



Humanities Institute at Stony Brook
p r e s e n t s

Wednesday, November 20th, 2013

4:00 p.m.

Humanities 1008

Reception to follow

Robert Markley

The Unsustainable Estate: Imagining Nature in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*

Mansfield Park makes us acutely aware of the passing of the seasons and of the normative weather conditions in England during the Little Ice Age (c. 1350-1850) – a period of shorter springs and growing seasons, longer winters, and violent shifts in weather patterns across northwestern Europe. The widespread perception during Austen's lifetime that the climate of Britain was unstable, prone to abrupt shifts and dislocations, encourages us to think about how the novel's vision of Nature both resists and responds to specific climatological conditions. Markley uses this literary text to explore how climatic variability shaped perceptions of nature, society, and self in the period.

Robert Markley is W. D. and Sara E. Trowbridge Professor of English at the University of Illinois, affiliate faculty with the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies, and editor of the journal *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*. His publications include *Two-Edg'd Weapons: Style and Ideology in the Comedies of Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve*; *Crises of Representation in Newtonian England, 1660-1740*; *Virtual Realities and Their Discontents*; *Dying Planet: Mars in Science and the Imagination*; and *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730*. He is currently completing a book on climate and culture during the Little Ice Age and another on the contemporary science-fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson.

