

PRESENCES

Newsletter of the Department of English and Literary Arts // MAY 2019



UNIVERSITY of DENVER

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
English & Literary Arts

A Vision of the Future THE DENVER SCHOOL OF FORMS AND POETICS



THE Department of English and Literary Arts at the University of Denver is currently developing a substantially unique summer program. Currently named the Denver School of Forms and Poetics, the program will provide a forum for the exploration of the distinctive as well as the interactive capabilities of creative writing and literary studies. In two-week workshops/seminars and mini seminars/workshops, DU and guest faculty, many of them significant voices in their fields, will discuss—with imagination and insight—aesthetic forms and critical poetics as they elasticize or expand intellectual boundaries. Cosmopolitan and innovatory in character, the aims of the Denver School of Forms and Poetics include transcultural and transdisciplinary studies of other pertinent artistic and intellectual forms in the humanities.

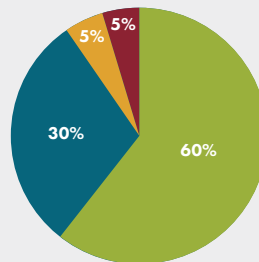
As an intercultural program shaped by the past present but oriented toward the future, the Denver School of Forms and Poetics models the root ideal of *DU Impact 2025*—“a vision of a modern urban global university dedicated to the public good.”

Advanced seniors contemplating graduate studies and graduate students already furthering their professional development are bound to find the experience particularly helpful. So too will all individuals principally interested in knowledge and a dynamic vision of the world. Among other benefits, the Denver School of Forms and Poetics will help students develop a robust critical education that aligns with their

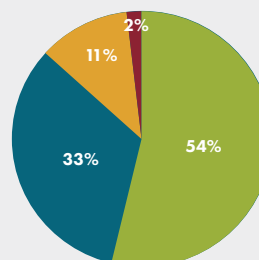
creative education, or vice versa, and current literary practices. It will also facilitate access to enriching ideas and methods, engaging faculty and participants, and a blend of curricular and co-curricular activities. The program will build on the strengths of the two main tracks—Creative Writing and Literary Studies—in the department.

The Denver School of Forms and Poetics is expected to open its doors in the summer of 2020. As part of the planning for the advent of the program, two graduate students—Alicia Mountain and McCormick Templeman—and Joel Lewis, the assistant to the chair, polled hundreds of respondents, including former applicants to the department’s graduate program and high school teachers in Colorado’s Front Range. The aim was to gauge interest and viability. Hopefully, the encouraging results of the poll will be translated into actual attendance when the program takes off.

How appealing is the notion of a hybrid summer program with a focus on blending the disciplines of Creative Writing and Literary Studies?



How appealing is the notion of a summer program being led by the current faculty of the University of Denver Department of English and Literary Arts?



Very appealing Appealing
Neutral Not Appealing

SNAPSHOT

A Vision of the Future: The Denver School of Forms and Poetics 1

The Undergraduate Experience 2

The Flexible MA (Literary Studies) Program 3

W. Scott Howard: Sonic-image-texts and Other Ideas..... 4

DU’s English & Literary Arts Faculty Exchange Program..... 5

Njabulo Ndebele, Eric Gould, and the Transnational Imagination..... 6

Dan Beachy-Quick and Rachel Feder on Keats’s Negative Capability 7

Narratives and Counternarratives..... 7

Graham Foust’s *Nightingaleness*..... 8

Rachel Feder’s *Harvest*..... 9

Selah Saterstrom’s *Ideal Suggestions*..... 9

Diana Nguyen’s *Poetry* 10

The Example of Bin Ramke 11

The 9th Literary Studies Roundtable 11

New Faculty Highlights



DR. JOANNA HOWARD is assistant professor of literary arts specializing in prose writing and prose and poetry hybrids. She is the author of the novel *Foreign Correspondent* (Counterpath, 2013); a story collection *On the Winding Stair* (Boa editions, 2009); an artist’s book *In the Colorless Round* (Noemi, 2006); and *Field Glass*, a speculative novel co-written with Joanna Ruocco (Sidebrow, 2017).



DR. ALEKSANDR PRIGOZHIN is assistant professor of English, specializing in British modernist fiction, media studies, and affect theory. He is at work on *Atmospheric Media: Closed Rooms and Open Air in British Modernism*, a book-in-progress about the modernist uses of atmospheric media as figures for interrogating the boundaries of subjectivity in a mass mediated age.

THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE



by *Emelia Kamadulski*,
undergraduate student

IN the Fall quarter of my first year at the University of Denver (DU), starting my first English course, I didn't know what to expect from the class or the department. Along with some common curriculum courses that quarter, I registered for Introduction to Creative Writing. As a creative writing workshop, while producing and editing our own writing we read and discussed a wide array of poetry and prose. Both activities enriched the other. We learned and were inspired by the craft of the writers we read, and our own writing increased our appreciation of and awareness of the minute details of our readings.

The literature classes I've taken at DU are also focused on increasing an awareness of the minute details of our readings, the color and texture of every thread, and the pertinent contexts, effects, and tensions. We look at all these elements individually and as parts of a whole and in this way too, we examine the different works taught in the course alone and in relation to one another. These relationships form the foundation of understanding the literary tradition in which our readings reside—the historical and cultural contexts that shaped and were shaped by their creation. These literature courses sometimes focus solely on this kind of analysis and other times put it in conversation with the production of creative work. Writing creative pieces is not typical for a literature course but has been part of several that I've taken at DU and I've enjoyed doing so immensely. Taught by Brian Kiteley, *Contemporary Literature: The Spy Novel* was one of these courses. We read novels of espionage from Le Carré and DeLillo to Fleming while interpreting the themes of the genre in our own writing. In this class, and especially in creative writing classes, I have applied the analytical skills developed in literature classes to my own work and I've seen my writing grow immensely.

Like literature classes, the creative writing courses at DU are eclectic, interesting, and as diverse as the people teaching them. As every instructor approaches the material with their own collection of passions and curiosities, no two sections of creative writing class are the same. I've taken a poetry class that explored experimentation with form, a fiction class that investigated storytelling through the comparison of historical folktales to their modern adaptations, and most recently a poetry class focused on looking forward. In this class, we read poets' debut collections, regularly submitted our own work to literary journals, and talked about internships, MFA programs, and the writer's "side hustle"—how to live as a writer when writing isn't paying the bills.

Based in discussion rather than lecture, the learning in a writing workshop comes from asking questions, responding thoughtfully, criticizing constructively, and collaborating with classmates. This can be a difficult balance to strike. Egos, delicate at the best of times, emerge when our peers dissect our creative work. But these are spaces that also develop resilience. Our egos get over themselves—this time accept an apple instead of ice cream and are healthier for it.

It has been through these creative writing workshops too that I've glimpsed a life as a writer outside DU. My past creative writing instructors have invited my classes to readings around Denver and encouraged us to attend. If you take enough English classes at DU, you'll start seeing familiar faces at these readings. At every event I've been to, I've seen a past instructor or teaching assistant in the audience or involved as a reader or facilitator. Back on campus there are also readings and lectures put on by faculty in the department or featuring a visiting writer or scholar. I've experienced the work of talented writers I'd never heard of and learned from professors I hadn't had the opportunity to study with. There's only so much you can learn in a classroom—not to imply that it isn't a lot—but between these readings and lectures on and off campus, I feel fully educated.

SAMPLE UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

ENGL 1010 INTRODUCTION TO THE MAJOR

Aleksandr Prigozhin

English 1010 offers a comprehensive introduction to the major. Course participants analyze key texts from the traditions of British and American literature. In addition to introducing the English literary canon, this course prepares students for future study in fields such as postcolonial literature, American ethnic literatures, and contemporary literature. The assignment sequence helps students develop skills in close reading, academic argument, and comparative analysis.

ENGL 2221 SHAKESPEARE SEMINAR

W. Scott Howard

This course places Hamlet within context of Shakespeare's time and our own, amplifying the play's transcultural and transdisciplinary legacy from the earliest performances to recent productions in London, Paris, New York, and Denver; from legendary Nordic sources to Shakespeare's foul papers, quarto texts, and First Folio; and from the cosmologies of Heraclitus, Ptolemy, and Copernicus to the quantum entanglements of Hawking, Barad, and Rovelli. We follow Hamlet's journey as a quest 'after' Hamlet across centuries & continents, through adaptations & archives, paying close attention to the poetics & praxis of mediating and remediating Shakespeare's works. This course integrates critical theoretical methods with these intersecting paths of study, emphasizing the materiality of Hamlet's multiverse. Campus activities include guest presentations from DU Faculty from archives & special collections, theatre, astronomy, emergent digital practices, and philosophy.

ENGL 2715 LATINA/O LITERATURE

Kristy Ulibarri

This course introduces students to the field of Latina/o/x literature. We primarily approach this body of literature through fiction and poetry that explore transnational identities and im/migration. This body of literature describes narratives written by/about those living in the U.S. who descend from Latin America and share the history of Spanish colonialism in the Americas. We explore how these narratives build and breach borders, both literally and figuratively. We also discuss the political and social contexts and subtexts of these narratives by looking at the larger discourses that surround immigration and border fortification in the U.S.: illegality, nativism, Juan Crow, the Brown Peril, xenophobia, and calls to build a border wall.

THE FLEXIBLE MA (LITERARY STUDIES) PROGRAM

by Joel T. Lewis, former MA student,
Assistant to the Chair



THE M.A. in English (Literary Studies) program is a showcase of the Department of English and Literary Arts' unique flexibility and hybridization of creative and critical methodologies. With a malleable course requirement of 45 credit hours with essentially no in-department restrictions, the candidate is able to craft schedules that are an eclectic blend of literature courses and creative writing workshops. With innovative courses that juxtapose authors, and critiques both contemporary and modern like Dr. Eleanor McNees's popular Virginia Woolf and the Victorians and Dr. Clark Davis's Melville and Faulkner courses, master's students are challenged to consider literature and creative writing from new angles and alongside seemingly odd bedfellows. This emphasis on critical links across styles and creators goes as far as to cross mediums. One of the texts Dr. Davis includes in his Melville and Faulkner course discussions is Robert K. Wallace's *Melville and Turner: Spheres of Love and Fright*,

which challenges readers to analyze the paintings of William Turner and Melville's fiction as components of a post-picturesque movement in both literary and visual art. The freedom with which these thoughtfully constructed courses blend mediums and their methodologies encourage students to think out of the box when approaching their thesis projects.

The advanced creative writing workshops further the department's philosophy of combining creative and critical disciplines with theory and analytical components of the required reading that inform the way students discuss and dissect their own work. Some workshops are divided with equal time given to reading and workshopping original work and discussing critical frameworks in relation to the session's assigned reading. This level of critical engagement with creative work, and as a component of the creative process itself, allows the workshop model to transcend subjectivity of voice and progress to structured experimentation and analysis.

Instructors are also thoughtful in how they adapt their reading assignments and discussion topics based on the composition of their class. Instructors are mindful of their students' thesis and dissertation topics and are willing to carve out space in the reading lists or final paper assignments so that coursework directly contributes to a student's program spanning

research. This student focus of the department faculty extends beyond the courses designed by instructors as master's students are encouraged to collaborate with faculty to craft smaller scale tutorials. The tutorial model of instruction is a focused attempt for instructor and student to investigate a specific corner of literary inquiry usually in order to assist the student with their unique thesis project. These typically one-on-one (though sometimes expanded to a student-to-faculty ratio as high as three students to a single faculty member) sessions are more loosely structured with often only a single meeting a week, sometimes in a casual setting near campus. These tutorials break down the hierarchical separation between student and instructor in such a way that the collaborative work which follows lends students a unique sense of ownership and investment in their research. The two-year degree experience hinges on the freedom of the student to choose and forge a path toward a thesis project and defense.

Current undergrad majors in the Department of English and Literary Arts are in a unique position when it comes to the MA admission process. High performing majors who achieve a 3.9 GPA or higher and are in good standing within the department are eligible to be fast tracked for admission. Eligible students benefit from having some admission requirements waived, including the GRE score requirement.

SOME FACULTY MEMBERS



Dr. Clark Davis



Dr. Donna Beth Ellard



Brian Kiteley



Dr. Tayana Hardin



Dr. Eleanor McNees



Dr. Adam Rovner



Dr. Billy J. Stratton



Dr. Kristy Ulibarri

Interview with
Dr. W. Scott Howard

SONIC-IMAGE- TEXTS AND OTHER IDEAS

Interview by Erinrose Mager



W. Scott Howard teaches poetics and poetry in the Department of English and Literary Arts at the University of Denver. He is founding editor of *Reconfigurations: A Journal for Poetics & Poetry / Literature & Culture*; and is co-editor (with Broc Rossell, PhD '13) of *Poetics and Praxis 'After' Objectivism* (University of Iowa Press, 2018). He is the author of two collections of poems: *ROPES* (with images by Ginger Knowlton) from Delete Press (2014); and *SPINNAKERS* (from The Lune, 2016). His critical monograph, *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe's factual telepathy*, is forthcoming from Talisman House in 2019. Professor Howard's work has received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

Mager: I'm interested to hear about your recently published books and projects and—to boot—the projects you're working on currently. Have you worked on any projects with current or former students? What was this collaboration process like?

Howard: The *Poetics and Praxis* book (which came out in August 2018) represents a path I've been following for many years from my days at Powell's Books (in Portland, OR) to my 'After' Objectivism courses at DU to the grad. course I'll be teaching next year on documentary poetics and sonic materialisms. The volume includes chapters from Graham Foust and Julie Carr plus seven other chapters from

colleagues in Canada, the U.K., and the U.S. The book engages poetics and praxis at the collective level in the spirit of the legacy we're celebrating; the volume concludes with a conversation among six additional contributors (including Rae Armantrout and Mark McMorris). And the Introduction, which Broc Rossell and I co-wrote, presents a paradigm shifting argument for the legacy of this movement from the 1930s to now. Working with Broc was one of the most exciting collaborations in my career thus far. We're happy that the book is out in the world, at last. My next book, which will be coming out later this year from Talisman House, is *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe's factual telepathy*. This volume also charts a path I've been following since Susan's works first found me at Powell's in the 1990s. Since the book is currently in the early stages of production, I don't want to say too much about it right now, except that I am really looking forward to seeing the work in published form. The volume includes some of my most intensive theoretical writing as well as some of my most lyrical and personal work. The book also includes an interview with Susan that represents nearly four years of our correspondence. In recent months, I've also been writing poems and creating a sequence of sonic-image-texts, some of which will be appearing this spring and summer in the journals, *B O D Y* and *word for / word*.

Mager: What are some recent or forthcoming DU community-related events and/or activities that you're particularly excited about? Tell us a little about your relationship to recent English Department events (and, perhaps, their relationship to your own scholarship).

Howard: During 2019, I am working with my colleagues Trace Reddell (emergent digital practices), Thomas Nail (philosophy), and Michael Caston (mechanical & materials engineering) to organize and host a sequence of events with support from the University of Denver's Center for Innovation in the Liberal and Creative Arts (CILCA) and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. These activities will include contributors from our community who will present their transdisciplinary works. In particular, we are looking for makers, practitioners, and scholars interested in collaborating across the arts, humanities, and sciences—with a sensitivity to the materiality

of their methods, media, and praxis. These DU events will highlight intersections of critical theoretical methods, classroom experiences, public encounters and actions. In this respect, all events will promote engagement with the larger Denver public. And, as you may have guessed, these initiatives also dovetail with my interests in the Objectivist writers; in Susan Howe's poetry, prose, and multimodal performances; in Shakespeare, Cavendish, Milton, and legacies of poetics and praxis—that is, shaping experience and knowledge through artistic forms of social action.

Mager: A little bird told me that you will be taking over Bin Ramke's role as editor of the *Denver Quarterly*; what excites you most about taking over this position? Where do you see DQ headed under your direction?

Howard: I am deeply honored by this opportunity to serve as editor of *Denver Quarterly* (beginning fall 2019) and I have much to learn. Bin, Thirri and I will be working together during spring quarter so that I'll be ready for next year. I have a notebook full of ideas and lists, sketches and dreams. I look forward to working with everyone in this cohort, and I'm excited about the journal's past, present, and future!

Mager: Any inspiring research-related trips you've been on lately? Seen any cool astrolabes, by any chance?

Howard: In October, I gave an invited presentation at the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. During one of the afternoons, we visited the Collegium Maius and toured the rooms where Copernicus studied (from 1491 to 1495); we saw some of the books and instruments that he would have used (including an astrolabe, a torquetum, and a celestial globe). The astrolabe was fabricated in Cordoba in the ninth century and was inscribed with Arabic letters and numerals. I visited Cordoba, Spain with my family last summer; so when I beheld that astrolabe there in the room where Copernicus studied, I was overwhelmed by the object's own story of travel and transformation through space and time and so many hands and minds. My visit to Kraków was a memorable experience, and I would love to return someday.

Denver. Durban.
Lille. Lund. Perth

DU'S ENGLISH & LITERARY ARTS FACULTY EXCHANGE PROGRAM



PIONEERED by the Department of English and Literary Arts, the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) at DU will welcome new visiting professors next year as part of an international faculty exchange program between the department and corresponding programs around the world — the English Studies program at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in Durban, South Africa; the English department at Université de Lille in Lille, France; the Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University in Lund, Sweden; and the Department of English and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia (UWA) in Perth, Australia. The discussions and arrangements that will launch these exchanges are in different stages of progression.

Confirmed for next year is the exchange between the department and the Department of English and Cultural Studies at UWA. In February 2019, Dr. Tony Hughes-D'Aeth was at DU to firm up arrangements. He met with faculty members and gave a lecture entitled "The Settler Colonial Farm Novel: A Transnational Mode." The next month, March 2019, Professor Maik Nwosu visited UWA to meet with faculty members, the head of school, and Dean Matthew Tonts, executive dean, FABLE (Faculty of Arts, Business, Law and Education).

It is expected that, in March 2020, Dr. Catherine Noske will arrive from UWA, Perth to teach at

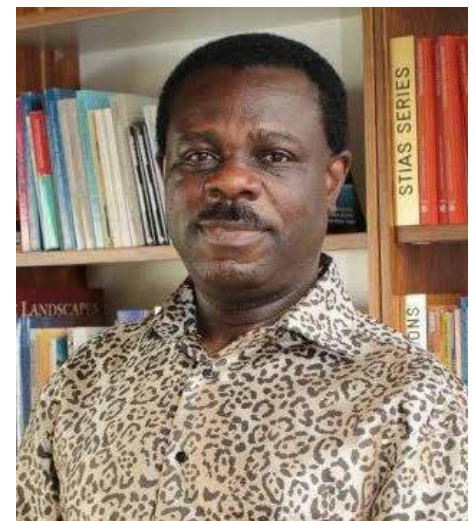
DU during Spring 2020. Dr. Noske completed her PhD in creative writing at Monash University, looking at white Australian practices of writing landscape. Her research has been awarded the A.D. Hope Prize from the Association for the Study of Australian Literature. She has been a committee member for the Australian Short Story Festival, a judge of the Western Australia Premier's Book Prize, and is a board member for writing WA and A Maze of Story. She has twice been awarded the Elyne Mitchell Prize for Rural Women Writers, and her novel was awarded a Varuna fellowship and shortlisted for the 2015 Dorothy Hewett Award. She lectures in creative writing and literature, and is editor of *Westerly*, a literary magazine published since 1956. Dr. Noske is interested in the possibility of "some publication cross-over" between *Westerly* and *Denver Quarterly*. While at DU, she is likely to teach a class on the theory and practice of creative writing. Later in 2020, Dr. Billy J. Stratton will travel to Perth to teach at UWA during the institution's second semester, which typically runs from July to November. Dr. Stratton earned a PhD in American Indian Studies from the University of Arizona among the first 30 in the discipline worldwide. His first book, *Buried in Shades of Night*, was published in 2013 and garnered much positive critical attention, while his latest project, *The Fictions of Stephen Graham Jones: A Critical Companion*, was published by the University of New Mexico Press in November 2016. He is currently at work on a novel set in Appalachian coal country. Stratton has also served as a Fulbright Scholar in the American studies program at Julius-Maximilians Universität Würzburg, Germany. While at UWA, Dr. Stratton will possibly teach a class on Native American and aboriginal literature.

The discussion regarding the second international faculty exchange program, between DU and UKZN, is currently at an advanced stage and could yield an actual exchange in 2020 or 2021. Dr. Jean Rossmann will then arrive from UKZN, Durban to teach at DU. Dr. Rossmann received her PhD in English in 2014 from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Pietermaritzburg. Rossmann is "interested in themes of trauma/loss, African cosmologies, and the relationship between artistic creation, alterity and transformation." Her teaching areas and interests include Theory

(gender/psychoanalysis/postcolonial/film): bell hooks, Franz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Žižek, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Laura Mulvey; Literature and Journalism: genre theory (literary realism/literary journalism); Modernisms: Modernist thinkers (Nietzsche, Freud, Baudelaire), poetry (Yeats, Eliot, Pound, H.D.), novels (Conrad, Woolf), drama (Jarry); Postmodernisms: Metafiction short stories (Ivan Vladislavic, Robert Coover), novel (*Adair's In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot*); African Film and Literature: Ousmane Sembene's *Hyenas*, Gavin Hood's *Tsotsi*, Plaatje's *Mhudi*, South African short stories. While at DU, Dr. Rossmann is likely to teach a class on Empire.

The proposed exchange program with the Centre for Languages & Literature at Sweden's Lund University and the English department at France's Université de Lille is still at an exploratory stage, but there is enough interest and goodwill to signal the possibility of a positive outcome.

The international faculty exchange program is a great opportunity for the department and DU in many respects. Not only will it broaden the horizon of students and faculty members in a department with a broad appreciation of the discipline of "English" and an institution with an increasingly bold(er) international outreach, it will bring new intellectual currents or energy to the department and DU through more varied courses and contexts.



Dr. Maik Nwosu,
department chair and program facilitator

Dialogues 1.0

NJABULO NDEBELE, ERIC GOULD AND THE TRANSNATIONAL IMAGINATION



Drs. Njabulo Ndebele and Eric Gould

FROM September 17 to 20, 2018, the Department of English and Literary Arts, working with the Office of the Chancellor and the Office of Alumni Engagement, hosted a visit from Professor Njabulo Ndebele, one of the most internationally recognized alumni of the department in its long history. Ndebele is a highly regarded South African fiction writer and essayist — *Fools and Other Stories* (1983), *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* (2004), and *The Rediscovery of the Ordinary* (1991, reissued in 2006), among other books. He graduated with a PhD in English (Creative Writing) from DU in 1983 following completion of a master's degree in English at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. On returning to South Africa after a four-year stay in Denver, Ndebele has had one of the most recognizable and distinguished academic and creative careers in southern Africa, serving as the leader of several South African universities (including University of Cape Town and University of Johannesburg, where he is now Chancellor). He has won one of the highest awards in African letters, the Noma Award for Publishing in Africa, and has been the recipient of 13 honorary degrees from universities all over the world, including Michigan, Cambridge, University College London, Soka (Japan), Chicago State, and DU.

He is currently the chair of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in South Africa.

Ndebele visited classes in the English Department during his visit, and on September 17 he and Professor Eric Gould participated in the first edition of Dialogues, the forum for faculty in the department's different tracks (literary studies and creative writing) and alumni to interact in a public conversation that recognizes but also transcends conventional academic boundaries. Notably, the idea of Dialogues was conceived after Professor Maik Nwosu, the department chair, witnessed a public conversation (organized by the University of Stellenbosch) between Professors Homi Bhabha and Ndebele during his fellowship at the Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Study (STIAS) in Stellenbosch, South Africa. At DU on September 17, the focus of the dialogue between Professors Ndebele and Gould was on the state of writing in South Africa and the intersection of fiction writing and globalization. Professor Gould, the interlocutor, is himself a distinguished scholar whose teaching and research are in 20th and 21st-century literature, with an emphasis on fiction and cultural studies. He has a PhD in English from King's College, London, and is the author/ editor of eight books including *Mythical Intentions in Modern Literature* and *Making Meaning: Reading and Writing Texts*. His book, *The University in a Corporate Culture*, won the 2004 Frandson Prize for Literature.

Before Dialogues 1.0, Professor Nwosu made the introductions and presented a framing question (abbreviated below).

Let us begin with references to three South African writer critics, J. M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, and Njabulo Ndebele. In different ways, Coetzee, Gordimer, and Ndebele point up the aesthetic and social contexts of literature in which "beauty" as "its own truth" (Coetzee) or the "essential gesture" (Gordimer) or a universal humanism (Ndebele) are, or can be, multidimensional signifiers that highlight as well as transcend specificities.

Professor Eric Gould arrived at DU as an assistant professor in 1972, and Professor Ndebele graduated with a PhD in English (creative writing) in 1983. In between these

two markers, and even before, DU's Department of English and Literary Arts produced at least three writer critics who rank among the most remarkable figures in African literature: Eskia Mphahlele (PhD 1968); Isidore Okpewho (PhD '76); and Njabulo Ndebele (PhD, '83), thanks in part to intellectual visionaries such as Professor Gould and Professor Gerry Chapman and Professor Bill Zaranka (all of whom are in attendance at this event today). So, in some respects, DU's Department of English & Literary Arts was already global in orientation back in those days, a vision of the world that has become even more noteworthy in our current dispensation (under Chancellor Rebecca Chopp). A lot has changed in the world since 1972 or 1983, and this is certainly a good occasion to discuss the significance of literature in relation to human consciousness. The discussion question I've been leading up to is simply this: How is the "essential gesture" of literature (both the creative and the critical imagination) shaped, stylistically and thematically, by cultural intersections or transnational transformations, and how has the "beauty" or "truth" of literature affected the movement of (modern) history?

During Dialogues 1.0, Ndebele's insights highlighted the global importance of both fiction and non-fiction today as both cultural and political text and aesthetic object. He offered first-hand experience of the view that the writer's contemporary importance links the ancient art of storytelling with the need to reflect on and dramatize social and psychological issues. Ndebele was active in the years of Apartheid and the transition to democracy in the early 1990s, and offered important insights into the work of Mandela, the complex transitions from Apartheid to a black and white culture reorganizing itself through "truth and reconciliation," not to mention many political challenges since. The conversation also moved to the need to resolve the paradox of art's autonomy and self reference in a world that plainly sees fiction as a way of dramatizing social issues.

Dialogues 2.0

DAN BEACHY-QUICK AND RACHEL FEDER ON KEATS'S NEGATIVE CAPABILITY

by Erinrose Mager

ON Tuesday, February 26, the Department of English and Literary Arts' Dialogues series welcomed two luminaries—poet and DU alumnus Dan Beachy-Quick and poet, DU professor, and self-proclaimed “unromantic Romanticist” Dr. Rachel Feder—to Margery Reed Hall's Reiman Theater for a public conversation about John Keats's concept of negative capability. DU English and Literary Arts graduate students, professors, and members from the wider university community were in attendance.

Beachy-Quick's poetry collections include *North True South Bright* (2003); *Spell* (2004); *Mulberry* (2006), a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award for poetry; *This Nest, Swift Passerine* (2009); *Circle's Apprentice* (2011), and *Of Silence and Song* (2017). He is also the author of *A Whaler's Dictionary* (2008), a collection of linked essays responding to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. He is a professor at Colorado State University.

Dr. Feder is an assistant professor of English and Literary Arts here at the University of Denver. She works at the intersections of literary history, creative nonfiction, and poetry with a focus on Romanticism. Her projects include a hybrid book about Mary Shelley, *Harvester of Hearts: Motherhood under the Sign of Frankenstein* (2018), a book length serial poem, *Bad Romanticisms* (2018), a book of poetry about astrology, motherhood, and literary history, *Birth Chart* (under contract), and a literary critical investigation of infinity discourse, experimental poetics, and the environmental humanities (in process).

“We must learn to be okay with half-knowledge,” said Beachy-Quick on the topic of negative capability, stressing Keats's view that poets ought to feel able to access aesthetic truths despite—and, indeed, because of—uncertainties in their knowledge. “Truth and beauty,” said

Beachy-Quick, “come from the limitations of personhood.” Prompted by Dr. Feder, Beachy-Quick read aloud Keats's 1817 letter to his brothers in which the Romantic poet first mentions negative capability, recalling a “disquisition” with the critic Charles Wentworth Dilke to whom he insists upon the ideal state “when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.”

Rather than narrowing their scope, Beachy-Quick and Dr. Feder widened their view as a means of parsing the term. Beachy-Quick, author of *A Whaler's Dictionary*, cited Melville's Ishmael as a character who, in his openness, epitomizes negative capability. While Captain Ahab's quest for the white whale is motivated by his monomaniacal need to understand God and the problems of evil, Ishmael takes the opposite approach, accepting that much in life is beyond rational understanding. Perhaps, suggested Dr. Feder, negative capability might allow us—especially those of us in academia—to live more authentically and with less anxiety, much as Ishmael finds that there is an authenticity to be gained in accepting that which we do not know.

Dr. Feder lamented to Beachy-Quick that she felt “Keats's FOMO” (or ‘fear of missing out’), a term with which Beachy-Quick was previously unfamiliar. “I feel like [Keats's] poems are always leaving,” clarified Dr. Feder. “I never feel like I completely understand.”

Beachy-Quick and Dr. Feder concluded their discussion by expressing the difficulties of Keats's *Hyperion*, a text with which Dr. Feder said she needed “help in loving.” “We look toward an embodied lack of understanding,” concluded Beachy-Quick—a call to embrace what Keats calls “the Penetralium of mystery.” An enlivening audience Q&A punctuated the evening's discussion.



Dr. Rachel Feder and Dan Beachy-Quick

NARRATIVES AND COUNTERNARRATIVES



Claire Garcia



Joanna Howard

ON Tuesday, May 14, the third conversation in the Dialogues series took place at the Lindsay Auditorium between Professor Claire Garcia (MA '87, PhD '91) and professor of English at Colorado College, Colorado Springs, and Dr. Joanna Howard, a fiction writer and assistant Professor at DU. Their dialogue focused on race, gender, ethnicity, and migration as well as their representations in writing and film.

Professor Garcia's research and teaching focuses on women writers throughout the Americas and Europe. She was lead editor of the collection, *From Uncle Tom's Cabin to The Help: Critical Perspectives on White-Authored Narratives of Black Life*. She is continuing her work on race, modernism, gender, citizenship and the Black Atlantic. Her essay, “No one, I'm sure, is ever homesick in Paris: Jessie Fauset's French Imaginary,” was published in *Paris, Capital of the Black Atlantic*. Her latest publication is a chapter in *Black French Women and the Struggle for Equality: 1848-2016*. Professor Garcia was recently named Colorado College's next dean of faculty.

Howard is the author of the novel *Foreign Correspondent*, a story collection *On the Winding Stair* (Boa editions, 2009); an artist's book *In the Colorless Round* (Noemi, 2006); and *Field Glass*, a speculative novel co-written with Joanna Ruocco (Sidebrow, 2017). Her work has appeared in *Verse*, *Conjunctions*, *McSweeney's*, *Bomb*, *Chicago Review*, *Brooklyn Rail*, and places elsewhere. She has also collaborated on translations from French, *Walls* by Marcel Cohen (*Black Square*, 2009) and *Cows* by Frederic Boyer (Noemi, 2014).

GRAHAM FOUST'S NIGHTINGALELESSNESS

by Alicia Mountain



DR. Graham Foust published his seventh collection, *Nightingalelessness*, with Flood Editions in May 2018.

Publishers Weekly notes that, in *Nightingalelessness*,

Foust “further sharpens his focus on the limitations of language as a means of exploring memory and time. He couches his linguistic sleuthings within a broader exploration of mortality that raises the stakes.” Dr. Foust describes the work as concerned with the capabilities of the sentence and the line, how the two intersect or interact. He explains, “The novelist Richard Powers once mentioned in an interview his desire to ‘build sentences that are equal to mental states.’ I think my poems are the result of my desire to do this as well.”

In cultivating the mental state for *Nightingalelessness*, Foust spent the years of its writing revisiting work by Henry James, Deborah Eisenberg, and Carol Emshwiller. Dr. Foust also acknowledges the pervasive presence of Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop, and Laura Riding in his reading life during 2012–2017, as he wrote the poems that would form *Nightingalelessness*. Rowan Ricardo Phillips’s *The Ground and Heaven* were more recent influences. Foust goes through seasons of writing and seasons of absorbing or observing the world around him. He says, “I write nothing for long periods of time and just read and listen to music and look at visual art and sometimes make visual art, making notes all the while. And then when I feel like it, I sit at a desk or a table somewhere and write.” During the *Nightingalelessness* period, Foust was listening to work by the composer Ben Johnston, as well as his trusted writing standby genres—country and hip hop. “Both are very conscious of their histories and their formal maneuvers,” he remarks, “and I need to be reminded to keep my eye on the ball.”

Nightingalelessness reaches toward the gaps and disjunctures that even language cannot span. The “nightingale” might nod to Keats’s

“Ode To a Nightingale” but also to Foust’s experience of teaching the poem far from any nightingales, to American students who have probably never heard a nightingale’s song since it is not an American bird. He is also compelled by the gendered strangeness of Philomela’s transformative revenge as a nightingale within the Greek myth despite the fact that female nightingales do not actually sing. With this keen eye for the seams at which our literature strains, Foust says that his teaching practice emphasizes reading poetry, which “allows people to take that knowledge and apply it to their writing, though it’s in large part up to each individual student to figure out exactly how that might work for them.” Foust is also at work on scholarly projects including an essay on Emily Dickinson and Samuel Beckett entitled “Getting Known” and a recently completed critical piece on Elizabeth Bishop’s poem “The Fish.” He and Sam Frederick have co-translated three books of poetry by the late German poet Ernst Meister, with more to come.

With *Nightingalelessness*, Foust offers us a collection for a discordant contemporary moment along with some comfort in being kept company by poems. “I think of a poem as a picture of a voice, a voice that’s buoyed by something like a song,” Foust says. “But a poem is neither speech nor song, so I guess the book is populated by voices for whom everyday speech is no longer useful but who can’t quite bring themselves to sing.” It seems fitting, for a book published in 2018, to find its register in a conversation complicated by speech, song, and—perhaps—by shouting. There is tension here “between the abilities of language to define experience and complicate it,” as *Publishers Weekly* describes *Nightingalelessness*. “The collection is imbued with both gravitas and grace, mirroring the anxieties of contemporary existence while also accepting them.” Of course, we can be certain that the wit and intellect we know of Foust greet us in these pages too.

OUR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

CONSTITUTED as Belles-Lettres since the founding of the University of Denver in 1864 and established as the Department of English in 1896, the Department of English and Literary Arts at DU considers literature as a site of possibility. We focus on the history of liter-ature in English and in English translation; the production of literature as a creative act; the interpretation of literature as aesthetic, social, economic, cultural and/or political text; and English education.

UNDERGRADUATE ROADMAP

LITERARY STUDIES MAJOR - 44 HOURS TOTAL

4 hours of Foundations Courses

ENGL 1010 Introductory Topics in English

12 hours of Advanced Studies

3 ENGL 2000-level courses

8 hours of Special Topics

2 ENGL 3000-level courses

8 hours of Senior Sequence

ENGL 3900

ENGL 3000-level seminar

12 hours of Electives

3 ENGL courses of any level

CREATIVE WRITING MAJOR - 44 HOURS TOTAL

8 hours of Foundations Courses

ENGL 1010 Introductory Topics in English

ENGL 1000 Introduction to Creative Writing

16 hours of Advanced Studies

2 ENGL 2000-level courses

2 Intermediate Creative Writing courses

(Poetry, fiction, non-fiction, or translation)

8 hours of Special Topics

2 ENGL 3000-level courses

4 hours of Senior Sequence

ENGL 3900 Senior Seminar

8 hours of Electives

1 ENGL 3000-level course

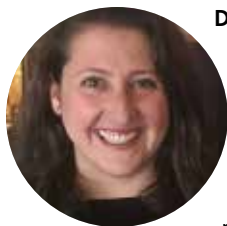
1 ENGL course of any level

DEPARTMENT DIVERSITY REQUIREMENT

At least 3 of the courses above must include international and/or ethnic literature

RACHEL FEDER'S HARVEST

by McCormick Templeman



DR. Rachel Feder's enthusiasm is infectious. Able to evince the same excitement about a Wordsworth poem as she is about a student project that

interrogates current popular culture, she infuses her classrooms with an open, spirited discourse and a deeply collaborative spirit. Her ethos as an educator is steeped in a commitment to mentorship, active intellectual exchange, while her output as an academic is truly hybrid in nature.

Her first book, *Harvester of Hearts: Motherhood Under the Sign of Frankenstein*, was released to acclaim in August 2018. Published by Northwestern University Press, the book is a hybrid text that explores Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and *Mathilda* from within the framework of the author's maternal experience with loss. A testament to Dr. Feder's collaborative mindset, *Harvester* has its origin in class discussions and she cites both graduate and undergraduate students in the book.

Although Dr. Feder is a Romanticist, she came to the sub-discipline in a somewhat unusual way. "I took a course about Romantic poetry and philosophy with Marjorie Levinson my first semester of graduate school [at the University of Michigan] and realized that some of the connections between mathematics and modernism that I was planning to study had their roots in Romantic era discourse." An interest in mathematics continues to inform her work. Currently she's drafting a book focused on the concept of infinity that situates it as a precursor to the environmental humanities and ecopoetics. In addition, she's also working on a book called *Dark Austen* about the less explored "gothic crevices" of Austen's novels and their relevance in the current political climate, especially with regard to women's rights and reproduction.

SELAH SATERSTROM'S IDEAL SUGGESTIONS

by Blake Guffey



Ideal Suggestions: Essays in Divinatory Poetics is the fourth full-length text published by Selah Saterstrom. Selected by Kristin Prevallet as the winner of the first Essay Press Open

Book Contest, *Ideal Suggestions* is Saterstrom's first collection of essays, following the publication of her novels, *The Pink Institution* (2004), *The Meat and Spirit Plan* (2007), and *Slab: On That Hallelujah Day When Tiger & Preacher Meet* (2015). Pedro Ponce in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* wrote upon its publication that *Slab* confirmed Saterstrom's "status as one of America's premier narrative archaeologists."

One of *Entropy's* best books of 2017, *Ideal Suggestions* was received with overwhelmingly positive reviews in *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Hyperallergic*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Atticus Review*, *Anomaly* and *Essay Daily*, among others, and in January of 2019 the book celebrated one year on the Small Press Distribution bestsellers list. Julie Carr writes in praise of the essays that, "To read this book is to understand anew the exuberant possibilities of the word," and TC Tolbert, "I never thought I'd say I want to go to church with someone, but I think I've just gone with Saterstrom and dammit all, it just might be saving me." Tolbert's assessment is not mere poetic hyperbole. As Prevallet writes in her introduction to the text, "This is a book in which everything is possible...It will teach you everything you need to know." However, what occurs through Saterstrom's essays seems to be less a matter of instruction than it is a form of learning which is active and shared between the text and all those who compose and form the text, the language which is the text, and finally the reader/receiver: Eleni Sikelianos has described *Ideal Suggestions* as a "chthonic" text, and this seems appropriate—it is a text which its words are not at rest but at work, always rearranging their shapes, their sounds, and their meanings.

What is "divinatory poetics"? In an interview with Teresa Carmody for *Entropy*, Saterstrom unpacks the question of the meaning of the term by quoting from her text: "In the book I write, 'sometimes students, when studying card reading, wonder about meaning. If they memorize the meanings assigned to certain cards, will this help? Sure. Though this is when I say some iteration of, 'What conditions must be present in order to best position one's multiple selves in the guts of the flux, all while remaining sentient, multi-conversant [...] and able, through a variety of modes and practices, to offer visibility to some poignant patterns?' [...] To me this means participating (reading and writing) from within the membranous precincts between our multiple bodies in the larger rhizomic field of resonances, where much is sounding and is also unsounded. This is the site from which I want to consider narrative. It is what I mean when I say: divinatory poetics." The essays composing *Ideal Suggestions* were in part inspired by the early American "self-help" book *Ideal Suggestion Through Mental Photography: A Restorative System for Home and Private Use, Preceded by a Study of the Laws of Mental Healing* (1893) by Henry C. Wood, a book which is a sort of family marker, passed down through generations of her family to Saterstrom, and containing the marginalia of her ancestors."

My mother knew how to listen in such a way that made people feel better," Saterstrom writes in the opening fragments of *Ideal Suggestions*. Her text, somehow, accomplishes this as well; it is a text which is at once a memoir, a statement of conviction, belief, and practice, while never failing to hold space for all those voices which have in truth comprised the text, aware that it is itself, as all of our texts are and should be aware that they are, collaborations with those experiences, those other voices which have formed our own and which still speak back, which are the ghosts of ourselves still living.



DIANA NGUYEN'S POETRY

by Alicia Mountain



IN April 2018, fourth-year PhD candidate Diana Khoi Nguyen published her debut poetry collection, *Ghost Of*, with Omnidawn Press after Terrance Hayes selected it for the 2018 Omnidawn Open Poetry Book Contest. In describing *Ghost Of*, Nguyen says, "It explores the terrain of grief after the suicide of a brother, investigating familial and larger transnational (U.S. and Vietnam) traumas and histories. It works with, in, and around artifacts my brother, Oliver, left behind, and enters into a kind of memory work as well." *Ghost Of* has received wide recognition—it was among five finalists nominated for the 2018 National Book Award in poetry. *Publishers Weekly* writes: Nguyen's "poems alternate between lyric fragments that are scattered across the page, akin to 'ashes into the sea,' and altered family photographs that operate as testimony and generative force."

In *Ghost Of*, Nguyen works with altered family photos from which her brother cut out his own image before his death. Text traces this absence in concrete forms. The book also navigates the narrative of Nguyen's maternal family leaving Vietnam. Nguyen explains that the text is populated with her "immediate family members: Son, Khoi, Denise, and Oliver (deceased). But also the ghosts of our younger selves, selves in na-tive lands, as well as the family members (living and lost) of my parents. The most attentive [readers] might also track a kind of cultural alienation that I feel moving through

American life as a person of color. Anxieties about motherhood (my possible own, my mother's, her mother's)—how promising and doomed the endeavor feels, knowing how death comes." In thinking about haunting and inspiration, Diana includes Abbas Kiarostami (*Close-Up*), Lucie Brock-Broido, Cal Bedient, Danh Vo, Harold Pinter, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Eliot Weinberger, Susan Howe, Claudia Rankine, Anne Carson, and Maya Lin as influences.

Ghost Of is the product of Nguyen's specific writing practice in which she writes only in 15-day spurts twice a year—once during winter break and once in summer. Nguyen calls these composition periods "concentrated, compressed, pressurized 15-day marathons."

Aside from the annual 30 days of generating new work, Nguyen teaches. She sees teaching as a way to deepen her reading practice by working through new books with students. Facilitating discussions and inquiries into texts enhances her own engagement with the work. When Nguyen introduces writing prompts into workshops, they are in fact prompts she uses for her own writing. Beginning in January 2019, Nguyen will be teaching an eight-week class at Denver's Lighthouse Writers Workshop on experimental and hybrid forms. At DU, Nguyen now teaches in the Daniels College of Business as a teaching assistant Professor. The class she piloted last year, BUS 3000: Strategic Business Communications, is part of the undergraduate business core curriculum at Daniels.

In the future, Nguyen's creative work may take on new forms. She is drawn to playwriting (and the work of contemporary playwrights Maria Irene Fornes, Caryl Churchill, Lauren Yee, and Melisa Tien). Among other projects, Nguyen plans to work on personal essays exploring issues around Asian American identity. A dissertation defense in 2019 is next on her horizon. While *Ghost Of* continues to garner praise, it is both complete and never-ending. "To be honest, I never feel like anything is finished," she says. "The remains will always remain—I won't ever be able to reconcile, or stop thinking about my family, my brother, my cultural-ethnic past by way of my parents, other Vietnamese Americans."

OUR GRADUATE PROGRAM

FOUNDED in 1947, the graduate program in English at the University of Denver is one of the oldest in the country. From the start, our program has emphasized the role that intellectual curiosity plays in literary creation and has aimed to bring together creative and critical thinking to the benefit of both.

GRADUATE ROADMAP

LITERARY STUDIES MASTERS – 45 HOURS TOTAL

32 hours of English Courses
8 ENGL-4000 level courses

13 hours of Electives, Graduate Tutorials, or
Cognate Courses

LITERARY STUDIES PHD – 90 HOURS TOTAL

48 hours of Foundational Courses
5 ENGL courses distributed over three periods of literary study (Before 1700, 1700-1900, and After 1900), at least one course in one period and at least two courses in the other two.
7 ENGL 4000 level courses

42 hours of Electives, Graduate Tutorials, or
Cognate Courses
8 hours cognate courses maximum
10 hours graduate tutorials (ENGL 4100) maximum
32 hours Independent Research (ENGL 5995) maximum

CREATIVE WRITING PHD – 90 HOURS TOTAL

48 hours of Foundational Courses
5 ENGL courses distributed over three periods of literary study (Before 1700, 1700-1900, and After 1900), at least one course in one period and at least two courses in the other two.
3 ENGL graduate level workshops
4 ENGL 4000 level courses

42 hours of Electives, Graduate Tutorials, or
Cognate Courses
8 hours cognate courses maximum
10 hours graduate tutorials (ENGL 4100) maximum
32 hours Independent Research (ENGL 5995) maximum

THE EXAMPLE OF BIN RAMKE



WHEN he's not writing award-winning poetry collections (*The Massacre of the Innocents* and *Wake*), or hard at work editing the *Denver*

Quarterly, Professor Bin Ramke is experimenting with cross-media and cross-discipline collaborations. The *Mattering* collection of sculptures exhibited at the University of Denver's Vicki Myhren Gallery crosses department and creative medium boundaries as the result of Ramke's creative partnership with Studio Art Ceramics Professor Mia Mulvey.



9TH ANNUAL LITERARY STUDIES ROUNDTABLE

THE 9th Annual Literary Studies Roundtable organized by PhD candidates Taylor Tolchin, Elizabeth Adams, and Olivia Tracy was held on Friday, April 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Anderson Academic Commons. Organized around the theme of "Entangled Emplacements," speakers presented work that engages the complicated interactions between physical, social, or imagined bodies and places/spaces; the histories of these interactions; and the implications of these interactions— affectively, politically, or otherwise.

The Roundtable featured keynote speaker Dr. Karen Jacobs from University of Colorado, Boulder. Dr. Jacobs's presentation, "Lost in Space: Mapping the Cartographic Uncanny," was well received.

Panels of English and Literary Arts graduate students and doctoral candidates also read from their current critical work.



2019 Honors and Awards List

Undergraduate

Deatt Hudson Scholarship for rising junior or senior
Sara Bacon-Maldonado

Mary Cass Award for outstanding achievement in writing by an English major (honors thesis)
Literary Studies: **Rhys Pasternack**
Creative Writing: **Connor White**

Olna Fant Cook Award for outstanding achievement by a junior in English and Literary Arts
Erin C. Macritchie

Virginia Case Scholarship for an outstanding junior in Textual Studies
Charlotte Grunebaum

Graduate

CAHSS Dean's Fellowship
Rowland Saifi
Dennis Sweeney

Clemens Fellowship
Alicia Mountain
Alison Turner

Denver Quarterly Fellowship
Vincent Carafano

Fairfield Fellowship
Brian Laidlaw



