PAYING ATTENTION

“Maybe I have attention surplus disorder. The easiest thing in the world for me is to pay attention.” – Susan Sontag in The Paris Review

Fall, in its usual way, signals change. Dr. Andy Scheiber concluded his very successful two-term, eight-year run as chair, and I have stepped into the role. A fresh batch of first-year students and newly declared English majors have been filling our classrooms with their energy. And we’re piloting Writing in the Margins with student editors. The issue you’re about to read was conceived, produced, written, and edited by the members of the fall senior seminar ENGL 481: English Majors in the World: Mauricio Carranza, Mary Conway, Nick Frost, Elena Garcia, Elizabeth Heaney, Alexandra Schwalbe, and Tess Wang. Their unsigned contributions are everywhere to be found; on pages 6–7 you can hear them directly as they recommend reading to illuminate your winter.

The heart of the seminar was an individualized research project on subjects, organizations, or communities the students wanted to pursue further once they march out of the Arches in their graduation gowns. No matter the subject (whether independent publishing as an enclave from capitalism [Alex], coffee houses as a sanctuary for lost rituals of leisure [Elizabeth], creating a DIY education inspired by Stickley’s Craftsman ethos [Nick], longing for the perfect writing community [Mary], reviving opera houses that were once prominent features of small Midwestern towns [Tess], discovering yoga’s ability to awaken gratitude [Elena], or sharing your love of Tolkien without being dismissed as a Lord of the Rings geek [Mau]), the burning question—the yearning question—really being asked was this: how can I be happy?

Happiness, as we know, has as much to do with purpose as it does with pleasure. We want a life that is meaningful as well as festive. It turns out, researchers are finding, that attention is vitally important to creating a meaningful, joyful life. When we are distracted we’re unhappy. When we are absorbed in what we love, when we are drawn into deep attention, we experience a state of well-being. That’s common sense, I suppose, but where are places we learn how to pay attention? English classes, for one. The core of our work in the field of English is devoted to learning to pay attention. To word, image, tone, nuance, context.

That’s what we’re all about over here in the English Department: paying attention to the world, inner and outer, and illuminating human experience—whether we’re lifting the painted veil and revealing the intrigues behind, imagining new realities and fashioning new selves, creating magical worlds and unheard-of creatures, or commenting on the main text to shift the reader’s attention. Like the scribes of yore, we do much of our work from and in the margins.

Dr. Amy Muse
Associate Professor and Chair
English Department
“Better to illuminate than merely to shine; to deliver to others contemplated truths than merely to contemplate.” – St. Thomas Aquinas

This year’s Common Context theme for the English Department is illumination. Through literary study, students in the core curriculum English 121: Critical Thinking: Literature & Writing courses have been exploring the illumination of the other and the illumination of the self.

Here’s how professor Mary Elizabeth Frandson describes the expansive scope this theme invites in her ENGL 121 course:

Adopting Emerson’s belief that to the illuminated mind, the whole world burns and sparkles with light, this course reveals how genres, such as the visual arts, poetry, the blues, slave narratives, cartoons, campaign speeches, narrative film, and inaugural addresses, emerged out of a need for expression. By placing ourselves in the role of the writer, the artist, the slam poet, the politician, we fully immerse ourselves in the creative possibilities that illuminate not only the many ways to create a narrative, but in doing so, how one might read themselves and arrive at a more realized, enlightened sense of identity.

The center point for the discussion on illumination was guest author Amy Leach’s book of lyric essays, Things That Are, as well as the series of talks surrounding her visit to campus. In particular, Leach’s September 24 lecture on illumination revealed the way this subject worked its way into both her writing process and her finished collection. Leach began her talk by taking her audience on a wild romp through the corners of illuminated texts. She proceeded creature by creature through the oddly ornamented margins of a psalm and other biblical passages. She pointed out each curiously strange depiction with rapt attention and a bemused smile reminiscent, one might think, of what she would look like reading Dr. Seuss to her young son.

It was precisely this sort of childlike fascination and attention that Leach wanted to model for her audience. For Leach, illumination is about an awakening, or re-awakening, to the present wonders of the world. Leach’s talk itself was an invocation to attentiveness – an invitation to come and see and allow yourself to be amazed at whatever it is you’re looking at. Toward the end of her talk Leach boldly asked an audience of primarily freshman students to sit and, for a full ten minutes, simply be present to the shifting emotions of Gustav Mahler’s Piano Quartet in A Minor. She exercised a tremendous amount of trust. Initially, as seats shifted and cell phones popped out, it seemed like a mistake, but in the end that experience of pen-drop silence and piano music was a powerful testimony to the attentiveness we are all capable of and the attentiveness that beauty demands. Beyond anything else, Leach’s talk proclaimed that the world is worth wondering over, and invited each one of us to join the well-established tradition of artists, writers, composers, and other observers who do precisely that.
This year’s Common Context theme, illumination, centered on visiting writer Amy Leach’s Things That Are, a series of imaginative essays published by local publishing house Milkweed Editions. With her fanciful interplay between whimsy and theology, Leach left students speechless during her campus visit in late September. She offered a lecture on the topic of illumination, participated in a panel with Milkweed Editions managing editor Patrick Thomas and Things That Are illustrator Nate Christopherson, and answered questions from our classes during a Q&A session.

During that busy week, I had the privilege of meeting with Leach and am pleased to be able to share some of our conversation with you.

What was the genesis of Things That Are? Why did you decide to write this book?

I wouldn’t say I sat down and decided to write it, but the decision sort of emerged as I wrote over many years. I think in the very beginning, I just wanted to write. I loved writing anything—anything for school, just a long answer on a history test, or whatever; I just found myself thinking more interesting thoughts when I would write as opposed to either just imagining things or talking. There’s something magical about putting words down.

I guess pretty early on in my graduate experience I started writing about animals and plants and just kept doing that. Then eight or nine years later I had enough pages that it turned into the book.

Your essays are clearly well-researched. Where do you find the inspiration to do that kind of research?

A lot of it is curiosity in different things as well as—I don’t know how well to articulate this—the lives of animals are so different from each other. I just find that very fascinating, trying imaginatively to enter all of these different experiences I find so rich. For example, goats are completely gregarious. They love to be together! They sleep together, they gather together, and they eat anything. They’re just open and gregarious, and I loved that and I loved entering that personality in writing about them.

On the other hand, pandas are quite the opposite. They like to be alone. They don’t gather in herds or groups. They don’t even stay with their families. They just like to be alone. When they see other pandas they go the other way. And they only eat bamboo! They are the opposite of goats. But I also loved affirming or endorsing that personality. I could feel these different ways of being in the world and endorse all of them, in the world and in my own self. I feel like it just kind of enlarges my own experience to try to enter the experience of other creatures and lives. That is what inspires the research: just curiosity in all these different ways of being.

I could feel these different ways of being in the world and endorse all of them, in the world and in my own self. I feel like it just kind of enlarges my own experience to try to enter the experience of other creatures and lives.

What was the most difficult part of writing Things That Are? The most rewarding?

Maybe the answer is the same. While I was doing my master’s degree I had three years when people expected things from me.

There were expectations, there were deadlines, and it made me write. It was difficult afterward keeping going. Sometimes I would go off on dead ends, even for a year at a time, where I would be writing and writing and writing and then realize it wasn’t good and I was going to have to start over. It is very difficult to realize that you put all this effort into something that you can’t use, that you have to throw out. And yet I would also say that is the most rewarding because I feel like I learned so much, maybe even especially during those dead-end years and dead-end essays. I learned to expect more and more from myself. That is good practice. And going back to some of the essays I realized weren’t very good I could even find one line, take that one line out, and just start all over again. So I would say that’s very difficult, but it’s also very rewarding because it just means that in the end I wasn’t compromising. It feels good to try very hard at something.

I’ve heard that you enjoy bluegrass music and a few of your essays have bluegrass accompaniment. Would you say bluegrass is your favorite genre of music, then?
It’s something I love very much and yet I wouldn’t say favorite because just like I was talking about with the pandas and the goats I just love the different ways of expressing. I love to listen to Mahler and Bach and feel what that music makes you feel. Feel the bluegrass, feel the jazz, and just having that versatility—its soul. I think what music reaches into is the soul and helps you be able to feel all these different ways of feeling.

Do you have any recommended bluegrass artists for us?

I love Gillian Welch so very much. I believe everything she sings.

If you had to give one piece of advice to a group of young writers, what would it be?

I tried a few other careers after college and did them all pretty half-heartedly and finally thought, “Well, I will go to an MFA program, and somebody else will make me write.” So I did nonfiction and I guess the reason I chose that was because it just seemed like it had fewer rules than fiction and poetry. That program was geared toward a lot of personal essays and I tried that a bit, but I discovered that I didn’t understand myself well enough to write about myself. Maybe someday, but I pretty quickly started skewing all the assignments toward birds and stars. I just enjoyed that so much. I enjoyed the research, I enjoyed the learning, all of it.

I feel like without the research and analytics I don’t have imagination.

My imagination really is in those things.

So I don’t know if it’s too general, but I guess my advice would just have to be keep going. You can give all kinds of specific advice, but for me the main thing, whether I was being guided or not guided or misguided, the most important thing was just to keep writing and to learn that way.

“What does a panda know, who studies just a few cloudy-mountain miles of the world? From her experience she must know about fallibility. Icicles melt, flowers fail, intangibly small babies grow tangible and autonomous, and one day when you come back from foraging to collect yours from the tree fork where you left him, he is gone. Mushrooms, moonlight, everything is ephemeral, with one exception: bamboo. Bamboo never fails, bamboo is eternal, evergreen, green in the orange season, green in the white season, green in the green season, poking up sweet little shoots into the spring rain. Blessed is the bear that trusteth in bamboo.”

— from “Radical Bears in the Forest Delicious,” in Things That Are (Milkweed Editions, 2012)
As the snow closes in around us and we retreat to plushy sofas in front of fireplaces or space heater-warmed nooks, what should we read? Seven graduating English majors, the co-editors of this issue of Writing in the Margins, have these books to recommend:

**Nick Frost**

*In Cold Blood* is a troubling, and yet fascinating, look at the dark side of humanity. Closely examining the murders committed by Dick Hickock and Perry Smith in a farmhouse in Holcomb, Kansas, it is by no means a lighthearted read, and yet I consider it to be essential reading for anyone interested in the human condition. Some speculate that it was the first non-fiction novel. Certainly a pioneering work in the true crime genre, *In Cold Blood* is nuanced and well-written. It was not surprising for me to learn Truman Capote spent six years researching in order to write it. Recently there has been a great deal of interest in Capote, and a number of movies have been made about his life. This is the book that made him such a sensation in his time. It is a must-read book that will keep your blood pumping through the winter chill.

*Favorite English course at UST: ENGL 215: American Authors II with Dr. Andrew Scheiber*

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**Mauricio Carranza**

Reading *The Odyssey* by Homer is one of the best literary experiences out there. It is a journey that takes you fantastic places and helps the imagination run wild. Reading *The Odyssey* can illuminate those dark days of winter ahead. Another book that helps with the illusion of travel, adventure, and thrill is *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson. This classic tale will take you on a voyage in the search for treasure. The journey is long but it is worth seeing the protagonist explain his life and situation. The growth he goes through is something he and you share and it creates a unique bond between character and reader.

*Favorite English course at UST: ENGL 325: Tolkien: Middle Ages, Middle Earth with Dr. Martin Warren*

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**Mary Conway**

If you enjoyed the adventure, high-society debauchery, and eventual disillusionment of Gatsby’s New York you’ll love Hemingway’s Paris in *A Moveable Feast*. I picked up this book the summer before I headed out for my semester-long study abroad in Rome. I was interested in the self-described experiences of the life of this famous author, but I also was looking for an example of how to write about travel. For a couple of months I kept running into the book’s titular quote, “If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.” So whether you’re interested in peeking into the notebooks of the famous author, seeking a way of thinking about your own travels, or just looking for a plateful of that sumptuous feast that was 1920’s Paris, *A Moveable Feast* will take you there.

*Favorite English course at UST: ENGL 361: Shakespeare & the Early Modern Era with Dr. Amy Muse*
Last year I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Emily Dickinson Reading Marathon, in which we read all 1,798 poems by Emily Dickinson (although I could only stay for a little over 100). While I had little previous involvement with Emily Dickinson, I found as I heard and read her poems out loud that the joy of them was in savoring the language. Each poem is short and quick to read, but rich in small linguistic delights. I found a similar delight when I first picked up Amy Leach’s *Things That Are*, a marvelous focus on word choice and beauty intrinsically tied up with the wonderment of nature. If you enjoyed reading *Things That Are* while Amy Leach was on campus this fall, I think you’ll almost certainly enjoy Dickinson as well.

Favorite English course at UST: ENGL 323: Writing Creative Nonfiction with Dr. Matthew Batt

After reading Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild*, which details Chris McCandless’s desire for self-discovery and the natural beauty he discovered in the process, I was launched on the path of my new journey as a college student. Through reading tales such as Cheryl Strayed’s *Wild*, Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain*, and Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times* I found not guidance for the future so much as a reflection of my journey of self-discovery and the perseverance that would be required. Each of these narratives shows struggles and setbacks in life, but also the lovely splendor of experiencing and conquering obstacles. Read about your past through a novel’s eyes and embrace the future with an illuminating tale. Grab a warm cup of hot chocolate to thaw your cold fingers as a snowdrift of literary beauty is surely coming your way!

Favorite English course at UST: ENGL 212: British Authors II with Dr. Emily James

I recommend you read *Dracula*, *War of the Worlds*, and *Sherlock Holmes*. During the course of my years as an English major, I’ve come across widely different genres and themes in literature. One thing I’ve noticed among these vastly different works, however, is a common questioning of humanity. Are we all dooming each other? Is there hope for the villainous and deceptive? What is our purpose? All of the books I’ve recommended delve deep into exploring the human condition. They raise questions on topics such as faith, mortality, and ethics. In my own experience, it is through literature that makes me question my morals and philosophy on life that I’ve discovered the most about myself as a person. Not only are these works deeply metaphysical, they also center on such fascinating protagonists and villains that you’ll be glued to the page. So brew a hot drink of your choice, relax, and let these stories take you on exciting adventures.

Favorite English course at UST: ENGL/CATH 222: The Catholic Literary Tradition with Dr. Billy Junker
The twenty-two letters in MS 04 Box 1, dated 1913-1936, waited, stacked in front of me; all bore the signature of Hilaire Belloc, and most were addressed to the American painter Carl Schmitt. I had the next three hours with these manuscripts and then another four with Belloc’s essay collections two days later. The University of St. Thomas’s archivist librarian at the O'Shaughnessy-Frey Library, Ann Kenne, had helped me gather texts to analyze, had explained patiently to me why letters like this could not simply be digitized and published, and had disappeared into the special collections two extra times for me that morning. Now she had left me to the correspondence between Belloc and Schmitt, and I sat as the quiet afternoon intruder on a century-old conversation.

An independent study with Dr. Emily James this past spring semester offered me my first extended opportunity to pursue a research project in the UST archives. In fact, Dr. James and I built the research project into the course. The independent study primarily explored the verbal inventions of Lewis Carroll and Belloc, the historical relationship between Belloc and Carroll, and the linguistic role in and philosophy of nonsense. Dr. James encouraged me to make space in the study for exposure to and practice in archival research. So, unlike most graduate students who visit archives with a tight agenda looking for a particular manuscript or two, my primary goal was to practice archival research using Belloc as a case study. It seemed a little backward at first, but I enjoyed the freedom to explore two or three items of interest that I had traced in Belloc’s work.

While enjoying the ephemera immensely, I was disappointed for the purposes of my research that Belloc’s letters were always quick responses to what appeared to be longer questions proposed by Schmitt. It was difficult to read only one half of a conversation.

In the end my favorite moment in the archives was a simple moment of contextual discovery: in addition to handling a first-edition copy of Belloc’s novel Belinda, I also found copies of the journal Life and Letters, edited by Desmond MacCarthy, where the novel was first serially published. There in Volume 1, Number 5, October 1928, I found Belloc’s work alongside Aldous Huxley and Virginia Woolf—curious journal companions to be sure.

As described on the UST library website, Special Collections and Archives holds “more than 23,000 volumes, 2,400 cubic feet of manuscripts and archival records, photographs, films, architectural drawings, and ephemera.” I knew those statistics when Kenne let me follow her into the collections holdings to peek at the stacks, but the sheer number of resources packed away in those shelves surprised me, such as the rows of G.K. Chesterton across from Belloc and the many volumes in the Dawson collection.

Although my research in the archives did not elucidate much about Belloc and Schmitt’s conversation about literary aesthetics (given Belloc’s hasty responses to Schmitt’s inquiries), my experience handling materials and reading sideways across stationery, advertisements, and frontispieces proved a valuable introduction to archival research as a master’s student. It certainly has expanded the way I have collected and engaged with resources for my master’s essay on Virginia Woolf this semester, and I hope to have the occasion to make use of UST’s archival holdings before I have finished the program.
In September, poet and travel writer Christopher Bakken visited St. Thomas to present a talk, “Case Studies in Subversive Eating: From the Garage to Greece,” and discuss his new book, *Honey, Olives, Octopus*, a celebration of Greek culture and sustainable ways of living by way of the dinner table. The travel memoir follows Bakken through repeated visits to regions of Greece as he explores eight fundamental ingredients that make up Greek cuisine: olives, bread, fish, cheese, beans, wine, meat, and honey. His adventures include baking Cretan bread, picking olives on the island of Thasos, and hunting octopus in the Aegean Sea. A reader cannot help but be drawn in by Bakken’s lyrical celebration of the food that is such a vital part of Greece’s cultural history. Two favorite examples: his description of the taste of Kythirian honey as “unbelievably rich, with a mouthfeel I found almost creamy, the bright, lemony twang of thyme (the resinous essence of thyme that is, without any of the grassiness I associate with the herb in my garden) keeping the honey from becoming cloying”; and of the smell of Naxian cheese as “an atonal, overripe troglodytic funk, with notes of wet dog, soggy diaper, and rotting Birkenstock.” (And that’s a compliment: it’s great stuff.)

While on campus Bakken taught a cooking class to about twenty students. Using basic tools that could be found in any student’s apartment and simple ingredients—many of them from the UST stewardship garden—he made a lentil soup, *melitzanosalata* (eggplant salad), and *tzatziki* (cucumber-yogurt dip), all accompanied by rustic sourdough bread he'd baked the day before with a starter made of wild yeast gathered this summer on Thasos. During the class, one of Bakken’s messages became clear: with a little work and some smart shopping, it is easy to make delicious, healthy meals. Even on a college student’s budget.

After reading *Honey, Olives, Octopus*, students from Dr. Liz Wilkinson’s and Dr. Olga Herrera’s ENGL 201: Travels: Journey Narratives classes wrote their own journey narratives and ethnographies. Luke Gion (’18) and Caroline Hutchenson (’17) attended an apiary event hosted by The Beez Kneez, a honeybee education and advocacy organization based in Minneapolis. Of his experience, Gion writes, “With the orientation now complete, I don the space-age looking bee suit, double-checking the Velcro zipper seams of my stinger armor before departing to meet the bees… Pumping her smoker to disrupt the bees’ pheromone communication so they don’t dive bomb us, Erin Rupp (the beekeeper) then takes a miniature crowbar and pries open the top of the largest stack, revealing ten frenetic, living plates of invertebrates… After locating the comb where the honey is stored, Rupp begins extracting other frames so everyone can take a souvenir selfie with the colony.”

Hutchenson stopped by The Beez Kneez honey house to see the extraction process: “I had seen the frames of bees and honey as a finished product,” she writes, “but I had no idea what happened in between. I had gathered enough information to know that a bike was used, but I was not sure how that would look, but the extractor is basically a large metal barrel that operated like a pedal-driven centrifuge. Four frames of comb are placed within slots, and an operator pedals from the black padded bike seat, spinning the honey off of the comb with each revolution.”
DEPARTMENT NEWS

The English Department co-hosted (with Modern and Classical Languages) the 2014 International Conference on Romanticism from September 24-28, which brought over 100 scholars of Romantic literature, art, theater, music, and science to the Twin Cities. Faculty YOUNG-O-K AN, RAY MACKENZIE, and AMY MUSE served on the planning committee and moderated sessions, and ALEXIS EASLEY led a session on how to submit your work to a scholarly journal. Graduate student NATHAN WUNROW served as coordinator. Alumni WILL BRAUN, MARIE CAMPBELL, and SHANDI WAGNER presented papers, and alumna BETHANY FLETCHER, graduate students LINDY HENSLEY and ERIC TASCH, and undergraduate English majors EMILY GRONDAHL, LETIZIA MARIANI, and MEGHAN HEITKAMP staffed the registration table.

Letitia Elizabeth Landon’s Letters and for Money: Love and Disillusionment in '09, M.A. ’11) to deliver a lecture, “Marry and Comed back alumna SHANDI WAGNER (B.A. '09, M.A. ’11) to deliver a lecture, “Marry and Comed back alumna SHANDI WAGNER (B.A. ’09, M.A. ’11) to deliver a lecture, “Marry and Comed back alumna SHANDI WAGNER (B.A. ’09, M.A. ’11) to deliver a lecture, “Marry and Comed back alumna SHANDI WAGNER (B.A. ’09, M.A. ’11) to deliver a lecture, “Marry and Comed back alumna SHANDI WAGNER (B.A. ’09, M.A. ’11) to deliver a lecture, “Marry and

A month later the department welcomed back alumna SHANDI WAGNER (B.A. ’09, M.A. ’11) to deliver a lecture, “Marry for Money: Love and Disillusionment in Letitia Elizabeth Landon’s Letters and Fairy Tales.” Currently a Ph.D. candidate in Victorian literature at Wayne State University, Wagner soon will be defending her dissertation, Sowing Seeds of Subversion: Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers’ Subversive Use of Fairy Tales and Folklore.

On November 20, students from EMILY JAMES’ GENG 637: James Joyce and Company and her ENGL 203: Visual Literacy courses, along with students in the Finnegans Wake reading group, presented John Cage’s experimental operetta, Rorator, the libretto of which is an adaptation of Finnegans Wake. The graduate students collected sounds to recreate a Dublin soundscape (as per Cage’s score) and projected various images and animations in the background. They and audience members read aloud from Cage’s libretto. The undergraduates presented illustrated etymologies of Joycean portmanteaux in poster form.

FACULTY


CATHERINE CRAFT-FAIRCCHILD published her article, "The Jewish Question" on Both Sides of the Atlantic: Harrington and the Correspondence between Maria Edgeworth and Rachel Mordecai Lazarus," in Eighteenth-Century Life.

ALEXIS EASLEY presented “Researching Gender Issues and the Periodical Press: Eliza Cook, Charlotte Cushman, and the Construction of Transrhetorical Celebrity” at the Nineteenth-Century Periodicals Symposium at the University of Greenwich in May. She also presented “The Bourgeois Body at Home and Abroad: Tattooing in Illustrated British Periodicals of the 1890s” at the Australasian Victorian Studies Conference at the University of Hong Kong in July. In addition, she presented “Press Networks and Transatlantic Celebrity: Eliza Cook and Charlotte Cushman” at the RSVP Conference at the University of Delaware in September.

GORDON GRICE published his memoir essay, “A Stiller Ground,” in This Land. New audio versions were released of two of his previous books, The Red Hourglass: Lives of the Predators and The Book of Deadly Animals, both read by actor Keith Sellon-Wright.

EMILY JAMES presented her paper, “Scribbling, Scrawling, and Literary Invention,” at the International Conference on Virginia Woolf in Chicago in June. She also presented “Beneath the Blotting Paper” at the Modernist Studies Association Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in November.

RAYMOND MACKENZIE’s translation of Montesquieu’s 1721 novel, Persian Letters, was published by Hackett in September.

DOUG PHILLIPS presented “Plotting for Kisses: Joyce and the Vital Lie” at the James Joyce Symposium in Utrecht, Netherlands. His review of Mari Rutti’s book The Call of Character: Living a Life Worth Living appears in Phi Beta Kappa’s The Key Reporter.

JAMES ROGERS’ personal essay, “The Sadly Sweet Season,” was named as a “Notable” in Best American Essays 2014. It also appeared in the August issue of Notre Dame Magazine.

ELIZABETH WILKINSON was the keynote speaker for the ACTC Undergraduate Women’s Studies Conference at Augsburg College where she presented “Gertrude Bonnin and the Transrhetorical Power of Silence.” In addition, she and ANDREW SCHEIBER presented “Red ‘n Blue: Native Americans and Blues Music” at the Delta Symposium in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Their band, Wilkinson James, also played for the Roots Music Festival.

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CURRENT STUDENTS

UNDERGRADUATE

JAMES MITE worked over the summer with Dr. Todd Lawrence on a research project titled, "Tyler Perry and the Burden of Representation: Black Masculinity and the Reconstructed Image of the Black Man.” As
a member of Cohort 2 in the Excel! Research Scholars Program, Mite’s research focuses on society’s representation of masculinity and portrayal of black men; he studied filmmaker Tyler Perry’s works to better understand how black men are portrayed.

Mite presented his research a second time at the 23rd Annual McNair Research Conference and Graduate Fair at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Following his work with Lawrence, he decided to change his major from business to English with a writing emphasis, which he considers a great decision!

GRADUATE CORRECTION: In our spring 2014 issue, the name of one of the profiled students in the article “Where Are They Now?” was misspelled. CAROLYN SCHUELLER says she wants to make sure her name is spelled correctly because she would “welcome contact from current or former students and others from the program, but it might be harder to find me with the wrong spelling.”

TIM DECCELLE published his paper, “A Transcendent Excess: Examining Griselda’s Assent in Chaucer’s Clerk’s Tale through Georges Bataille’s Aetheological Mysticism,” in Comitatus Vol. 45 in September. He also presented “Dysfunctional Mirror: Image, Text, and Desire in Mary Shelley’s Short Stories” at the 2014 International Conference on Romanticism, September 25-28, in Minneapolis. He and his wife, Mary, welcomed the birth of their daughter, Juliette Kay Decelle, in May.

BETSY HOWARD presented her paper, “Eclipsing Satellites and Socialites: Modernist Literary Circles, Planetary Motion, and Woolf’s Unique Vantage,” at the University of Mankato’s 2014 English Graduate Student Conference on April 26. She presented another paper, “Who fought with us upon St. Crispin’s Day?: Examining The Modern Conception of the Medieval Monarch in Kenneth Branagh’s rendering of Shakespeare’s Henry V” at the 2014 Graduate English and Art History Conference on April 25. Betsy and her husband, Zachary, welcomed their first child, Molly Adele, unexpectedly early on October 25.

NATHAN WUNROW and his wife, Jane Wunrow, welcomed Aliza Mae, their third daughter, into the world on July 27.

ALUMNI

ANN HALE (’14) was the recipient of the 2014 VanArsdel Prize for her essay “W. T. Stead and Participatory Reader Networks in The Link and The Review of Reviews,” which will appear in the spring 2015 issue of Victorian Periodicals Review. She is currently a doctoral student at the University of Greenwich, London.

SARAH HAYES (’10) is currently in the Ph.D. program in English at University of Florida and will be defending her dissertation, “Penitential Education: The Spatial Imaginary of American Indian Boarding Schools,” in April 2015. This past summer she was awarded a fellowship by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale to perform archival research in their Western Americana Collection. Hayes has won her departmental teaching award and the O. Ruth McQuown Scholarship, a campus-wide competitive scholarship at UF. She also has presented at a number of conferences, including: CCC, SSAWW, CEA, and SCMLA.

ELYSE KALLGREN (’14), is adjunct instructor for the Pathways program at the University of Northwestern, St. Paul. She teaches online English composition to PSEO students.

MICHAEL LACKEY (’86) was promoted to Professor of English at the University of Minnesota, Morris, and edited Conversations with Jay Parini, a book of Parini’s interviews, which was published this summer in the University Press of Mississippi’s Conversations series.


FERNANDO SANCHEZ (’10) is in the midst of his fourth year at Purdue’s Rhetoric and Composition Program. This past year, he has presented at nine conferences, including IWAC, CPTSC, and Watson. His scholarship has been published in Transcripts, the WPA journal, and most recently, Composition Studies. His latest project looks at multimodal composition strategies of urban designers.

SHANNON SCOTT (’10) notes that her essay, “Female Werewolf as Monstrous Other in Honoré Beaugrand’s The Werewolves,” will soon be published in She-Wolf: A Cultural History of the Female Werewolf (Manchester UP, 2014).


JENNIFER WALDENBERGER (’12) was accepted into the doctoral program in higher education leadership at Edgewood College.

IN MEMORIAM

PROFESSOR PAUL J. HAGUE

We are sad to announce that Paul Hague, a faculty member in the English Department from 1955-1990, passed away on December 3rd at the age of 89. Hague, who was named Professor of the Year in 1997, particularly enjoyed teaching courses on Willa Cather and detective literature. One always could tell if Hague was around by listening for his wonderful, distinctive laugh. Jim Kurpius (’60), who had Hague for freshman English and was tapped by Hague to be editor of the 1958 Aquinas yearbook, established the Paul Hague Endowed Scholarship for Excellence in English in 2001 to honor “the superb (and sometimes groovy) teaching skills, values, and humanity of a remarkable professor, friend, and mentor. This annual scholarship ... provides special recognition to those (English major) recipients who demonstrate the same love of the study of language and literature as professed by Paul Hague during his celebrated career at St. Thomas” (WITTM, Spring 2004). The department extends its condolences to Paul’s wife, Jerry Lou, and his three children: Molly, John, and Bob.
From “When Trees Dream of Being Trees,” from *Things That Are*, by Amy Leach

So the tree finally just stood there with its smashed branches, exhausted, in the late afternoon sunlight. The other trees around regarded the tree going mad without much comment. They had seen this dreadful thing happen before, when trees dream of being trees.