

W. SCOTT HOWARD, Ph.D.

Professor of English & Literary Arts
Department of English & Literary Arts, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208
Office Phone: 303-871-2887; Fax: 303-871-2853
E-mail: showard@du.edu & DU Portfolio: <http://portfolio.du.edu/showard>

My University of Denver Story

This is my first academic job since graduating in 1998 from the University of Washington with my PhD in English and Critical Theory. The cross-disciplinary and trans-historical, multimodal and theoretical nature of my graduate training in two doctoral programs prepared me for my tenure-track job at DU, which was advertised in the 1997 MLA/JIL as “Poetics and Poetry. Concentration in either American or English literature of any period. Cognate comparative specialty desirable.” I should note that I have always understood “either American or English literature” as signifying *both/and*.

Since arriving at the University of Denver in 1998, my teaching and public engagement, my research, writing, and publishing have consistently integrated these fields of artistic and cultural production: poetics and poetry; Renaissance & early modern literature and culture; modern & postmodern American poetry and poetics; critical theory, historiography, and digital humanities. My work celebrates Poetics and Poetry from the pre-Socratics through the postmoderns, and engages the humanist legacy of *praxis*—that is, grounding knowledge in forms of social action. My path has therefore underscored intersections of lyric poetry and political discourse from An Collins to Robert Hayden; of dramatic performance and cultural/media critique from Shakespeare to Johanna Drucker; of historiography and social contract theory from Milton to the Objectivist writers.

My first published journal article, in 1996, studied Susan Howe’s *a bibliography of the king’s book; or, eikon basilike* through comparative theories of gift and sacrificial economies. That project amplified my abiding interest in Howe’s poetry and prose. My dissertation, in 1998, investigated the seventeenth-century English elegy as a form of historiography, and shaped many of my subsequent publications concerning a range of poets from Ben Jonson and Katherine Philips to Lorine Niedecker and William Bronk. These paths of inquiry persist in my presentations and teaching, research and writing.

Since my promotion with tenure in 2004, my work has increasingly included digital media studies and forms of artistic making as dynamic avenues for praxis in my fields of expertise; and especially, in my community of the Department of English and Literary Arts, where we value intersections of creativity and critique, scholarship and service, teaching and technology. Collaborative and collective forms of knowledge sharing and artistic production inform my open-access, peer-reviewed, MLA-indexed journals; my edited digital collections; my poems and poetry collections, and my sonictexts.

On all of these levels, my work engages the whole community at DU from first-year undergraduates to doctoral students; from my home department to the Emergent Digital Practices program, the University Honors program, and the DU/Illiff Joint-PhD program.

My work at DU has moved along the transdisciplinary and multimodal paths outlined above, while at the same time emphasizing the centrality of the literary work as an agent for positive social change—*poetics and praxis*—within context of the materials and methods, the lives and times of the language, the artists/writers, the primary texts and contexts as well as their shared moments and legacies. My concerns with book history and library collection development, for example, illustrate my work's engagement with materialist perspectives on individual agency and public action. My undergraduate and graduate courses that have underscored the significance of the works of women writers as well as of writers representing a diversity of ethnicities and races; of politics and religions; of manuscript, print, and digital cultures; and of arguments in the field concerning literary canons, time periods, and theoretical methodologies have also consistently highlighted the value of comparative studies shaped by attentiveness to the mediation and remediation of creativity and critique. The medium is always the message.

Our fields of artistic, cultural, and intellectual work are not changeless, disembodied, transcendent forms; they are distinctive media grounded within and shaped by the precarious conditions of our shared experiences. Collaboration, dialogue, and public engagement (through teaching and presentations, research and publication, readings and discussions, performances and spontaneous acts of open-access knowledge sharing) are more important than ever for the future of the Humanities. Language matters.

Among the many formative experiences during my doctoral training at the University of Washington, my Teaching Fellowship in 1996 from the Pew Charitable Trusts prepared me to contribute to twenty-first-century academic communities that value transdisciplinary and multimodal methodologies; the integration of research, teaching, service, and community engagement; and the responsibility of risk-taking so that new forms of artistic, cultural, and social exchange may emerge. Diversity matters.

I am excited to be working in a community that embraces these priorities. For example, my home department's recent emergence as the Department of English & Literary Arts signifies our understanding that creative writing and literary studies are enriched by their vital relationships with other fields of creativity and critique within as well as across institutional units. Our division's emerging identity as a unified College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences also prioritizes these values of collaboration, dialogue, and community engagement. Within these dynamic contexts, I am grateful for the opportunity to be working with my colleagues in English & Literary Arts, Emergent Digital Practices, and Philosophy for the PRAXIS initiative sponsored by DU's Center for Innovation in the Liberal and Creative Arts. That program seeks to build a sustainable model for collaboratively designed and delivered undergraduate courses, including Keystone experiences, that will integrate transdisciplinary critical theoretical methodologies with multimodal materials and means for connecting classroom learning to public-facing events and workshops, internships and professional development training, community and social engagement at DU and in Denver.

Since my promotion with tenure in 2004, my teaching, scholarship, and service have benefitted from strategic risk-taking that combines old-fashioned scholarly methodologies with innovative forms of artistic creation, critical discourse, knowledge production, and public engagement. For example, my co-edited volume, *The Divorce Tracts of John Milton* (2010), provides new standard editions of all five of Milton's divorce pamphlets—the first time ever for these materials to be collected in one volume along with essential contextual documents also appearing for the first time—so that the field of early modern studies may be transformed by vital engagement with primary materials that have not hitherto been available. My edited volume, *An Collins and the Historical Imagination* (2014), also aims to transform the field by providing the first comprehensive assessment of Collins's legacy from 1653 to the present. Within context of the collection's chapters, the volume includes a collaboratively annotated, modern edition (with photographic facsimile pages) of one of Collins's most widely discussed devotional & political poems.

The collaborative annotations for that text first took shape in 2008 via an open-access wiki that I launched as one of our live special events during the first of three annual, open-access, digital conferences facilitated via my electronic peer-reviewed journal, *Appositions: Studies in Renaissance / Early Modern Literature & Culture*. I am the founding editor for this journal, which has published ten annual volumes (2008-2017) of scholarly articles, interviews, special features, and book reviews, all of which are MLA-indexed and EBSCO-distributed globally. I am also the founding editor of another peer-reviewed electronic journal, *Reconfigurations: A Journal for Poetics & Poetry / Literature & Culture*, which has published five annual volumes (2007-2011) of an even more dynamic range of works, including poetry and prose fiction; critical essays and crowd-sourced dialogues; visual art and visual poetry; digital monographs and collectively assembled hybrid forms of writing. Within those diversified contexts, our special features include *BAOBAB TREE: LOCAL KNOWLEDGE / GLOBAL POLITICS* (2009), a guest-edited, pan-African collection of visual art, creative writing, and cultural critique; and another guest-edited collection, *OUTSIDE-IN: NEW ZEALAND POETRY & POETICS* (2009), which assembles a robust gathering of poetry, fiction, and cultural critique. All of the work we have published at *Reconfigurations* is MLA-indexed and EBSCO-distributed globally. Both of these electronic journals are ISSN registered with the US Library of Congress; both freely provide global access.

My dedication to these and many other transdisciplinary and multimodal projects since 2004 has consistently prioritized vital relationships among manuscript, electronic, and print cultures in the spirit of comparative studies and community engagement. Some of those efforts have targeted, for example, critical environmental issues—such as the multigraph, *Water: Resources and Discourses* (2006)—and the politics of archives, artifacts, and access to information, which was the central theme for another digital multigraph—*Archives on Fire: Artifacts & Works, Communities & Fields* (2016).

My volumes of poetry, *ROPES* (2014) and *SPINNAKERS* (2016), each complement, in their own ways, such efforts to combine analogue & digital media and methods (spoken word poetry, printed poetic text, concrete/visual poetry, and electronic transcoding) for a range of publications and public performances.

My recently published, co-edited volume, *Poetics and Praxis 'After' Objectivism* (2018), transforms the legacy of the Objectivist writers from 1931 to the present through new attention to their formative context and the trajectory of their disruptively democratic methods from local to regional to national and international audiences across many different artistic and philosophical schools and political movements during their times and ours. The book engages poetics and praxis at the collective level in the spirit of this shared legacy that is vital for creative writers and scholars today in the US, Canada, and the UK. The volume (which gathers chapters from eleven scholars and poets into an integrated text) concludes with a conversation among six other contributors that echoes the dialogic character and context of the *Symposium* documents from the foundational "Objectivists" volume, *Poetry 37.5* (February, 1931). Also in sync with my digital projects (outlined above), that conversation was facilitated via a wiki that I launched in 2016 that provided our contributors with an open-access platform for their collaborative work. All of these materials were written specifically for this volume.

My next scholarly monograph, "*Colliding Phenomena*": *Susan Howe's Facing Pages and Sonic Materialisms*, will be the first book in the field to investigate the intersection of archival materials, compositional processes, book arts methods, and sonic materialisms as defining characteristics of the poetry, prose, and transdisciplinary multimodal performances of Susan Howe. My previous publications (1995-2017) in this field of study and my forthcoming monograph, *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe's factual telepathy*, inform my approach to this next book, which will also complement my collaborative teaching in our PRAXIS initiative and our related 2019 public events (as noted above).

On October 10, 2018, I gave a presentation, which included a poetry reading, at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. This was a memorable experience. I was invited for this visit by Tomasz Bilczewski, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, which hosted my lecture and reading. The purpose of my visit was to place my creative and critical work within context of digital humanities programs at DU with specific attention to our Center for Innovation in the Liberal and Creative Arts. I am grateful for this opportunity that underscores the culmination of my work since 1998 and the potential for my path forward.

All of these creative and critical, transdisciplinary and multimodal projects have equally transformed my teaching, advising, and service to my communities at DU. I am excited for the years ahead and for the opportunity to continue with my work at all levels.