

# PRESENCES

Newsletter of the Department of English and Literary Arts // MAY 2020



UNIVERSITY of  
DENVER

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES  
& SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Languages & Literatures

## Journal of the Pandemic Year

The coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in December 2019 caused a significant human toll and disrupted many agendas around the world. Consequent adjustments at the University of Denver included moving the Spring 2020 quarter online and canceling scheduled activities. In the department, many planned events were affected either by the cancellations or the depressed socioeconomic climate. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, Dr. Catherine Noske from the University of Western Australia, Perth, was scheduled to arrive on March 23 to take part in the department's first-ever international faculty (full-term) exchange program by teaching ENGL 3732: Creative Writing in Theory and Practice during the spring quarter; our pioneer Alumni Week was planned to take place on May 6 and 7; and the Denver School of Forms and Poetics, the department's inaugural summer program, was scheduled for June 15–27. Here is a compilation of how faculty and students were affected by or responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.



So much of the first part of this year has been marked by uncertainty and trauma, with the situation across our world changing with an unprecedented rapidity.

It is also a moment of strange juxtaposition. The digital connectivity which has spurred panic and anxiety in this situation has also been the salvation of lives in supporting medical systems, quick responses in containment, and global communication. The same online world has likewise both facilitated continued work for many and been a welcome social relief to isolation.

Nevertheless, it is hard to escape the fact that at the start of the year I had expected that I would by now be with you all in Denver, two weeks into a faculty exchange! The concept began in conversations in early 2019, between our discipline group of English and Literary Studies here at the University of Western Australia (UWA), and DU's Department of English and Literary Arts. Over the last year and a half, we have been developing plans for my travel to Denver to participate in a quarter's teaching and research within your faculty, followed reciprocally by Dr. Billy Stratton's travel here to Perth in 2021 for a semester's teaching and research with us. But COVID-19, and the restrictions it has put on international travel, has seen these plans temporarily suspended. With the trauma that this pandemic has caused, and the loss it has entailed, this seems a small disappointment. I am writing now in the hope and confidence that the world will recover, and that we will see this exchange happen at some point in the future.

### DR. CATHERINE NOSKE

*Lecturer, University of Western Australia and author of *The Salt Modonna* (Picador, 2020)*

Since the pandemic began, some things, but not terribly many, I admit, have changed. I am worried all the time. Most notably, my travel plans—from Puerto Rico to New Orleans to England—have been suspended. It has been nearly impossible to read, I have found. I am working slowly through a few book reviews. So—I have great admiration for everyone in our department who has continued to work and teach this quarter. At home, I've reorganized all my books (no more piles on the floor!) and my closet. I take Tilly (my dog, a Catalburun, if you haven't met her) on evening walks. I have phone calls with old friends, and I'm doing lots of deep listening to music. My baking activity is not particularly exponential, as I want to conserve my resources. At-home exercise clears my mind and spirit, and perhaps the most nourishing activity has been the hasty assemblage and

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### Visiting Faculty Highlights



#### DR. NICHOL

**WEIZENBECK** is a Visiting Teaching Assistant Professor at the University of Denver. Her current research interests include

women novelists of the early-eighteenth century; prose fiction of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries; the English Picaresque; and eighteenth-century concepts of gardens, pornography, incest, and sexuality.

Particularly of interest to Nichol are the more obscure—and understudied—authors who demonstrate the early transitions, developments, progressions, and the “strange” of the rudimentary English novel.

In 2014, Nichol was awarded a Fellowship at The Chawton House Library, where she read over 50 spectacularly rare first editions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century prose fiction and novels. Her essay, “Bringing Sentimental Fiction to its (Anti-) Climax: Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*,” may be found in the collection *Interpreting Sexual Violence 1660-1800* (2015).

cultivation of heirloom vegetable seeds, herbs, and some flower bulbs, for a summer garden. I'm most looking forward to my valerian and feverfew!

## **ALICIA WRIGHT**

*Graduate student and assistant editor of the Denver Quarterly*

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I'm lucky to share an apartment in Denver with two awesome roommates who are both seventy. Because of the risk COVID-19 poses to their already compromised health, we've been super cautious of going in public ever since the pandemic started appearing in the U.S., which feels like upwards of a hundred years ago. I don't know when it started happening, but at some point along the way, my morning cup of coffee turned into a morning cup of coffee ice cream, which is okay, because it's a pandemic and there are no rules. Actually even if it wasn't a pandemic, the lack of rules would still apply. In quarantine, I've given myself a haircut, pierced my ear, and spent a considerable amount of time learning Megan Thee Stallion's 'Savage' dance. Transitioning to online courses has been weird. I'm grateful for assigned texts such as *Moby-Dick* and Longenbach's *How Poems Get Made*, which have kept me busy and sane. Outside of these texts, the tedious nature of online discussion boards is slowly crushing my soul. I'm so impressed with those who are able to stay engaged and present in online discussion boards. As the days go on, it's getting easier to be patient with myself when I hit that wall around 3 p.m. and my eyes refuse to stare at the laptop screen any longer. At this point, I take a walk in the (possibly pointless) mask I made out of a pet filter and dish towel. When people look at me weird, it helps to imagine myself as a character from some post-apocalyptic cyberpunk film who looks very cool and totally not stupid.

## **CATHERINE GRAAS**

*English major and Denver Quarterly intern*

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After over 35 years teaching in the English Department at DU, I suddenly found myself panicked at having to learn how to mount a wholly online graduate class (a four-hour weekly seminar) for the first time. Having come reluctantly, and with considerable effort, to master the basics of Canvas in my other classes, I was less perturbed about beefing up my

expertise on Canvas (though I certainly needed to master far more than the basics) than I was about arranging Zoom meetings, capturing videos on Kaltura and figuring out how to present a power point in Zoom while also seeing thumbnails of my students. To that end I gratefully took a number of classes led by Alex Martinez in OTL and also one on managing stress conducted by Paul Michelac. It's been an enormous learning curve (for someone who didn't know how to use Skype or Zoom), but I've tried to solace myself with the idea that I'm garnering entirely new skills, ones that might just be useful in future classes and that might help me at this late career stage to acquire new pedagogical approaches. Having survived the first three weeks with only minor panic attacks, I feel that I am providing an important forum for my graduate students to come together both virtually in our weekly Zoom meetings and via conversations in the Discussion section of Canvas. I also arrange individual Zoom conferences with students and am in frequent touch on email. I believe that I need to model an empathic and consistent presence for my students during this stressful and precarious period. I am still sadly deficient in making video lectures, still can't figure out how to cut and edit and am generally uncomfortable with the video format, though I've always enjoyed lecturing in person. I'm reminded of two clichés that underlie much of what I'm trying to achieve this quarter. The first is an old saying my mother used to repeat to me: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." and the second is a line from Tennyson's poem "Ulysses": "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

## **DR. ELEANOR MCNEES**

*Associate Chair and Interim Director of Graduate Studies*

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I have always thought teaching was writing. I suggested to my graduate students over the years that they never lose or destroy course notes, syllabi, and handouts for classes, and that they revise everything as they go along, even months and years after the teaching experience. What we write in classes and for classes is often very useful for our own writing generally, even for creative writers. But this spring quarter 2020, in the midst of a pandemic, I have found even more profoundly the value of teaching as writing. I have not been using Zoom, either as a method of conducting discussions or as a tool

for lectures. I use the Chat feature on Canvas, and I use emails and Discussion threads to communicate with my classes. I also post a lot of, too many, Announcements, which I allow students to comment on. I am working on an old unfinished essay of mine about Donald Barthelme for my graduate tutorial. I have found these written conversations generative. This small group has worked on Chat, and lately we have been doing a kind of Exquisite Corpse exercise, making up a Barthelme-like story one sentence at a time, by email. We have also done something I am calling an Exquisite Essay. I wrote the first few paragraphs, and then the students throw in their two cents. We have built something, already, that I have never had, nor seen, in a standard in-person class, a thought experiment yes, but also a real exploration of our group reading of these great short stories.

Without the somewhat unclassifiable experience of the standup routine of an in-person classroom lecture or the performer leading a discussion, this stripped down version of a class is what I always thought it was, a group conversation, an exquisite hive essay, the mind at work with other minds to create a consensus of thoughts, but also something more than just the originator's or individual's thoughts, a literature class that conjures up an informal literary critical essay.

## **BRIAN KITELEY**

*Professor of Creative Writing*

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Adjusting to the online format and "all Zoom, all the time" life in grad school hasn't been the hard part of the coronavirus era—the absence of real human contact has. When I moved to Denver in the fall of 2018 to start the program at DU, I came into a city where I knew nobody and had no connections. I was lucky in that DU became such a home for me, and the folks I've met here have become my best friends, but with Denver locked down, those social connections are sorely missed. As someone who has spent nearly his entire life as a student, not being able to hang out with classmates and grab lunch between classes has been the strangest experience of my academic career.

## **BEN CALDWELL**

*Graduate Student*

In a time of mass crisis, when we isolate to combat a virus that seems to linger on every sill and plastic bag, the white walls of our rooms become their own flat horizons. The dailiness of living becomes a necessary antiseptic, tingling, with a weight all its own. The quotidian do-and-have-done is all we have to stay safe, and managing daily tasks helps to pattern the chaos of living in uncertainty. Panic, after all, has no hierarchy. I can be sad for those suffering on ventilators, angry at those who support ignorant political leaders, happy I perfected a kale-and-white-bean stew, and mortified at the miniscule role my ideas play in effecting change. It's existential entropic implosion! I turn, these days, to poetry because I believe it is evidence of life lived. Even if it's just a few per day. Because I hand-write poems, typing them up is a good way of marking progress. Even when I've felt I couldn't bear times of isolation in the past, I let words ricochet onto the page and kept them. They're here for me now, reminding me of survival. When I type, the materiality of the language shifts medium, and that is a wild magic. With these small tasks—typing up existing work, reading the work of others, cooking, taking a daily walk in alleyways to avoid unnecessary contact—I am contouring what may be the new normal. I believe that being is its own form of resistance in these trying times, and productivity may be an occasional byproduct.

Professor W. Scott Howard has expressed a similar compulsion to pattern his days to

combat the existential quandaries that isolation brings. He and his wife have enjoyed making a peanut-and-chicken stew for which their friend gave them the recipe. He's adjusting to being home in his house with his family, maintaining family care and self-care while still taking time out to be alone. Aloneness, during a pandemic, can take the form of writing poems, listening to music, making music, or even rubbing his nose against the fur of a familiar blissfully ignorant to our current situation. It's a matter, for Scott as it is for me, of paying attention to how one's inner world is structured, moving through what channels you can, and fortifying the bridges that help you navigate a suddenly new kind of life. Scott says it's good to pay attention to what's happening in nature, to go on long walks and bike rides, to reach out to family and friends through postcards (material communication, a form of poetry), phone, and Zoom. I agree with all that he is doing and all that the community at large has done for one another. Even though we are experiencing a trauma that will inform all of our collective memories, I hope we can all try to approach ourselves with radical kindness and remember that the virus can't infect Denver's bright sky, nor can it dim us if we refuse to let it.

**JUSTIN WYMER**

*Graduate Student*

Lily DeThomas is a Junior in the English department who has had, for most of her life, a

massive phobia of pandemics. When we spoke via Zoom Friday night, she was optimistically looking at the current coronavirus as free exposure therapy. While she misses the normalcy of her weekly routine at DU—her classmates, her professors, and her coworkers at Illegal Pete's—she has been making good use of her “free” time. She's embraced the state of the world and recorded an album on which she plays guitar and sings, and she is also continuing to work on her novel. For DeThomas, like many of us, the virus has led to an increased connectivity with her family through the laptop and via the phone.

I stress sleep. The first week away from school, I found it difficult to get out of bed. Sort of like when you are a child and you want your whole body under the covers (right, because that will save you from the man with the chainsaw!). If I didn't get out of bed, then I didn't have to face the world. I probably would have stayed in bed if I didn't have to make a homeschool schedule for my son, plan the class I was going to teach through Zoom, and create a meal plan. The act of planning for someone else helped me to plan for myself. I've never feared pandemics, they were things that happened in Hollywood films. I do fear the influx of academic essays with cheesy quarantine references to 2020's culture in their titles. I do fear the way Hollywood might capitalize on COVID-19.

**ERIC MILLS**

*Graduate Student*

**OUR FACULTY**



Dr. Donna Beth Ellard



Dr. Eric Gould



Dr. Tayana Hardin



Dr. Joanna Howard



Brian Kiteley



Dr. R.D. Perry



Dr. Aleksandr Prigozhin



Dr. Adam Rovner



Dr. Lindsay Tuner



Dr. Kristy Ulibarri

# THE GRADUATE EXPERIENCE

by Olivia Tracy

During my three years as a Literary Studies PhD at the University of Denver, I've experienced the varied and exciting opportunities offered by the department and have always felt that there is more I could do or attend (if I only had the time!). From courses to readings to teaching and professional development opportunities, the department allows students to follow their interests, create new departmental programs and events, and explore the intersections between critical and creative work.

At DU, our graduate courses include Creative Writing PhDs, Literary Studies PhDs, and MA students, encouraging diverse and open dialogue. In courses ranging from "Critical Trends and Pedagogies in African American Literary Studies," to "Monstrous Materialisms," to "Theory Through Fiction," students and faculty have consistently invited each other to read the texts in new ways; as a Literary Studies PhD, for example, I've learned about how to read and consider literary work from a craft perspective during class conversations and collaborations with students in other specializations. In many courses, we're given the option to write a creative or a critical final project, giving space for us to further pursue the projects most beneficial to our own work. One of my favorite things about the program has been the opportunity to develop and explore tutorials with faculty within the department; I've taken two one-on-one tutorials with faculty, and a few in groups of three, and these small-group settings have given me unique and exciting opportunities to focus and further develop my own research interests.

Graduate students also have many opportunities to read and share our creative and critical work. This year, five creative writing PhDs represented the DU writing community at the 5x5 readings, which celebrate the connections and dialogues between DU and the MFA programs at four other front range universities. Creative Writing students and faculty participate in readings around the Denver area on an almost weekly basis, sharing their work and celebrating book launches and other publications. This fall, the *Denver Quarterly* also held a reading and reception to celebrate

the launch of its most recent issue, an opportunity for the DQ editorial and events/social media staff to celebrate the many new directions for the journal. We have an exceptionally exciting and welcoming literary community of scholars and creative writers in the Denver area; I've often found myself with at least four, if not more, readings or events to attend in a single week. We also have many on- and off- campus opportunities to share our critical work. Many of us attend academic conferences to share work in our fields and about our writing center scholarship, and, every year many of us participate in the Literary Studies Roundtable, a one-day on-campus conference where we can share and celebrate our critical work with the departmental community.

I've also benefitted from professional development support and mentoring, both in individual conversations with faculty members and in professional development workshops. These workshops give us the opportunity to learn more about developing and revising articles for publication, writing cover letters for job applications, developing grant proposals for conference funding, and other topics graduate students find valuable. Almost all of these activities, from professional development workshops to 5x5 readings to the Lit Studies Roundtable, are organized by representatives from the English Graduate Student Association (EGSA).

PhD students teach, TA, and work in the Writing Center, getting many teaching opportunities that they can design and develop from their own interests. During their first year in the program, many of us get the opportunity to work in the Writing Center, where we consult with undergraduate, graduate students and faculty about their writing. During our time in the Writing Center, we also have designated time to pursue our own research projects about the Writing Center. During our second and third years, PhD students teach individually-designed classes including "Intro to Creative Writing," "Art of Fiction," and "Art of Poetry"; one of my favorites was my Art of Fiction course exploring "Fictions about Recipes, Food, and Women's Bodies." We also have opportunities to serve as TAs for faculty; this mentorship helps us learn more about teaching and develop and discover our own teaching pedagogies.

## SAMPLE UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

### ENGL 2544 GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL TEXTS

Eric Gould

This course combines fiction and film about India/Indian Diaspora, South Africa, and Japan with readings in sociological and other theories of globalization. We focus on the impact of globalization on culture—an important and ongoing effect even in this age of economic deglobalization. We examine how this shapes postcolonial identity, the morally ambiguous (and at times negative) effects of westernization and modernization, and the way cultural hybridity complicates nationalism and internationalism.

### ENGL 3731 THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CREATIVE WRITING

Catherine Noske

This course combines the consideration of critical discourses with creative writing workshoping to interrogate the ways literary theory and creative practice are intertwined. It will move through a series of theoretical contexts related to contemporary writing practice. Our focus across the whole will be on the production of literary fiction and poetry, and the complex cultural and social discourses in which we inherently involve ourselves when producing such writing.

## SAMPLE GRADUATE COURSES

### ENGL 4660 THE BLACK IMAGINATION

Maik Nwosu

Focusing mainly on Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas (especially the U.S. and the Caribbean/Latin America), this course explores and connects aspects of the black imagination. These aspects include oral performances, thought systems, literature, art, cinema, and critical discourses in different eras and in various places. Studied together, these existential and intellectual signposts provide an expanded insight into black (African and African diasporic) aesthetics from an intercontinental and an interdisciplinary perspective.

### ENGL 4702 VIRGINIA AND THE VICTORIANS

Eleanor McNees

Though critics have tended to view Woolf as a thorough modernist, they forget how much she learned from her father-tutor Leslie Stephen, a major Victorian editor and founder of the Dictionary of National Biography. This class redresses that imbalance by reading the primary Victorian novelists about whom both Stephen and Woolf wrote: Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy. In addition to specific novels by these Victorian authors, we will read Stephen's and Woolf's essays on them and investigate theories of intertextual influence. We'll conclude with *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Years*, two of Woolf's novels that contrast the Victorian and Modern worlds and demonstrate the power of an inherited history.

# Interview with Dr. Eleanor McNeese

by Justin Wymer



## How are you settling into your role as Interim Director of Graduate Studies?

Because the previous Director of Graduate Studies, Adam Rovner, did such a good job supplying me with materials and information, the transition was not as difficult as it might have been. During the course of several meetings, Adam apprised me of the general timelines, orientation, procedures involving the Dean's office and OGE. The most difficult part of the job is managing my time so as not to spend an inordinate number of hours answering queries, signing documents, etc.

## Walk us through a typical day in the life of a scholar and author, full-time professor of Victorian and British literature, and Interim Director of Graduate Studies.

I'm sure it's different for everyone, but here goes: I tend to spend mornings when I don't teach or have other meetings (after I walk my dog 2+ miles every day) checking my work email for about an hour or so, going (on good days) to the gym where I usually listen to an audio book that I'm either teaching or somehow using for work, and then either going into my office or to a local Starbucks where I work for another 3–4 hours either on course preparation and grading or on my research projects—either on a book

I've been writing for a decade or on articles accepted for publication. On days I go into the office (during term time usually three or four and sometimes five) I either teach and/or meet with students. As I currently supervise several dissertation and MA students, I meet regularly with them and also with graduate students who have specific concerns and questions. Several times a week I have other meetings for committees on which I currently serve, generally ones outside the Department of English and Literary Arts. I spend and have spent since becoming Interim Director of Graduate Studies considerable time reviewing the Graduate Student Handbook for policies, signing forms electronically, etc.

## You previously served as Graduate Director in 1996. How do you find your current responsibilities different from and/or similar to those you had then?

The Internet was still in a nascent stage, so all signatures were by hand and most documents available only in hard copies. Mastering electronic signatures and dealing with Slate applications have been challenging. In addition, the Dean's Office is much more involved in official communications from advertising to budget discussions to monitoring application numbers. Having myself served as an Associate Dean between my last graduate directorship and now, I do understand the larger challenge of trying to balance the economic constraints the Dean's Office faces and the frustration in the Department of English and Literary Arts about lack of adequate funding for graduate programs. This makes me perhaps a little less impatient about Dean's Office responses and more willing to work slowly and doggedly towards enhancing financial prospects of our GTAs.

## Have the students who attended the graduate program shifted? If so, how (e.g., in interests or specialty, dynamic, background, etc.)?

The main shift I perceive is with the MA thesis and PhD dissertation topics. These have become more interdisciplinary and multi genre. It's now relatively rare for a student to write on a single author or to concentrate on a single period before the 20th and 21st centuries. Theoretical

approaches have shifted too with an increasing emphasis on ecofeminist, narratological and philosophical perspectives. The students themselves seem similarly engaged and engaging and more proactive as exemplified by the EGSA Professional Development series of sessions throughout the year. Perhaps now graduate students feel more pressure to work outside of the program (adjunct teaching, waiting tables, etc.) and are more determined to finish in four years (at least for CW students) than previously. Conversely, it seems to take Literary Studies students at least five and often six years to finish and graduate as they rarely are able to take a year (or even a quarter) off to write.

## What is the greatest challenge of being Interim Graduate Director? What is its greatest pleasure?

The greatest challenge is the conflict between having a vision for the program—like reworking the MA degree and requirements or holding general interest/information meetings for the graduate student or hosting cross-college graduate sessions—and the small time-consuming tasks of signing documents, reviewing course plans, keeping up with Dean's office requests for information. The greatest pleasure, as it's always been for me, is meeting with individual students, getting to know them—their interests and their passions—and being somehow useful to them.

## What do you think makes DU's graduate English and Literary Arts Department unique?

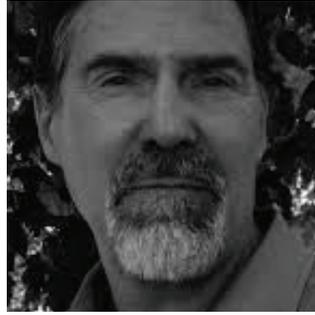
As our literature continues to emphasize—the dual nature of our PhD with the blend of creative and critical courses and the mixing of creative writing and literary studies students. Increasingly the separation between creative writing and literary studies students has blurred with a number of professors practicing hybrid kinds of writing themselves and crossing between creative and scholarly publications. The hiring of new faculty with feet in both camps and with a keener interest in theory has contributed to this blending as well. The smallness of the program ensures that each student can receive individual attention from faculty members and can work with those faculty to construct meaningful thesis and dissertation projects.

# The 2019 Inaugural Lecture Series

by Blake Guffey



Dr. Graham Foust



Dr. W. Scott Howard

In the fall quarter of 2019, the Department of English and Literary Arts held its Inaugural Lecture Series as a “forum for our newly promoted Full Professors to showcase their work or share their insights as well as celebrate their promotion.” This event was organized by Dr. Maik Nwosu with the support of the Department, and the first two lectures, by Dr. Graham Foust and Dr. W. Scott Howard, were held in Sturm Hall’s Lindsay Auditorium on the afternoons of October 25 and November 8, 2019, with celebratory receptions preceding both events. Dr. Foust, introduced by Dr. Bin Ramke, gave a lecture entitled “Mirrors And Oil: Some Reflections On (And In) Two Poems By Elizabeth Bishop,” while Dr. Howard, introduced by Dr. Clark Davis, offered the lecture, “Signal Escapes: Contexts, Collaborations, And Contingencies Since 1990”.

Dr. Foust began his lecture by asking the audience, “What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?” Dr. Foust was born in Tennessee and raised in Wisconsin: he has a BA from Beloit College, an MFA from George Mason University, and was awarded his PhD from SUNY-Buffalo; with Benjamin Friedlander, Dr. Foust edited the poetics journal *Lagniappe* and taught from 2002 until 2005 at Drake University before coming to the University of Denver as an assistant professor. Dr. Foust is winner of the Sawtooth Poetry Prize and has published numerous essays, translations, and full-length collections, including 2015’s *Time Down to Mind* and 2018’s *Nightingalelessness* in which, Ben Lerner writes, “Like Stevens, Dr. Foust writes intricate poems that explore a world from which meaning has departed; the poet seeks to restore it, however tentatively, through the powers of artifice.” In his lecture, through an engagement with the poems “Insomnia” and “Filling Station” by Elizabeth Bishop and through considerations of Ad Reinhardt’s black paintings and Parmigianino’s Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror, Dr. Foust sought to examine the role of the artist within the work of art (and the artist as sitter versus the artist as viewer) and the role which surfaces play in our creation and consumption or understanding of art. Dr. Foust stated that what he values most in Bishop’s poetry are her radical incongruities and the internal differences which may be identified in her work—moments of logical friction from which the magic of poetry emerges. This idea can be illustrated through an examination of Parmigianino’s Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror, particularly by considering Parmigianino’s hand which is foregrounded in the painting: is this Parmigianino’s left or right hand?

If the painting is merely an accurate description of life then what we should be seeing is Parmigianino’s left hand foregrounded in the mirror’s reflection, however, a close examination of the painting seems to reveal a utensil in what would be Parmigianino’s left hand which would actually suggest that it is his right. Is this an error on the part of Parmigianino, a misunderstanding of what we are seeing, or is this a commentary by Parmigianino on the nature of art and representation? Elizabeth Bishop’s “Filling Station” is a poem which, like Parmigianino’s painting, confronts us with surfaces before subverting them to reveal truer textures; “Somebody arranges the rows of cans,” Bishop writes, “so that they softly say:/esso—so—so—so/to high-strung automobiles;” surfaces are not dead in Bishop, as reflections are not dead in Parmigianino (or in John Ashbery), but serve rather as revelatory intervention within the mundane.

Dr. W. Scott Howard began his lecture with an examination of the relation of the particular detail to art and to the estrangement of the familiar. Dr. Howard received his BA from Lewis & Clark College, his MA from Portland State University, and his PhD from the University of Washington before joining the University of Denver in 1998 as an assistant professor. In his lecture, Dr. Howard discussed his time working at Powell’s Books in Portland, Oregon as being formative in his early poetry education and in his coming to discover the University of Denver through the *Denver Quarterly*, which Dr. Howard now serves as chief editor of (the *Quarterly* welcomed the opening of its new office in Sturm Hall this fall). Dr. Howard has received numerous research grants and awards, and has published widely throughout a variety of research fields; his most recent full-length publications are 2018’s *Poetics and Praxis ‘After’ Objectivism*—a volume, co-edited with Broc Russell, which “...examines late twentieth-and early twenty-first-century poetics and praxis within and against the dynamic, disparate legacy of Objectivism and the Objectivists”—and 2019’s *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe’s Factual Telepathy*, published by Talisman House. Howe and her hybrid materialism have long been of interest to Dr. Howard, who has helped to facilitate the University Library’s acquisition of rare Howe documents, including *Tom Tit Tot*, “a unique letterpress volume of textual montage, visual art, and collaborative design and production by Susan Howe and R. H. Quaytman, the poet’s daughter.” Dr. Howard is a poet and a audio-visual artist in addition to an academician: his collaboration with Ginger Knowlton on *Ropes* (from Delete Press) is an intermingling or interplay of image and word, while his collection of poems *Spinnakers* (from which he shared selections during his lecture) serves as a revelation of language as a form of code or encoding through which we experience ourselves and the world. Dr. Howard performed audio-visual collaborations with his daughter from *Spinnakers* during his lecture. During a lively question and answer session that followed the lecture Dr. Howard stated that he is currently beginning work on a follow-up to the first volume of *The Divorce Tracts of John Milton*, co-edited with Sara J. van den Berg and published by Duquesne University Press in 2010.

## Professor Graham Foust

by Professor Bin Ramke



[Dr. Graham Foust] has had eight full length books of poetry published so far. His first two books were published in 2003: *Leave the Room to Itself*, from the prestigious Ahsahta Press, as Winner Sawtooth Poetry Prize. *As in Every Deafness* appeared also in

2003 from Flood Editions, one of the premiere

publishers of progressive and experimental poetry in this country. This press has continued to support Graham's work, publishing *Necessary Stranger* in 2007—this book was a finalist for the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association Book of the Year award. Then came *A Mouth in California* in 2009. In 2013 *To Anacreon in Heaven and Other Poems*, also from Flood editions, was an Amazon Best Book of the year and was a finalist for the 2014 Believer Poetry Award, then came *Time Down to Mind* in 2015 and my favorite of his many wonderful titles, *Nightingalelessness*, in 2018 soon to be followed by my second favorite of his titles, *Embarrassments*, scheduled to appear in 2021.

During a three-year span, from 2012 to 2015, Graham Foust in collaboration with Samuel Frederick published English translations from the German of Ernst Meister. *In Time's Rift* [translation of Ernst Meister's *Im Zeitspalt*] in 2012. *Wallless Space* [translation of Ernst Meister's *Wandloser Raum*] in 2014. This book was shortlisted for the American Literary Translators Association's National Translation Award in 2015, then also in 2015 the third volume of this group of Ernst Meister poems, *Sage vom Ganzen den Satz* appeared under the title, *Of Entirety Say the Sentence*. These works from the German were all published by Wave Books, another prestigious American Press.

Finally, I want to read to you a bit from a review by Alex Niven of Graham's book *To Anacreon in Heaven*. The review was entitled: (*Faintly Transcendental: On The Poetry Of Graham Foust, May 19th, 2013*): "Anacreon was an ancient Greek poet famed for his drinking 'hymns.' The title of Foust's latest collection is lifted directly from a song by an 18th-century London gentleman's club of amateur musicians, for whom Anacreon was a mascot. 'To Anacreon in Heaven' was the society's official song, and the tune (minus the alcoholic lyrics) later became the basis for the American national anthem, 'Star-Spangled Banner.'"

For all its world-weariness, then, Foust's poetry is ambitious because it suggests that if we can accurately register the variety of textures in the English language at this moment in time, this might form the basis of a much more profound inner transformation. Foust comments: "One tries to write as well as one can in the hope that someone not yet born will someday read it and be moved by it. Actually, why settle for that—it sounds so trite. One hopes that one might someday change another person's life. Other poets have done that for me, so I know it to be possible. ... I can't help it. I have to believe that some poetry has the power to do this." Somewhere in this endorsement of the limitless possibility of poetry is the romantic heart of Graham Foust's darkly eccentric interpretation of American idealism. Someday soon it might just change your life.

## Professor W. Scott Howard

by Professor Clark Davis



I start here not because scholarship is all there is to Scott's work—far from it—but because this passion for detail, this scholarly faith in the magic of the radiant fact, seems central to me to the work he's done and the way he goes about doing it.

At the University of Washington, in the English and critical theory program, Scott's truffle-hunting instinct led him backwards a bit, to the Renaissance, to Donne and An Collins, Milton and Shakespeare. But it didn't leave modern or contemporary poetry behind. On Scott's CV the Renaissance is regularly interrupted—like a car horn in a string quartet—by articles on Bronk, on Howe, on Robert Hayden. Scott was hired as a tenure-track assistant professor at DU in 1998 to work in the short-lived poetics program. But occupy two fields he has, very successfully now, for some time. In the Renaissance, he has produced, with Sara van den Berg, the definitive—and now standard—edition of *The Divorce Tracts of John Milton*. He has edited the first book of scholarly essays devoted to An Collins, and founded *Appositions*, one of the earliest fully online journals in Renaissance studies. In contemporary poetry we now have his co-edited collection of essays devoted to poetics after Objectivism and the impressive gathering and synthesis of his work on Susan Howe, just out, *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe's Factual Telepathy*. And alongside it all, to underline the connection between finding and making, he has steadily pursued his own poetic practice, resulting in two volumes, *Ropes* and *Spinnakers*.

And there are many more essays, and many, many more presentations, and lists of courses and of dissertations directed that stretch unto the horizon.

From a survey of all this loving labor, a few themes emerge: first, Scott is a collaborator. I know of no one who spends more time finding ways to share work, to co-teach, to interact with colleagues both near and far than Scott. He has taught in a number of programs around the university, including EDP, the Honors Program, the joint PhD program, the Critical Theory program, probably more that I'm not remembering. It is a feature of his work—a feature of his character I think—and speaks to a spirit of shared pursuit that is both rarer than it seems and very admirable. Second, he WORKS. If you, like me, occasionally sneak up in the night to get your mail out of your department box because it's a holiday and you'd rather not be here but there might be something important you need to pick up, chances are you will run into Scott, standing in front of the department sink, rinsing out his tea mug while bundled up in winter gear that reflects the fact that his office (and indeed the building) has no heat over the break. Or perhaps you'll note his snow-covered bicycle in the rack outside, the only one there other than the permanently attached, tireless frames, forlorn and orphaned. (I remember a former department assistant, who had formerly been a medic in the army in South Korea, quietly expressing her concern to me that Scott appeared to have symptoms of frost bite after his morning ride into work.)

That's dedication, folks.

# The Summer that Almost Was:

## THE DENVER SCHOOL OF FORMS AND POETICS

Everything seemed to be going reasonably well, and it was almost certain that the department's inaugural summer program, the Denver School of Forms and Poetics, would take place over a two-week period (June 15–27) as planned. Several people in the department had worked hard to ensure the take-off of the program—graduate students working as program assistants: Diana Nguyen, Alicia Mountain, McCormick Templeman, Ben Caldwell, Olivia Tracy, Cassandra Eddington, Taylor Wesley, Elizabeth Adams, and Ella Longpre; the Assistant to the Chair, Joel Lewis; the Steering Committee, Dr. Maik Nwosu and Dr. Billy Stratton; and many faculty members (including a projected visiting professor and an adjunct): Dr. Billy Stratton, Dr. Tayana Hardin, Dr. Maik Nwosu, Dr. Clark Davis, Dr. Eric Gould, Dr. Adam Rovner, Dr. R. D. Perry, Dr. Catherine Noske, Dr. Kristy Ulibarri, Brian Kiteley, Dr. Rachel Feder, and Julia Madsen. Interest in the program was gradually growing, as was evident in the increasing number of inquiries, applications, and an early registration or tuition deposit.

To be considered for admission, applicants were asked to provide a brief introduction describing their interest in the program. Here are a few of the responses:

*I received the Denver School of Forms & Poetics booklet in the mail and was immediately intrigued. Not only are a couple of my favorite professors teaching seminars, but the variety of topics, faculty, and guest speakers is exciting and impressive. The idea of combining The Poetics of Myth & Fragments, Ruins, and Things Left Unwritten could raise some interesting*

*parallels between the creation of myth & the way the literary canon treats writers who passed away before completing a work. Or utilizing a Narratological understanding in Writing the Environment to create innovative and exciting narrative structures for readers to explore the natural world through. I am excited not only to learn from experts on the topics they've studied in-depth but to explore the connections between each seminar, guest lecture, and reading.*

*The inaugural offerings of the Denver School of Forms and Poetics have caught my eye. I shared the program offerings with one of my colleagues, and his response—that the program is a “veritable academic feast”—is a perfect description of how I felt when I read through the brochure. I can't imagine a more intriguing and timely collection of courses and topics.*

Everything seemed to be going reasonably well until the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and disrupted human lives and plans. The University of Denver decided to move both the spring quarter and at least the first half of the summer program (June/July) online. The Denver School of Forms and Poetics, which had been planned as a learning as well as community experience, had to be deferred until the summer of 2021. Hopefully, the seminars planned for this year would still be offered next year.



Dr. Maik Nwosu, Director



Dr. Billy J. Stratton,  
Steering Committee Member

## SEMINARS

### CREATIVE CRITICISM

Dr. Billy J. Stratton

This seminar explores the dynamic interplay between creativity and modes of literary analysis and critical modes of interpretation. Considering acts of strategic disruption and decolonization, along with the dance of meaning that stems from the play of language as a fertile starting point we will explore the possibilities of a practice of literary criticism that seeks an engagement with texts in more authentic, honest, responsive, and reflective ways. Discussions and short readings will be drawn from a wide variety of sources in which native/indigenous writers, scholars, poets, and storiers including Gerald Vizenor, Gordon Henry, Stephen Graham Jones, and Layli Long Soldier will be placed in critical conversation with theorists and philosophers such as Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Frantz Fanon, Umberto Eco, Jean-François Lyotard, and Slavoj Žižek among others. The anticipated result will be to invigorate an exploration of the constraints and limitations imposed by western/conventional modes

of thinking and being as a means of facilitating a lively consideration of ways that we might challenge and overcome the tyranny implicit in dominant regimes of knowledge and meaning-making experiences as they relate to the creation, presence, and interpretation of literary artifacts.

### STORY, SELF, SOCIETY

Dr. Tayana Hardin

So, what's your story? It's likely we all have received this question, but there is absolutely no guarantee we all answer the same way. Whether we share our answers with arrow sharp precision or with meandering wonder, we rely on story to structure our understanding of self and society. What stories do we tell ourselves and others about who we are? Are these stories steadfast, or do they change over time and space? Do we have a say in who we are or are our identities shaped only by societal forces? These are not easy questions, but they are important ones we will consider together. Our considerations will be inspired by literature, visual art, music, architecture, short walking tours of the DU campus, and a spirited, interactive visit to the Vicki Myhren Art Gallery.

### THE MIGRANT MUSE AND THE NEW DIASPORAS

Dr. Maik Nwosu

In the beginning there was a river. The river became a road and the road branched out to the whole world. And because the road was once a river it was always hungry. —Ben Okri, *The Famished Road*

This seminar examines the movement of people from one locality to another, especially across borders, as well as consequent experiences—including reception and dis/integration in receiving countries. Referencing different regions of the world such as Africa and the African Diaspora, Europe, Asia, and America, we will discuss the nature and effects of migration from different perspectives, such as historical, socioeconomic, and literary/artistic. Because the movement of people is related to the movement of history and the transformative character of the imagination, we will explore migration and diaspora narratives, which provide insights into a contemporary phenomenon that traces a path back to the history of humanity.

## SEMINARS

### THE POETICS OF STILLNESS

*Dr. Clark Davis*

This seminar will be grounded in materials from the antebellum American period, 1820–1860. It will investigate artistic and literary expressions of quiet in the context of a society ostensibly devoted to action. What does it signify to seek silence or stillness in the midst of industrialized modernity? Is non-action necessarily a form of quiescence, withdrawal; or can it be a form of resistance or engagement? How did poems, paintings, essays, and fiction of the period confront this question, and what can their responses tell us about our own hyperactive age and our attempts to counteract the constant demands for our attention?

### FORM AND FUNCTION: AN INTRODUCTION TO NARRATIVE THEORY

*Dr. Adam Rovner*

This seminar presents an introduction to critical methods associated with classical narrative theory. We will trace the development of narrative theory from Russian Formalism through to Structuralism and Narratology. Our focus will be on defining and understanding “literariness”—that which makes a given work a work of literature. Students will read seminal work from thinkers identified with these varied yet interwoven critical approaches, and will consider the diachronic development of narrative theory. Through lectures, discussion, and “laboratory” work, participants will learn to apply the tools of these methodologies to the interpretation of literary texts. Influential theorists we will consider include: Viktor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson, Boris Eikhenbaum, Jan Mukarovsky, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette, and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan.

### FRAGMENTS, RUINS, AND THINGS LEFT UNWRITTEN

*Dr. R. D. Perry*

Incomplete literary works are ubiquitous, although there are various causes for their incompleteness. Sometimes, history and the vagaries of transmission cause us to lose texts, either completely or in part. Such is often the case with older works, like the fragments left to us by Sappho, or the Old English poem “The Ruin,” which is about ruins but is also itself ruined. Other times, authors leave their own works unfinished, either by choice or due to forces beyond their control. Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston never brought their play, *Mule Bone*, to a conclusion due to their personal conflicts, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s opium-addled memory prevented him from writing any more of “Kubla Khan.” What’s more, incomplete literary works have a variety of effects. These works can present something of a challenge to scholarship: our assumptions about works of art tend to favor those that are finished, allowing us to understand how their different parts relate to the whole. Works without that clear sense of completion—like Franz Kafka’s novels and their relationship to some of his shorter prose pieces—lead to uncertainty about the boundaries of the work and even—as in Kafka’s case—lawsuits. These same works of art, though, have also served as inspiration: different authors will often attempt to bring the works to completion, creating new works

out of the old. Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* gave rise to a veritable industry of continuations, from the fifteenth century to the last decade. This seminar will work to make something out of fragmentary, ruined, or incomplete works. We will discuss strategies for understanding them aesthetically and what opportunities they may afford us creatively. Rather than see these works as a cause for lamentation, we will them use them as a source for our own creative and critical explorations.

### THE POETICS OF MYTH

*Dr. Eric Gould*

Myth means several different things, but it is only one thing: a cultural narrative that we consider to be important for some reason, whether we like it or not. It is a genre of folklore tales or traditional stories, often supernatural, that attempt to tell the beginnings, middles, and ends of human experience in a particular place. The Australian Aboriginal Dreamtime is an example of this. It is a narrative that talks about how awesome someone or something is, or why a particular product or sports person is mythic in their fame. It is also a story that is deliberately untrue and non-factual, a story whose importance to us is determined by how wrong it is. Political chatter perhaps? But in every instance, myth is a narrative: it is language in action aiming to explain a mystery in an imaginative way. When we talk about the poetics of myth, we are talking about how those narratives work as language, how they make meaning, why they often are wildly imaginative and to what effect, how they try to link nature and culture, such as the story of how the jaguar brought fire to the Baroro Indians. As stories, then, myths are often considered literary or even poetic since they emphasize the play of the imagination. They are narratives that have anthropological and cultural significance. And literature in its turn often intends to be mythic by exploring a mystery through a clever use of language or an adaptation of conventional narrative structures. In this seminar, we will read some stories that have been told in order to understand the way the world works. We’ll talk about how the boundary between myth and literature is a tenuous one. Both the language and the material structures of story-telling are “mythic” and even mysterious in themselves.

### WRITING THE ENVIRONMENT: ECOPOETIC PLACE-MAKING

*Dr. Catherine Noske*

The natural world faces significant challenges in the modern era. In this seminar, students look at the way that the environment is represented in textual forms, both in literary texts and through their own creative practice. The seminar is particularly interested in contemporary scholarly debates in eco-criticism, the relationship between the human and the non-human, and how these discourses can shape creative practice in responding to the world in which we live. Students will plan, develop and write a creative work (prose or poetry) turning on these questions, with the aim of using creative writing to consider their own (ecopoetic) place-making.

## MINI SEMINARS

### BOOKS OF THE DEAD: UNDERWORLDS AND UNDERCOMMONS

*Dr. Kristy Ulibarri*

The first part of this four-hour seminar will consider the historical myths around books of the dead – from the Egyptian Papyrus of Ani to the Tibetan Book of the Dead—and the late capitalist rise in horror tales—from H.P. Lovecraft’s *Necronomicon* references to zombie flicks. We will think about how this history informs our literary ideologies and consolidates tropes of the dead. The second half of this seminar then will explore the theoretical ground of Achille Mbembe’s necropolitics, where populations are made “living dead” through imperial, racial, and economic violence, and Fred Moten and Stefano Harney’s idea of the undercommons, where alternative forms of dialogue and mobilization are imagined.

### 3 A.M. EPIPHANIES IN THE AFTERNOON

*Brian Kiteley*

This four-hour seminar will be a generative workshop, using Brian Kiteley’s book of fiction exercises, *The 3 A.M. Epiphany*, as a resource and prod for building future fictions. The seminar will not be a regular workshop. The seminar will not read and discuss their own fiction, but students will build ideas, fragments, and components of fiction.

### NEGATIVE CAPABILITY

*Dr. Rachel Feder*

The Romantic poet John Keats only mentions negative capability once, in a letter written to his brothers in 1817. There, he describes negative capability as the quality of being “capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason.” In this seminar, we’ll explore how the concept of negative capability might help us understand Keats’s work and consider both contemporary responses to Keats and very recent works of poetry.

### DOCUMENTARY POETICS

*Julia Madsen*

This seminar explores documentary poetics as a mode and methodological approach encompassing multiple media, focusing specifically on page and screen-based iterations.

### OUR FACULTY



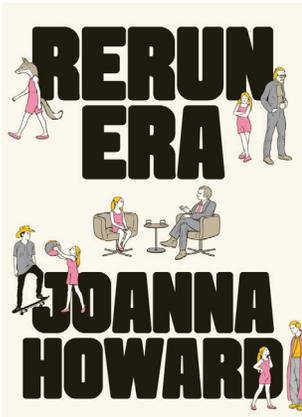
Selah Saterstrom



Dr. Rachel Feder

# RERUN ERA

by Ella Longpre



Looking at a graph that tracks the Google search history of the word *rerun*, I can see the effects streaming services like Hulu and Netflix have had on the frequency of *rerun*'s use. Search trends for the term now hover around half of what they were at its peak. Compare this to the term *streaming*: the seismic trace of streaming's red line makes a flatline of the blue graph of *rerun*, now hovering like a zero, breathing its last.

Streaming, after all, means continuous flow, while a rerun means something with a limited duration being replayed *at intervals*. And of course, we know that the significant distinction between these two cultural modes of consumption is that of choice. As streamers, we have a choice to stream from a paralyzing array of media.

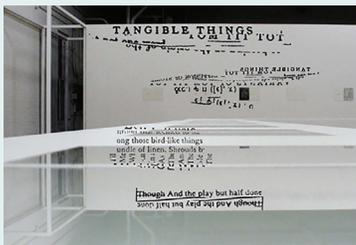
Enter Joanna Howard's *Rerun Era*. In a rerun culture, we don't necessarily want to watch *Andy Griffith*, we watch it because it's on, until it becomes pleasure. We watch reruns of old shows that were set in even older times. And then we feel nostalgia for an unknown era. Rerun culture is the mode of exchange that drives the intergenerational dynamics of *Rerun Era*'s vignettes. The young protagonist of *Rerun Era* (who, since this is a memoir, is a young Joanna Howard, though she isn't really called by name) forms a precocious opinion about her preferred rotating *Gunsmoke* character, and this bestows her, as a youngest child, with a conversational cache amongst the adults in her family—if only in her imagination. It gives her an in.

The memoir is organized into short vignettes with whoppers for titles: "Sometimes I Dangle By My Arms" (a *Twin Peaks* reference, perhaps) and "Folks Tend to Kill Themselves." The organizational logic of the vignettes mimics memory in that they do not always appear chronologically. The vignette "I am Born" (and yes, the title is punctuated by a period) appears about 50 pages in, a la *Tristram Shandy*. But more importantly, this structure mimics the rerun, not just in the sense that temporality is disrupted, but in the way that themes resurface, holidays that don't agree appear continuous, the child actor is suddenly an adult and then a child again. *Rerun Era* also follows the flow of the sitcom more generally, where a comedy of tantrums and jellies is immediately followed by a tragedy, where characters like a swimming pool or a stroke recur, they submerge

and resurface without comment on their disappearance.

"Someone is always chasing me"—an emphatic declarative with an unknown variable—is the exemplary comedic tense of *Rerun Era*'s narrative distance: we are in a continuous present muddled by an imprecise memory. And, you know, chaos. The word *conniption*, seriously undervalued and underutilized in our culture, is one of the stars of this book—after all, the young Joanna is "famous" for her tantrums. Aside from being just a great word and comedic gold, the *conniption* is a relief for the young narrator and for the reader. Like being flung in a pool or pressing too hard with crayons, the tantrum is where the young protagonist is not observing or making sense of complex and sometimes terrifying adult dynamics, not taking on adult problems or language. Just being a kid who does not want the ice cream. Though it's told, still, from a wry narrative distance, and with younger-self-deprecating humor.

Somehow the distance created by an imprecise memory is equivalent to the distance between the world and a child's misperceptions of it, the distance between a kid's face and a TV screen. Networks broadcast reruns because they have no original content to play; we flip to the rerun because there's nothing else on. They are a "screen memory," sure. But a rerun is also like a favorite object, something shared with a loved one, something passed down, and *Rerun Era* picks up these favorite objects, rerunning and passing them down to us, to hold in our hand.



## W. Scott Howard's *Archive and Artifact*

by Elizabeth Adams

In October 2019, Dr. W. Scott Howard published his critical monograph, *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe's Factual Telepathy*, with Talisman House. In describing *Archive and Artifact*, Elizabeth W. Joyce writes, "Howard uses the breadth of his knowledge of history and a wide range of texts and carefully detailed archival materials to provide us with new approaches to Howe's poetry and prose, approaches that are considered and well-reasoned and will be essential for scholarship moving forward." Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno has also praised *Archive and Artifact*, noting, "Howard's exceedingly illuminating exposition of Howe's work is absolutely essential reading for anyone interested in Susan Howe or modernist poetics. Beyond that, it is itself a true work of art, a model of what literary criticism should be."

ARCHIVE AND ARTIFACT:  
SUSAN HOWE'S FACTUAL TELEPATHY

W. SCOTT HOWARD

In *Archive and Artifact*, Howard presents an account of Howe's artifactual poetics—the polyvocal quality of her work that stems from her ability to convey the synergy created by chance intersections that emerge during archival work. Pulling from Howe's own work, Howard describes this particular ability as Howe's *factual telepathy*, and, in *Archive and Artifact*, he tracks this factual telepathy from what he argues is its emergence in the Awede edition (1987) of *Articulation of Sound Forms in Time* and the paradigm press edition (1989) of a *bibliography of the king's book*; or, *eikon basilike to The Quarry* (2015) and beyond. This investigation of Howe's inter-/intra-textual poetics also allows Howard to celebrate the way in which Howe's work revels in digression and hesitation and echoes an undervoice speaking against the grain of dominant narratives.

One of the true pleasures of reading *Archive and Artifact* is the realization that Howard's own methods embody factual telepathy. His approach is multifaceted, weaving together the theoretical and the lyrical, affective experience and historical fact, creative and critical methods, and multi-period literary knowledge. Beyond the deeply

researched wealth of information that we expect from literary criticism, his text includes personal stories, excerpts of student work, and a full interview with Howe. This hybrid approach allows readers to join more completely in his "nonconformist's helical quest 'after' the poet's signal escapes."

For those who are familiar with Howard's work, *Archive and Artifact's* fascination with and embodiment of hybridity should come as little surprise. Howard often tells the story of his arrival at the University of Denver in response to a job call for "Poetics and Poetry. Concentration in either American or English literature of any period. Cognate comparative specialty desirable." Whether he's researching Renaissance and early modern literature or postmodern American poetry and poetics, editing *Denver Quarterly* or writing his own poetry, Howard's work has managed not only to fill, but to exceed these expansive requirements. The wide-ranging, transdisciplinary, multimodal aspect of his work—along with his longstanding enchantment with Howe's poetry—promises to continue as Howard begins work on his next book project, "*Colliding Phenomena*": *Susan Howe's Facing Pages and Sonic Materialisms*.

## THE EXAMPLE OF VINCENT JAMES

by Cassandra Eddington



A fourth-year PhD candidate currently serving as the 2019–2020 Associate Editor of *Denver Quarterly*, Vincent Carafano's triptych of novellas, *DOOMSDAY*, was shortlisted for the Tarpaulin Sky Award (2019), and his first novel, *Swerve*, a metaphysical detective story, is forthcoming from

Astrophil Press (2020). Of his path toward writing, Vincent jokingly tells me, "I could say that formal logic made me a writer." He began his undergrad studying philosophy at University of Texas El Paso, later transferring to New Mexico State University where, in his senior year of college, he took both formal logic and writer Evan Lavender-Smith's creative writing workshop. "Formal logic broke me," he tells me. But it was just as much the difficulty of American analytic traditions as the alternatives he saw possible in creative writing that would eventually (the path had a few curves) lead Vincent to the PhD in English at DU.

Vincent loves working with friends on their manuscripts and was excited to further his editorial capacity through working with *Denver Quarterly*. As Associate Editor of *Denver Quarterly*, he has worked closely with DQ's new editor Scott Howard since last summer to overhaul the production process and create a robust digital presence for *Denver Quarterly*, which will include a companion website to the print issue where conversations can continue in more dynamic interaction. Vincent describes "a kind of sympatico thinking" shared between he and Howard. "We both have a forward-thinking momentum," he says.

## THE PASTS AND FUTURES OF MEDIEVALISM

by Ben Caldwell



Dr. Donna Beth Ellard's first book, *Anglo-Saxon(ist) Pasts, postSaxon Futures*, out from Punctum Books in late 2019, begins with a challenge to the very discipline it comes from: How can medievalists generally, and Anglo-Saxon specialists specifically, combat the very real tendency in their discipline toward imperialist thinking and white supremacy? In our current political moment, in the wake

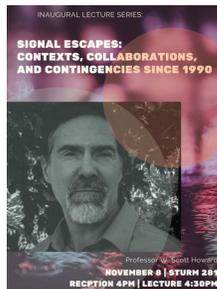
of Charlottesville and other white supremacist rallies that have co-opted the imagery of the Crusades, how can scholars of the medieval period do their part to dismantle that legacy?

It's a hard question to pose, but Dr. Ellard rises to meet it with a combination of great scholarship and personal essay. She takes on the white supremacist history of not only Anglo-Saxonist scholarship, but also of her home state of Mississippi, where the legacies of chattel slavery and the Confederacy have left a racist scar of their own. As she writes in the book's Foreword (twice, in paragraphs written to "my white colleagues" and "my colleagues of color"), this book "is an offering. It is the story of my family, myself, and a Mississippi world in need of healing...written with the great hope" of reforming and changing "the field previously known as Anglo-Saxon studies." Elsewhere in the book, she works to demystify (and de-myth-ify) some of the longstanding sacred cows of the field; a favorite essay of mine brings scholarship around King Alfred of England back down to earth by discussing not his leadership or accomplishments, but his miserable health and ailing body.

Even for readers who aren't medievalists or interested in Old English, this book shows how we can hold our own respective fields accountable for the problematic periods of their history.

## 2019/2020 Events Retrospective

<p><b>FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13</b> New Graduate Student and Faculty Reception</p>	<p><b>THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19</b> Rosa Alcala Reading</p>
<p><b>MONDAY, OCTOBER 14</b> Denver Quarterly Reading</p>	<p><b>THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17</b> Jessica Bardill Lecture</p>
<p><b>WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13</b> CCL Dana Leibsohn Thinking With Colonial Loss: Print, Paper, Wax</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8</b> Brock Rossell Poetics &amp; Praxis 'After Objectivism</p>
<p><b>THURSDAY, JANUARY 9</b> Brock Rossell Multi-Genre Reading</p>	<p><b>THURSDAY, JANUARY 14</b> Erica Weaver Writers and/as MEDIEVAL Critics?</p>
<p><b>WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19</b> DU 5x5 Reading</p>	<p><b>THURSDAY, APRIL 2</b> Dr. Catherine Noske Welcome Reception</p>
<p><b>FRIDAY, APRIL 10</b> Annual Literary Studies Roundtable Featuring Dr. Sylvan Goldberg</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY, MAY 6</b> Alumni Week</p>
<p><b>THURSDAY, MAY 7</b> Alumni Week</p>	



### INCOMING FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

**PATTY YUMI COTTRELL** was born in Korea and raised in Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Milwaukee. Their work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Guernica*, *BOMB*, *Gulf Coast*, and others. They live in Brooklyn. *Sorry To Disrupt the Peace*, their first novel, was longlisted for the *Times Literary Supplement's* Republic of Consciousness Prize, and is the winner of the Best First Book-Fiction 2017 National Medal from the Independent Publisher Book Awards and Barnes & Noble's 2017 Discover Award for Fiction.