Lewis* by William Pritchard, *Yale Review*, Fall 1969, xiv-xxvii.
- The Saddest Story* by Arthur Mizener, *Yale Review*, Fall 1971, xx-xxvii.
- The Fall of the American University* by Adam Ulam, *Commentary* 55 (February, 1973), 96-98.
- Joyce books by Cixous and Ellman, *Partisan Review* 2 (1973) 306-309.

A Psychological Approach to Fiction by Bernard J. Paris, *Conradiana* 3 (1976) 269-71.

Books on TV by Newcomb and Alley, *Georgia Review* Fall 1977, 775-78.

Two books on Conrad, *Nineteenth Century Fiction* Fall 1986.

Books Edited:

General Editor, *Media and Popular Culture*, book series, HarperCollins Publishers, London. Seven volumes published, four with an introduction.

James Carey, *Communication As Culture*

John Fiske, Bob Hodge, and Graeme Turner, *Myths of Oz*

Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics*

David Marc, *Comic Visions: Television Comedy and American Culture*

Peter Donaldson, *Shakespearean Films, Shakespearean Directors*

Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction*

Richard Goldstein, *Reporting the Counterculture*

Editor in Chief, *Media in Transition* series, as above.

Papers, Public Lectures (selected listing):

"Graduate Education in the Humanities: Complaints Old and New," Western Association of Graduate School Deans, San Francisco, May 1965. Reprinted, *Woodrow Wilson Newsletter*, Fall 1966.

"Among Enemies: Joyce's *Ulysses*," Wesleyan University, November 1970.

"Talking and Acting in *Don Quixote*," Smith College, May 1971.

"Interdisciplinary Courses in the Humanities," Stanford Univ, November 1973.

"Conrad and Wordsworth," World Conference on Conrad, Cambridge, England, August 1975.

"Popular Culture and High Culture," Middlebury College, October 1976.

"Television and Literary Study," Vermont Council of Teachers of English, October 1976.

"Conrad and Modernism," keynote lecture, Second International Conference on Joseph Conrad, University of Miami, November 1977.

"Toward a History of Prime-Time Television," two lectures, Indiana University, April 1977.

"Popular Culture and the Literary Curriculum," Conference on "The English Curriculum Under Fire," School of Education, Univ of Chicago, June 1978.

"Television: A Humanist's View," National Broadcaster's Conference, Keystone, Colorado, June 1979.

"The Modernist Impulse in Popular Culture," Conference on "Jews, Cities and Modernist Culture," Columbia University, April 1980.

- "Teaching Books in a Media Culture," National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention, Boston, November 1981.
- "Television: The Network Era," American Orthopsychiatric Association, Boston, April 1983.
- "Designing a Serious Literature Curriculum for Non-Majors," Association of Departments of English Meeting, MLA, New York, December 1983.
- "American Television: Toward Thick Description," The Siebert Seminars, College of Communications, University of Illinois, February 1984.
- "*Don Quixote*: Stories and Truth-telling," Visiting Lecture Series, Directed Studies Program, Smith College, March 1985.
- "Television as Art and Artifact," Iowa Symposium and Conference on Television Criticism, University of Iowa, April 1985.
- "Reading Television Historically," Communications Forum, MIT, May 1985.
- "Toward a New Criticism of Television," Fourth International Conference on Television Drama, Michigan State University, May 1985.
- "Television History: Thicker Descriptions Wanted," Society for Cinema Studies, New York City, June 1985.
- "The Idea of Consensus Narrative: Toward an Aesthetic Anthropology," Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory, University of Illinois, October 1985.
- "The Network Era: An Aesthetic Estimate," Conference on American Television, Hofstra University, Long Island, November 1985.
- "The New Scholarship on Television," Gannett Center for Media Study, Columbia University, New York City, November 1985.
- "Television as a Narrative System," The Poetics Institute, New York University, New York City, November 1985.
- "The Spirit of the Humanities," Honors Banquet Address, Kappa Tau Alpha chapter, College of Communications, University of Illinois, April 1986.
- "Entertainment Technologies and Society: The Case of Television," Science, Technology and Society Forum, University of Illinois, May 1986.
- "History as Melodrama," Symposium on Television and History, National Humanities Center, Triangle Park, North Carolina, February 1987.
- "Evaluating Television Fiction: *Lonesome Dove* and the TV Western," Speech Communication Association of America, Chicago, November 1989.
- "A Short History of Network Television," College of Communication, University of Illinois, April 5, 1990.
- "Narrative and the Construction of Culture," MIT Communications Forum, April 26, 1990.

"Television as Narrative" -- three lectures, University of Michigan, February 12-13, 1991.

"Bearings--Melodrama Across Cultures," introductory paper, conference on Melodrama, MIT, May 1991.

"The Arts and New Technologies," Keynote lecture, New England American Studies Association. May 1, 1993.

"The Deathhouse Letters of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg," national conference on "40 Years After: The Rosenberg Case," Center for Literary and Cultural Studies. Harvard University. May 8, 1993.

"Jane Austen and Modern Criticism," MIT Conference on Austen, November 1993.

"Triple Victims: New Perspectives on the Rosenberg Case." Community Church of Boston. Annual Rosenberg Memorial Lecture. 20 June 1995.

"Network Prime Time: A Short History," Future of Media Studies Conference, MIT, 19 Oct 1995.

"Literature, Media and the Culture Wars," National Conference of Teachers of English. 22 March 1996. Boston.

"Art and Artifacts: New Perspectives on Prime Time TV," MIT Alumni Club of Colorado. 12 April 1996. Denver.

"TV Culture, Canonical Literature and Evaluation: Rethinking the Culture Wars." National Literature Project Distinguished Lecture, NCTE convention. Nov. 23, 1996. Chicago.

"Against Apocalypse: Myths of Media Revolution," introductory paper, conference on "Technologies of Freedom? Emerging Media in Modern Culture," Media in Transition Project, MIT, May 1997.

"Cultural History, Media History: The Case of Television," Columbia Univ. Graduate School of Journalism, November 1997.

"Emerging Media: Continuity and Recurrence," symposium on "The Aesthetics of Transition," Media in Transition Project, MIT, February 1998.

"Web of Paradox," conference on "Democracy and Digital Media," Media in Tr Project, MIT, May 1998.

"'This market, this bazaar of life': Markets Imagined and Remembered," symposium on "Internet Markets," ILP conference on "Next Generation Internet," December 1998.

"Undergraduate Writing." Respondent (with Steven Pinker) at MIT Writing Office forum featuring Nancy Sommers, Harvard. 30 Sept. 1999.

"No Elegies for Gutenberg." lecture, Symposium on Print Culture in Transition, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI. 27 Oct. 1999.

"New Media, Old Purposes." Introductory talk, Media in Transition conference, MIT. 8 Oct. 1999.

"The Family on American Television," MIT Family Resource Center. 15 Nov 1999.

"Remembering Joseph Heller," TV commentary, "Greater Boston," WGBH 16 Dec 1999.

"New Media, Old Wisdom" Keynote lecture: Daimler-Benz Foundation conference, "Knowledge Transfer and Knowledge Society," Ladenburg, Germany, 31 March 2000.

"The Horseless Buggy Principle and Other Laws of Media Change," MIT ILP international seminar. 11 January 2001.

"MIT Initiatives on the Web: the Communications Forum and OpenCourseWare," conference on "Media Communities," University of Innsbruck, Austria, 19 March 2004.

"Three Principles of Media Change," "New Technologies and their Ancestors." Two lectures. International conference on the Taiwan Communications Commission, Kainan University, Taipei, 10-11 March, 2005.

"Democracy and New Media," American Democracy Project Lecture, SUNY Plattsburgh. Sept 28, 2005.

"Just Give Me a Minute, Just Look at the Sky: Linda Gregerson and Contemporary American Poetry," University of Amsterdam, March 13, 2007.

"Toward Comparative Media History," University of Utrecht, March 30, 2007.

"Consensus Narrative and Cultural History," University of Amsterdam, April 5, 2007.

"Troubled Cousins: The Dutch and the Americans," keynote, annual conference Dutch American Studies Association, Amsterdam, March 5, 2010.

"Understanding New Media," MIT Alumni & the School of Art, University of Amsterdam, April 22, 2010.

"No Elegies for Gutenberg: Books in the Digital Age," MIT Alumni Club of Germany, Hamburg, Germany, May 5, 2010.

"'A Ceaseless Spectacle of Transition:' Flux and Instability in the Digital Age," Conference on New Paradigms, College of Design, North Carolina State University, Oct. 9, 2010.

Numerous other lectures or papers on literature or media, including appearances at MLA, American Studies Association, and Popular Culture Association conferences and such institutions as the University of California, Irvine, the University of Richmond, The Poynter Center at Indiana University, the University of Iowa, Northwestern University, Boston College,

Boston University, Memphis State University, The Center for Twentieth Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, The Boston Public Library, The Huntington Theater.

Interviews/Profiles/Media Appearances

"Television Without Guilt," 30 min interview, WBTV, Charlotte, N.C., Jan 1977.

"Taking Television Seriously," interview/profile, *Boston Magazine* Nov 1977.

"Television and Older Cultural Forms," three 60 min interviews, Illinois Public Radio, Feb 1985.

"TV in America," 60-min interview, *Point of View* WLVI TV, Boston, July 1989.

"Technologies of the Future," 30-min interview, Korean TV Broadcasting System, Oct 1991.

"Media Study Today," 60-minute interview Swedish Broadcasting system. Nov., 2002.

"The Digital Future," 60-min panel discussion, Taiwan Public TV, March 2005.

Administrative/Curricular Experience:

Stanford: Co-Director, The Voice Project (Freshman Honors English Program); Graduate Committee on Creative Writing Fellowships.

Yale: Director, Creative Writing Sequence, 1967-69; Chair, Directed Studies Program (honors program in humanities), 1968-70; Chair, History, The Arts and Letters (interdisciplinary major), 1970-72; Graduate Studies Committee in English, 1971-75; Yale College Steering Committee, 1968-70.

MIT: Literature Appointments Committee, 1976-80; Chair, Literature Curriculum Committee, 1977-80, 1982-90; variously later. MIT Advisory Committee on Oklahoma City University, 1980- ; Founding Director, Film and Media Studies Program, 1983-95; Director, Cultural Studies Project, 1991-1996. Steering Committee, Comparative Media Studies Program, 1999-2002. Editorial board, MIT Faculty Newsletter, 1985-2007). MIT Committee on Intellectual Property, 2011- .)

Professional Service:

New England Secondary Schools Project on English Education, 1967 [HEW project for curricular reform in urban schools].

Awards Committee for George Jean Nathan Prize in Dramatic Criticism, 1970-72. Supervising Committee, Modern Literature Division, MLA, 1974-77; Chair, 76-77.

Editorial Board, *Conradiana*, 1975- .

Advisory board, *Parents' Choice: A Review of Children's Media*, 1978- .

Consultant and/or reader for Prentice-Hall, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, various university presses including California, Chicago, Harvard, Oxford, Rutgers, Yale.

Cambridge Humanities Seminar, 1976-79.

Advisory Editor, *Adventures for Readers* (1979), Harcourt Brace series of literature texts for secondary schools.
Juror, Kayden Prize for the best book in the Humanities, University of Colorado, 1981.
Trustee, University Film Study Center, 1982-87; President, 1989.
Juror, Banff (Canada) International Television Festival, 1985, 1986.
Chair, "New Directions in Media History," Communications Forum, MIT, 1985.
Chair, panel on "Television History," Society for Cinema Studies, NYC, 1985.
Editorial Board, *Communications*, 1985- .
Governing Committee, MIT Communications Forum, 1985-
Moderator, "Changing the Subject," Panel at international conference, "Cultural Studies Now and In the Future," Univ. of Illinois, Apr 1990.
Poetry editor, *MIT Faculty Newsletter*, 2000-07.

Memberships:

Modern Language Association; Popular Culture Association; American Studies Association; Society for Cinema Studies; National Council of Teachers of English.

Courses Taught (selected listing):

Stanford:

Freshman English
Introduction to Creative Writing
Advanced Fiction Writing

Yale: Major English Poets

European Backgrounds of English Literature
Daily Themes [expository writing]
Advanced Fiction Writing
History, The Arts and Letters: Romantic and Modern Culture [interdisciplinary honors major]
Directed Studies: Fiction Seminar [honors seminar]
Modern Fiction
The Political Novel
Literature and Popular Culture
English Fiction [graduate course]
Psychoanalytic Approaches to Literature [graduate course]
The Teaching of Literature [graduate course]

MIT: Introduction to Literature

Introduction to Fiction
Comedy
Forms of Western Narrative
Literary Interpretation
Modern Fiction
Conrad, Joyce, Woolf
Popular Narrative
Major Directors
Literature and Film
The Film Experience
American Television: A Cultural History
Problems in Cultural Interpretation
Media in Transition [Comparative Media graduate subject]
Major Media Texts [CMS graduate subject]
Contemporary Literature

Film Styles and Genres

University of California, Santa Barbara:

Introduction to Western Literature
The Novel in England and the U.S.
Problems in Fiction [graduate course]

Breadloaf School of English:

Modern and Contemporary Fiction [graduate course]
Aspects of Popular Culture [graduate course]

George Washington University:

Issues in Broadcasting [graduate course]

University of Illinois:

American Television
The Idea of Consensus Narrative [graduate course]
Communications and Popular Culture [graduate course]

University of Utrecht:

American Television: A Cultural History (graduate course)

University of Amsterdam:

Literary Modernism
The American Century [graduate class]