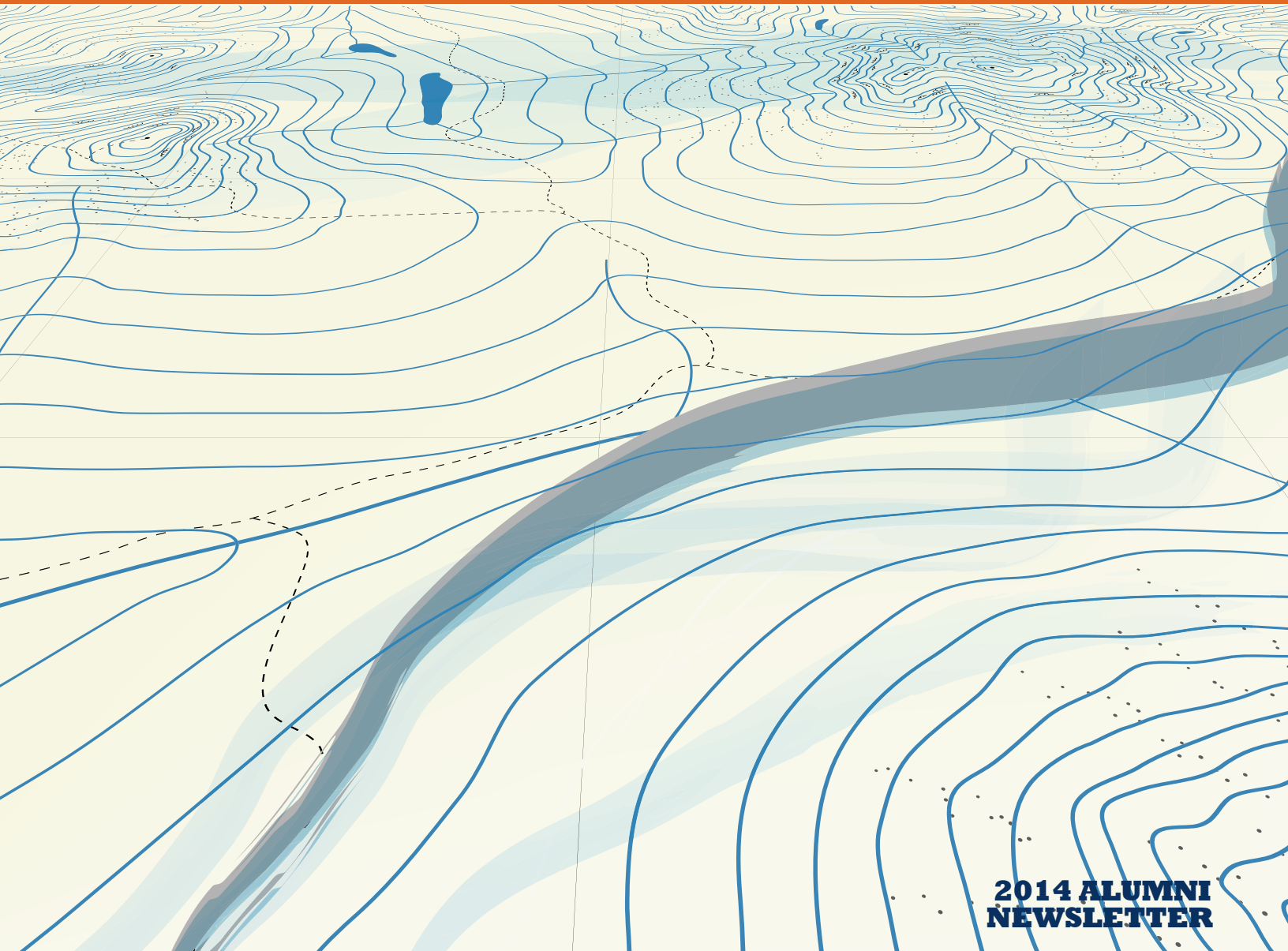


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AND LITERATURE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**NEW COURSES
NEW DIRECTIONS**



**2014 ALUMNI
NEWSLETTER**

A NOTE from the CHAIR



**MICHAEL
SCHOENFELDT**
DEPARTMENT CHAIR

As I enter my last year as Chair of this remarkable Department (not to mention my 29th year on the faculty), it is tempting to reflect on the various changes the Department has undergone. Almost every year, the Department has welcomed new faculty, and said farewell to others. Change is indeed the norm, and the lifeblood, of English Departments. Maintaining the Department's excellence in research and teaching has been made somewhat tougher by the challenges and constraints facing all humanities departments in public institutions of higher education. But it has been made much easier by the enthusiastic support we receive from our amazing alums.

First the losses: Alan Wald, the H. Chandler Davis Collegiate Professor of English Literature and in the Program in American Culture, has retired. He is the leading cultural historian of the United States Literary Left in the mid-20th century, and the author of eight books. While we expect him to continue (or even accelerate) his remarkable productivity, we know that his presence will be missed deeply in the classroom.

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Professor Russell Fraser, former Chair of the Department, and the author of twenty (!) books. He made his reputation in Shakespeare and Renaissance literature, but his abundant interests ranged widely, and his last book, published in 2013, was a study of the influence of religion and art on Central Asian societies. His passionate, articulate commitment to literature, and to the Department, is profiled later in this issue.

And it is with almost unspeakable sadness that I report the untimely death of our brilliant colleague, Patsy Yaeger. A pioneering feminist literary critic who specialized in Southern literature, gender, and material culture, Patsy managed to light up every room she entered. The world is darker without her.

And now the gains: It is with great pleasure that I note four new colleagues who are joining the Department. We welcome two scholars and

two creative writers. The scholars are Madhumita Lahiri, who comes to us from the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom, and is a specialist in postcolonial literature and world literature; and Walter Cohen, who comes to us from Cornell University, and is a specialist in Renaissance and European literature. The creative writers are Kirstin Quade and Tarfia Faizullah, who will be joining the Helen Zell Writers' Program as the Nicholas Delbanco Visiting Professor in Fiction and Poetry, respectively. Please be sure to read their profiles in this issue. Each will bring vital new energies and perspectives to the Department.

As always, the awards of our lauded faculty are too numerous to mention, but three deserve special notice here: Linda Gregerson, a poet as well as a scholar, has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Class of 2014; Lorna Goodison, poet, fiction writer, and memoirist, was awarded the Commander of the Order of Distinction by the Jamaican Government for her service to literature; and Khaled Mattawa, poet, scholar, and translator, was appointed one of two new chancellors to the Academy of American Poets and was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. You can get a taste of the wonderful work of Lorna and Khaled later in this issue.

Having endured the winter of the polar vortex, my colleagues and I are warmed by your professional successes and your substantial affection for the Department. We love to hear from you about what you have done with your degree from our Department. Without your help and support, we would not be able to recruit and retain the best faculty, who will continue to develop innovative courses and programs of the kind surveyed in this issue of the newsletter in order to provide the best education imaginable for our students. ☺

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AMERICAN SOUNDS

by Michael Byers

When we begin, a few of them know a few things:

1. They know they can say “The Shadow knows!” and then cackle.
2. They know the Dragnet theme—“*Dum da dum dum*”—but maybe not where it comes from.
3. They know something about *The War of the Worlds* broadcast.
4. They know, the Lone Ranger something-something-something? Maybe?
5. Oh, wait, Superman, right? Was Superman on the radio?

They’ve seen a photograph of a family gathered around an enormous appliance, chins on their hands. But it’s a long time gone, this life, when all you did was listen. It’s hard to imagine. So this is a course on the history of radio drama and comedy? And we’re supposed to actually put on a show of our own at the end of the semester?

The students are game, they’re interested—but they don’t know much.

So during the first class, we do something simple. We turn off all our electronic devices. We power down. And we start to listen. I bring in a big wooden box and pair of hard-soled shoes. And we try to walk. And in order to learn how to walk—rather, to *sound like* we’re walking—we have to listen to the way we actually move. Does our heel hit first? Our toe? What about when we’re going upstairs? Downstairs? (We dispatch a few researchers to the stairwell to see what each of these footfalls sounds like.) What about when we’re standing around talking? Are we really just standing still, or are we, very minutely, shifting our weight, sliding our feet ever so slightly...

It’s harder than it seems.

Next, we try to kill somebody.

Gunshots, I tell them, were notoriously hard to reproduce. The best way to make it sound like you’re firing a gun? Fire a starter’s pistol.

Yeah, we don’t do that.

Instead, we go to the end result—the falling corpse. How do you make it sound like a body’s really falling? How does a body hit the floor? We break into groups to figure this out. Their only prop: an empty cardboard box from the English Department copy room. It’s all they need, but they don’t know how to use it.

Do you throw the box on the ground? Put something in the box and shake? Hit the box with something? They’re delighted. They’re hooked.

And suddenly they want to know everything.

As I tell my students, my expertise in midcentury American radio drama and comedy comes not from any scholarly work on my part, but from enthusiasm. I’m a fan. I became hooked early in life, listening on weekends, late at night, to a nostalgia show aimed at listeners thirty years my senior, and I’ve never stopped. In this new era of satellite radio and podcasts—and with the Internet Archive to draw from—anybody can listen to any show at any time.

Because there are so many shows (examples of hundreds and hundreds of distinct programs survive, and many of these program runs are years-long), a question arises as to organization and approach. How do you write a syllabus that will even begin to capture the vastness of this material? To proceed chronologically doesn’t work, because many of these shows existed for a large chunk of the period we consider (1930-1962). Yet to consider a sophisticated proposition like *Gunsmoke* before we consider something much less worldly—say, *Chandu the Magician*—seems wrong as well.

So we proceed by genre, although these genres are also, to a degree, *ideas*. And within each genre, we move more or less chronologically. So we begin with private eyes, because everybody loves a good detective story. Hey, *The Adventures of Philip Marlowe*. *The New Adventures of Nero Wolfe*. We meet Jack Webb for the first time in *Pat Novak for Hire*. Everything sounds cozily familiar. We know these characters from movies, from detective novels. We know what the 1940s were like, don’t we? Black-and-white, wartime, all those dresses and hats. Nothing surprising here.



And then we discover *Candy Matson, Yukon2-8209*. One of the only female private eyes on the radio. Interesting. And—gee—she has a very obviously gay sidekick, Rembrandt Watson.

The show aired in 1949.

Which is surprising, because you couldn't be gay in 1949. Could you?

Apparently you could. Huh.

And wait, in the Marlowe episode entitled “The Indian Giver,” Gerald Mohr as Marlowe makes an emphatic point by saying, “I think Indians are all good Americans!” It's an episode in which the main femme fatale is not only beautiful, sharp, and a graduate of an Ivy League college but is described as having “dark skin, dark hair, and darker eyes... a full-blooded American Indian!”

Maybe we don't know what 1949 looked like after all.

And this is when I reveal what will be the secret heart of the course: the discovery of a very nuanced, heretofore unknown history of the United States. Because when you listen to the daily life of Americans as lived out on the air—even that life as rendered in drama and comedy—you hear what life was really like. It was much more complicated, much more subtly shaded with fear, joy, welcome, prejudice, bigotry, admiration, than we can discern from the year 2014.



Jack Webb at a radio broadcasting studio.

... you hear what life was really like. It was much more complicated, much more subtly shaded with fear, joy, welcome, prejudice, bigotry, admiration, than we can discern from the year 2014.

So when we come to the Black and White week—shows about or featuring African-Americans—we're ready for a careful look at what was really the case. We are all freshly, horribly appalled at *Amos and Andy*. And we marvel that it was the most popular show on radio for decades running. We gape at the hideous, hateful stars, Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden. We read about the boycotts of the show—reported almost exclusively in the black newspapers of the time. We read about *Beulah*, and we don't really mourn the early death of Marlin Hurt, the white man who starred as the black housemaid. And we track the difference in tone—how the 1945 episodes, starring Marlin Hurt, are just carelessly racist, while the Hattie McDaniel episodes (1947-1952) have instead a sickeningly condescending flavor, some of the most overt mockery having been removed.

But then we turn our attention to shows made by African Americans, for African Americans: wonderful, almost unknown programs like *Destination Freedom* (the episode on housing segregation in Washington D.C., say, which aired in 1949). Or *New World a-Comin'* (we listen to a 1944 episode entitled “Negro Fascism and Democracy,” in which black men and women point out how fighting fascism in Europe is complicated when considered from the point of view of

people long trampled by violence at home). Why haven't we heard of these shows before? We note the familiarity of some of the language of these shows, and that's when we learn that many of the civil rights leaders of the 1950s and 1960s honed their craft on programs like these. Where did they first try selling a radical, egalitarian message to the white majority? On the radio.

As we listen, it becomes clear that there is a moment, just after the end of World War II, after the troops have returned home, when the lessons of that terrible war are being taken to heart. Justice and equality are the only reliable paths to peace. Jack Webb returns in a 1947 show called *One in Seven*, featuring stories—taken from news headlines—of discrimination and fairness. The ideal of a truly American democracy, with everyone participating, is taking shape in the popular culture. Superman fights the Ku Klux Klan in 1946 in a 16-part adventure called “Clan of the Fiery Cross.” Even our private eyes, seen in this light, are instructive: even the bad guys are often to be pitied, and the good guys aren't all good to begin with. Interestingly this is when comedy is at its peak as well: Jack Benny's best programs are from 1948 and 1949, and we're all laughing. Jack is kinder to Rochester now, after the war, than he was before.

But all good things come to an end. We learn about the Red Scare. We reel at the endless list of blacklisted artists and activists. Norman Corwin, whose work we all admired during wartime, is now deemed a traitor to his nation. The generous, even revolutionary possibilities alive in 1947 begin shrinking away—until by 1951 the most popular shows are all cop shows and westerns. Jack Webb has become Joe Friday. We've become a law-and-order society. We're afraid of the Soviets, the Koreans, the Chinese, ourselves. The private eye shows are replaced by *This is Your FBI* and *I Was a Communist for the FBI* and *Counterspy*.

I bring in an old loyalty oath and ask them all to sign it. Even now, with nothing on the line, they shudder, they balk. Some refuse.

Slowly the world unclenches. And as talent flees radio for television, radio becomes a less interesting place. Ozzie and Harriet are created. *Father Knows Best*. *The Couple Next Door*. *A Date with Judy*. Like a creeping fungus, the soap operas spread. As the 1960s dawn, the world starts to look almost recognizable. We've come a long way. By 1962, when *Yours Truly*, *Johnny Dollar* goes off the air, we feel we've lived through a remarkable era.

All the while, the students have been writing: small scenes, short scripts, and now they're writing longer scripts for performance. The job: write something that could plausibly air sometime before 1962. We pick a few to rehearse. Out come the shoes and the cardboard box again. And now here's a real, genuine vintage microphone to act at. And here's what we sound like when we become Superman, or a female private eye, or a harried housewife. We rehearse. We fix our scripts, tweak our lines. We marvel at the facility of the old performers, who were sometimes literally handed a script as the microphone went live.

We need to kill somebody. And finally we figure it out. Here's how you drop a body: put your elbow on an upended cardboard box. Let your fist and forearm drop to the box. Boom. Then: *let your arm bounce*. A body doesn't fall all at once, it falls in segments. Listen to it fall.

The night of the performance, the students are ready. They hold their scripts. They say their lines. They play their music. They drop their bodies.

They know everything—at least, everything I know. And now they're enthusiasts too; and they know the world is richer, more complicated, than they'd ever suspected. 🌟

CLIMATE CHANGE

IN THE CLASSROOM

by William Alexander

Last fall and this winter I taught a junior-level course for the English Department called The Literature of Climate Change. This new course in the curriculum responds to an urgent public debate occurring in every nation in every part of the world. That debate raises questions and problems and existential dilemmas that students need to understand as they prepare for life in the 21st century. Scientists and humanists agree that the next generations will face a crisis with almost no precedents in human history. Literature can shed light on this crisis and model for readers ways of coping with it. Literature instructs readers how to *think about* a current and future era that requires original and profound thoughtfulness as well as immediate action.

The first task of any class on this topic is to get a clear view of the situation they will be studying. On April 1, 2014, the *New York Times* provided in their lead editorial, "Climate Signals, Growing Louder," a survey of the situation: "On Monday, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations group that since 1990 has been issuing increasingly grim warnings about the consequences of a warming planet, released its most powerful and sobering assessment so far. Even now, it said, ice caps are melting, droughts and floods are getting worse, coral reefs are dying. And without swift and decisive action to limit greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and other sources, the world will almost surely face centuries of climbing temperatures, rising seas, species loss, and dwindling agricultural yields." Another panel, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, is quoted as concurring that "the ultimate consequences could be catastrophic, and . . . the window for effective action is swiftly closing."

In each class (17 in the fall, 18 in the winter) there were three or four engineers; in each class 2 or 3 people were set on going to medical school; in both classes there were PitE (Program in the Environment) majors. Many of my students became Graham Sustainability Scholars: Elana Horwitz, Andrea Paine, Lindsay Rosenthal, Leonard Ang, and McKenzie Meyers. They are intellectually curious and determined people who





Global warming is endangering the balance of a wide range of ecological systems—from polar ice caps to wetlands to coral reefs.

enjoy the give and take of debate. I stir the pot now and then. I plant questions. And they think about my questions, but the class is *totally* discussion based. They may or may not respond to my questions. It is up to them.

In the fall and winter they come to my house for a potluck dinner and then share their climate change projects. I ask them to make their projects fierce. In reference to an international effort to decrease carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million, Zac Butcher was asked to leave the room for 350 seconds, while Mother Earth remained. Mother Earth did all she could, but because Zac thought he had a lot of time, he paused too long and Mother Earth lost. Caitie Fey wrote a short story, “The Wall,” in which half of human kind is fated to die prematurely. The story uses the wall being built between Bangladesh and India for its allegorical plot. Rachel Cash gradually took off her coat because of the warming climate and recited a fierce poem at the same time. In the winter term, Leonard Ang talked about wind turbines that kill birds, solar panels that create incredible heat so that birds flying over die, a boat in the Detroit River using Petco, exported because it is not allowed here. Kim Channel had a box full of water tables, and we learned how much water it takes to produce a single apple. McKenzie Meyers wrote a beautifully constructed and optimistic poem plus a crafted portrait of sea glass that comes up after years in the Atlantic Ocean. Rami Faraj’s project—about his and our legacy—was a structure of candles; you could blow them out (which I did) or attach them to a wick and light them.

In the fall semester we performed our projects for PitE Director Gregg Crane. In the winter term he wasn’t available, but we presented our climate projects nevertheless in front of small audiences. The imagination of disaster, in Henry James’s famous phrase, became more palpable and compelling for everyone who participated.

We began both terms with Barbara Kingsolver’s *Flight Behavior* and watched *Gasland 1*. Next, Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (both fall and winter, though next winter I’ll replace it with Elizabeth Kolbert’s *The Sixth Extinction*). We read Henry Pollack’s *A World Without Ice* and watched the documentary *Chasing Ice*. In the fall we studied Amy Seidl’s *Early Spring: An Ecologist and Her Children Wake to a Warm-*

ing World and in the winter term, Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony*, and we viewed *The Island President* about rising sea levels around the Maldivian Islands.

Other texts included, in whole or in part, Alan Weisman’s *The World Without Us*, Edward Abbey’s *Desert Solitaire*; *A Season in the Wilderness*, along with a documentary about the war on drugs, *The House I Live In*, Christian Parenti’s *Tropic of Chaos*; *Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*, Thomas Friedman’s *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*; *Why We Need A Green Revolution—And How It Can Renew America*, Bill McKibben’s *eaarth*; *making a life on a tough new planet*, and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*, to which I append *The Book of Job*, *Ecclesiastes*, and five chapters of *Genesis* (including Noah’s Flood). I intersperse selected

“What are you seeing in your own backyard?” What are you seeing in your sacred sites, in parts of the world you love to visit?

chapters of Kathleen Dean Moore and Michael P. Nelson, editors: *Moral Ground*; *Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*.

There is also a coursepack: “When Death Comes,” a poem by Mary Oliver; “On Living,” a poem by Nazim Hikmet; “The Little Green Monster,” a short story by Haruki Murakami, from his collection, *The Elephant Vanishes*; “I thank You God for most this amazing,” by E.E. Cummings; “Keeping Quiet,” a poem by Pablo Neruda (from *Extravagaria*). In addition we discuss an essay by Andrew J. Hoffman, “Climate Science as Culture War,” and the foreword and first chapter of Hadyn Washington and John Cook’s *Climate Change Denial: Heads in the Sand*.

University students have a healthy appetite for texts that challenge them. Texts that construct profound and alarming visions. Texts that imagine human destiny and the fate of Nature with compelling evidence. Students make use of class time to assess book-length visions of their future, as well as real-life public policy, about which they cannot afford to be naïve. John Holdren, the science adviser to President Obama, has made the provocative statement that

“the human response to climate change will be threefold: mitigation, adaptation, and suffering, and we will have a great deal of all three.”

Here is the kind of comment that erases naivete in the classroom. Christopher Hayes, in *The Nation* on May 12, 2014, notes that “the last time in American history that some powerful set of interests relinquished its claim on \$10 trillion of wealth was in 1865—and then only after four years and more than 600,000 lives lost in the bloodiest, most horrific war we’ve ever fought . . . those companies will have to leave 80 percent of their reserves in the ground if we are to avert a global cataclysm.” It is “an audacious demand, and those making it should be clear-eyed about just what they’re asking. Their task may be as much instigation and disruption as it is persuasion.” He mentions the movement to stop the Keystone XL pipeline and speaks about how “the divestment movement is pushing colleges, universities, municipalities, pension funds and others to remove their investment from fossil fuel companies. So far, eighteen foundations, twenty-seven religious institutions, twenty-two cities, and eleven colleges and universities have committed themselves to divestment As the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass said, ‘Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.’”

In the fall term Emma Kelly did a half-hour sound interview located in places important to her. I took her to one of my sacred sites, the marsh where the sandhill cranes fly into during the fall. I realized that the rising heat would empty the marsh visited by these lovely cranes. We imagined how this beautiful place would be transformed, how the cranes wouldn’t come any more, how they would die from the heat or need to go further north. Emma asked all of us the same question that Henry Pollack asks in *The World Without Ice*: “What are you seeing in your own backyard?” What are you seeing in your sacred sites, in parts of the world you love to visit?

One last timely quotation reflects the kind of corrective measures these students are thinking about, debating, testing in their backyards and neighborhoods, and resolving to put into action in a positive spirit on a global scale.

The June 2, 2014 issue of the *New York Times* reports that President Obama is using the 1970 Clean Air Act, without the help of Congress, to eliminate 600 coal-fired power plants. On page A16, June 3, 2014, “the Obama administration contends . . . it will prevent up to 100,000 asthma attacks and 2,100 heart attacks in the first year the rules take place.” On page A22, the lead editorial says, “each state will be given a reduction target tailored to its energy mix. States will be able to decide how best to meet their target, using an array of strategies of their choosing—deploying more renewable energy sources like wind and solar and more natural gas, ramping up energy efficiency, creating regional cap-and-trade initiatives aimed at the greatest reductions at the lowest cost.” The new regulations will

go through a period of public comment before taking effect, by June 2015. In 2012, the United States emitted 6.5 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases, of which two billion came from power plants, most burning coal.

The success of these and/or other efforts to blunt the effects of climate change are most visible in Washington D.C., and they are being followed closely on the campus of the University of Michigan by young people who desire to help shape their lives, and their children’s lives, for the better. 🌱

Keeping Quiet

by Pablo Neruda

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth,
let’s not speak in any language;
let’s stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines;
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.

Fisherman in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused
with total inactivity.

Life is what it is about;
I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death.
Perhaps the earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive.

Now I’ll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.

—from *Extravagaria* (translated by Alastair Reid)

WHY I TEACH JANE AUSTEN

by Adela Pinch

On the first day of my Jane Austen course, I look out at the 100 students: roughly 95 women, 5 men. Of course I am delighted to see so many women: mentoring female students is one of the joys of my life. But I am dismayed and frustrated to see so few men. It is this way every time.

On the first day of my Jane Austen course, I look out at the 100 students: roughly 95 women, 5 men. Of course I am delighted to see so many women: mentoring female students is one of the joys of my life. But I am dismayed and frustrated to see so few men. It is this way every time. Every time, I ask students to notice the demographics of the classroom, and every time, I give them a little lecture that goes something like this:

Our view of Jane Austen as primarily a “woman’s” author, one who wrote principally about women for female readers, is a very, very recent phenomenon. It is largely the product of the contemporary publishing industry, which realized that there were good profits to be made in reprinting Austen’s novels, and positioned her as the forerunner of “chick lit.” Publishers have figured out that women represent a large, reliable sector of the reading public, and that books marketed specifically at woman readers sell very well. Throughout most of her history, by contrast, Austen was celebrated specifically for the ways in which her writing seemed to transcend the narrow interests of gender. Nineteenth-century critics routinely compared her to Shakespeare; for Virginia Woolf, Austen was, like Shakespeare, an example of the androgynous mind.

And, as recently as 1973, when the great American literary critic Lionel Trilling looked out at the 150 students clamoring to get into his Columbia University course on

Austen, the overwhelming majority of them were male. It could be objected that the Columbia undergraduate student body was in fact not co-ed in 1973. However, while Trilling’s course was a Columbia College course, 1973 was the first year most courses there could be taken by students from the all-female Barnard College; there were certainly some Barnard students, as well as some women in Columbia’s graduate programs, in attendance. It could also be objected that, by 1973, when Trilling was the *eminence grise* of twentieth-century, liberal, literary humanism, 150 students would probably have packed a room (as someone in the *New York Times* wryly pointed out) to hear him read from the Manhattan telephone book. Surely the mostly-male crowd at Professor Trilling’s Austen course, it can be objected, says nothing about the gender-neutral appeal of Jane Austen in 1973. And the difference between the 150 mostly-men in Trilling’s class in 1973 and the 100 mostly-women in mine surely speaks to more than the collusions of a profit-hungry publishing industry. It stems from the rise of the women’s rights movement, and feminist criticism, rumbling underway in New York City even as Trilling was teaching Austen uptown; it reflects the huge shifts in the demographics of American higher education; and it may reflect, most recently, a climate of economic uncertainty in which enrollments in humanities courses, particularly by male students, is in decline.

But it might be worth (and here I am no longer lecturing at my 2013 students, but writing to you, the readers of the *Alumni Newsletter*) going back to what Lionel Trilling himself thought was going on in his class in the fall of 1973, in order to note what has changed, as well as what has remained the same. At his death two years later, he left an unfinished essay called “Why We Read Jane Austen.” He begins the essay by describing his “amazement and distress” at the 150 students who turned up at what he thought was going to be a small seminar. Trilling never came to an answer to the essay’s title question before he died. But he mused about the ways in which Austen’s novels seemed to provide his students with an alternative world, one which is “distinctly . . . gratifying . . . to the whole sensory and cognitive system,” and about whether they turned to Austen as a moral guide whose “fictive persons” “must inevitably have a consequence in one’s own behavior and feeling.” But he also wondered whether his students’ ability to empathize with Austen’s characters, and to find the characters’ moral choices a guide to their own, ought to be tempered by a recognition of all that makes the world of Austen’s characters so historically distant, so fundamentally alien to the world of 1970s college students.

Moreover, as some of Trilling’s women students learned, studying a gender-neutral Austen came at a cost. The feminist critic Carolyn Heilbrun, who studied at Columbia with Trilling and later became a professor there herself, wrote a memoir of her experiences as a student: *When Men Were the Only Models We Had*. In it, Heilbrun captures the complex legacy of having been an ambitious, intellectual woman student in the middle of the twentieth century: the painful mixture of admiration of, influence by, and exclusion from the mostly male world of the intellectual elite. Trilling, she notes, was “famously uninterested either in women students or in any women’s writing apart from the universally excepted Jane Austen.” And she notes that Trilling—a man of his time—infamously used Jane Austen’s *Emma* to comment on what he viewed as the limited moral life of women, in both life and literature, in an essay from the 1950s. “It is the presumption of our society,” he wrote, “that women’s moral life is not as men’s”; of women literary characters, he wrote: “most commonly they exist in a moon-like way, shining by the reflected moral life of men.” Heilbrun, who was already on the faculty at Columbia at the time of the 1973 Jane Austen course, documents both how much Trilling’s few women students learned from him, as well as how much they may have needed feminism.

So: why do I teach Jane Austen? My teaching of Jane Austen draws on the legacies of both the humanist Trilling and the feminist Heilbrun. As a feminist scholar, I am totally committed to teaching Jane Austen’s work as a window onto the complex history of gender relations, of a woman writer’s negotiations with late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century culture. I welcome the opportunity

that my course provides to encourage young women and men—many of whom will never take a course on gender—to learn about the history of feminism, and to practice hands-on research into the history of women’s lives and women’s writing.

But I also seek to capture the gender-neutral Austen of Lionel Trilling and his 150 students, for whom Austen’s novels of manners were the preeminent vehicle for the exploration of people’s lived relations to philosophical, moral ideals. We explore (and here I am lecturing to my students again) how Austen perfected the form of the novel precisely by making the novel the home for all of the big philosophical issues of her day and ours. These range from epistemological questions—how do we know what is “real”? how do we know our own minds, and those of others?, to the psychological—what is the nature of thought? are there levels and layers of consciousness in a single mind?, to the moral and political—is happiness a personal pleasure, or a social good? Above all we ponder the literary-philosophical question—how did Austen come to the realization that the novel is the most philosophical form of writing—precisely because such questions only make sense when embedded in ordinary social life, and can only be answered through stories.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that these are questions both men and women care about. Maybe next time there will be more men in my Jane Austen class. 🌀

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TRANSLATION IMPOSSIBLE

by Khaled Mattawa

Some readers will recall the controversial Polish-American novelist Jerzy Kosinski, author of the National Book Award-winning novel *Steps*, the equally troubling novel *Being There*, which was made into an excellent film starring Peter Sellers, and the harrowing debut work *The Painted Bird*. The young Kosinski and his parents survived the Holocaust due to the cunning of his father and the generosity and bravery of fellow Polish nationals. Kosinski migrated to the United States in 1957 while his parents stayed in Poland. He tells the story of telephone conversations he had with his father, who was a classicist, and how the two of them tried to talk in Latin in order to confuse the likely censors listening in. As they spoke they heard clicks and chirps, signs of the authorities eavesdropping on their conversations. Then one day, the operator barged in and declared, “This call must be terminated. You are speaking in a language that is not recognized by the United Nations!”

The amusing thing about the Kosinski anecdote is also what is frightening about it. One can imagine a scene in a film showing the translators’ corps working for the Polish secret police calling on each other, those on duty and those off, or others on vacation, trying to find someone who specializes in this strange language—all the languages recognized by the United Nations. It’s a special joy to see those in power befuddled by the things they’re supposed to have mastered. In the end the Polish secret police ended the Kosinskis’ conversations because they could not filter them. Like all smart customs regulators trying to catch smugglers, they have to let some things get through if they are ever going to catch the big one. But what happens when they cannot see or understand what they are certain is passing before them? That’s when they step in and stop the traffic altogether.

Let me turn to another extreme example that involves another translation of invasive languages. The anti-terror apparatuses in the Pentagon and the CIA/NSA have a dream of doing away with their native language experts (their middle men) and replacing them with translation machines that will render speech accurately, without bias or mediation. They have set up phone interceptors to monitor telephone calls from all over the world, specifi-

cally to listen for terrorist language. They have given their machines certain words in Arabic, such as “Jihad” and “the Great Satan” to catch potential plotters. This is what America is listening for. How many terrorists/Jihadis ever mention Jihad in their phone conversation? I don’t know.

The point about these two cases is that translation constantly rubs against our notions of Utopia. One of these versions involves a translator who provides information so perfectly that we are overjoyed by the transparency and happy union of languages. In this dream two languages come together and the intervening translator is supposed to dissolve. People want this to happen in translation so much that even those who do not understand a language are often willing to correct or question the translator. That’s what happens when you translate faithfully and well. People want to shove you aside and speak to each other directly! But a translator or translation is not like a judge or minister presiding over a marriage whom everyone forgets after the wedding. Translation sticks around, as a problem as well as a boon, and makes us conscious of the misfit in our presence.

There’s also the utopian vision that Walter Benjamin suggested in his essay “The Task of the Translator.” Benjamin preferred that translation be literal, and in that way imperfect, so that it points to an ideal of poetry that exists beyond both the original and translated version. It should try to capture “an idea in the mind of God,” he wrote, an idea that we can’t reach in our own language, and that no language and no poetry can express. Translation, according to Benjamin’s suggestion, should make us realize that we have been engaged in a kind of suspension of disbelief as to our poetic inadequacy. He wanted translation to lead us to the ruins of a linguistic utopia, to Babel before the tower was built and when all human beings had one language. He also meant for translation in this manner to make us imagine an afterlife where an ideal of beauty and transparency dominates.

Is translation possible? I do not like the verb “Is” in this question, nor do I like the adjective “possible.” I feel that the question posed before us is ontological. Is this a chair? Yes, it is a chair. That’s not a good question. Let’s

try again: A stuffed tiger and a living tiger are both tigers; the active verbs tell us which of them lives and which merely exists. To try to harness the living noun of translation with a verb like “is” will only strangle it. Translation never *is*, translation *happens*. And if an adjective is needed, the first I can think of here is “inevitable.”

So if translation is inevitable, how do you deal with it? The Polish secret police’s answer is one way. In Libya when the Qaddafi regime was in power and noted some suspicious activity, it kept only the landlines open, and only foreign-language phone calls that the government could translate were allowed to continue. During the uprising that brought down the regime, it shut down the mobile phone network altogether, which was very difficult to do since even their own agents needed cell phones. Such limitations are not practical in America where the phone lines need to be open for the system to work. The CIA/NSA’s solution to the chaos that translation causes is another utopian vision of sorts, an electronic Tower of Babel that intercepts and translates all the foreign language calls coming through.

The CIA/NSA phone intelligence system and their dream of total comprehension are an extreme example, but the point is that the act of trawling, to fish out what

... translation constantly rubs against our notions of Utopia.

we expect to hear, is not limited to governments. And the issue is not limited to catching the so-called bad apples. Only yesterday, a fellow poet and I wondered why two of the best-selling poets in America are an Arab and a Persian (Khalil Gibran and Rumi). We wondered also why two of the best-selling novels in recent years are by an Afghani. What are we listening for when we read/translate works by authors from lands and cultures sometimes considered as enemies?

Is translation possible? Translation will happen, but what do we do when what comes before us defies our expectations, as with Kosinski’s Latin? In what sense do we set up magnets to seek out certain vibrations, tones, phrases from those speaking other languages? In what way does translation exclude, and what does it carelessly include? More than any other kind of exchange, translation seems to me the route through which vital cultural goods are exchanged—in fact, where sometimes cultural goods flee into another language so that they are protected. Indeed, languages can serve as preservatives for cultural products beyond their timely currency, or what Benjamin called an afterlife. There is a whole body of Moroccan literature that is preserved in English now—I’m referring to Paul Bowles’s work—that does not exist in Arabic. There are endless ethnographic ac-



Khaled Mattawa was honored for his work as a poet-translator of Arabic poetry with a 2014 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

counts of thousands of people speaking other languages preserved in European languages. There are the forced confessions of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo too. I have a feeling that the translations exist, but the more genuine originals are deeper in the files.

The other side of this equation is how not-translating can be a form of safety. It’s common now in Arab countries like Egypt at Christmas to see Santa Claus and the phrases “Merry Christmas” plastered everywhere, even in shops that do not cater to tourists. Kept in its own language “Merry Christmas” is a quaint foreign thing. There are Christians in Egypt and what they say to each other in Arabic about Christmas is not often heard on the street. I mean, Egyptian Muslims are not threatened by “Merry Christmas” when it stays un-translated. The words “St. Valentine’s Day” could not be translated as such in Saudi Arabia because of the Christian reference and a general aversion to sainthood in Wahabi Islam. So the holiday has become “the Feast of Love.” The holiday has become so popular among young people in Saudi Arabia that the government had to intervene. Perhaps the young Saudis will start calling it something else, since celebrating love or sainthood is allowed in their country.

The point is that translation, however invisible, often rubs against currents of power. It runs into trouble and it causes trouble. I think also, that as a counterweight to utopia, translation happens in perpetuity; there’s no stasis in it as in all utopian visions. Babel merely existed before the tower was built. It was all that noise in the tower that caused God to shatter the unity of a single language and gave Babel its allegorical name. And if signs are at play in one language, deviating from their assigned meanings, watch what they’ll do when they couple with other

signs from another language. A feast of love, indeed. Translation goes on, and requires several attempts, embodying the doubling of noise, the yes and no of our exchanges. Translation includes the moment of anticipation where the words coming at us and the words we anticipate in our mouths are wrestling, corroding, combining. We let what is outside of us settle within, and claim an equal portion of the other's generosity.

I love Kosinski's story because it highlights how the powers-that-be recognize translation's inevitable subver-

siveness, and that is why to me it serves as a sign of a culture's brain wave activity, how translation is like water, and in that sense it is the best means of finding cracks in a society's dead matter, its petrified notions. The Polish example is one system's effort to plug all the holes, and we know what happened to that utopian, or dystopian, fantasy of power. Like air, translation corrodes non-living matter that does not organically engage it—from iron to rust, and from rust to dust, to Whitman's "handkerchief of the Lord," a new language is born. ☺

NOTEWORTHY



Karen Russell

Our **Zell Visiting Writers Series** once again brought to campus an exciting lineup of authors, including alumna **Elizabeth Kostova**, **Karen Russell**, **Marilyn Nelson**, and **A.M. Homes**, and continues to be a wildly popular and well attended series. In addition to the readings, each semester the series also features a multi-day residency for renowned authors. This past year the **Zell Distinguished Writers in Residence** were fiction writer **Jane Smiley** and poet **Edward Hirsch**. Last winter also included **Kristina Lugn** as our International Writer in Residence, a visit co-sponsored by Scandinavian Studies which also involved a reading of one of Lugn's plays, staged by Chicago theatre company Akvavit Theatre. ☺

In its 8th year, the **Sarah Marwil Lamstein Children's Literature Lecture** featured young adult author **Gary D. Schmidt**, the author of middle grade novels such as *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*, which won Newbery and Printz Honors; *The Wednesday Wars*, which won a Newbery Honor; and *Okay for Now*, a National Book Award Finalist and Children's Choice Award winner. Professor Schmidt teaches writing, medieval literature, and children's literature at Calvin College, and is on the graduate faculty of Hamline University's MFA program in Writing for Children.

AWARDS



Angela Berkley and Jamie Jones

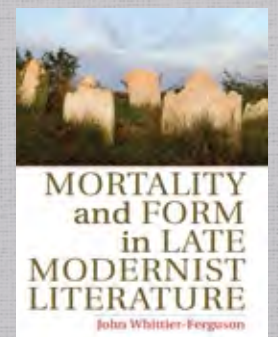
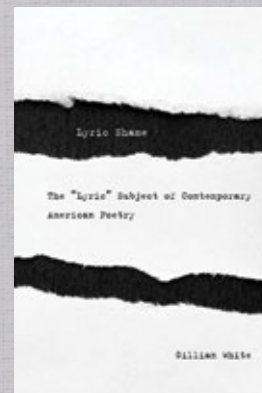
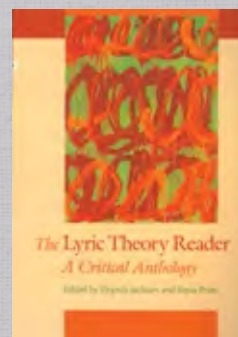
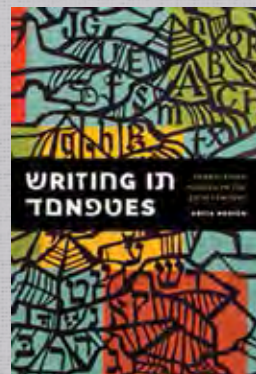
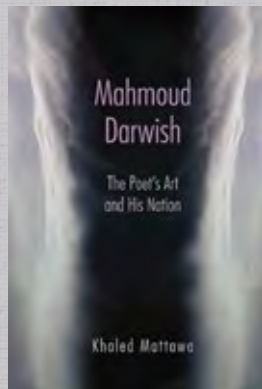
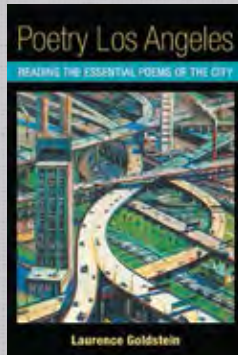
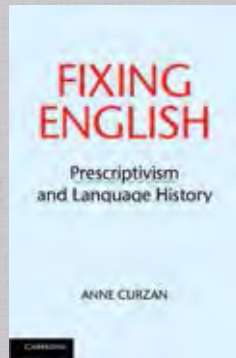
The 8th annual **Ben Prize** was awarded to **Angela Berkley** and **Jamie Jones**. The Ben Prize was established in 2007 in honor of Laurence Kirshbaum and was made possible through the generosity of Bradley Meltzer and a group of donors to promote the teaching of good writing. The award was named after Mr. Kirshbaum's grandson. Two exceptional lecturers are chosen each year for their work with students to improve writing skills. Nominations for this award come from students.

The three recipients of this year's **David and Linda Moscow Prize for Excellence in Teaching Composition** were **Justine Neiderhiser**, **James Pinto**, and **Rebecca Scherm**. The selection committee had to make difficult decisions in choosing from such an impressive pool of applicants. The committee found it inspiring and humbling to read all of the nominees' files, including the many glowing letters of support they received from their students and colleagues. The three instructors who were selected this year are remarkable for the highly effective, thoughtful, and innovative activities and assignments that all of these instructors employ in their classes. Please join us in congratulating these accomplished instructors and celebrating their achievements. Also awarded this past year was the **Feinberg Family Prize for Excellence in First-Year Writing**. Winners were **Karen Duan** (Instructor: James Pinto), and **Connie Zuo** (Instructor: Jaimien Delp). The two essays from English 125 were both thoughtful, well-written works that demonstrated the range of genres in which our students write. Both winning essays will be made available from our website.



Justine Neiderhiser, James Pinto, and Rebecca Scherm

Recent FACULTY PUBLICATIONS



FROM TOP
L-R

Like a Bird Flying Home: Poetry & Letters to His Daughter from New Hampshire
Walter Clark (Edited by Francelia Mason Clark and Alison Clark)

Fixing English: Prescriptivism and Language History
Anne Curzan

Dear Wizard: The Letters of Nicholas Delbanco and Jon Manchip White
Edited by Nicholas Delbanco

Educating the New Southern Woman: Speech, Writing, and Race at the Public Women's Colleges, 1884-1945
David Gold (with Catherine L. Hobbs)

Poetry Los Angeles: Reading the Essential Poems of the City
Laurence Goldstein

Coming Out Swiss: In Search of Heidi, Chocolate, and My Other Life
Anne Herrmann

Mind of Winter and *The Infinitesimals*
Laura Kasischke

Studying Disability Arts and Culture: An Introduction
Petra Kuppers

Mahmoud Darwish: The Poet's Art and His Nation
Khaled Mattawa

Writing in Tongues: Translating Yiddish in the Twentieth Century
Anita Norich

The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology
Edited by Yopie Prins (with Virginia Jackson)

Lyric Shame: The "Lyric" Subject of Contemporary American Poetry
Gillian White

Mortality and Form in Late Modernist Literature
John Whittier-Ferguson

WALTER COHEN

PROFESSOR

Almost the only thing about me that isn't utterly conventional is the stage of life at which I take up this wonderful opportunity to join the English Department at the University of Michigan: my 65th birthday falls early in the current academic year. This is how I got here. I grew up in the suburbs of New York City and attended an excellent public high school. From there I went to Stanford (BA in English) and then UC Berkeley (MA, PhD in Comparative Literature), before spending more than 30 years as a professor of Comparative Literature at Cornell University. This description is a bit misleading because for the vast majority of my time at Cornell I was also engaged in academic administration—chair of two departments (Comparative Literature and Romance Studies), senior associate dean of Cornell's equivalent of LSA, dean of the graduate school, vice provost of the university. The career in administration initially caught me by surprise. I'm a child of the 1960s and it never occurred to me that the very institution I often protested against as a student would someday want me to help run it. But times change, and so do institutions as well as people. Moreover, in retrospect it occurs to me that much of the satisfaction I got from my desultory student activism—contribution to a cause larger than my own advancement—translates quite well into the business of running a university. That aspect of my career is over, but I hope to bring the same commitment to high academic standards, to diversity, and to democratic governance to bear more informally on my work for the department, college, and university here at Michigan.

I'm a specialist in Renaissance literature, especially drama. My first book is titled *Drama of a Nation: Public Theater in Renaissance England and Spain*. It attempts to explain the unique similarities between the theaters of these two otherwise dissimilar countries in the broader context of Medieval and Renaissance European drama. I am also one of four editors of *the Norton Shakespeare* (3rd edition forthcoming in early 2015). In the new edition, the

print version is accompanied by a major web presence, which allows for inclusion of a far wider range of materials than is possible in a single-volume book. But I have always wanted to be a dilettante, and for the past quarter of a century—when administration and children, now adults, permitted—I have been engaged on *A History of European Literature: The West and the World from Antiquity to the Present*, under contract to Oxford University Press and in the final stages of revision. This long then-to-now study (roughly 750 pages in print, but, happily, with an online version as well) argues that European literature, each of its conventional periods (the Middle Ages, Romanticism, etc.), and most of its major writers look different when considered in the light of world literature. On this basis, I offer a series of hypotheses about European literature, world literature, and the nature and function of literature more generally.

I believe that teaching and research should intersect, whether one is talking about freshmen or advanced doctoral students. I treat my courses as labs, in which I try out ideas. In return, students get a sense of participating in the creation of new knowledge, of learning to think in a disciplined fashion like a literary critic—not the only good way to think, to be sure, but one of them. For me, this new job is a second beginning, a chance to return to full-time teaching for the first time since the 1980s. This year I'll be doing two sections of the introduction to the major, English 298, on Shakespeare, Race, and the Twentieth Century; English 383, Jewish Literature, on postwar Jewish fiction in English (mainly the U.S.) and, to a lesser extent, in other languages; and English 841, a graduate seminar on Renaissance and Early Modern Literature. In coming years, when I'm not enjoying the pleasures of Ann Arbor life, I'm eager to develop lecture courses and seminars aimed primarily at freshmen and sophomores, with the aim of getting students excited about literature and the wide variety of ways our faculty connect it to the crucial concerns of our time. ☯

TARFIA FAIZULLAH

DELBANCO VISITING PROFESSOR OF CREATIVE WRITING

I'm delighted to be joining the Helen Zell Writers' Program as the Nicholas Delbanco Visiting Professor in Poetry. I was born in Brooklyn, NY and raised in Midland, TX to parents who immigrated from Bangladesh in the 1970s. Growing up in Midland was an ultimately baffling experience—I attended an Episcopalian private school from the time I was five through high school, and I was part of a small Muslim community that struggled to find its own culture in a town known for its oil boom. I've lived in Texas, Missouri, Virginia, Alabama, Washington, DC, Bangladesh, and most recently, Detroit. My obsessions include but aren't limited to comic books, photography, film, formal poetry, the psychology of memory, video games, trauma studies, non-Western poetics, poets of exile, letterpresses, and creative nonfiction.

Lately, I've been interested in distinctions between personal and political trauma—I'm fascinated by how much we contain and carry as human beings, particularly in our modern moment. My first book, *Seam* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2014), centers around a sequence of poems that imagines an interview between a Bangladeshi American interviewer and a birangona, a Bangladeshi woman raped by Pakistani soldiers in the 1971 Liberation War. I'm working on a second manuscript, *Register of Eliminated Villages*, as well as a lyric memoir, *Kafir*. I've also started translating some Bengali poetry into English, and contemporary poetry into Bengali. Some of my recent poems appear or are forthcoming in *New England Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *jubilat*, *The Oxford American*, and *The Kenyon Review*. I recently was the recipient of a Pushcart Prize and a fellowship to the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference.

I feel lucky to have degrees from two state schools: a BA from UT Austin and an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. I'm excited to join a program that is part of another state school, as I believe these institutions are vastly important and vital anchors to education in America. I've taught at a number of institutions, but most recently (and most poignantly), I served as a writer-in-residence for InsideOut, a non-profit in Detroit that puts writers in public schools. A couple of times a week, I coaxed (sometimes dragged and pulled) high schoolers into rendering their complex and varied inner lives into poetry. I believe that all of us can find possibility in the world if we're willing to look for it in ourselves. ☯



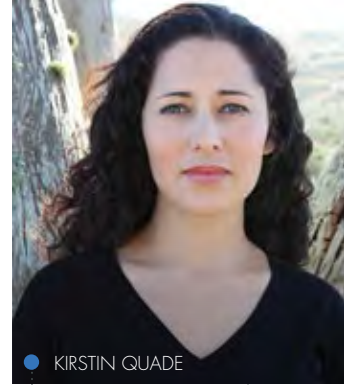
WALTER COHEN



TARFIA FAIZULLAH



MADHUMITA LAHIRI



KIRSTIN QUADE

MADHUMITA LAHIRI

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

I am delighted to be joining the University of Michigan this fall. I work in the subfield known as postcolonial literature or world literature, and I am interested in theorizing worldwide flows of literature and ideology as they intersect with language hierarchies and with the increasingly global nature of English. The bulk of my research is in English language literatures, although I also work in Bengali and in Hindi, and occasionally in French. I have recently begun learning Chinese.

My current book project, *Fictions of Internationalism*, shows how the internationalist movements of the early 20th century envisaged new literary forms and even new languages as essential to their projects of forging a better world. Exemplified in movements such as Esperanto, Theosophy, and the Communist International, this form of worldwide thinking required radical innovations in literary representation, often prioritizing inspiration over accurate representation. Through such texts as Mahatma Gandhi's fictionalized history of South Africa and W.E.B. Du Bois's romance novel about India, I propose a model of intercultural contact I term *transfiguration*, that considers together the representational and compositional problems of figuration with the border-crossing concerns of translation, without assuming, as the translation metaphor often does, that accuracy in meaning is the primary purpose of transnational works.

My own trajectory mirrors my interest in global cultural flows. Born in England, I was raised in Washington, D.C., and New Delhi, India. After finishing high school in New Delhi, I studied mathematical economics at Yale. My love for literary studies prevailed, however, and I graduated from Duke University in 2010 with a Ph.D. in English and an abiding fondness for biscuits and gravy. I then spent a year at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, where I took in South Africa's dynamic cultural landscape as a postdoctoral fellow in the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa. I moved back to the United States for a postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University, and I have been, most recently, an Assistant Professor at the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom.

I am looking forward to bringing my research and teaching experience on three continents to my new home at the University of Michigan. I enjoy cooking elaborate Indian meals, and many evenings in March find me following recent developments in college basketball. Ann Arbor's farmers' markets, walking paths, and arts programming promise to provide me with plenty to explore. I'm looking forward to being part of the department for many years to come... 🌀

KIRSTIN QUADE

DELBANCO VISITING PROFESSOR OF CREATIVE WRITING

I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the faculty of the Helen Zell Writers' Program as the Nicholas Delbanco Visiting Professor in Fiction. I'm brand new to the Midwest and am looking forward to exploring everything Ann Arbor and Michigan have to offer. I'm an avid hiker and like to draw in my spare time, as well as care for my extremely charming and occasionally badly-behaved parrot, Frito. I've also recently developed a deep interest in cold weather gear.

For the last five years I've lived in the very temperate Bay Area. I taught fiction, creative nonfiction, and mixed-genre classes as a Jones Lecturer at Stanford, where I was also a Stegner Fellow and Truman Capote Fellow. I've also taught in the MFA program at the University of San Francisco. Before that, I received my MFA from the University of Oregon.

My fiction is mostly set in northern New Mexico, where I was born and where my mother's family has lived for four hundred years. When I was growing up, my family moved a great deal, following the work of my father, a research geologist. My father specializes in the geology of deserts, so we spent months at a time living out of tents or our VW van as the dust gusted over us—experiences that have also found their way into my fiction. My story collection, *Night at the Fiestas*, will be published this winter by Norton. I am currently at work on a novel.

This fall I am teaching two classes, English 230: The Story Collection, and English 323: Fiction Workshop. I am so looking forward to working with the students and faculty in the English Department and to getting to know a new town! 🌀



To learn more about our faculty, please visit
www.lsa.umich.edu/english/

remembering

PATSY YAEGER

by Marjorie Levinson, Anita Norich, Valerie Traub, Jennifer Wenzel

Patricia Smith Yaeger died of ovarian cancer on July 25, 2014. A member of the Departments of English and Women's Studies since 1990, Patsy was named Henry Simmons Frieze Collegiate Professor in 2005.

As editor of the profession's most prestigious scholarly periodical, *Publications of the Modern Language Association* [PMLA] from 2006-2011, Patsy reimagined what the journal could be, most notably in the innovative Theories and Methodologies section and her Editor's Columns. The latter she often transformed into conversations, inviting scholars to think through issues ranging from the future of postcolonial studies to the import of different forms of energy for literary periodization. Key to her critical genius was a prolific imagination and limitless curiosity that allowed her to see things and make connections others couldn't.

Patsy's editorship was only one of the highlights of an illustrious career during which she pioneered feminist scholarship of literature and culture, particularly of the American South. *Honey-Mad Women: Emancipatory Strategies in Women's Writing* appeared in 1988 and the award-winning *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing 1930-1990* in 2000. Her edited volume, *The Geography of Identity* (1996), and the co-edited collection *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (1991), extended her purview beyond the U.S. She turned to issues of trauma in the landmark essay, "Consuming Trauma; or, the Pleasures of Merely Circulating" (1997).

Patsy's more recent publications in material culture and the environment, specifically those on cities, infrastructure, oceans, trash, and energy, will shape the environmental humanities for years to come. Her Editor's Column, "Literature in the Ages of Wood, Tallow, Coal, Whale Oil, Gasoline, Atomic Power, and Other Energy Sources" (2011), led to



Fueling Culture: Energy, History, Politics (forthcoming), an interdisciplinary collection of essays on keywords related to energy she was co-editing at the time of her death.

Spanning the wide arc of Patsy's scholarship, from her formal training as a Romanticist at Yale in the age of high theory, to *Luminous Trash*, the book manuscript underway when she died, is the spirit of what she termed "a female sublime," a sublime not of mastery but of skepticism. Patsy valued the restlessness and excess of her curiosity, which even as it opened new intellectual territories, rounded back upon those adventures in knowing to challenge their authority. Patsy embraced that reflexive return. She loved the line from

Yeats's "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop": "For nothing can be sole or whole/That has not been rent."

Patsy was a luminous scholar, vibrant teacher, gracious colleague, supportive mentor, fiercely loving wife and mother, passionate gardener, inimitable dancer, wondrous conversationalist, and precious friend to many. A scintillating interlocutor, she talked seamlessly about poems and politics, critical theory and travel, gardens and girlfriends. Her students describe Patsy as generous with her insights about literature and life, a facility that was recognized by an award for Distinguished Graduate Mentoring in 2013. She was asking canny questions and generating dazzling ideas up to her death. Upon hearing of her illness, many people remarked, in protest or disbelief, that Patsy was so extraordinarily *alive*. Her boundless charisma expanded the worlds of all who knew her. She is survived by her husband Dr. Richard Miller, daughter Kiri Miller, and son Noah Miller.

A session in memory of Patsy will be held at the 2015 Modern Language Association Convention in Vancouver. A day-long symposium in her honor will be held in 3222 Angell Hall on March 13, 2015. ☺

RUSSELL FRASER

by John Knott

When Russell Fraser died in Honolulu in March, he had just published his twentieth book, *Sojourner in Islamic Lands*, based on travels through central Asia following the course of the Silk Road. The fact that he was tethered to an oxygen tank for the last nine years of his life didn't undermine his commitment to writing or to seeking out new experiences. After retiring and moving to Hawaii with his wife Mary Zwiép he continued his habit of writing every morning. He made new friends and, when tennis was beyond him, took up the violin.

After being fired from his first teaching job at UCLA for refusing to sign a loyalty oath, an act of which he was proud, Fraser restarted his teaching career at Duke, earned tenure, and served as Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Princeton, then moved to Vanderbilt to chair the English Department before coming to Michigan in 1967 to chair our own department, the first outsider to hold the position. He brought energy, ambition, and flair to the job, reorienting the department by reducing teaching loads, emphasizing research productivity, and democratizing salary and promotion procedures. He pushed the curriculum in new directions as well and created an innovative course that used Shakespeare to teach introductory composition. Fraser was a gifted and popular teacher himself, equally at home lecturing on Shakespeare or parsing English poetry with students at any level of experience. He was pleased to have started and served as founding director of the interdisciplinary Medieval and Renaissance Collegium (now the Program in Medieval and Early Modern Studies) but took greater pleasure in teaching and writing about literature than in any kind of administrative role.

Fraser was a major critic of English Renaissance literature who extended his intellectual range over the course of his career, writing for more general audiences in books including one about what he considered the best poetry in English since 1500 (*Singing Masters*) and another on some of his favorite modernist writers, European and American as well as English (*Moderns Worth Keeping*). His lifelong passion for Shakespeare was reflected in popular and scholarly editions of the plays, a book on Shakespeare's poetics based on *King Lear*, and a two-volume study of Shakespeare's life and art in the context of his times. A series of books exploring Renaissance literature in relation to intellectual and cultural history (*The War Against Poetry*, *The Dark Ages and the Age of Gold*, and *The Language of Adam*) established him as an ambitious and incisive critic with a singular style.

With *The Three Romes* (Moscow, Constantinople/Istanbul, and Rome) he began a series of three books (including *From China to Peru* and his recent book on Islam) in which he combined his own travel experience with commentary on the religious, artistic, and cultural pasts of the places he visited.

Although Fraser received widespread recognition for his academic accomplishments (including a Guggenheim Fellowship and appointments as a Senior Fulbright-Hays Scholar and a Rockefeller Resident Scholar at Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, and visiting appointments at Columbia and the University of Hawaii), by example and exhortation he called into question the academy's tendency to specialization and pursuit of the currently fashionable, aspiring to an older ideal of critic and man of letters. Writing a biography of critic R. P. Blackmur (*A Tangled Web*), someone he had come to know and admire at Princeton, was one way of defining this ideal. Another was naming his collegiate professorship for Austin



Warren, a predecessor in Michigan's English Department known for his wide-ranging and influential criticism. It was characteristic of Fraser to publish many of his essays in leading literary journals of general interest such as *The Sewanee Review* and the *Virginia Quarterly Review* rather than those that appealed to a narrower scholarly audience. Throughout his writing he honed a style that was demanding and unmistakable, *sui generis*, like the man.

Russ Fraser's Michigan friends remember him for his gregariousness and his competitive spirit as well as for the discipline that kept him at his writing. As chair he would exhort assistant professors to get their books done ("stick to your last"), setting a daunting example with the pace and reach of his own writing, and challenge them on the squash and tennis courts as well, not conceding anything to age. He enjoyed interacting with students in the classroom, one mark of a good teacher, and entertaining colleagues and friends. As a convivial host at parties, he liked to welcome guests in his kilt, affirming his Scottish heritage with the zest he brought to everything he undertook. He valued friendship and believed in loyalty, demonstrating his own friendship in numerous acts of generosity, especially to younger colleagues. Some of Russ Fraser's friends would tell you that the friendship could be tested when they didn't seem loyal enough or embraced trends that he deplored in the profession or the university, but they continued to admire his outsize accomplishments, his remarkable presence, and his deep commitment to the literature he loved. ☺

TWO POEMS

by Lorna Goodison

I once saw a photograph of Charlie Chaplin sitting on a beach in Oracabessa—a seaside town on the island of Jamaica, where I grew up going to the movies most Saturdays. I have never forgotten that photograph; and because of it, I have always wanted to write a poem about Charlie Chaplin.

Three years ago I had the good fortune to get invited to lunch in Oracabessa with Chris Blackwell who is the founder of Island Records and the man who managed Bob Marley's rise to international stardom. He lives at Goldeneye, the property once owned by Ian Fleming and where Fleming wrote the James Bond series. Firefly, the house where Noel Coward lived and where he wrote many of his plays and entertained members of the British royal family as well as everybody who was anybody in the world of entertainment and films, is not far from Goldeneye. Not far from Goldeneye and Firefly is Golden Clouds, a property that was built by Ruth Bryan Owen, the first woman ever to be appointed a United States ambassador to anywhere. It was from Chris Blackwell that I learned how Charlie Chaplin used to visit all three of these places.

After that memorable lunch, I went looking for more evidence of Charlie Chaplin in Jamaica; and while I managed to find some photographs of him sitting at dinner with Noel Coward and others, I was most taken by an excerpt from a letter he wrote to Ruth Bryan Owen, describing Golden Clouds as "a wonderfully magical place where time stood still, a paradise." And so I built the poem around Chaplin visiting this beautiful mansion by the sea, which has its own private beach; and I played with the idea of him looking out through his window—as he would at a scene in a movie—at fishermen rowing past. Because he was such a great humanitarian I think he would have felt compassion for some of those Jamaican fishermen who are unable to swim but who nonetheless still regularly venture far out into deep and dangerous waters.

I was able to play with images of Chaplin's Tramp while also giving a nod to "The Song of the Banana Man," a poem by Evan Jones in which a tourist mistakes a local banana farmer for a beggar because his clothes are old and stained. Except for Chaplin, all the characters in the poem are ordinary Jamaican people, although in reality he would have been almost exclusively in the company of the rich and famous on those visits to Jamaica. But if Chaplin's life and work is to be taken as evidence, he greatly loved and valued ordinary working people, and they also loved and valued him; and so I am happy that he smiled a while and felt released from the cares of his rather complicated life when he visited Golden Clouds over a hundred years ago.

I read this poem on a program on the BBC in December 2013 in a discussion program on Gift Giving; and I read it because I am grateful that Charlie Chaplin gave us all the gift of laughter. The poem is meant to give something back to his memory. 🍌

Charlie Chaplin at Golden Clouds

Charlie Chaplin declared Oracabessa Paradise. One hundred and one years ago on this day, time stood still there for him.

At Golden Clouds he smiled and checked in for a time his bag of crosses carried from childhood; bag of abandonment and

want that made him identify with the poor little man; baggy pants, coat too tight, castoff shoes so outsized, he wore them right to left.

Cane and a bowler hat, wicked man's mock moustache. Jesus, what a job! Responsibility for making this world laugh. Chaplin

looked out silently from his room window framing the Caribbean Sea and saw rowing hard, big fishermen who cannot swim.

He went for a walk and watched banana men dressed like tramps, cultivating acres of hillside land. The inheritors of earth

about their business, not caring about who the great man was, except to offer him a jelly coconut—Oracabessa sun can be hot—or like

the chambermaid, recite a psalm as she turned down his clean sheets that he'd pass the night in peace; to rise up come morning rested.



Across the Fields to St Bega's

for my beloved students at the University of Michigan

Clear the old stile set in the dry stone wall
and go across fields to where St Bega's beckons;
you will step past drowsing dams who suckle
newborns underneath shade trees.

You have never seen so many lambs fattening
on creamy ewe milk. Sweet-faced they are these
ideal baby sheep, all soot-cheeks and shine eyes
set to head side;

plump bodies upholstered tight with wool stuff,
same as rolled white thatch capping pates of elders.
If gate latch does not yield, jump-fence again
to land on stone tombs.

Tennyson passed through here; Wordsworth too,
but St Bega's at noon is silent except for wisps
of Matins candle smoke and leaflets which tell
of her miraculous bracelet.

Bega's wrist-band, ring-fence against harm, ring
us round with blessings. Once again into the fields
to sight this psalm: Sheep safely grazing
in green pastures, by still waters.

Above: a previously unpublished poem based on the author's travels during the summer of 2014 through England.

At left: excerpted from *Supplying Salt and Light* by Lorna Goodison. Copyright © 2013 Lorna Goodison. Reprinted by permission of McClelland & Stewart, a division of Random House of Canada Limited, a Penguin Random House Company.



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