

## FROM INTELLIGENT DESIGN TO CARTOONING: A JOURNEY THROUGH TECH COLLOQUIUM IV

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I recently had the pleasure of attending the latest installment of the Tech Colloquium series at Clemson University. The pleasure I received from attending this event spawns from the unexpected diversity of subjects and professionalism in which they were presented. Going into the colloquium, I must admit that I was solely interested in the presentation titled, "Illustrating *The South Carolina Review*: The Case of Ted Hughes and the Evolution of 'Skylarks.'" Because I am an English/Literature major, this would be understandable; still, much to my surprise I found myself enthralled by a presentation on the creative process of a field guide. So, since there is obviously a lot to cover, I will waste no more time and get to my thoughts and opinions concerning each of the segments that I was able to attend.

First, I have to say that was no better way to start off the colloquium than with the discussion that took place after the marvelous introduction of John Risseeuw and his humanitarian work through art. The main focus of this discussion was the controversial debate of Intelligent Design vs. Evolution and the "need" to teach the theory of Intelligent Design as a science along side that of Evolution. I tried my best to let my own opinions of the matter rest so as to leave an open mind to critically analyze the opinions and events that took place during the discussion. At first the debate was quite one-sided against the idea of Intelligent Design (which was my stance coming into the presentation), but I was pleasantly surprised when later in the discussion a young lady lent her thoughts on the matter from a slightly more religious viewpoint. This, I think, allowed for a little more of a varied debate than just a one-sided bashing. In the end, we were presented with Mr. Risseeuw's captivating new piece that captured his stance on the hypocrisy and rather ridiculous idea that Intelligent Design could be designated as a science instead of a religious stance.

The next segment set up the more technical aspect of the colloquium in which many of the presenters focused on the essential editing techniques needed to properly run a digital press, as well as a print edition. Wayne Chapman opened this segment up by taking the audience (who, might I add, were enjoying wonderful cookie and veggie refreshments) through an interesting tour of the Clemson University Digital Press website. This tour allowed the audience to see the stark differences between setting up text in print as opposed to digital media, but also showed how access to the digital media can be much more convenient at times than print. Mr. Chapman also showed us many examples of designing issues with site layouts and print covers for the many essays and works that the digital press publishes through both digital media and print.

The third segment was the presentation of a very well researched and intriguing look into, "Ted Hughes and the Evolution of 'Skylarks.'" The oral presentation for this was given by Elizabeth Stansell while a useful Power Point presentation was conducted in the

background headed by Allison Kerns. Elizabeth Stansell took the audience eloquently through the long and laborious thoughts of Ted Hughes while also handing out beforehand a small set of poems concerning skylarks that she would be making reference to in her presentation. I found this to be a handy aid to flip back to as Ms. Stansell would frequently make references to specific lines that were crucial to that moment in her presentation. The only thing that I can criticize about this presentation is at the beginning when the presenter and the Power Point presentation seemed to be out of sync. This, however, was remedied around half-way into the presentation and the wild scripture of Ted Hughes fit perfectly with the strange message of his journey to “Skylarks” told melodically by Elizabeth Stansell. The segment I was waiting for was well worth the wait.

The fourth segment entitled “Making *The Nature of Clemson University: A Field Guide*,” was the segment I was expecting to be a “sleeper segment.” No offense, but I was honestly expecting this segment not to be quite as interesting as the rest; I must say that I was proven wrong and pleasantly so. After this presentation, you will never take advantage of the hard work that is put into, not only a field guide, but any piece of literature that is heavily textual and pictorial in its composition. I never realized the amount of time and precision that goes into something as “simple” as a field guide. The part that amazed me the most was the detail put into constructing the field guide all the way down to the type of binding used. Binding is one of those things that I really never pay much attention to, unless it is cumbersome. From this presentation, I was shown why you never realize it, because when enough thought is put into making the book as user friendly as possible, it doesn’t allow you to complain about something as minute as binding. After this presentation, I gained an amazing amount of respect for the editors that spend so much time perfecting each page down to the precise placement of pictures and type that allow the reader to fully enjoy everything possible about a book without unneeded distractions.

The final segment, entitled “Making *Growing Up Cartoonist in the Baby Boom South*,” was probably the most entertaining of all the presentations. We were taken on an all-too-brief tour into the correction and details that are taken into consideration by an editor when attacking the creation of a book. From clip art placement, to textual wrapping and margins, we were able to see first-hand, through a wonderfully created Power Point presentation conducted and presented humorously by Charis Chapman, how an editor approaches the job of converting a book from one print version to a better and more polished version. After this skillful presentation, we were taken through a tour of many of Kate Salley Palmer’s zany and prolific political cartoons. Kate Salley Palmer narrated this section with a tone of humor and seriousness, placing entertaining little stories in when needed. The amazing thing about this last part was seeing how pertinent the messages from years ago still have on present political events, showing how art and literature play a crucial role in the preservation of history for the analysis of future generations.

Overall, I was pleasantly surprised with how much I enjoyed the whole Tech Colloquium. I came into the event expecting only a few highlights, but left knowing that I had been enlightened to many different aspects of the print and digital world. Through this observation, I found it rather depressing at the lack of student involvement in the audience. I can only hope that in the future this could be remedied and that more students create the time and space to sit down, enjoy and learn something new about the literary world around them. It is a lot more than just Shakespeare and ten-page research papers.