

Literature & Criticism

From the Director

By **David B. Downing**



This is an exciting time of transition for us as our newly revised MA in Composition and Literature swings into full operation. Students in the MA Generalist program can elect to continue as they had planned, or they can shift to the C&L program. Please check out our new website to know more. All applicants for Fall 2014 will be slated for the C&L program as the Generalist curriculum will now be phased out. We are especially grateful to Todd Thompson, our MA Coordinator, for all his fine work in shepherding the program revision through all the departmental and university committees for final approval.

The new program offers some innovative features, especially by combining courses in both the Literature and Criticism (L&C) and Composition and TESOL (C&T) programs, so that students can gain experience and training in the two main fields, literature and composition, that all English teachers encounter in their careers. This collaborative effort draws on the wide-ranging expertise of faculty in

L&C and C&T. For this reason alone, it is unique in the nation by responding directly to one of the main challenges of our changing job market that increasingly calls for expertise in writing as well as literature.

An additional new feature of the C&L Program is that it includes the design and implementation of a new course, ENLG 757/857: Digital Composition, Literature, and Pedagogy. Dr. Ken Sherwood has been responsible for developing this course, and he will be teaching it for the first time beginning this coming summer 2014, and again in spring 2015. This course will also count as a Research Skills course for all L&C doctoral students.

We are also pleased to announce the addition of our colleague, Michael T. Williamson, as a new member of our L&C Program. Mike has long been recognized as an outstanding teacher and scholar from our undergraduate program, and Mike's appointment to the graduate program also reflects the success of our new procedures for making internal appointments reflective of our program-matic needs. Please read the interview with Mike by Reza Parchizadeh on page 8 of this Newsletter.

Finally, we are also grateful to our Dean and Provost for approving our national search for a new faculty position in our program with a focus on the long 18th-century British Literature. We are screen-ing candidates this fall and hoping to make a job offer in early spring semester, the position to begin in Fall 2014. As we lost Jim Cahalan to retirement, and Adrian Wisnicki to another university, this new hire will then enable us to cover the wide range of interests our students have demonstrated across many periods of British and Transatlantic literatures.

David B. Downing



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Literature & Criticism Website:

<http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=40965>

Registration Web Address:

www.iup/ursa

Graduate Literature E-mail Address:

iup-gradliterature@iup.edu

Graduate Literature Telephone: (724) 357-2263

IUP Academic Calendar:

<http://www.iup.edu/academiccalendar/-default.aspx>

Newsletter Editor: Reza Parchizadeh r.parchizadeh@iup.edu

Faculty Advisor: David B. Downing downing@iup.edu



Post-Jungian Film Studies

By Tom Slater



Here are some puzzles. Jimmy Stewart as Scottie Ferguson follows a woman he believes is named Madeline Elsner (Kim Novak) to a small historic hotel in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958). He sees her car parked outside and sees her appear in an upstairs window. He asks the desk clerk about which

room she's in but is told no one is in right now. Disbelieving, he has the clerk take him upstairs where he finds the hotel empty and looks out the window to see that Madeline's car is gone. Other ghostly images appear throughout the film as well that are never explained.

Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone are in bed together at the end of *Basic Instinct* (1996). Stone's character has been cleared of suspected murders of a former lover and a detective with an icepick. Douglas's former lover has been charged with those crimes and appears guilty. As Douglas and Stone start making love, the camera pans down past the mattress and bed-frame to show an icepick on the floor. But is it there or just in Stone's subconscious? Was she the killer, or were there more than one? We don't know.

In *Who Am I This Time?* (1983), Christopher Walken plays Harry Nash, a young man who was found as an infant on the church steps and raised to adulthood, but still lacks a personality. But when he's on stage for the community theater productions, he gives one great performance after another, completely becoming whomever he's asked to play. With multiple identities, he becomes far happier than if he'd only had one.

Lack of resolution, or even any possible resolution, leaves a work open to multiple interpretations. With a post-Jungian approach to film, we can understand these examples, and we can also find the same opportunities in any film. Meaning is never completely controlled by the filmmakers or the viewers. Instead, the film possesses (or creates) an indefinable, imaginary realm in which possibilities for exploring new ideas are never exhausted.

Viewers possess the same qualities. Our pre-symbolic identities with which we are born, linking us to each other and perhaps to something eternal, are still with us. When this part of ourselves intersects with the indefinable of film, we increase our abilities to develop new meanings, in the film, in ourselves, and in others. These are some of the ideas we worked with in our program of "Post-Jungian Film Studies" this semester. It's been very complex, but also (at least for me) very fun and fulfilling.

**A note on film studies resources: Film studies research has become much quicker and easier at IUP. Just go to www.iup.edu/filmstudies which takes you to the Center for Film Studies home page. In the column on the right, click on Resources. That takes you to a listing of several prominent film studies institutions like the British Film Institute, the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and the Museum of Modern Art Film Studies Center. Check out whatever you'd like. For more immediate needs, go back to the column on the right and click on Useful Databases. That takes you to a listing of the most useful databases from the IUP library for film research. MLA Bibliography, ProQuest Digital Databases, and Humanities Full Text are particularly useful.*

Cinema Solo

By Reza Parchizadeh

On the occasion of the opening of our Center for Film Studies that holds communal sessions of film showing and criticism and other cinematic events at Jimmy Stewart Museum (<http://jimmy.org>) in Indiana, Pennsylvania and other places



I remember I had always wondered how it would feel like to sit in a quite spacious theater all by myself and watch the movie I liked. Of course, since I am an avid movie-watcher, I have had my moments of solo-watching at home; however, the cinema is a horse of different color. And now I know.

A couple of years ago, I had gone to watch a movie, not the sort of picture everybody likes, but one of those that they say has its own aficionados. I knew that there wouldn't be a large audience; what I actually didn't expect was that there would be no audience at all. It was already

the time for the movie to start, but there was not a soul around, except for me and perhaps the poor operator himself who had to watch the film over and over (later I realized that the system was being operated full-automatic). "What an excellent opportunity! It may only happen once in a lifetime." I told myself. "A large theater with all the seats empty so that I can sit wherever I want; and with no mumbling, grumbling chips-chewing jerks to distract my full attention from the picture. And, best of all, the picture is all mine to enjoy. Mine!"

This was the impression I had the moment the reel set out to roll. When half an hour had passed, I was enjoying myself with the vast prospect of the screen before me: the picture was great, the landscape shone spectacularly, and the score fondled my ears, and it was all mine. But, though I couldn't say what, there was something missing there. Was it the script? No chance! The cinematography? Never been better! The sound? As clear as Pavarotti himself! So what? It was only when I tried to weigh the picture against those great ones I had seen before that I came to realize there was, technically speaking, nothing wrong with it. What was missing there was quite of a different nature: it was the audience, the very "mumbling, grumbling chips-chewing jerks" themselves!

It is an ambivalent feeling when you try to avoid people and then come to the impression that you are missing them; sometimes even the selfsame mumbling, grumbling chips-chewing jerks; not to mention those cognoscenti whose sheer presence by your side emanates in the air the feeling that "Yes, there are people here and there beside me with whom I can share the pleasure of watching such a great movie, even if it is not through words, even if it only goes through mesmerized looks and occasional sighs, and even if it is transformed into a delighted smile at the end of a lovely movie that a fellow-watcher delivers to me the moment I am stretching my muscles and set off to leave the theater."

This was the very feeling I came to miss and long for when I, at the end of the movie, made for the exit: there was no cheering, no self-styled interpreting, no relieved murmuring, and not even the displeased groaning. And the truth is, I missed the first three no more than I did the last. As it seems, it is not just the picture that makes the cinema, but the whole aura, including, to a great extent, the audience itself. It is all about sharing and a sense of community.

MELUS 2013 Report

By **Lingyan Yang**

Dr. Lingyan Yang was Conference Committee Chair, MELUS Vice President, and Program Chair to organize the MELUS 2013 national conference and to run the conference on site in Omni William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh on Mar. 14-17, 2013. MELUS stands for Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S. The conference was a huge success with stimulating and rigorous scholarly exchanges and a balanced budget with a presentable conference surplus. Dr. Yang thanks all the IUP leaders and all participating faculty and students for your wonderful support. IUP President Driscoll, Mrs. Driscoll, Vice President Speidel, and Dean Asamoah from College of Humanities & Social Sciences attended the plenary lunch to offer extraordinary institutional support for the conference. President Driscoll delivered a warm and presidential welcome to all conference attendants. About 235-245 faculty and graduate students attended the conference. Seven Grad Lit faculty (Drs. Berlin, Comfort, Downing, Heflin, Thompson, Williamson, and Yang) participated in the conference, as well as 30 Masters and doctoral students from Grad Lit Program. The conference featured 4



plenary sessions of 7 plenary speakers or panelists, including Prof. Houston A. Baker, Distinguished University Professor at Vanderbilt U, one of the world's leading African American literary theorists, author of more than 20 books, former President of MLA in 1992, and Prof. David Palumbo-Liu, Louise Hewlett Nixon Professor, Director of Comparative Literature and Director of Asian American Studies from Stanford U, a prominent Asian American cultural theorist in the academy.

The conference also featured 72 sessions/panels/ events, two receptions hosted by MELUS and Oxford UP respectively, and book exhibitions. The feedback on the conference was overwhelmingly glowing. Prof. Baker graciously commented that “The MELUS conference (2013) in Pittsburgh was superb in every way.... In brief, Prof. Yang, MELUS 2013 was a near-perfect conference.” Prof. Fred Gardaphe, a leading Italian American and American ethnic literature scholar and former MELUS President, generously wrote, “it was a great conference. One of the greatest. Thank you for your hard work.” Prof. Joycelyn Mooty, Sue E. Denman Distinguished Chair in American Literature, U of Texas at San Antonio and former editor of *African American Review*, commented, “the entire conference was absolutely lovely; you and your institutional supporters did a brilliant, beautiful job!” Prof. Wenying Xu, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Chatham U and former MELUS President, 2009-12, wrote, “What a fantastic conference! I have heard nothing but praises, and congratulations!” Dr. Yang is deeply grateful for all IUP leaders who have offered tremendous support for the MELUS 2013 conference. Special thanks also go to Dr. Yang’s 5 amazing and highly dedicated graduate student assistants from the Grad Lit Program: Jennifer Matos Ayala, Rachel Warmington, Kittiphong Praphan, Carolyn Marcille, and Ibrahim Azizi.

Student and Alumni News

Eliza Albert presented a paper at Oxford for the 2nd Annual International Graphic Novel Conference held by inter-disciplinary.net on 9/24/13 called “Traveling Through Space and Time: Identity and Travel in Graphic Novel”.

Angela Aliff presented a paper called “The Senses Subvert: Kingsolver’s Avoidance of the Gaze in *Prodigal Summer*” at the conference Subject to Change: Nature, Text, and the Limits of the Human in University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, on March 24, 2013.

Kathryn Leigh Allen led a week-long Study Abroad course to London, England, for sixteen students (March 8-16). She presented a paper entitled “Joseph Campbell’s Monomythic Hero in Orson Scott Card’s *Science Fiction*” at Popular Culture Association’s annual conference, March 27-30, 2013, in Washington, DC. She will also present a paper entitled “Teaching Star Trek in the English Com-position Classroom” at English Association

of Pennsylvania State Universities’ annual conference, October 17-18, 2013, in West Chester, PA.

Ali Almajnooni is finalizing his fourth novel (in Arabic), which is expected to be out in early 2014. The novel is set in the 1940s Saudi Arabia’s barren desert of Hejaz. It tells the story of Mastura, a young, recently widowed Bedouin woman whose father, struck by the rampant epidemic smallpox, gives her away to another man in exchange for the latter’s healing him. Fed up with the harsh circumstances of her life, Mastura thrives to, and does, make her own destiny, to live long afterwards in the memory of her tribe.

Francis X. Altomare appeared on the Gameshow *Jeopardy* airing on Thursday, September 26, 2013.

Jennifer Matos Ayala, Literature and Criticism Ph.D. candidate, chaired a panel and presented at the 26th MELUS National Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, on March 14-17, 2013. Jennifer’s conference presentation titled “Possessed Bodies: The Colonized Female Body and Sexuality” discussed the colonized female bodies and sexualities in Bharati Mukherjee’s *Jasmine* and Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* and how these influence the female characters’ identities and relationships from a feminist, post-colonial and racial perspective. On April 3, 2013, Jennifer presented on a panel for Issues of Diversity: Voices from the Field, A Working Paper Series of The Frederick Douglass Institute for Intercultural Research. Her presentation titled “‘Frothing with Delight’: Sexual Freedom and Oppression in Three Twentieth-Century Novels” explored how the female characters in these novels are concurrently empowered and oppressed by their sexuality and desirability because of the sexual politics of the time. Along with Rachael Warmington, Kittiphong Praphan, Carolyn Marcille, and Ibrahim Azizi, Jennifer was awarded the Outstanding Service & Citizenship Award for their outstanding, dedicated, and exemplary professional services as the IUP graduate student team and Conference Committee members for MELUS 2013 National Conference in March 2013.

Mary Louisa Cappelli published a paper called “Maternal Interruption: Reconceiving Political Spaces and Social Agency in Buchi Emecheta’s *Joys of Motherhood*” in the volume *Disjointed Perspectives on Motherhood: Pedagogies of the Reversed Maternal Image*, edited by Catalina Florina Florescu, Lanham: Lexington, 2013. She also presented a paper named “Throwing Rocks at the Sun: Baragaig Motherhood Resistance in the Global Age of Land Grabbing” at the conference Natural Resource Distribution and Development in the 21st Century, in Society for Applied Anthropology, March 2013. She

presented another paper called “El Mundo Zurdo de Gloria Anzaldúa: Healing Sueños of Neplantera Activism” at XXXVIII International Symposium of Hispanic Literature, Los Angeles, California, March 2013.

Edward Carvalho read his poetry at the Minás Gallery in Baltimore, Maryland on November 10, 2013. The reading focused on selections from his recent chapbook, *Headlong into the cloudburst naked* (PAresia, 2013). Also, his latest edited book, *Acknowledged Legislator: Critical Essays on Martín Espada*, is currently in press with Fairleigh Dickinson UP, with an anticipated release of early 2014. This volume is the first-ever book-length study of Espada’s work and features essays and interviews from leading scholars in the field of Espada studies. The volume features 13 contributors and tallies almost 400 pages. Speaking to the importance of this collection, Cary Nelson writes: “It is a tremendous pleasure to have this ambitious collection of essays about the American poet who, more than any other writer, combines incisive political critique with utopian longing and unforgettable humor. No season should go by without rereading Espada. Now we finally have a collection of critical essays about his work that informs and challenges.”—Cary Nelson, editor of *Anthology of Modern and Contemporary American Poetry* (Oxford UP, 2014). Nelson’s praise is echoed by additional endorsements from Lee Upton, Roberto Márquez, and the leading Latino/a studies scholar, Ilan Stavans.

Gregory Luke Chwala, doctoral candidate in the English Literature and Criticism program, presented a paper in Buffalo, New York, at the 3rd biannual international Queering Ireland conference, “Queer Irish Diasporas,” sponsored through the Humanities Institute, SUNY Buffalo, 9-10 August. His paper was entitled “Community and Crisis: Queer Irish Diasporas in Albert Nobbs.” This past year he also published two articles through Interdisciplinary Press: “Distorted and Displaced Heteronormativity: Hypermasculinity, Violence and Sexuality in Chris Abani’s *GraceLand*,” and “In a ‘hall of horrors’: A Phenomenology of Heteronormative White Double Consciousness in James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room*.” The article on *GraceLand* has been developed as a larger chapter for a special edition anthology on Queer Sexualities to be published in 2014.

Jaron Fox moderated the six O’clock series on September 23, 2013. The focus of this panel was Censorship and Freedom of Information; and covered various topics ranging from banned and challenged books, problems with internet freedom, and cases like Snowden. On September 25, 2013, he was one of the MCs for the Banned Books event. At this event, students, faculty, and

community members were encouraged to read passages from banned or challenged books. Jaron aided in announcing the readers and informed the audience as to why a particular book was banned.

Tracy Lassiter, who earned her PhD from IUP’s English department in 2013 and currently works as a temporary English faculty member, presented a paper entitled “While My Gorilla Gently Weeps” at the International Comparative Literature Congress held at the Sorbonne in Paris in July 2013. In support of this presentation, separately she won her second Love of Learning Award from the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, one of 147 recipients nationwide out of a pool of more than 1000 applicants. She also has a chapter appearing in a forthcoming anthology entitled *Energy in Literature*; her submission is called “The First Nations’ Way: Indigenous People’s Literary and Political Resistance to Big Oil”.

Dennis B. Ledden’s essay, “Virgilian Elements in Laura Esquivel’s *Malinche*”, will appear in *Cincinnati Romance Review* 36 (2013). He presented this essay at the PCA/ACA National Conference held in Washington, DC, March 27-30, 2013. Dennis has been commissioned by *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* to write a book review for a November issue on *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway, 1923-1925*. Vol. 2. Ed. Sandra Spanier, Albert J. DeFazio III, and Robert W. Trogon. New York: Cambridge UP, 2013. His review of the following text appeared in the recent spring issue of *The Hemingway Review* (32.2 (2013): 144-47): *Hemingway’s The Garden of Eden: Twenty-Five Years of Criticism*. Ed. Suzanne del Gizzo and Frederic J. Svoboda. Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2012. Both of the following presentations were derived from Dennis’s dissertation, “Ernest Hemingway’s Concealment and Discovery of His Male Self: The Influence of His Romantic Relationship with Agnes von Kurowsky on His Early Fiction,” which has been forwarded to ProQuest for publication: “Hemingway, Kurowsky, and the Male Self in *A Farewell to Arms*.” American Literature Association Symposium, New Orleans, Louisiana, October 4-6, 2012; And “The Influence of Hemingway’s Affair with Agnes von Kurowsky on the Composition of *The Torrents of Spring*.” The 15th Biennial Hemingway Society Conference, Petosky–Bay View, Michigan, June 17-23, 2012.

Lisa Marzano, Assistant Professor of English at Palm Beach Atlantic University, was awarded the best paper award for her presentation, “Wayne Booth and the Ethics of The Help” (novel and film) at the Southeast Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature, The Daub-Maher. Lisa’s essay sparked a fervent discussion on

whether historical literature /film should be taught with exposure of its unhistorical scenes.

Reza Parchizadeh, since early 2013, as well as being Editorial Assistant of this year's *Works and Days* volume, titled *Education for Revolution*, and having been frequently interviewed by television channels on political issues regarding the Middle East and U.S. domestic and foreign policy, has published the following articles on various subjects in a number of journals and websites around the world: "The Problematic of the 'Antagonist' in the Iranian Cinema"; "A Survey of the 'Aryanist' Nationalist Discourse in Iran"; "The Tight-Collars"; "Whorist' Misogyny and 'Ethereal' Misogyny"; "An Unfinished Revolution"; "Nationalization of Iranian Oil as Assertion of Iranian Identity"; "On the Contingency of the Political Act: A View to the Iranian Presidential Election"; "The Islamic Republic's Star Wars"; "Pragmatic Ethics' or Absolute Lack of Ethics?"; "The Student Up-rising of July 1999 in Tehran and the 'Student Syndrome' in Civil Rights Movements in Contemporary Iran"; "The Revolution in Egypt and a Trap for Iran: Democracy or Legalism?"; "The Fallacy of the 'Culture of Democracy' by the Reformists"; "The Oppressed Historical Mind"; "Release of the 1953 Putsch Documents and the Destiny of the Monarchists"; "Egypt: Putsch or Revolution?"; "Egyptian Army: Nationalist or Imperialism's Instrument?"; "Obama and the Last Act of the Syrian Tragedy"; "Why Does Iraq Crack Down on MEK?"; "The Islamic Republic is about to Spark WWII"; "The Sour Soup of the Syrian Chemical Plan and the Iranian Atomic Project"; "Did the United States Push the Mullahs to Power in Iran?"; "'Heroic Flexibility' in the History of the Islamic Republic"; "How Islamic Fundamentalists Achieved Power in Iran through U.S. Intervention"; "Cultural Hegemony of the Islamic Republic"; "If Israel-phobia does no good for Iran, it certainly does so for the mullahs!"; "A Fatwa for Some Seasons"; "While even Hamas has realized the charade, we haven't yet!"; "Violation of human rights in Iran has increased under President Rouhani"; "Islamic Republic's negotiations behind closed doors and Iranian people's



'inalienable rights'; and "The new Turkmanchay Agreement was signed at last!"

Julie Ann Pavlick presented a paper called "The Triangle of Heteronormative Opposition: The Confinement of Homosexuals in Multicultural Literature" at EGO/GSA Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference, Indiana, PA, March 2013. She presented another paper, "Locked into Darkness: The Silencing of Women Coal Miners in Appalachian Literature", at the 36th Annual Appalachian Studies Conference, Boone, NC, March 2013. She also made another presentation, "Rom-antic Racialism and Pro-Slavery Sentiment: How Both Reside in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin", at Frederick Douglass Institute, Indiana, PA, April 2013.

A. J. Schmitz presented "I thought you raised goats: Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* and the Destabilization of the Urban/Rural Hierarchy" at the Mid-Atlantic Popular & American Culture Association Conference, November, 2013; and "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Female Genital Mutilation in Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy*," at the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States Conference, March, 2013.

Jessica Showalter is, this semester, the Lillian Gary Taylor Visiting Fellow in

American Literature at the University of Virginia's Harrison Institute for American History, Literature, and Culture. Last semester, she received an IUP Graduate Research Grant that funded her archival research at the University of Pennsylvania, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. She chaired a panel and presented a paper at the 2013 Pennsylvania College English Association Conference. She also published book reviews in *Studies in the Humanities* and *Teacher-Scholar*.

Rochelle Spencer has been appointed to the Board of Directors for the Hurston-Wright Foundation, whose mission is to discover, educate, mentor, and develop African-American writers. As a member of the Board of

Directors, she will serve on Board Committees that guide the direction of the Organization; help to formulate policies and procedures; and assist with overseeing programs, fundraising, and outreach efforts. Her review of Venus E. Evans-Winters' "Teaching Black Girls: Resiliency in Urban Classrooms" will be published in an upcoming issue of *Callaloo*. In the review, she discusses how Evans-Winters takes what she terms a "postmodernist approach" to teaching black girls: she believes that by dismantling grand narratives about race, gender, and class, she will encourage black girls to be more resilient and complete their educations.

Mark Dawson Thomas was panel participant in "Creative Writers in Cyberspace: Teaching Students to Collaborate Online" and "Creative Writing Assignments for the Composition Classroom" at Gulf Coast Association of Creative Writing Teacher Conference on April 5, 2013. He will also be panel chair in "Writing from Distance: Facilitating Student Collaboration in the Online Classroom" at Florida College English Association Conference on October 17, 2013.

Samantha Vertosick presented a paper at this year's PASSHE Graduate Research and Creative Projects Symposium and has been accepted to present at PAMLA's 111th annual conference at the end of October in San Diego, where she'll also be moderating a panel on Autobiographies for Dr. Tanya Heflin. Both presentations were/will be a reading of her paper entitled "And They Lived Happily Ever After: A Glance at Traditional and Contemporary Fairy Tale Endings".

Jennifer Mary Woolston presented a paper entitled "Analyzing Archie Comics: Feminism, Gay Rights, and More!" at the Popular Culture Association of the South (PCAS), in Savannah, GA, October 2013. She also chaired and moderated the panel at which it was presented, entitled "Engendered Comics". Jennifer also recently completed book reviews of *Sing Us a Song, Piano Woman: Female Fans and the Music of Tori Amos* by Adrienne Trier-Bieniek, and *Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom* edited by Carrye Kay Syma and Robert G. Weiner for a forthcoming issue of *The Journal of American Culture*.

Studying National Literature from a Global Perspective

An Interview by Reza Parchizadeh with Dr. Michael T. Williamson

Dr. Michael T. Williamson is Associate Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He

has taught at Rutgers University and was Director of Composition for the Rutgers University College campus. His research interests include Romantic and Victorian literature, Holocaust literature, and literature of the interwar period (1918-1939).

Q: Could you please tell us about the new trend of studying national literature from a global perspective?

A: Sure. The field of 19th-Century Studies in America has changed a lot over the last ten years, partly because of some reappraisals of the role of religion. For instance, feminist movements in the Arab World have really restructured the way people think about religion and literature, especially 19th century women's literature.

Q: Did Arab Spring have anything to do with it?

A: Not necessarily. It was before that, in the 1980s. People were working on various aspects of veiling in Islamic countries, for example. I knew a woman from Syria in graduate school, Mohja Khaf, who was working on veiling and how significant it was as a cultural component. Three of her poems, "Men Kill Me," "The Road to Damascus," and "Canoe," have been published in *A Crack in the Wall: New Arab Poetry*. Also, a number of books came out in the mid-1980s that dealt with the Bedouins and the sentiments of their poetry. Those developments helped us to reread the language of sentiment in 19th-century British women's poetry, which until then had been regarded as embarrassing and even complicit with British colonialism. Romantic women writers such as Felicia Hemans became interesting because they "read the world" in their poetry, and they did so from a perspective that was distinct from the perspective of canonical male Romantic poets.

Q: But how would you possibly relate recent Arab Studies to 19th-century British Studies in America?

A: What we're finding as we go back to the 19th century is, for instance, that the role of women, preachers, and Methodism were difficult to read using preexisting contexts defined by national literatures. I was just speaking with a student in our program, Sheila Gross, who wants to write about hair and the relationship between discourses of modesty, honor, and intellectual (as well as political) power in 19th century British literature. And

that's where Arab Studies comes in. That's where Global Literature becomes truly global, since we can reconsider British 19th-century women writers according to ideas about modesty that normally wouldn't have been accessible without a discourse of modesty and honor from Arab scholars and students. We have a lot of students at IUP that are from overseas, carrying with them various literary heritages. That's fascinating.

Q: Could you tell us more about the codes of modesty?

A: Well, one of our students, Ghada Al Abbadi, recently defended a really interesting dissertation about the importance of changing the kinds of texts we teach in 19th-Century Studies, and she based part of her argument on the ways in which 19th-century writers understood women's movement inside and outside the home. Codes of modesty and honor were interpreted by some 19th-century writers as infringements on freedom. Other writers, however, understood the actual behavior of women in "Middle Eastern" countries in a different context; they were willing to produce new knowledge from the intersections between their cultural expectations and forms of literary and imaginative creativity they observed in the Middle East.

Q: Talking about 19th-century British Literature, how did Persian Literature affect Victorian Literature?

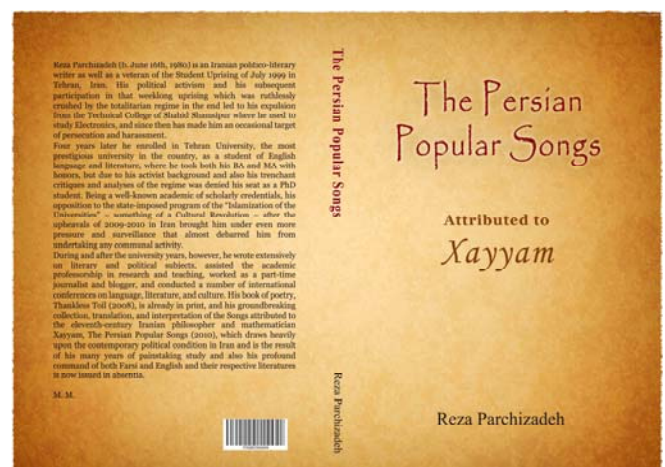
A: We have here the case of Edward FitzGerald and the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, for instance. It did not enter English Literature as just foreign and "exotic." It really got into English life and changed it. What we need here and now is to study it – as study any other literature – as the Victorians did: dealing with it not just as pure text, but letting it influence us. In other words, what we need is literature as a process of "metamorphosis." There is this tradition that says only one literary model/tradition is valuable. What we need in effect is a crossover in disciplines: being interdisciplinary, not just focusing on one tradition as if it only had one set of expectations. I understand, Reza, that you have translated the *Rubáiyát* from Persian and have written about the differences

between FitzGerald's translation and the original. Perhaps for the next issue I could interview you about this work?



Q: I'd be honored. But for now, could you please tell us how this global perspective would work with regard to Colonial and Postcolonial Studies?

A: Well, it shows us that the process of literature is different from the process of colonization. The older paradigm of "the writer representing the nation" is now going away. The model of English and American Literature is a national model, but we've gone beyond that. We now value literary traditions within countries that predate colonialism or complicate ideas about colonialism. In this respect, I am thinking of Felicia Hemans's poems about Albanian, Suliote, Armenian and other literary traditions from the Caucasus during the period of Ottoman colonization. I've become very interested recently in Russian and Soviet colonization as well, especially as we now have access to texts produced by people who were colonized by the Soviets in the 20th century. Sometimes I think we give too much power to the imagination of the colonizer and neglect the many imaginations that emerge in literature.



Faculty News

Dr. Gail Berlin's essay, "Constructing Tonwenne: A Gesture and Its History", is now in print in the volume *Reading Lazamon's Brut: Approaches and Explorations* (Rodopi 2013). The paper examines the motif of the "overwrought mother" in an Early Middle English text. Her paper, "Like a Duck from a Falcon: Moses in Middle English Biblical Literature, the Mystery Cycles, and Piers Plowman B", is forthcoming in *Illuminating Moses: A History of Reception from Exodus to the Renaissance* (Brill 2013). A paper presented at the Lazamon's Brut conference in Paris (2012), "Magic and Gadgets in Lazamon's Brut," is now in final proofs and examines medieval legends about and attitudes towards technology. Dr. Berlin was particularly interested to learn about Eilmar of Malmesbury, an Anglo-Saxon who fashioned wings, flew, and survived his flight shortly before 1066. At the 2013 MELUS Conference, she also presented her paper, "Haunted Lyrics and Trans-generational Trauma: American Jewish Poetry after Auschwitz".

Dr. David B. Downing collaborated with **Nick Katsiadis**, **Tracy Lassiter**, and **Reza Parchizadeh** in writing the "Foreword" to this year's *Works and Days* volume titled *Education for Revolution*, which was guest edited by E. Wayne Ross and Rich Gibson. This volume contains fifteen essays from some of the leading Marxists theorists of education. Nick, Tracy, and Reza served as Editorial Assistants. **Ed Carvalho** designed the front cover of the volume. In October, David attended the annual meeting of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities (CAFPRR) of the MLA, and he served as Chair for the meeting. For the January 2014 MLA in Chicago, he served as organizer and chair of a special session, "Who Benefits? Competing Agendas and Ethics in Graduate Education." David read his paper, "Ethical Conundrums: Institutional Pressure and Graduate Student Needs in the Era of Contingency". In conjunction with CAFPRR, this session featured as speakers Jentery Sayers, Daniel Purdy, Shane Peterson, and Katina Rogers. David also served as a delegate to the annual meeting of the MLA Delegate Assembly.



Dr. Tanya Heflin has thoroughly enjoyed working closely with graduate students in the Literature and Criticism program over the course of the last year; having designed three new graduate courses, having served on two dozen exam/dissertation committees, and having begun to serve as faculty advisor to IUP's active EGO group. Her graduate courses in auto-biography, magic realist women's literature, and literary theory reflect three of her deepest ongoing interests within literary study. In March, Dr. Heflin chaired a MELUS panel that interrogated the complex question of authenticity in multi-ethnic American literature, and she presented her recent archival work on Luiseño writer and painter, Bonita

Calachaw Nuñez. In November, she served as Presiding Officer of Auto-biography for PAMLA for the second year, developing three new panels on aspects of auto-biography that range from global life-writing and narrative representations of aging to the use of digital platforms for life-writing. Happily, she was able to invite two current IUP graduate students, Jaclyn Sullivan and Samantha Vertosick, to serve as moderators for two of her panels for the San Diego conference. She is compiling a critical anthology of this collected work to promote new directions in women's life-writing from multiple perspectives. At the conference, she also presented her critical comparison of the outraged media response to the self-revealing autobiographical work of early twentieth-century writer Mary MacLane to that of

contemporary filmmaker Lena Dunham, creator of the HBO series *Girls*. In addition, her book project on Native American and settler women's life-writing, *Naked-Soul Ladies: Private Diary and Public Playacting in the American West*, is under second review, as are two articles on the archived diaries of Western writers, Mary MacLane and Mary Hunter Austin. In September, Dr. Heflin had the great pleasure of working with the enthusiastic officers of EGO to host IUP's Second Annual Banned Books Read Out, and she also embarked on university-wide campus service as chair of the Doctoral Teaching Circle and as appointed member of the President's Commission on the Status of Women at IUP. Most recently, Dr. Heflin has just been invited to film an interview for the NEH-funded

documentary, *Mary Quite Contrary*, directed by Margie Judd, who has requested that she speak on camera about Mary MacLane's playful use of language, her underground influence on literary Modernism, and her transformative role in changing women's diary practice and experience of psychological interiority.

Dr. Christopher Kuipers had a keynote address and two presentations this year: "Translating Manga and Anime: Let Us Count the Ways" as the keynote address at Anime Expo, Los Angeles, July 4, 2013; "Toward Rhetorical Universals" at International Society for the History of Rhetoric Conference in Chicago, July 25, 2013; and "How to Build a Paper Castle: A Corpuscular Argument for Reassessing the Authorship of the Cleanness-Poet" at Medieval-Renaissance Conference XXVII in University of Virginia's College at Wise, September 21, 2013.

Dr. Alexis Lothian has been having a busy semester. As well as presenting her research at the American Studies Association and Critical Ethnic Studies Association annual conferences, she was invited to be keynote speaker at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign's graduate student conference, "Imagining Alternatives." She also finished editing a special issue of the open access journal *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media and Technology* focused on feminist science fiction, which went live on November 5 at <http://adanewmedia-org>. As part of the launch for the Ada issue, Alexis was invited to participate in the Sally Miller Gearhart Symposium on Feminist Science Fiction. Part of the 40th anniversary celebration of the University of Oregon's Center for the Study of Women in Society, in November, the Symposium included a rare public talk by Ursula K. Le Guin as well as contributions from authors Suzy McKee Charnas, Vonda McIntyre, Kate Wilhelm, Larissa Lai, Andrea Hairston, and L. Timmel Duchamp.

Dr. Mike Sell was awarded the 2013-14 IUP University Senate Distinguished Faculty Award for Research. He has recently published two invited essays: "Avant-Garde/Roma: A Critical History of Bohemianism and Cultural Politics" appears alongside contributions by Salman Rushdie, Zygmunt Bauman, and Ethel Brooks in the BAK publication, *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*; "Blackface and the Black Arts Movement" is one of the essays in a special Summer 2013 issue of *TDR* that reconsiders the history and politics of blackface performance. A third invited piece, "Avant-Garde Theory and Right-Wing Ideology", will be included in an anthology edited by Kimberly Jannarone and published by the University of Michigan. Mike is serving as consultant and presenting on two panels at the international Black Arts Movement conference at the

University of California, Merced, March 1-2, 2014. His current projects include *Archiving Rosaly Roffman: Towards a Poetics of the Archive*, a collaboration with IUP Professor Emerita Rosaly Roffman; *The Avant-Garde: A Critical Introduction*, co-written with the University of Warwick's James Harding; and *The Black Arts Movement: Essays*, a collection of previously published material, revised and updated. He was recently elected Director of the BA Program in English Studies, and he continues to be a dedicated and busy family member, including coaching two teams for the Murrsville Area Soccer Association.

Dr. Tom Slater has a few things going on right now: he is reviewing a manuscript, *Apocalypse in Hollywood: The Life and Films of Rex Ingram*, for the University Press of Kentucky; he is serving as a judge for the best essay in a book competition for the Society of Cinema and Media Studies; he has organized the Jimmy Stewart/Frank Capra Writing Competition, which offers cash prizes in four categories for graduate students; and has also brought two film events to campus this semester. One of the events was a showing of the award-winning *The Exquisite Corpse Project* on October 7, accompanied by producer Joanna Popik, director Ben Popik, and writer/actor David Segal, who talked a lot with the audience afterwards. The other event was a lunch time visit by actor Brian O'Halloran (Clerks) and writer/director David Lee Madison (Mr. Hush) on Oct. 11, who talked about their work and provided guidelines for getting low-budget independent productions started.

Dr. Todd N. Thompson published "From Brahmin to Biglow (and back again): James Russell Lowell as Temporary Satirist" in *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, 58.2 (2012): 155-184. He also presented "[L]ate from Mexico': Satire, War, and News in James Russell Lowell's Biglow Poems" at American Literature Association Symposium on War and Literature in New Orleans, LA, Oct. 10, 2013; and "Celebrity P.O.W.s and 'Othered' Political Critique in Black Hawk's Life" at MELUS in Pittsburgh, PA, March 15, 2013; as well as "'This Reminds Me of a Little Joke': From Humor to Satire in Abraham Lincoln's Political Rhetoric" at Mid-Atlantic Popular and American Culture Association in Pittsburgh, PA, Nov. 1, 2012.

Dr. Veronica T. Watson published a book, *The Souls of White Folks: African American Writers Theorize Whiteness* (University Press of Mississippi, 2013); and had two presentations: "(Un)Teaching Whiteness: Engaging the African American Counter-Narrative to Whiteness" at Monmouth Interdisciplinary Conference on Race in West Long Branch, NJ (April 2013); and "The 'Intolerable

Invisibility' of Whiteness: Morrison's *A Mercy* and the Literature of White Estrangement" at Northeast Modern Language Association Conference in Rochester, NY (March 2012).

Dr. Michael T. Williamson has been busy working on intersections between literary romanticism, literary modernity, and traditional sacred literatures. His essay, "Modernist Yiddish Aesthetics, I. L. Peretz's Middle-brow Yiddish Poetics, and the Place of Yehoash in Modern and Middle-brow Literary History", was published in the journal *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945* this Fall. He also presented "Desperate Play: Holocaust Texts and Nineteenth Century Mystical Texts" at The Space Between Conference in DePaul University, Chicago, IL; and "Yiddish Poetry in America: A Cautionary Tale" at the 27th Annual MELUS Conference in Pittsburgh, PA.

Another essay, "Felicia Hemans's Public Poetry, J.J. Winckelmann's *History of the Art of Antiquity*, and the Possibility of Imaginative Plenitude", will be published in the journal *Women's Writing*. He also continues to work on categories of "middlebrow" literature (literature that approaches the problems of "high modernism" and "high romanticism" from aspirational middle and lower middle class perspectives).

An essay in this area, "Before Jeeves: Victorian Schoolboy Stories, Impudence and Melodrama in P.G. Wodehouse's Novels, 1909-1923", has been accepted for publication and will be included in *Middlebrow Wodehouse: Fiction and Musical Comedies in Their Historical Contexts* (Ashgate Press). Dr. Williamson has presented numerous conference papers on Yiddish poetry and fiction written during the Holocaust. During his Spring 2014 sabbatical, he will continue working on his book, *The Heart of the World: Romanticism, Mysticism, and Differentiation in Interwar and Holocaust Yiddish Poetry*, forthcoming from Northwestern University Press. He is also working on an essay on George Eliot's use of nineteenth century mysticism in *Daniel Deronda*, which was presented as "The Heart of the World: Romanticism, Hasidic Mysticism and George Eliot's Daniel Deronda" at Nineteenth Century Studies Association in Asheville, NC. He also reviewed an



article, "At Freedom's Door", by Malcolm Darling for *South Asian Review* 33.2 (2012). In the future, he hopes to publish papers with shorter titles! He is looking forward to teaching ENGL 764/864 Topics in British Literature since 1660 in the Summer 2014 semester and again in the Fall 2014 semester.

Dr. Lingyan Yang has been busy with the national leadership duties as MELUS Vice President, Program Chair, and board member to serve her profession and the institutional duties as Director of the inter-disciplinary Women's Studies Program at IUP. She presented a paper, "Asian American Feminism as Part of Global and American Multi-ethnic Feminist Decolonizing Knowledge", chaired two panels, and attended the Women's Studies Directors' Work-shop in the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) conference in Oakland, CA, on Nov. 8-11, 2012. Dr. Yang presented another paper, "American Multiethnic Women's American Dream", in MLA 2013 Convention in Boston in Jan. 2013, where she also attended the MELUS Executive Council meeting and attended the Award Reception for the MELUS Distinguished Contribution Award to Prof. Lisa Lowe, one of the most prominent Asian American scholars and Prof. of English at Tufts U. In the ALA

(American Literature Association) conference in late May 2013 in Boston Dr. Yang organized and chaired two MELUS panels on "New Directions on Latino/a American Literature & Criticism" and "New Directions in American Multiethnic Masculinity Studies," both of which went very well. Dr. Yang organized and will chair and present in a roundtable, "Critical Pedagogies for Teaching North Asian American Feminist Multidisciplinary Studies," and will attend the Women's Studies Directors' Workshop again in the 2013 NWSA (National Women's Studies Association) conference on Nov. 7-10, 2013 in Cincinnati, OH. She has organized and will chair one MELUS panel titled "New Directions in the American Multiethnic Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Theories and Criticisms" in the MLA 2014 Convention on Jan. 9-12, 2014 in Chicago this coming winter. Dr. Yang is currently revising the manuscript for her edited volume, *Asian*

Pacific American Cultural Criticism: A Reader, and revising the introduction that she wrote, "Introduction: A Brief Intellectual History of Asian Pacific American Cultural Criticism". She is also working on two other articles. Currently in Fall 2013 she is working with her colleagues in IUP Women's Studies Program to lead the Women's Studies minor program revision. Dr. Yang was also very delighted and proud that in 2013 Dr. Pamela June, a 2009 graduate of IUP's doctoral Program in Literature & Criticism, landed a tenure-track Assistant Professor position in the English Dept. at Ohio University, Eastern Campus. Dr. Yang directed Pam's terrific and exemplary dissertation on the female body and American multiethnic women's literary narrative.

Banned Books Read Out Draws an Enthusiastic Crowd

By **Tanya Heflin**

For the second year in a row, IUP's Banned Books Read Out inspired both laughter and reflection from its enthusiastic audience of students, staff, faculty, and community members. Sponsored by the English Department, supported by IUP Libraries, and facilitated by EGO, the 2013 Banned Books Event drew a large crowd to the sunlit back corner of the library lobby. Reading from behind a podium wrapped in yellow caution tape, audience members volunteered to "read out" passages from beloved favorite books that have faced the threat of censorship within individual communities across the country.

Banned Books Week marks an annual event that is promoted nationally by the American Library Association, which hosted the first ever Read Out over thirty years ago to bring a public face to censorship challenges that libraries handle on a continual basis. Attendees are frequently astonished to learn that some of their most beloved books—from *Leaves of Grass* to *Harry Potter*—have faced the threat of censorship in communities, schools, and libraries. At the Read Out, readers

challenge these threats and celebrate the freedom to choose for themselves what books they will read.

According to the American Library Association, the most frequently cited reasons for attempting to ban books are sex, profanity, and racism, and most often these attempts are motivated by local community members expressing an earnest concern for protecting children. However, from the library's perspective, there is a vast difference between an individual restricting his/her own choices versus attempting to restrict the choice of all readers in a community by forcing public agencies to restrict access to everyone. With events like the Banned Books Read Out, the American Library Association, IUP Libraries, and the IUP English Department make a public statement promoting the value of free choice and widely available access to materials. IUP's September 25th event was a boisterous celebration of those freedoms.

While the first IUP Banned Books Read Out was organized as a grassroots community project by undergraduate English majors in Tanya Heflin's ENGL 340 course on the novel, this year's Read Out was organized with extraordinary enthusiasm by the dedicated officers of EGO, our English Graduate Organization. Each EGO officer took on one or more of the duties necessary for the public event: Lauren Shoemaker and Jaron Fox served as emcees; Rachael Warmington and Jennifer Matos Ayala coordinated a raffle of enviable "swag bags" filled with Banned Books totes, mugs, buttons, and other goodies; Sheila Gross handled catering; Asmaa Alshehri and Matt Stumpf got the word out with



publicity; and Samantha Audette coordinated the volunteer readers' signing-in process and doled out reading passages. In addition, the entire group tackled the time-consuming work of researching the banned history of texts, and even more painstaking, selected single very brief passages to represent the richness of each given text. Throughout all these efforts, EGO's dedication was extraordinary and its enthusiasm infectious.

High points of the event included spirited readings from English Department graduate students and faculty. Faculty readers included Dr. Tina Perdue, Dr. Todd Thompson, Dr. John Roby (Anthropology), Dr. Madison Peshock (IUP alum), and Dr. Gian Pagnucci, who dedicated his reading from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in tribute to Dr. Wendy Carse, whose passing over the summer marked a loss that has reverberated through IUP's English Department. Impassioned readings were likewise performed by a number of English Department graduate students, including A.J. Schmitz, Chelsea Rae, Erin Guydish, Matt Stumpf, Seham Arish, Jennifer Matos Ayala, Meg Oldman, Mona Alshamsi, Julie Pavlick, Mona Albalawi, and Samantha Vertosick. One unmistakable fan favorite was President Mike Driscoll's deadpan reading of a selection on potty training from *Captain Underpants and the Preposterous Plight of the Purple Potty People*, which along with Becky Driscoll's reading from *Harry Potter*, were afterward remarked upon by first-year undergraduates who were struck by the Driscolls' approachability and sense of fun.

The Banned Books Read Out was part of a full week of Banned Books events that included a Six O'Clock Series panel on "Censorship vs. Freedom of Information," organized by Kelley Cotter, reference librarian at IUP's Stapleton Library. In short, the 2013 Read Out was a delight and will be followed for years to come as a way for the English Department, IUP Libraries, and EGO to promote individual choice and to celebrate our freedom to read.

The Souls of White Folks: African American Writers Theorize Whiteness

An Interview by Reza Parchizadeh with Dr.
Veronica T. Watson

Dr. Veronica T. Watson is a Professor of English in the Graduate Program in Literature and Criticism at IUP. She teaches, publishes and presents a range of literature

focusing on 20th-century African-American literature; Southern American literature, race and gender; geography, place and race; and critical race and whiteness studies. She has been an invited guest speaker for the Fulbright Commission for Educational Exchange in Kathmandu, Nepal and is an active presenter at national and international conferences.

*Watson's **The Souls of White Folk: African American Writers Theorize Whiteness** (<https://www.facebook.com/SoulsOfWhiteFolk>) is the first study to consider the substantial body of African-American writing that critiques Whiteness as social construction and racial identity. Arguing against the prevailing approach to these texts which suggests that African-American writers retreated from issues of "race" when they wrote about Whiteness, Watson instead identifies this body of literature as an African American intellectual and literary tradition that she names "the literature of white estrangement." She argues that these texts are best understood as part of a multi-pronged approach by African-American writers to challenge and dismantle white supremacy in the U.S. and demonstrates that they have an important place in the growing field of critical whiteness studies.*

Q: In your book you have introduced quite a number of terms and concepts that are significant not only for literature but also for humanities in general. I'd like to ask you to define some of them in detail for our readers. To begin with, would you please tell us about "White Life Novel"?

A: A "white life novel" is a novel written by an African-American writer that is predominantly about white characters. During the 1990s, Robert Fikes Jr. published two essays in which he identified around forty of these novels dating back to the late 19th-century in America. He identified that body of literature and named it. My work with this body of literature starts from this point.

Q: What is the difference between white life novels and the "literature of white estrangement"?

A: Fikes identified white life novels as any novel by an African-American writer that focused on white characters. The literature of white estrangement, on the other hand, are white life novels (as well as other genres of writing by African-American authors) that level a critical gaze on whiteness. I would like to make a distinction here: there are lots of white life novels that I would argue are not part of the tradition of literature of white estrangement; that's the term I've coined to talk about the texts that are exploring whiteness as a "racialized identity." What I mean by that is that these are texts that are very conscious

and deliberate about examining, critiquing, excavating, and deconstructing whiteness as an identity. Before the emergence of critical whiteness studies in the 1990s, whiteness was not regarded as a race; it was simply seen as “human/universal.” The literature of white estrangement are texts that have always been challenging that notion, pitting themselves against the tradition that saw whiteness as the norm; and they have been asking questions like what does it mean to be a white person in this country? What are the privileges that attend to that? What are some of the challenges that come with that? These texts showed us what it means to critically engage whiteness as a racialized identity.

Q: You have called these texts a “counternarrative to the myths of whiteness.” Would you please tell us more about that?

A: Let’s imagine what happens when you have this narrative that positions you and allows you to think of yourself as good, upstanding, moral, and Christian even when you walk outside of your door and spit on the black man who’s walking in front of you or rape the black woman who lives next door to you. The texts that we are talking about often give us that unflattering view of whiteness; they “uncover” the contradictions and moral lapses that often attend being white in the U.S. So these texts sort of present the underbelly of that myth. It is in that way I’d like to think of them as a counter-narrative to the myths of whiteness. In effect, what these texts do is to “name” whiteness as an “epistemology.” Whiteness is not neutral; it shapes our interactions with the world.

Q: Why has the literature of white estrangement not been fully engaged yet?

A: There are basically three reasons that account for this omission. The first reason has to do with the readers’ expectations. People usually read conventional African-American Literature to get a snapshot of black life in America, difficulties attending to it, and ways to overcome them. Historically, a black reader identifies with that snapshot while a white reader might be more curious

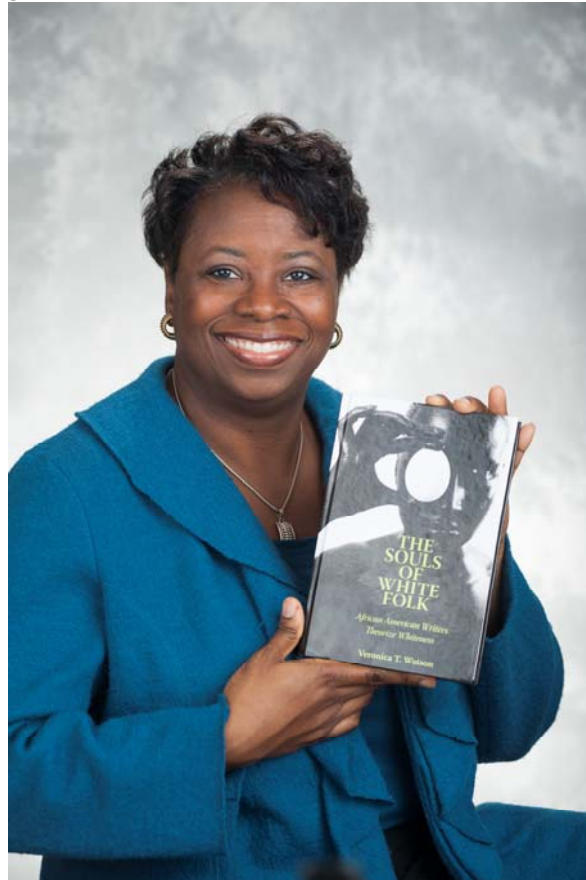
about it. In effect, we approach African-American Literature as a sociological lens into a marginalized community. Because we have done that, scholars also began to look for and privilege one thing about African-American Literature: its ability to voice those hardships and to protest against them. A second reason for the omissions is how African-American Literature is typically conceptualized and marketed. There are different sections for different books in bookstores: African-American, Native-American, Women’s Studies, and so on. However, white life literature did not easily fit in the conventional African-American canon because of their focus on white lives. That means these texts were often “lost” from view and failed to garner significant readership. The result is that they went out of print quickly, even when written by major authors of the African-American literary tradition. Finally, they were also often marginalized because they did not appear to engage the protest tradition within black literature. These are all interconnected dynamics, but the result has been that the literature of white estrangement has not previously been recognized as an intellectual tradition within African-American Literature.

Q: How would one theorize whiteness through fiction?

A: African-American writers have been theorizing whiteness through novels, stories, poems, and songs for as long as they have been in this country and continent. Through fiction, we can get small snapshots of how black thinkers have analyzed whiteness and tried to understand it as a phenomenon in our world; and how they have thought about how to restructure it. So, I use these texts in my book to theorize whiteness; to understand how whiteness works on both social and individual levels. It’s a humanistic project. *The Souls of White Folk* is the first attempt in that direction.

Q: Any final words?

A: I am really happy to teach this kind of literature in class; because when white students encounter this material, they often start from a position of defensiveness. They are hesitant, cautious, and on guard, but the literature of white



estrangement breaks that down. And it's amazing to me, and often to students of color, to see those defenses fall. By the end, it's not uncommon for students in this class to be openly emotive and to be much more willing to share experiences that they never would have talked about out of shame, fear, or guilt. So this literature does begin a human process that I think is really powerful. It opens up spaces for people to connect with each other. It's a literature that is squarely rooted in a liberation and social justice agenda.

Community of Scholars: The IUP English Graduate Organization (EGO)

By **Sheila Gross, President, Ph.D. Candidate, Literature and Criticism**

The IUP English Graduate Organization, fondly known as EGO, is a very active organization on campus. Every English graduate student in the Literature, Composition, and Generalist programs are members of the organization. Every year, graduate students vote on a new group of officers to head the organization in its many activities. Last year's officers were Erin Guydish, President; Meg Oldman, Vice President; Amy Klemm, Treasurer; Mitch James, Secretary; Lisa Weddell, Historian; Julia Grove, Social Coordinator; A.J. Schmitz, Public Relations Officer; John Helper, Web Master; and Jess Showalter, Workshop Coordinator. The faculty advisor was Dr. Todd Thompson. This year, the reigns were passed to faculty advisor, Dr. Tanya Heflin, and to officers, Sheila Gross, President; Rachael Warmington, Vice President; Matt Loudon, Treasurer; Jaron Fox, Secretary; Lauren Shoemaker, Historian; Jennifer Matos Ayala, Social Coordinator; Asmaa Alshehri, Public Relations Officer; Matt Stumpf, Web Master; and Samantha Audette, Workshop Coordinator.

EGO's biggest event of the academic year is our annual interdisciplinary graduate conference in the spring. Last year's 2013 conference was held on March 8th, 9th, and 10th, and was entitled "Living by the Code: An Exploration of Morality and Ethics." The conference was a great success with fifteen panels and over thirty-five participants. We were honored to welcome two keynote

speakers: Dr. Michael G. Cornelius, Chair of English and Mass Communications and Associate Professor of English at Wilson College, who presented on "Nancy Drew and the Ethics of Perfection"; and Dr. Aimee-Marie Dorsten, Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at Point Park University's School of Communication, who presented on "Ethics in Practice: Are They a Luxury or An Everyday Necessity?" This year's 2014 conference is entitled "Enacting Change in a Polarized World: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Inequality", and is going to be held on March 7th and 8th. EGO is excited to announce our new scholarly/creative magazine entitled *Voices* in which we will publish selections from the conference presenters.

In addition to planning our conference, which includes book sales and bake sales, we also host other events. We pride ourselves on being a community of scholars; and to foster that sense of community, we host social gatherings both on and off campus. Since the graduate programs are so large, these gatherings allow us to take a break from our academic work and get to know each other in a social environment. Our upcoming first annual Fall Poetry Event, hosted at the Artist's Hand, will be a wonderful opportunity for the graduate program members to share their creative works with each other. This year, EGO is making an effort to make a stronger connection with the undergraduate English majors by hosting a Q & A session during the fall semester with students interested in attending graduate school. We are looking forward to hosting similar events in the spring semester and to our conference.

The EGO officers would like to extend a special thanks you to our advisor, Dr. Heflin, for getting EGO involved in the Banned Books Read-Out, which was held in Stapleton Library on September 25th, as well as for encouraging us to participate in English Department meet-and-greets. Her advice and ideas have been invaluable, and we look forward to our continuing relationship with her in the spring semester.

EGO Members



Welcome New Students!

The following students have been admitted to the graduate program since Spring 2013:

Ph.D./Literature & Criticism:

Kathryn Allen, Mead Banat, Cara Chanoine, Auerlio Chapa, Evelyn Emma, Ashraf Mansour, Jeffrey Markovitz, Mark Thomas, Evelyn Wynn, Muhammad Alatrash, Zakarya Aldukhayil, Aishah Alreshoud, Nicholas Katsiadas, Alexandra Lykissas, Wesley McMasters, Gerardo Muniz Villalon, Michaela O'Toole, Ashley Stahle, Rodney Taylor, Henry Yukevich, Sultan Alghofaili, Ziyad Alkhalifah, Javad Zangouei, Ryan Beltz, Serena Gould

M.A./Literature:

Sultan Alquthami, Arene Al-Shara'H, Raja Althobaiti, Bryan Alukonis, Seham Arishi, Mark Di Mauro, Joseph Perkovich, Beshaiar Alqahtani, Katie Difulco, Nicol Epple, Elsa Klingensmith, Carl Sell, John Shilpetski IV, Jirayu Sinsiri, Wejdan Alsubhi

M.A./Generalist:

Jessica Broniszewski, Danielle Cyphert, Kirstie Moss, Johanna Rahkonen,

Congratulations Graduates!

The following students successfully graduated in December 2012 and May/August 2013:

Ph.D./Literature & Criticism:

Ghada Al Abbadi, Mohammad Ibrahim Aljayyousi, Francis C. Altomare, Judy M. Bertonazzi, Ashley Lynn Bourne, Tracy J. Lassiter, Rachal Marie LeBourhis, William Louis Magrino, Allyson D. Marino, Stacey L. Mascia, Judith Lynn Britt McNeely, Eric Paul Meljac, Jean Ann Popovich, Viki Dasher Rouse, Bahramand Shah, Michelle Gaffner Wood

M.A./Literature:

Muhammad Khaled Alatrash, Ziyad Khalifah Alkhalifah, Joseph Michael Nelis, Harley D. Schultz, Divya Singh, Rodney Taylor, Lisa Lynn Weddell

M.A./Generalist:

Zakarya Abdulrhman Aldukhayil, Sultan Saleh Alghofaili, David Scott Ellis, Renee L. Fagan, Christina Marie McKee, Adam James Norwood, Kimberly Rose Skarns

Dates to Remember

LATE FALL 2013

Last Day of Fall classes: Dec. 9
Final Exams: Dec. 10-13
Commencement: Dec. 14

SPRING 2014

Candidacy Exam: Jan. 23-24
Classes Begin: Jan. 20
May graduation applications due on URSA: Mar. 1
Spring Recess: Mar. 17-21
Summer/Fall Registration: TBA
Draft of Thesis/Dissertation due for format review:
Apr. 1
Electronic copies of Thesis/Dissertation due: Apr. 15
Last day of Spring classes: May 5
Final Exams: May 6-9
Commencement: May 10

FUTURE DATES TO HELP WITH YOUR PLANNING

Pre-session I Classes Begin: May 19
Pre-session II Classes End: May 27
Candidacy Exam: May 29-30
Summer Session 1 Classes Begin: June 2
Summer Session 1 Classes End: June 30
Summer Session 2 Classes Begin: July 7
Summer Session 2 Classes End: Aug. 4
Candidacy Exam: Aug. 21-22
Fall 2014 classes begin: Aug. 25





Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Director, Graduate Studies in Literature and Criticism
English Department
Leonard Hal, Room 111
421 North Walk
Indiana, PA 15705-1087

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