

# Musings

Fall 2007 • English Graduate Newsletter • The Department of English  
Volume 11 • Number 1

## From the Chair

## Inside this Issue

It's gratifying to be told that you are a genius. At least, I've heard this from one member of our faculty, Stuart Dybek, who was recently awarded the MacArthur Foundation \$500,000 "genius" award. As if that weren't honor enough for one week, Stuart received a call the next day telling him that he had won the Rea Award for Short Story, a prestigious prize reserved for writers who have significantly shaped the short story as an art form. Stuart Dybek, celebrated author of *I Sailed With Magellan* and *The Coast of Chicago* (among other books), is an iconic Chicago writer; he joined the faculty last year as Northwestern's first Distinguished Writer in Residence.

Stuart's award was just the most recent of a slew of honors conferred on members of the English Department. Our cohort of Victorianist scholars had an unusually successful year in this regard. Christopher Herbert was named the Chester D. Tripp Professor of Humanities. Such an appointment, former dean Dan Linzer reports, "represents the highest recognition Northwestern can confer on a faculty member." Chris recently completed his fourth book, *War of No Pity: The India Mutiny and Victorian Trauma*, and is enjoying a fellowship this year from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In recognition of his outstanding research, Christopher Lane (also a Victorianist) was given a two-year appointment as the Herman and Beulah Pearce Miller Research Professor of Literature. Chris's groundbreaking book about mental disorders and drug companies, *Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness*, has just been published this fall. English was also recognized as one of the best teaching departments at the university. Jules Law, who is currently working on a book on the politics of fluids in the Victorian period, was named the Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence, the highest teaching award that Northwestern grants. English can now boast of having four McCormick winners amidst our ranks. Christie Harner, a graduate student (also in Victorian studies!), received the Weinberg Graduate Teaching Award, a prize reserved for the best graduate instructor in all of the humanities at Northwestern.

As if to prove that Victorianists aren't the only faculty members glittering with prizes, Averill Curdy, poet and co-editor of the *Longman Anthology of Poetry*, won a 2007 Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Susan Manning was one of the recipients of the 2006 Studs Terkel Humanities Service Awards, which recognizes people who have championed the humanities in their communities. And Martin Mueller secured a two-year one million dollar grant from the Mellon Foundation, which will allow him to develop a digital library project. Our cup runneth over.

English celebrated these achievements and others as we welcomed an entering class of eleven new doctoral students at our annual Fall Collation. Kasey Evans and Tracy Davis offered lively presentations drawn from their research. We also greeted a wonderful cohort of new faculty. Vivasvan Soni joins us as an assistant professor specializing in eighteenth-century literature, with a current book project that stretches from classical Greece to enlightenment Europe (*Mourning Happiness: Narrative and the Politics of Modernity*). Before joining our faculty, Viv received his Ph.D. from Duke University and taught at University of Michigan. We also are happy to welcome Shauna Seliy as a Visiting Assistant Professor and Artist in Residence. Shauna received her MFA from University of Massachusetts, Amherst; her acclaimed debut novel, *When We Get There* narrates the story of young boy's life in a ghostly coal mining town in western Pennsylvania. Visitors Joyce Kelley (Ph.D. University of Iowa) and Janine Tobeck (Ph.D. University of Wisconsin, Madison) occupy a newly created position this year, that of Teaching Postdoctorate Fellow. They offer a range of exciting courses in twentieth-century British and American fiction. Finally the department is delighted to welcome Gabriela Nuñez (Ph.D., University of California, San Diego) as a Mellon Postdoctorate specializing in Latino/a Studies.

Congratulations are in order to two dynamic assistant professors who published books last year and who were tenured. Kevin Bell specializes in transatlantic literary modernisms, twentieth-

From the Chair	1
New Graduate Students 2007-08	2
Recent Graduates	3
Thoughts from the Trenches: An Interview with Jenny Mann	4
A Walk Through the Othello "One Book, One Northwestern" Project of 2006	5
Job Placement	5
Faculty News	6
Papers, Conferences, and Plans	9
Fellowships and Other Awards	10
American Cultures Colloquium	11
Long Nineteenth Century Colloquium	11
Early Modern Colloquium	11
2006-07 Donors	12





**Priya Bhan** was born in Modesto, California and earned her B.A. from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. She double-majored in English and Psychology and minored in History. Naturally, after graduating, she decided to work for Wal-Mart as an electronics sales associate for a year. Quickly realizing that not every day is a great day and not every meal is a banquet at her place of employment, she dreamt of attending graduate school as a medievalist. While she loves reading anything from magazine smut to nineteenth-century British literature, her expertise lies in medieval devotional writing,

Southeast Asia. In his stateside incarnation he makes pickles, writes poetry, and collects antique maps. Academically, he focuses on global Anglophone literature (especially Rushdie, Coetzee, and the contemporary Indian novelists), a gig which (he hopes) should include lots of traveling.

Our new M.A. student, **Fay Chang**, attended National Chengchi University in Taiwan, receiving a B.A. in English in 2006. In her undergraduate work, Fay fostered a great interest in racial, cultural, and gender studies. Her future research takes aim at feminist and gender theory as well as comparative literature. She expects to obtain solid knowledge of literary history and cross-disciplinary methodology at Northwestern.

**David Clark** enjoys reading, thinking, and writing about continental modernism, especially Joyce; our great tradition of absurd, hilarious, bathetic, and burlesque literature; love, of course; 'religious' themes such as God and the Apocalypse, as they appear in both pious and secular art; and plenty of other things. He also enjoys hiking wherever humans are not, cooking

**Lorna Mellon** was born in Chicago yet knows little of it, having spent most of her life in California. A graduate of UCLA with a major in English and minor in Art History, her interests are vast but lie primarily in psychoanalytic and deconstructionist theories. She is more than thrilled at the opportunity to become a living paradox as a professional student for the next half a decade as she continues her research on trauma and the meaning of text. Until recently she lived la vie Parisienne and is dreading the probable effects of the harsh Chicago climate on her softened Californian sensibilities.

**Chris Shirley** is originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico and has slowly adapted to colder climes during the last four years, studying English and Art History at Lake Forest College, a mere twenty miles north of Evanston. His period is early modern and his subject is gender and sexuality, but his interests include critical theory, modernism, postmodernism, and lyric poetry. When not ensconced in his ivory tower, he enjoys music of all kinds - but especially classical - movies, and drum and bugle corps.

**Elizabeth Sterzinger** was born and raised in

## NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS

political struggles during the establishment of Christianity, and attendant questions of gender and sexuality. Her best work is produced while eating chocolate and listening to heavy metal.

**Rachel Blumenthal** earned her undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt in English and History with a minor in German. Her focus is on American literature, particularly race and ethnic studies and issues of national identity. Her senior thesis dealt with Carson McCullers and Toni Morrison, looking at the ways in which these authors challenge/'re-write' American childhood stories like Nancy Drew and Dick and Jane. She has also very recently developed an interest in Arab-American literature, one she hopes might take her to her next project. In her free time, she loves movies, restaurants, piano, writing poetry, ping-pong, and of course, the ultra-hip game of pool.

**Ariel Bookman** grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Miami, Florida. After graduating from Emory with a B.A. in English and History,

Ari waited tables and worked as a manny (male nanny) for a year. After that, he spent time traveling around the world, with stops in Eastern Europe, Africa, India, and

and eating elaborate meals, and playing and listening to music. He is of average size and well-accustomed to Midwestern weather.

**Carolina Hotchandani** received a B.A. in English from Brown University and an M.F.A. in poetry from Texas State University. She is interested in love sonnets by various authors from various periods, and she has enjoyed experimenting with the sonnet form in her own poems. She is recently returned from teaching English at a small language school in South Korea.

**Maha Jafri** is from Albany, New York, and graduated from Johns Hopkins University with a major in English in 2005. At Northwestern, she plans to study the Victorian gothic and its relationship to postmodernism. Her interests include arts and crafts, eating, puns, and Baltimore.

**Jason Lusthaus** received a B.A. in English Literature and Religion from Colgate University. Gladly putting his previous career in the coffee service industry on hold, he comes to Northwestern to pursue his interests in nineteenth-century British literature, the development of religious studies, and psychoanalysis.

Wisconsin, and she received her B.A. in English Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2001. After two post baccalaureate years paddling canoes and kayaks around the Great Lakes region, she moved to the Pacific Northwest where she earned her M.A. in English at Portland State University in 2005. While working on her M.A., she focused on British and American modernism and critical theory, developing a particular interest in psychoanalytic theory, specifically Lacan and Žižek. Before moving to Chicagoland, she was teaching writing and introductory literature as adjunct faculty at PSU. Though excited to be starting her Ph.D., she is notably less excited to suffer through Midwestern winters once again.

**Jade Werner** comes to Evanston after a solid two years of globetrotting between Japan, Los Angeles, and Montreal. Jobs held during this peripatetic period include English teacher for special-needs students in rural Japan, writer for an alternative weekly in Los Angeles, temp at a non-profit organization, concert reviewer for a Montreal city blog, and illegal barista in a Turkish café. She is hoping to research the impact of transatlantic dialogue in the construction of virtue in late-Victorian literature. Writing about herself in the third person makes her all bashful.





## from the chair (cont. from pg. 1)

and twenty-first century African-American literature, and critical theory. His book, *Ashes Taken for Fire: Aesthetic Modernism and the Critique of Identity*, shows how modernist texts assault the logic of representation and the identities cemented through this logic. Susie Phillips is a scholar of medieval and early modern literature and culture. Her book, *Transforming Talk: The Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England*, analyzes the intersection of medieval pastoral practice, oral culture, and literary production; her new book project explores multilingual dictionaries in the early modern period. Kevin and Susie add to our "tenure-line powerhouse" of brilliant young scholars who are busy reshaping the landscape of literary studies.

This past year witnessed the publication of many creative and scholarly books, including Carl Smith's *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (which was newly awarded the Lewis Mumford Prize as Best Book in Planning History, 2005-2007); Barbara Newman's *Frauenlob's Song of Songs* (published with CD of songs attached); Mary Kinzie's *California Sorrow*; Brian Bouldrey's *Honorable Bandit: A Walk Across Corsica*; and Reg Gibbons's edition, *Goyen: Autobiographical Essays, Notebooks, Evocations, Interviews* (these in addition to those mentioned above by Kevin Bell, Chris Lane, and Susie Phillips). Two fascinating scholarly books by former graduate students in English were published this year: Timothy Rosendale's *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England* and Celia Marshik's *British Modernism and Censorship*. Our library in the Hagstrum Room of University Hall expands each year with books testifying to the expansive nature of literary studies.

I want to take a moment to reflect on one special event last spring, a symposium that English hosted in honor of Larry Lipking on the occasion of his retirement. At this event, eight noteworthy scholars (including three former colleagues from Northwestern) gathered to present work and to pay tribute to our colleague. At our "Larry-fest," as we called it, the department had a chance to register Larry's significant contributions to literary studies over the years.

Finally, as this edition of *Musings* makes abundantly obvious, our graduate program is one of the best in the country. We are extremely proud that our students are placed in the most competitive academic jobs in North America. Just this year, one newly minted Ph.D. student accepted a tenure line job at an Ivy-league university. In recent years, students have accepted jobs at Cornell University, Columbia University, University of Texas, Ohio State University, University of British Columbia, Queens University, and Trinity College. Graduate students have been successful at winning prestigious national fellowships and publishing in top-notch journals. Our program remains small and elite: English admitted eleven new students after receiving over 270 applications last year. Who knows? Maybe, in the future, one of them will get that dizzying phone call from the MacArthur Foundation...

Wendy Wall  
Department Chair

## recent graduates

**Daniel Gleason** (Ph.D., June 2007)  
"Seeing Imagism: A Poetics of Literary Visualization"

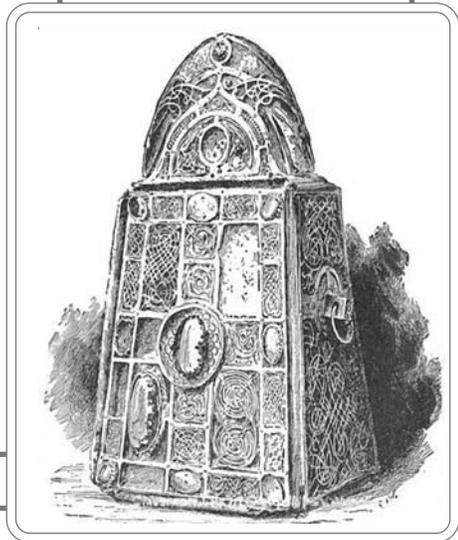
**Anne McCarley** (M.A., June 2007)  
"The Limits of Interpretation: Language and Resistance in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* and J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*"

**Doug O'Keefe** (Ph.D., June 2007)  
"Ballad Opera, Imitation, and the Formation of Genre"

**Rachel Osterhage** (M.A., June 2007)  
"Dialectic of Desire: Sex and Faith in *The Heart of the Matter*"

**Anne Sullivan** (Ph.D., September 2007)  
"Writing the Rites of the Goddess Fame: The Divinely Comical Conversion of Geoffrey Chaucer"

**Randall Woods** (Ph.D., June 2007)  
"'Prufrock' to *The Waste Land*: T. S. Eliot's Periodical Publications 1915-1922"





# Thoughts from the Trenches an interview with Jenny Mann

**Jenny Mann**, a 2006 English Department Ph.D., is among a number of students in our program who have had terrific success in recent years in the job market. In 2006-07, Jenny had nine MLA job interviews and tenure-track job offers from the English departments at three prestigious research institutions. At the end of the process, Jenny chose to accept the assistant professorship at Cornell University, where she had been a postdoctoral fellow in 2005-06. *Musings* asked Jenny to share some thoughts about her experience on the job market.

*Musings:* Can you tell us a little bit about what you think made your work and record appealing to search committees?

Mann: I spent two years on the job market as a candidate, and I want to begin by just making clear that many parts of the process remain opaque to me. At least as I understood it, though, the paramount feature of my record was my dissertation. This is field specific, but I got the sense in my interviews that everyone in early modern studies is sort of waiting for the next big thing after New Historicism. My own work diverges a bit from the more recognizably New Historicist project, and I think that really helped me gain some interest.

I think I also had some help from timing. My second year on the market was a great year for early modern jobs, and I had the good fortune to be finished with the dissertation. There was a world of difference in being on the job market as a postdoc, able to talk about the dissertation as a finished project. Also, my postdoc gave me another semester's worth of teaching experience to talk about in my letter and interviews.

*Musings:* Do you have any particular advice about preparing a job letter?

Mann: The job letter should play to one's strengths as a candidate. As a graduate student, I published an essay on a topic unrelated to my dissertation, and I featured that work in my letter as the prelude to a second project. My weakness was the amount of teaching—in my first year on the market I had not yet taught my own course—so I emphasized my experience giving lectures at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

I knew I had a project that I believed in, but I also knew that my letter had to persuade others to believe in it as well. Over the course of two years on the market, I easily went through thirty drafts each of both my job letter and my dissertation abstract, with the help of my advisors and friends. By the end, every sentence was doing its job—conveying my claims in a precise, concrete fashion. My priority in preparing these materials was to catch the interest of a reader who has good will but limited time and concentration.

*Musings:* Were there things that surprised you about the job-search process?

Mann: There's only so much nervousness a person can physiologically produce in one day!

*Musings:* Do you have tips or advice for current graduate students about how you conceptualized and then went about researching and writing your dissertation?

Mann: For me it began when I read a book that kind of blew my mind (Patricia Parker's *Literary Fat Ladies*) and pointed me towards a topic—English vernacular rhetoric—that I found incredibly interesting. I read as much as I could in the primary and secondary literature so that I could suss out the state of the scholarly conversation and see if there was a place where I could

intervene. It was a continuous process of honing my topic so that I could say what I wanted to say but also fit my insights in with the work that had gone before. I let myself indulge in a year of reading (including time spent in the archive at the Folger Shakespeare Library) before I forced myself to draft the first chapter. My biggest breakthrough was the discovery of a chapter structure—each of my chapters is oriented around a single rhetorical figure. This consistent formal principle really helped me manage the proliferation of ideas that becomes inevitable in a book-length writing project.

*Musings:* What aspects of your training and experience at Northwestern did you find particularly helpful during the job search?

Mann: Most importantly, I benefited from excellent faculty advisors who helped me develop as a teacher, scholar, and writer. Like all Northwestern students, I was also consistently funded by the Graduate School. And the English Department does



*"Thoughts from the Trenches" continued on page 8*

# A Walk Through the *Othello* "One Book, One Northwestern" Project of 2006

by Mary Kinzie

The goals of the "One Book, One Northwestern" program in general and the *Othello* Project in particular were to create an informed body of students and faculty focusing on a single text so that different perspectives could be illustrated through a continuing conversation, and to show Chicago more of what is going on in the humanities at Northwestern, and thus foster more engaging outreach to the community.

At the beginning, with funding from the Alumni Association, the Humanities Institute, and the President's office, the English Department (under the leadership of Chair Wendy Wall and Associate Chair Susannah Gottlieb) partnered with the existing freshman summer reading initiative. Incoming freshman from Weinberg and the School of Communication received copies of Shakespeare's *Othello*, and participated in a month-long online learning project, discussing secondary materials assembled by English and other faculty (Edward Muir, Carl Petry, Jeffrey Masten, Regina Schwartz, Linda Austern, Martin Mueller, Harvey Young, Kate Baldwin, and Tracy Davis). Almost seven hundred freshmen checked the late summer website set up by Joanne Diaz and Will West. During freshman orientation week, students attended a performance event with professional actors and a discussion led by Jennifer Brody and Will West.

Twenty-four "*Othello* Fellows," students with majors in Economics, Legal History, Sociology, International Relations, European Studies, Political Science, English, Theater, and Radio/Television/Film, were selected to serve as commentators at *Othello* events. The *Othello* Fellows were a motivated, bright, and curious group who enjoyed speaking with visitors and performers. Seven courses were offered through the English Department that featured *Othello* in different frames of reference (from a freshman seminar on "Early Modern Race" to an upper-level course on "Renaissance Tragedy" to a course cross-listed with Gender Studies to a graduate seminar on "Early Modern Performance"). With total class enrollments of nearly two hundred and fifty, the "One Book, One Northwestern" project reached a sizeable and various array of Northwestern students.

Then, scheduled throughout the fall quarter of 2006, the English Department organized and hosted twelve "One Book, One Northwestern" events involving faculty from ten departments and programs spread across three schools (Sociology, History, Radio/Television/Film, Theater, French and Italian, Af-Am, Music, African Studies, Performance Studies, and English). Nobel prize-winning poet, novelist, and dramatist Wole Soyinka and Harvard professor Marjorie Garber gave featured keynote addresses, each drawing audiences in the hundreds. Performances from Shozo Sato's Kabuki *Othello* were given, and discussions were held on the transformations of Shakespeare's play from the stage to film, dance, opera, visual art, and other works of literature. The finale was an onstage rehearsal of several scenes, directed by David Bell, with commentary from Barbara Gaines, the famed director of Chicago Shakespeare Theater. With attendance at the public events of more than thirteen hundred guests from on and off campus, the *Othello* Project may well have drawn the greatest number of visitors for a single set of Humanities events in Northwestern University's history.



## Pl a c e m e n t

**Ashley Byock's** position at l'Université Paris 7 - Denis Diderot teaching American Civilization has been renewed for another year, into 2007-2008.

**Daniel Gleason** has accepted a job teaching English at the Illinois Math and Science Academy, a residential magnet high school in Aurora, IL.

**Jenny Mann** accepted an offer extended by Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and has joined their faculty this fall in a tenure-track position as an Assistant Professor of English, teaching early modern literature.

**Carrie Wasinger** has taken a position as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan in Lansing on a one-year Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Teaching Postdoctorate Fellowship. She will be teaching the nineteenth-century British novel and young adult literature.





**Alfred Appel** is hard at work on the heavily-illustrated *Victory Scrapbook: From Hemingway, Léger, and Miró to Dick Tracy, Picasso, and Me*, to be published by Alfred A. Knopf.

**Eula Biss's** essay "The Pain Scale" recently appeared in *The Best Creative Nonfiction*, a new anthology from Norton, and is also forthcoming this winter in *The Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Nonfiction*. "It Is What It Is," an essay on the lyric essay, is forthcoming in the *Seneca Review*, and "The Voice Box: Our Opera of High and Low," an essay about genre and gender, is forthcoming this fall in *Columbia*. "Black News" will appear this fall in *Nightsun*, and *Iowa Review* will publish "Time and Distance Overcome" this winter. Both of these essays are included in a recently completed collection of essays forthcoming from Graywolf Press in 2009.

**Brian Bouldrey's** travelogue-memoir *Honorable Bandit: A Walk Across Corsica*, was published by the University of Wisconsin Press in October 2007.

**Katharine Breen** has begun thinking about a new project on late medieval "thinking machines." This category includes everything from the sex-changing personification allegories in Langland's *Piers Plowman* to all sorts of neat diagrams and wheels built into medieval manuscripts. Sooner or later she will have no choice but to fly to London, and perhaps Paris, to consult some of these manuscripts in person.

**Nick Davis** enjoyed (actually, "adored") his first year of teaching and working in the English Department and the Gender Studies Program. This year, while continuing work on his first book manuscript about queer cinema and Deleuzian theory, he will also offer three new courses about Henry James and film, twentieth-century American



novels, and gender and sexuality in contemporary sci-fi movies. More recently, he finished two commissioned essays on *The Incredibles* and *Brokeback Mountain*, began one about the 70s films of Julie Christie and Vanessa Redgrave, and started gearing up to cover the Chicago Film Festival for the Chicagoist blog as well as his own website.

**Tracy C. Davis** is President of the American Society for Theatre Research. In 2007, she published three books: *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*, a comparative study of British, American, and Canadian rehearsals for nuclear war; *The Performing Century: Nineteenth-Century Theatres History*, Volume 5 of *Redefining British Theatre History*, co-edited with Peter Holland of Notre Dame University; and *Considering Calamity: Methods for Performance Research*, co-edited with Linda Ben-Zvi of Tel Aviv University.



**Stuart Dybek Named 2007 MacArthur Fellow**

Stuart Dybek, the inaugural Distinguished Writer in Residence at Northwestern University, and an artist whose fiction is close identified with the city of Chicago, received two major awards in October. He was given a MacArthur Fellowship, which carries a stipend of half a million dollars with "no strings attached," and the prestigious 2007 Rea Award for the Short Story. His works include *Childhood and Other Neighborhoods* (1980), *I Sailed with Magellan* (2003), and *The Coast of Chicago* (1990), which was the selection for the city's "One Book, One Chicago" discussions in 2004. He teaches the writing and reading of fiction in the English Department's Creative Writing Program.

**Brian Edwards** returns from a year's leave happy to be back in the classroom and to serve as Director of Undergraduate Studies in English. Not that he became a stranger to the classroom: last winter he was visiting faculty at the University of Tehran, followed by a stint in the spring at l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris. Summer found him in Morocco again, along with Kate Baldwin and children Oliver (8), Pia (5) and Theo (2), whose tolerance for 113° temperatures he now takes for granted. *Dry heat*. This fall he traveled to: Lisbon, for the International American Studies Association; Potsdam, as a plenary speaker at the German-American Frontiers of the Humanities symposium; Montreal, to present a

paper at the Middle East Studies Association; and Fez, where he is organizing a small conference on globalization and culture. On campus, Brian has launched a conference series on Middle Eastern Media; the first was held last May. Along with a colleague in political science, he is also co-convenor of a new faculty working group in Middle East and North African Studies. His essays on American studies in Tehran and on contemporary Moroccan cinema were published this fall in *Public Culture* and the *Journal of North African Studies*, respectively. In the winter, his essay on *Star Wars*, Tunisia, and post-9/11 kiddie Orientalism will appear in *The Believer*. Meanwhile, he is completing editorial work on *Globalizing American Studies*.

**Christine Froula** wrote the essay on "Sex" for the Cambridge *Joyce in Context* volume (2008), also a review essay, "Giacomo Joyce, or, Assumed Dongiovannism"; organized an international MLA panel on newfound Joyce manuscripts now in Ireland's National Library; and began a book project on literature, violence, and universalism, part of which she will present at Princeton this fall.

**Reg Gibbons** edited a posthumous collection of writings by William Goyen, *Goyen: Autobiographical Essays, Notebooks, Evocations, Interviews*, which was published in May (University of Texas Press). Forthcoming in 2008 are his new book of poems, *Creatures of a Day* (LSU Press) and his translations of *Selected Poems of Sophokles* (Princeton). He continues as a columnist for *American Poetry Review*, publishing the first of two essays on apophatic poetics in the November/December 2007 issue, with the second to appear in the January/February 2008 issue. In October he visited the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, where with Ilya Kutik he addressed a seminar on literary translation and also gave a joint reading of poems in Russian and translations into English, relating to a collaborative project with Kutik on Russian poetic thinking. Although on leave from English and Classics this fall, Reg continues as Director of the Center for the Writing Arts, and in this capacity sponsored two mini-conferences at Northwestern, "The Black Arts Movement in the Broader Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement" and an International Day of Writing, both of which were held this past October. He has also helped create a new international program this fall at the Guild Complex, a literary center in Chicago that he co-founded in 1989.

In February 2007 **Jay Grossman** joined scholars from Europe and the Americas at the founding organizational meeting in Paris of The Walt Whitman Transatlantic Association, dedicated



to exploring and fostering "the artistic, democratic, and intercultural vision of Walt Whitman in the context of the need for improved European and transatlantic cooperation." In June he joined a committee of activists and scholars invited to plan the development of the Sexuality, Identity and Social Change Institute of Antioch University Los Angeles, to support the fight for social justice through education and empowerment around issues of queer gender and sexuality. His essay, "'Profession of the calamus': Whitman, Eliot, Matthiessen," is forthcoming in *Leaves of Grass: The Sesquicentennial Essays* (Nebraska). This year, in addition to directing the American Studies program, he has organized the Fall 2007 "One Book One Northwestern" programming with fifteen events, including lectures, readings, performances, and conversations focusing on James Baldwin's *Go Tell It On the Mountain*.

The main item in **Chris Herbert's** life of late that might be of interest to readers of *Musings* would be the forthcoming publication of his book *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and*

organized by Vanderbilt's Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. Masten was the keynote speaker for the conference "Shakespeare's Couples, Shakespeare's Couplings," the Annual Shakespeare Symposium of the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. He also presented work at the Society for Textual Scholarship conference and the Shakespeare Association of America. Masten continues as director of Gender Studies at Northwestern.

**Chris Lane** spent much of the summer with his partner Jorge tooling around Sicily and Calabria in a tiny Citroen that looked as if it might collapse at any moment, but somehow managed to get them across the Apennines to the Adriatic. There, he wrote a commissioned op ed for the *New York Times* about his book, *Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness*, published this fall by Yale University Press. He also wrote several spin-off pieces that will appear shortly, one to be given as a talk at London's Institute of Ideas, where Chris will be speaking in October. A French translation of his book, *La timidité*,

ever passing through the vernacular, and it remains brilliantly theatrical: the candidate had to face a tough two-hour grilling before an audience of fifty, moderated by an emcee in white tie, tails, and a top hat. Professor Newman's three cats, Felicitas, Oxymoron, and Hyperbole, keep life rhetorically interesting and supply her household with its daily minimum requirement of fur.

**Bill Savage** is currently on leave, working on several projects, including an essay for the French literary journal *Le magazine littéraire* on Simone de Beauvoir's feminist theory as it appears—or doesn't—in her correspondence with Chicago novelist Nelson Algren. Luckily, the magazine will be doing the translation.

**Shauna Seliy** is delighted to join the faculty as an Artist in Residence in fiction. She spent the summer on a book tour for her first novel, *When We Get There*. The book received starred notices from *Booklist* and *Kirkus Reviews*, and a long review in *The New York Times*. *The Chicago*

# Faculty News

*Victorian Trauma* (Princeton UP), which ought to be available in supermarket checkout lanes by Christmas. He could add some reminiscences of the enchanting summer of 2007 spent in Provence, but will abstain for fear of becoming insufferably maudlin.

**Joyce Kelley** joins the department of English this fall as a visiting assistant professor. Last spring she completed and defended her dissertation entitled *Excursions into Modernism: Women Writers, Travel, and the Body* at the University of Iowa.

Alfred A. Knopf recently published **Mary Kinzie's** seventh volume of poems, *California Sorrow*. In October she read with Reg Gibbons and Polish poet Adam Zagajewski at the annual conference of the Association of Literary Critics and Scholars in Chicago.

This past year, **Jules Law** was awarded the Charles Deering McCormick Professorship of Teaching Excellence

Last spring, **Jeffrey Masten** gave talks and seminars at Duke University, the University of Pennsylvania, and a Newberry Library conference on "Pre-modern Race and Sexuality"

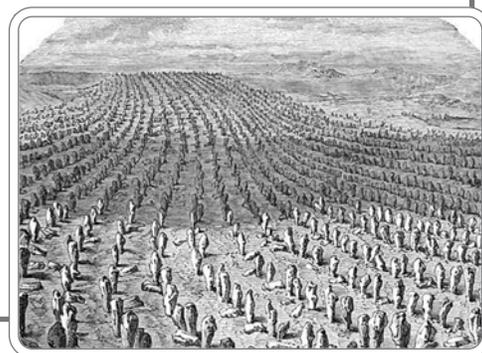
will appear next fall in Editions Flammarion's "Bibliothèque du savoir" series. Chris is based partly at the Kaplan Institute this year and is making good headway with his study of Victorian agnosticism, *Failing Gods: A Century of Doubt*. He's looking forward to a trip to India in December, where he'll give an invited lecture on psychoanalysis and Victorian literature. He's also giving several other talks this year, including one at Oxford and another at the "Big Ten" summer institute at Madison, where he and Lauren Berlant will be the guest lecturers.

**Barbara Newman** has decided, with regret, not to publish her Collected Administrative Memos, even though another year as Director of Graduate Studies is likely to produce two or three more volumes of the same. She has instead completed an article on literate women in the twelfth century and a new edition/translation, the *Collected Saints' Lives of Thomas of Cantimpré*, featuring the aptly named Christina the Astonishing. (What was so astonishing about her? Read the book!) Summer brought a trip to lovely, forested Finland, which contains more medieval churches than you would ever have imagined, to play the role of "opponent" at a dissertation defense. She suspects that this ritual shifted straight from Latin into English without

*Tribune* called it a strong debut and included the novel in its list of "Hot Reads for the Summer." This fall she's been invited both to participate in the Wordstock Book Festival in Portland, Oregon and to read at the Amherst College Center for Creative Writing.

**Glenn Sucich's** article, "Alchemy and Areopagitica," will be appearing in the volume *The Uncircumscribed Mind: Reading Milton Deeply*, which is forthcoming from Susquehanna University Press. He also presented a paper, "'Forthwith to dissolve': The Question of Satan's Salvation Revisited," at the 2007 Conference on John Milton, held in Murfreesboro, TN.

**Regina Schwartz's** book, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the*





*World*, will be published this fall by Stanford University Press in its theory series, "Cultural Memory in the Present." It is dedicated to her mother, who died in July after living with Regina for the past ten years.

**Viv Soni**, who works on eighteenth-century literature as well as moral and political theory of the period, is delighted at joining the faculty. He is putting the finishing touches on a book

manuscript titled *Mourning Happiness: Narrative and the Politics of Modernity*, which describes the narrative processes by which a politics of happiness comes to be eclipsed in the eighteenth century in novels, sentimental moral theory, Kant's ethics, Rousseau's political theory, and the American Revolution. He also considers Greek ideas of happiness – from Solon, Aristotle, tragedy, and Athenian funeral orations – to imagine what a utopian politics of happiness would look like, and how happiness might be rooted in narrative. An article, "Trials and Tragedies: The Literature of Unhappiness," appeared in a recent issue of *Comparative Literature*. He is now at work on a project which traces a modern crisis of judgment to its genesis in the eighteenth century, and on another project that makes the case for utopian literature as an essential form of political thinking in a democracy.

**Helen Thompson** spent six weeks in Paris last summer with a University Research Grant Committee Award to work on a project about subject-object relations and empiricism; while in France, she gave a talk at the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference held in Montpellier. She has recently edited and contributed to a special issue of *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* (Fall 2007) on the topic "Empiricism, Substance, Narrative."

While this year was consumed with managing budgets and course schedules (tasks required of the Chair of the English Department despite a lack of training for such endeavors!), **Wendy Wall** did have time to pursue some research projects on topics near and dear to her heart – namely cookbooks and Renaissance poetry. In one undertaking, she investigates ways in which the first published cookbooks in England exploited features of the book (such as tables of content and indexes) to shape the reading experience. In presentations made at Vanderbilt University, Syracuse University, and The Shakespeare Association of America, she argued that this new experience of reading altered early modern understandings of the home. Her summer research trips to the Folger and Houghton Libraries allowed her to survey printed and manuscript recipe books, as part of a separate article on women's writing in the household. Finally, Wendy is writing an article, for a volume on Renaissance food, on *distillation* as it appears in Shakespeare's sonnets and in recipe books.

**Will West** proved the value of saving your old notes by giving two talks based on research he initially undertook for his 2003 book: an invited lecture on "Knowledge and Performance in the Early Modern *Theatrum Mundi*" at "Ordnung und Repräsentation von Wissen: Dimensionen der Theater-Metapher in der Frühen Neuzeit" at the University of Augsburg in March; and a keynote address on "Irony and Encyclopedic Writing Before (and After) the Enlightenment" at *Encyclopaedism Before the Enlightenment* at the School of Classics of the University of St. Andrews.

very well by its graduate students in the amount of professional advice and training we receive before entering the job market. Because I was encouraged in my second and third years to attend conferences and turn seminar papers into articles, I acquired the habit of thinking about how my intellectual interests and research program could enter into a wider professional conversation.

*Musings:* The job market has a reputation for producing intense anxiety and pressure. But was there any aspect of going on the market that was unexpectedly easy or pleasurable?

**Mann:** Nothing was easy, but there is an intense euphoria that comes after a really great interview. We've all felt it after teaching a seminar that goes especially well. Another Northwestern Ph.D. who had served on search committees gave me some great advice. She explained that MLA is very hard on committees, and if you come to your interview with energy and enthusiasm it can sometimes provide a real lift to a group of tired people. So I put a lot of my focus on that.

*Musings:* Conversely, what advice would you give to job-marketers for managing the stress that comes with the process?

**Mann:** Everyone deals with stress differently, but my own strategy was to hyper-prepare. I spent December "studying" for my MLA interviews. I knew that I would be asked, "Tell us about your research," and I practiced and practiced (on my husband, family, cats) until I could answer with clarity, brevity, and concrete examples. I also tried to get a sense of each department's programs, so that I could explain to the interview committee how my teaching and research would complement their strengths and fill their needs.

*Musings:* What would you say are the key ingredients to getting a tenure-track job?

**Mann:** Write the best dissertation you can and then figure out how to communicate what makes you excited about your research. Take a look at your CV and then work to translate that raw data into a coherent story about your graduate career. Tell that story in your job letter in a way that shows how it all fits together—research, teaching, professional engagement—in the form of a multi-dimensional candidate they would love to have join their department.

*Musings:* What was the most unexpected question you were asked in an interview?

**Mann:** In one interview a graduate student asked me: "I work on eco-criticism, as do many other students in my program. How would you teach a Renaissance graduate course that would appeal to us?" The first thing that came out of my mouth was, "Well, I've never thought about that before." Then I remembered the sage words of my advisor and said, "But that sounds really exciting! Here are some things that occur to me . . ."

For second place, in one of my last interviews I was asked unexpectedly, "What do you do in your spare time?" I honestly couldn't think of anything except, "Um, revise my job letter?"





## Papers Conferences & Plans

**Sarah Blackwood** presented "Picturing the Interior: Frederick Douglass, Henry James, and the Nineteenth-Century Portrait" at the Midwest MLA Conference in November of last year; "Nathaniel Hawthorne's Portraits of Mind" at the Smithsonian American Art Museum Fellows Lectures this past May; and "'The Absent Things,' or The Aesthetics of Psychology in Jamesian Biography" at Peter Rawlings' Reading Henry James conference, also in May. She spent six months as a fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC, delving into the archives at SAAM, the Hirshhorn, and the Phillips Collection while researching artist Thomas Eakins, bothering the folks in the Prints and Photographs Division at the Library of Congress for information about a set of beautifully damaged old daguerreotype portraits. Finally, Sarah's article "Fugitive Obscura: Runaway Slave Portraiture and Early Photographic Technology" has been accepted for publication in the journal *American Literature*.

**Ashley Byock** assisted in organizing a conference called "Masculinité à Hollywood, de l'après-guerre à l'an 2000" at Paris 7 in December of 2006. She also presented a paper called "Realism and Context in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*" at the Narrative Conference in Washington, DC (March 2007). In September, she will present a paper comparing interdisciplinarity in American studies at US and French universities at the conference "L'interdisciplinarité en question" which will take place at l'Université Nancy 2.

**Katy Chiles** presented portions of her dissertation work at the American Studies Association and the Midwest MLA, as well as presenting a paper at this past summer's Society of Early Americanists/Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture Conference in Williamsburg, VA. She also conducted research at Cornell University Library's Native American Collection under the auspices of a Northwestern University Research Fellowship.

**Vanessa Corredera** will be presenting a paper entitled "'That's he that was Othello': Racial Identity in *Othello* and *O*" for the Renaissance Drama in Performance panel of the Midwest MLA conference in November.

In April of 2007, **Joanne Diaz** participated in a seminar at the annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America, and spent the month of February doing research at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, after which she traveled to London to look at complaints in ballads and broadsides.

**Christie Harner** chaired a panel on Victorian Landscapes at the 2007 New England MLA conference. She also presented a paper entitled "London People: Pseudoscience and its Impact on the Victorian Public Sphere" at the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies conference. She will be conducting research in London this year, funded for nine months by a Graduate School Research Fellowship. Christie will also spend a month at the Huntington in 2008, funded by a Mayers Fellowship.

This past April, **Peter Jaros** gave a paper called "Stephen Burroughs: Dis-integrated Character" at the American Comparative Literary Association conference in Puebla, Mexico. At the June Society of Early Americanists/Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture conference in Williamsburg, VA, he also presented "'Suspicion was impossible': Lavater, Brown, and the Irresistible Face," as part of a panel on Natural Philosophy and the Early American Novel chaired by William Hunting Howell.

**Heidi Kim** and **Brent Mix** were both nominated to attend this past summer's Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

**Greg Laski** will present a paper entitled "Traumas of the Sentimental Eye: Witnessing Slavery, Revolution, and the Limits of Sympathy in Letters from an American Farmer" as part of a special session on trauma, realism, and narrative at the 2007 Midwest MLA conference in November.

**Jason Malikow** presented "The Legacy of the Anarchist 'Black Bloc' as Political Actor" at the North American Conference on Global Radicalism hosted at Michigan State University, and "one adequate, coherent voice': Narrator and Reader Identity in Dennis Cooper's *Guide*" at the International Conference on Narrative hosted at Georgetown University.

**Sarah Mesle** presented a paper on gender theory and political activism at the annual Midwest MLA conference last year.

**Nathaniel Small** gave a paper entitled "'Man Delights Not Me': Pederasty and Boy Actors in Early Modern England" at the Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies conference in February, as well as "Laughing Fits: Documents in Madness" at the Graduate Student Conference at the Newberry Library in June.





## Fellowships & Other Awards

**Sarah Blackwood** was awarded a Kaplan Institute for the Humanities Mellon Research and Writing Grant for summer 2007 and the Weinberg Dissertation Research Fellowship for 2007-2008.

**Katy Chiles** was awarded a Mellon Foundation Grant by the NU Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities for fall 2007.

**Christopher Clary** is this year's recipient of the newly established Larry Lipking Newberry Fellowship, which will provide him with funding in the winter of this coming year.

**Melissa Daniels** has received a Diversifying Faculty in Higher Education in Illinois Fellowship, which began as of the fall of this year.

**Anna Fenton-Hathaway** was chosen to receive this year's Debbie & Larry Brady Graduate Fellowship, which will fund her throughout the 2007-08 academic year.

**Daniel Gleason** was selected to receive the second place 2006-07 Hagstrum Prize for Best Dissertation for his dissertation entitled "Seeing Imagism: A Poetics of Literary Visualization."

**Christie Harner** is this year's recipient of the prestigious Weinberg College Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award, as well as a Mayers Fellowship which will fund her for a month at the Huntington in 2008.

**Peter Jaros** is one of Northwestern's recipients of the year-long Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship.

**Wen Jin** was chosen as the winner of this year's Hagstrum Prize for Best Dissertation for her dissertation entitled "Rethinking Cultural Translation: Multiculturalism and Chinese American Transnational Literature."

**Jenny Lee** was awarded the 2006-07 English Department Teaching Award for Excellence as a Teaching Assistant.

**Scott Proudfit** was selected as the recipient of the 2006-07 English Department Teaching Excellence Award.

**Wendy Roberts** was awarded the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Charles Davis Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Presentation at the 2006 RMMLA Convention in Tucson, Arizona for her paper "Regionalizing Christianity: Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps* in the Context of Regionalist Fiction." The award carried with it a monetary gift as well as publication in the Fall 2007 issue of *The Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*. In addition, honorable mention for the 2006-07 Strand Prize went to Wendy for her essay "'For me to live, is Christ; and to die, is gain': Accounting for Biblical Citation in A Journal of Rev. John Marrant."

**Sarah Mesle** earned a Humanities Institute Mellon Research Grant, as well as an Alumnae Fellowship Recognition Award.

**Brent Mix** has been appointed as a Fletcher Jones Foundation Fellow of the Huntington for a period of two months in 2008.

The winner of the 2006-07 Strand Prize was **Abram Van Engen** for his essay, "Shifting Perspectives: Sin and Soteriology in Julian's *A Revelation of Love*."

Our students received five Graduate Research Grants in the 2006-07 academic year:

**Jeffrey Knight** (Fall) - "The Sense of Information: Renaissance 'New Media' and the Social Life of Texts"

**Sarah Mesle** (Fall) - "Representing the Racial Self: Pro-Slavery Ideology and the Problem of Sentimental Literature"

**Scott Proudfit** (Winter) - "Collective Implications: Author, Text, and Dialogue in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Collaborative American Theatre"

**Gayle Rogers** (Spring) - "British Modernism and Ortega's Spanish Vanguard: Internationalism, and Modernity (1922-1939)"

**Josh Smith** (Spring) - "Romancing the Saints: The Relationship between Secular and Sacred Literature in High Medieval Britain"

Virgil Heltzel Fellowships were awarded to three of our graduate students, **Chris Clary**, **Elizabeth McCabe**, and **Brent Mix**, each of whom will receive a quarter's worth of funding.

Thanks to a spectacular group of applications, all the students nominated to the Graduate School by the department for 2007-08 Research and Dissertation Year Fellowships have received funding:

**Christie Harner** and **Jeff Knight** have received Research Fellowships.

**Joanne Diaz**, **Sarah Mesle**, **Scott Proudfit**, and **Gayle Rogers** have received Dissertation Year Fellowships.





As the **American Cultures Colloquium** (ACC) at Northwestern enters its seventh year of programming, we look forward to an exciting and diverse series of talks on topics ranging from seventeenth-century colonial slavery to contemporary transgendered musicians. This year we will host **Thomas Bauman**, Musicology, Northwestern University; **Jennifer Brody**, English, Northwestern University; **James Farr**, Political Science, Northwestern University; **Christopher Freeburg**, English, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; **Ramón Gutiérrez**, History, University of Chicago; **Scott Herring**, English, Indiana University; **Helen Jun**, English, University of Illinois, Chicago; **Alan Nadel**, English, University of Kentucky; and **Simon Strikeback**, Filmmaker and Activist. The ACC@NU would like to thank Northwestern University's Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, the departments of English, History, Radio/Television/Film, Political Science, and Religion, as well as the American Studies, Comparative Literary Studies, and Asian American Studies Programs for making these events possible. Please see the ACC@NU website for more detailed schedule information: <http://www.english.northwestern.edu/ACC>

## American Cultures Colloquium



The **Long Nineteenth Century Colloquium** (LNCC) enters its second year with a flourishing speaker series, increasing membership, and renewed dedication to the interdisciplinary study of Britain and its empire in the long nineteenth century. We're looking forward to visits from distinguished guests **Nancy Armstrong** (English, Brown University), **Anne Helmreich** (Art History, Case Western Reserve University), and others throughout the year, and we will continue our practice of holding reading groups in preparation for each visit. This year, we're also excited to kick off a new speaker series, in which

## Long Nineteenth Century Colloquium

Northwestern LNCC faculty get the chance to share their current work with the group. Finally, we're planning a new series of colloquia specifically for LNCC graduate students, where we can explore the benefits and challenges of interdisciplinarity by discussing our work with peers across departments. We want to thank the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities and the Department of English for their generous support as we look forward to this year's exciting slate of events.



## early modern colloquium

The Northwestern **Early Modern Colloquium** (EMC) is an interdisciplinary group of scholars and graduate students who meet regularly to attend lectures and to workshop essays- and chapters-in-progress. Last year's wonderful schedule began with **Marjorie Garber** (Harvard) and concluded with **Roland Greene** (Stanford). This year, the EMC will be hosting events featuring scholars from Northwestern as well as other institutions. Some of this year's speakers this year include **Bradin Cormack** (University of Chicago), **Bruce Smith** (USC), **Kristen Poole** (University of Delaware), **Lynn Enterline** (Vanderbilt), **Martin Mueller** (Northwestern), and **Will West** (Northwestern).



*We are grateful to everyone who has donated to the department over the past year, and especially those listed below (donations over \$100).*



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# MUSINGS

*A Publication of the  
English Department at  
Northwestern University*

*Fall 2007 • Volume 11 • Number 1*

*Please send thoughts and news to:  
Musings  
Northwestern University  
University Hall 215  
Evanston, IL 60208-2240  
email: [grad-english@northwestern.edu](mailto:grad-english@northwestern.edu)*

*Contributions Courtesy of English Department Faculty & Graduate Students  
Edited by Mary Kinzie & Nathan Mead  
Design by Nathan Mead*