

Loose Canons

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Sense Memories

By Laura Otis

When you smell something nasty, how do you find the words to describe it? When you read someone else's words, what do you see? This issue of *Loose Canons* looks at the ways that literature activates our senses and the ways that writers have turned their sensory experiences into literature.

Supposedly literature is created by imaginative minds, but as neuroscientists Antonio Damasio and Eric Kandel have argued, it no longer makes sense to think of minds in isolation from bodies. As writers create, they work with memories of bodily sensations, struggling to represent them so that readers can feel them. Do writers "translate" these memories into language? And why do they work so hard to do it? The questions of how literature grows out of and stimulates sensory experiences go to the heart of why people read and write literature. And as can be seen from the strong relationship between English and Creative Writing at Emory, reading and writing are hard to separate, since both demand active use of sensations, emotions, and memory.

This issue brings together students and faculty whose literary analysis focuses on the body—its sensations, its abilities, its need for rest. Pat Cahill recounts her discovery that "flaying" in Renaissance drama really meant flaying, performed live onstage with a "false skin." Ben Reiss explores the contradictions in Thoreau's references to sleep, a bodily process about which Thoreau does and does not want to talk. In a study of 19th-century sensation fiction, Rachel Bowser explains why this dangerous best-selling literature was thought to act directly on the nerves. Discussing the pleasures of archival research, Liz Chase describes the scent, feel, and sound of documents, challenging the stereotype that such work is "dry." In my own article, I compare people's abilities to think with images and words. And Samyukta Mullangi explains how the different "feel" of life in India and the United States led her to a double major in Biology and Creative Writing.

Together, these reflections suggest the profound physicality of what we do. As studies such as Elaine Scarry's *Dreaming by the Book* have shown, reading, writing, and interpretation are not just "cerebral." When done well, they draw on every aspect of bodily experience.

Literature and the Senses



EMORY

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Alumni News

RAND BRANDES (PhD '85), Martin Luther Stevens Professor of English at Lenoir-Rhyne University, has contributed an essay to a new book about Irish poet Seamus Heaney. Brandes's essay is the first chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Seamus Heaney*, edited by Bernard O'Donoghue and published by the Cambridge University Press. The book is a part of the *Cambridge Companions to Literature* series. Brandes's essay is entitled "Seamus Heaney's Working Titles: From 'Advancements of Learning' to 'Midnight Anvil.'" "

CATHERINE BURROUGHS (PhD '88) has been appointed Ruth and Albert Koch Professor of Humanities at Wells College for 2008-2013.

CHRISTOPHER REIGER (BA '93) has just published a book of literary criticism: *Clear-Cutting Eden: Ecology and the Pastoral in Southern Literature* (University of Alabama Press, 2009).

KRISTINA STRAUB (PhD '84), Professor of English and Associate Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA, has a new book out from Johns Hopkins University Press: *Domestic Affairs: Intimacy, Eroticism and Violence Between Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2009).

LAURA CALLANAN (PhD '99) received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at Duquesne University.

NATHALIE ANDERSON's (PhD '85) third operatic collaboration with composer Thomas Whitman—this one a version of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes story, "A Scandal in Bohemia"—was performed this February by Orchestra 2001, a Philadelphia-based orchestra specializing in contemporary music. Nathalie's poems have also appeared recently in *The Book of Irish American Poetry from the Eighteenth Century to the Pres-*

ent (ed. Daniel Tobin; Notre Dame Press), in *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* (twice!), and in the January 19th edition of *The New Yorker*.

TARA CHRISTIE (PhD '07), along with her husband Matt Kinsey, returned to Princeton University, where they met as undergraduate students. Tara is currently a Lecturer in the Department of English and Associate Director in the Office of Capital Giving. In Spring 2008, she found herself in the bizarre position of teaching a section of the English Department's early British Literature survey. Out with Yeats, Eliot, Heaney, and Muldoon...in with Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, and Fielding! Tara and Matt have a son, Sam (aged 20 months), and another one on the way (due July 1st).

MONICA CHIU (PhD '96) was named the Interim Director of the University Honors Program at the University of New Hampshire for 2008-09. She will serve as the director in 2009-10. Her essay "Sequencing and Contingent Individualism in the Graphic, Postcolonial Spaces of Satrapi's *Persepolis* and Okubo's *Citizen 13660*" appears in the journal *Graphia* 4.6 (Fall/Winter 2008).

The European Association of Teachers of Academic Writing (EATAW) accepted KAREN LACEY's (PhD '00) proposal to present a paper in late June 2009 at the University of Coventry, England, about the problem of balancing and integrating the teaching of reading into online writing pedagogy. Also, she's received the Teaching Award for 2009 from Mercer University's College of Continuing and Professional Studies. Karen was also recently named a Governor's Honors Teaching Fellow for 2009-2010, under a program administered by The University of Georgia.

BRENDAN CORCORAN (PhD '03) was awarded
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ed tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at Indiana State University. Also, he has had two essays published in 2008, “Ciaran Carson’s Confetti” in *An Sionnach: A Journal of Literature, Culture, and the Arts* 4:2 (Fall 2008): 54-69 and “‘Persisting for the unborn’: Derek Mahon’s *Elegiac Poetics*” in *New Hibernia Review* 12:2 (Summer 2008): 87-105.

KATE MCPHERSON’s (PhD '98) second co-edited volume of essays, *Performing Pedagogy in Early Modern England: Gender, Instruction and Performance*, is forthcoming from Ashgate Publishing. Her co-editor is Kathryn M. Moncrief of Washington College. She also attended the Renaissance Society of America meeting in Los Angeles, where she gave a paper, “Great-Bellied Women: Refiguring Pregnancy in Early Modern England.” It’s an excerpt of the new, first chapter of the book, *Refiguring Maternity*, which she is completing while on sabbatical during Spring 2009. The book had its genesis in her dissertation at Emory a decade ago. Kate’s also participating in a workshop, “Public Shakespeares” at the Shakespeare Association of America meeting in Washington DC. Her contribution is a design for a one-day conference for high school teachers on using performance to teach Shakespeare, which she plans on running in Spring 2010. The workshop project and conference were both inspired by her participation last summer in the NEH “Shakespeare’s Blackfriars” conference.

SHARON MCCOY (PhD '03) has two essays coming out this spring: “‘The Trouble begins at 8’: Mark Twain, the San Francisco Minstrels and the Unsettling Legacy of Blackface Minstrelsy” in *American Literary Realism* 41.3 [Spring 2009]: 232-248, and “‘I ain’ no dread being’: The Minstrel Mask as Alter Ego,” *Centenary Reflections on Mark Twain’s No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*, Eds. Joseph Csicsila and Chad Rohman, *Mark Twain and his Circle Series*, University of Missouri Press (forthcoming in June 2009). She has also been elected vice president of the American Humor Studies Association and invited to chair a panel on *Pudd’nhead Wilson* at the Sixth International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies in Elmira, NY (August 6-8, 2009).

AMY BENSON BROWN (PhD '95) will give a presentation in June on “University-based Support for Faculty Authors” at the American Association for University Presses in Philadelphia. She also gave a presentation on “Support for Scholarly Publishing” at a University of Southern California conference on “Advancing Social Science and Humanities Research” in March.

JENNIFER MARGULIS’s (PhD '99) article, “Looking Up,” which was the cover story of the November 2008 issue of *Smithsonian Magazine*, has been chosen by science writer Nathalie Angier to be included in a forthcoming anthology called *Best American Science Writing 2009* (Harper Collins publisher). Her article, “Oregon Uncorked,” about the southern Oregon wine industry appears in the May issue of *Oregon Business Magazine*. She also has an article coming out in the June issue of *More* magazine about a woman entrepreneur who is fighting food waste and hunger; a 5000-word feature about unvaccinated children and childhood disease in the July/August issue of *Mothering*, and a first-person essay about cycling and pregnancy in the July issue of *Fit Pregnancy*. She spent the month of March in Europe with her family in order to research two forthcoming guides to family-friendly travel—one about London and the other about Paris—for family.com’s travel section and is writing about the Oregon Caves, Walla Walla Washington, and extreme horseback riding for the travel section of the *Oregonian*.

KATHERINE ELLISON (PhD '04) has been invited to discuss her study, “Circulating Intelligence: Mixed Media and Messages in Early Cryptography Manuals” at the Indiana University Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies workshop on “Mixed Media, Mixed Messages: Media and Mediality in the 18th Century.” She also won an ISU College of Arts and Sciences Service Initiative Award and the Dean’s Award for Scholarly Achievement.

JEFF MASSEY (PhD '03) has been granted both tenure and promotion (to associate professor) at Molloy College (effective September). He also recently gave a plenary lecture titled “Where the Wild Things Are (Not Wild Things): Locating the

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Rachel Bowser

Reading and Teaching Sensation Fiction

While I was still in my M.A. program at West Virginia University, I knew I wanted to work on Victorian sensation fiction. How could I not want to? A genre full of best-sellers, each of which scandalized the nineteenth-century literary establishment with representations of bigamous wives, assumed identities, sensational melodrama, and lavish descriptions of the heroines' beauty? Yes, please.

Sensation fiction was the dominant literary trend of the 1860s, producing the three best-sellers of the decade: Wilkie Collins's *Woman in White* (1859), Mary Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), and Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861). The genre name was assigned not by fans but by disdainful critics who suggested that the enormously popular novels glorified scandalous and criminal behavior (most notably behavior that threatened the sanctity of marriage and domesticity). H.L. Mansel claimed that the frenetically plotted novels were organized in an attempt to "preach to the nerves."

Further, the critics worried that the novels would inspire similar behavior, or at the very least indecorous responses, in their readers because of the affective nature of the prose; the sensuous descriptions of heroines' bodies and their susceptibility to flights of sensual and impulsive behavior were thought capable of eliciting physical responses from readers. The literary and cultural critic Mrs. Oliphant famously objected to what these representations implied about the state of English femininity:

Now it is no knight of romance riding down the forest glades, ready for the defence and succor of all the oppressed, for whom the dreaming maiden waits. She waits now for flesh and muscles, for strong arms that seize her and warm breath that thrills her through, and a host of other physical attractions . . .

this intense appreciation of flesh and blood, this eagerness of physical sensation, is represented as the natural sentiment of English girls.

She was not alone in decrying the unnatural qualities of the genre. In his review of *Lady Audley's Secret* (a novel in which the working-class heroine is abandoned by a fortune-seeking husband, prompting her to abandon her son, fake her death, assume a new identity, secure a job as a governess, from which position she seduces and marries the local baron; when her first husband returns from Australia she makes the understandable decision to push him down a well), W. Fraser Rae voiced similar objections:

Lady Audley is at once the heroine and the monstrosity of the novel. . . .

The nerves with which Lady Audley could meet unmoved the friend of the man she had murdered, are the nerves of a Lady Macbeth who is half unsexed, and not those of the timid, gentle, innocent creature Lady Audley is represented as being . . . All this is very exciting; but it is also very unnatural. The artistic faults of this novel are as grave as the ethical ones. Combined, they render it one of the most noxious books of modern times.

I challenge you to find a graduate student who wouldn't want her dissertation to feature "one of the most noxious books of modern times."

The breakneck plots, scandalous women, and outraged establishment critics certainly make sensation novels fun to read, but I've also learned how much fun they are to teach. Possibly a context caveat is warranted: It may be that when students have been reading Eliot and Dickens anything a little more breezy guarantees success. Also, the critical rhetoric about the novels' threat to moral values is amusingly familiar to students who have heard about the breakdown of family values

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Laura Otis

Reading, Thinking, and the Visual Sense

During an intense discussion in “The Roots of Modern Neuroscience,” a student started drawing on the board. While the class watched, she sketched something that looked like a loaf of French bread being pinched in half. “What is that? What are you doing?” we asked. She said she was drawing her idea, which involved the changing relationship between two concepts over time. Struggling to express it in words, she had decided to bypass them altogether and show it as she saw it, as a cylinder of dough being pulled apart.

At a recent conference, Katherine Hayles told me a similar story about a visually inclined student struggling to write his personal statement for an application. After one revision, his poorly organized essay only got worse, and it wasn’t expressing his ideas. Hayles suggested that he visualize it as a blueprint and think of the paragraphs as adjacent rooms, so that the logical flow reflected contiguity in space. His next draft improved greatly, since he could see his argument. And once he could, so could everyone else.

Twenty-two years of teaching students from diverse fields has shown me how greatly people vary in the ways they think. While I would not classify people as visual or verbal “types,” I have encountered many who respond to their surroundings and develop ideas more effectively through images and others who reason better with words. When I was trained to teach writing, I was told not to trust students who said they had wonderful ideas but couldn’t express them. If they couldn’t put their ideas into words, I was taught, they had no coherent ideas. As soon as I met my students, though, a class of 18-year-old engineers, I started to doubt this claim. The research project I’m now pursuing was born back then as I wondered how the relationship between thought and language varied from person to person.

Students who say they are “translating” their

ideas into words have the backing of prominent scientists. Eric Kandel’s *Principles of Neural Science*, one of the most widely read neuroscience textbooks, asserts: “Language is often said to be inextricable from thinking, but in fact the two should be distinguished. Thinking is the ability to have ideas and to infer new ideas from old ones; language is the ability to encode ideas into signals for communication to someone else. Language, the code by which we transmit ideas, is different from the ideas themselves.” Linguist and cognitive scientist Steven Pinker argues that people think in “mentalese,” an inner form of representation that can be converted to language when the need arises. According to these neural and cognitive scientists, thoughts do not consist of words.

Challenging this view are word-oriented scholars such as Edwin Whipple, who in 1854 lampooned Roget’s thesaurus: “We congratulate that large, respectable, inexpressive and unexpressed class of thinkers, who are continually complaining of the barrenness of their vocabulary as opposed to the affluence of their ideas, on the appearance of Dr. Roget’s volume. . . . Dr. Roget, for a moderate fee, prescribes the verbal medicine which will relieve the congestion of their thoughts. . . . The idea being given, he guarantees in every case to supply the word.” Like many aficionados of language, Whipple doubts whether the people complaining about language’s inability to express their ideas actually have ideas to express.

Sweeping claims about thought and language marginalize certain classes of thinkers, but awareness of diversity may increase tolerance, so that neither word-based nor image-based reasoning will be considered inferior. In my current research, I will be interviewing people from a wide variety of fields, asking “For you, what’s an idea? Do you see it? Do you hear it? How did you get one of the

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A Sense of India

My foray into creative writing has been inextricably tied up with the events in my life. When I was four years old, my family packed its bags and moved from southern India to Rochester, Minnesota. From the moment I learned how to read, I was hooked. I remember trudging to the library with my mother with a rucksack that could fit at least 25 books, the checkout maximum, before I could even tell time. I soon forgot how to speak Telugu, my native language and began to reply in English to my parents. But it was an expected component of assimilating to a different culture. They did not reprimand me for it.

Three years later, my father received a job offer in Arizona, and so we collected our things again and moved to sunny Tucson. That was the place where I first began to write. I had a brilliant third grade teacher who had all her students devote every afternoon after lunch to writing poetry, fiction, essays--whatever we desired. I wrote a huge number of poems and short stories and felt encouraged when I was published in various children's anthologies. At about the same time, my mother became homesick, and unable to refuse her anything, my father finally relented, and we moved back to where we started--a small Indian town.

During the next seven years, my English improved minimally. The English that I was taught in school was more about rote memorization of verses and plot developments than actual language. My friends and I did not speak English between classes as much as its bastardized cousin, Angrezi, a fluid, casual form of speech whose grammar imitated Hindi and borrowed several words from it, too. This was the time when I started becoming invested in the idea of pursuing medicine as a career. My parents, both physicians, began to take me to work as a volunteer in the health camps that their hospitals set up in the villages every month. When I first started helping out in these camps, I

would notice the pastoral surroundings, the mud roads, and sultry heat that flooded the open country. But, by the end of the day, my mind could scarcely register such details. All I could focus on was the immense gratitude and respect with which the doctors were treated. I felt, for the first time, the differences between my comfortable, middle-class life and that of the villagers, and felt frustrated and restless. I fantasized about growing up and becoming crazy rich so that I could come back and help fund new roads, new housing communities, free hospitals, free schools--

In India, I lived more than I learned. I absorbed the sights, sounds, smells and memories, some dark and startling, some filled with a lazy content. Two of my friends hanged themselves for failing a geography exam, my principal permanently paralyzed a student by pushing him down the stairs, and my cousin almost died after multiple organ failure due to malaria. But our huge bungalow was situated right next to a wide canal that was surrounded by flora and fauna and the most beautiful seasons. I rode to school every day on a rickshaw, hit the branches of the mango trees in our courtyard with twelve-foot sticks to catch their falling fruit, and basked in the swift downpour of the monsoons. When I returned to the States at the age of sixteen, I was a different person entirely.

Everyone told me that it was fascinating how my hitherto strong Indian accent seemed to vanish within weeks of living in New York, almost as though I had never left. To be honest, I agree with them most of the time. The way I dress, the culture I seek out, and even the language that I think in are not reminiscent of my time in India. But I know who I am and am reminded of my history every time I pick up a pen. Seven years of being distant from English and creative writing choked

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Elizabeth Chase

Into the Archives

If you have scanned the shelves of the “Fiction/Literature” section of your local bookstore recently, you may have noticed a trend: the world of archives has gained a certain cachet with publishers. For instance, Arturo Perez-Reverte’s *The Club Dumas* begins with a fragment of Dumas’s manuscript for *The Three Musketeers* before spinning off into the world of occult book collecting. Geraldine Brooks’s *People of the Book* uses what little we know about the Sarajevo Haggadot, one of the earliest illuminated Jewish religious texts, to imagine a complex history for the volume. Her main character is a preservationist charged with evaluating and restoring the book’s binding in 1996, just after the end of the Siege of Sarajevo. These are only two of many examples, but such books point to the fact that the world of archives has an expanding and captivated audience outside the coterie of academics and librarians.

The growing fascination with archival materials stems, perhaps, from the fact that archives satisfy the desire to feel connected to history. The sensory experience of working in an archive is one shaped and infused with the presence of the past. Archival materials bear the trace of many hands; books pass through the hands of publishers, owners, books dealers and collectors, as well as the binders, preservationists, or cataloguers who aid in their preservation. Manuscripts pass from their creators to recipients both intended and unintended. Those that find their way to special collections libraries to be perused by researchers come laden with a history that adds a particular aura to the experience of working with such rare, unique material.

Walking into an archive, that history is almost immediately felt when visitors see the exhibits and permanent displays that signal an institute’s interests and give a sense of its holdings. In this sense, the first sensation of archival work is visual

as researchers absorb their surroundings. We see scholars and students hunched over documents, deciphering handwriting or examining the pages of a text, seated in neat rows and supervised by library staff. We figure out what to request, fill out the paperwork, store our things, and take a seat amongst a gathering of like minds. Then, when the requested material appears from some unseen location behind-the-scenes, other senses join in. Older books have a certain smell to them, and the texture of their pages differs from that of our trade paperbacks because they were created to withstand time. Often, the oldest books in special collections libraries are in better shape than many of those printed within the past fifty years. And touching their pages, it is easy to see why. Books have been printed on vellum or heavy, handmade paper, bound in vellum or calfskin with embossed or tooled leather. The bindings themselves have a story to tell; those who study bookbinding can tell you as much or more about where and when a book was published by feeling and examining its binding than by reading its copyright page.

Such materials have an intellectual appeal that can be all absorbing, yet as you work, sounds slowly make their way into perception. The hushed voices of librarians conferring with colleagues and other researchers add to the sense that people feel a certain reverence for these places and the materials they preserve. Of course, that reverence is sometimes disrupted: It is nearly impossible to read the letters of Flannery O’Connor to her friend Betty Hester without laughing. We may also overhear bits of conversation or literature being read aloud, as researchers literally listen to voices out of the past. Audio-visual materials give us access to visual and auditory experiences that increase our understanding of how an author read

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New Graduate Students

Elizabeth Bishop arrived at Emory from upstate New York with a BA from SUNY Oswego in History and English. She is refining her interests in Critical Theory, Lacanian Psychoanalysis, and American and British Literature. She will study German over the summer and hopefully finish Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. However, she will set it aside to baby-sit your children if you need her to (or cats).



Derrick D. Cohens holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas- Fayetteville, a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Arkansas- Little Rock, and a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Wyoming. His research interests include Twentieth-Century American Literature and Twentieth-Century African American Literature, intellectual history, queer theory, and black queer studies.



Tina Colvin graduated from the University of West Florida in Pensacola, Florida in May, 2008, with a Bachelor of Arts in English. Her primary interests include 20th and 21st-century American literature with an emphasis on post-war and post-atrocity fiction, as well as postmodern stylistics, post-WWII global art cinema, and trauma theory.



James Howard specializes in medieval and early modern literature. He comes from Clarksville, TN, a decent-sized city where Robert Penn Warren went to high school, and, during his own high school days, was fortunate enough to attend the Governor's School for the Humanities. He then attended the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. After being forced to specialize by his advisors, he settled on English Literature and Mathematics. His primary literary interests drifted back in time with a succession of classes, progressing through modernism, Romanticism, the Enlightenment, the Renaissance, and finally into the medieval period. At that point, he wrote a thesis on the feminine quest in "The Tale of Sir Gareth" in *Le Morte Darthur*, graduated, and came to Emory. Currently, he is primarily interested in medieval conceptions of sexuality, the art of allusion, and medieval adaptation.



Diana Louis is originally from Delray Beach, Florida. Prior to coming to Emory she studied at Cornell University where she received a B.A in English and Africana Studies with a minor in Education. As a Mellon Mays Fellow at Cornell she conducted research on Multicultural Curriculum and Pedagogy. Her research interests center around issues of race, class, and gender in 19th and 20th century Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean literatures and cultures as well as Swahili language, literatures, and cultures.



Brent Dawson and **Asha French** have also joined the graduate program.

Skin Deep

When I was asked to write about my interest in Renaissance drama and sensory scholarship, my thoughts immediately turned to a class discussion a few years ago of Thomas Preston's *Cambises*, a once popular but now obscure play, which represents one of the first tragedies written for the Elizabethan stage. As I talked with students about this "tyrant-king" drama, I emphasized its difference from works composed only a few decades later, like *King Lear* and Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, which think about sovereignty in remarkably complex ways. As it happened, however, my students had little interest in talking about kingship. Instead they wanted to discuss something I had mentioned only in passing—namely, that Preston's King Cambises sentences a corrupt judge to death by flaying. More precisely, they wanted to know whether this particularly gruesome form of execution had been simulated onstage. Caught off guard by the question, I responded by reminding them that notions of theatrical verisimilitude won't get us very far with Preston's play, which happily mixes figures from ancient history like Cambises and the judge Sisamnes with fictional clowns named Huf, Ruf, and Snuf and allegorical characters such as Diligence and Shame. While the Renaissance stage is no stranger to scenes of bodily mutilation, I added, there is no reason to assume that *Cambises* enacted anything like a real flaying.

This vague response to the students' queries might have ended the matter had I not realized that, thanks to the wonders of digital technology, we could easily call up a first edition of *Cambises* in our smart classroom. So we did. And when we examined the text together, I realized just how wrong I had been. We found out that the text of *Cambises* is at times acutely attentive to the claims of realism. Indeed, unlike most early English dramas, the text furnishes information about exactly the kind of dramaturgical questions that

interested my students. For example, at one point, the text enjoins an actor to "Smite [another] in the neck with a sword to signify his death," and it also includes the notation "a little bladder of vinegar pricked" by way of explanation for another very bloody scene. More to the point, when we looked at the scene in which Cambises orders the judge's execution, we discovered that the text clearly indicates that the flaying scene should be staged; moreover, it includes a simple instruction that I continue to find fascinating: "Flay him with a false skin."

In the classroom that day, this stage direction actually stopped me in my tracks, for I quickly saw that I couldn't answer any of the questions that it raised and that my students immediately articulated. What's a false skin? How exactly was the flaying enacted? How was the skin of the flayed man represented? And what were spectators meant to see as existing beneath the skin? Although I could not then answer such questions, I am grateful to my students, for they ultimately led me to realize that *Cambises* registers what was, in fact, a widespread cultural obsession in the early modern period—one that is manifest not only in a range of better known dramas but also in contemporary paintings (for example, Titian's extraordinary depiction of the myth of the Flaying of Marsyas [1575-6]), in anatomy texts (such as the *écorchées* in which figures are displayed with skin in hand) and in medical and philosophical texts that, following Aristotle, seek to understand the nature and precise location of the sense of touch.

As *Cambises* makes clear, explorations of the nature of touch and the properties of human skin become especially rich and strange when they are taken up in an arena as deeply invested in practices of simulation as is the early modern theater. How, after all, are we to understand the "false

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skin” referred to in the text of *Cambises*? Even if one takes a most literal approach to the matters raised by the stage direction and surmises that, in this case, the false skin must have been an animal skin, one is left with questions. Why might the theater be interested in exploring the liminal area where animal meets human precisely as it depicts a scene of intense suffering? Is this scene gesturing toward the question of the animal? That is, might it be thinking about whether humans are distinguished from animals by our capacity to feel pain? In substituting animal hide for human skin, is the play asking us to recognize a difference between two categories or is it rather dissolving the possibility of such a distinction?

By placing skin center stage and then defining its representation as false, *Cambises* also gestures toward larger questions about identity that are, I think, crucial to many early modern texts. To invoke a false skin is, of course, to suggest deceit, and with *Cambises* there is something unmistakably appropriate about the treacherous man’s execution occurring by means of a stage property identified with falsehood. Yet even as one notes the suitability of the prop, one is left with a seemingly unanswerable question: What is a true skin? Is it a skin that truly represents one’s identity? But how can skin mark one’s distinctiveness after it has been removed, as it were, from one’s person? Moreover, while skin is often understood as the marker of personhood, might it not also be understood as a kind of covering over of identity? And what are we to make of the relationship between skin and pain that any enactment of flaying surely evokes? Can a false skin signify true pain?

As I have come to realize, concern with skin—and the use of animal skins—is pervasive on the Renaissance stage. Plays by many dramatists (including Shakespeare, the glover’s son) are teeming with references to a wide variety of hides as well as to the animal origins of materials like gloves, shoes, and parchment. Think, for example, of Hamlet’s graveyard query to Horatio, “Is not parchment made of sheepskins?” While playwrights like John Webster may well have had the capacity to “see the skull beneath the skin,” as T. S. Eliot famously claimed, they also often lingered on the surfaces of the body. To cite just

a few examples, they imagine poisons that kill through absorption, female cosmetic practices that “flay” smallpox scars, and racial differences that are expressed in the texture as well as the color of skin. They evoke birthmarks and skin diseases and touchstones and touchpowder and healing by touch. Above all, perhaps, they return again and again to the skin as a locale for painful and pleasurable sensations and conjure up scenes in which individuals are wounded or “touched to the quick.” Consider, if you will, the extraordinary skin-exchange articulated in Thomas Middleton and William’s Rowley’s revenge tragedy *The Changeling* when one character laments that the woman whose glove he has obtained would “rather wear [his] pelt tanned in a pair of dancing pumps than he should thrust his fingers into her sockets.”

In short, though *Cambises* is no longer much read or taught, I have found it essential to my recent teaching and scholarship, for with its scene of flaying and false skin, it has the effect of making perfectly obvious something often overlooked: Renaissance drama was profoundly preoccupied with the representation of skin and cutaneous sensation. The questions that most engage me now have to do with understanding how cultural productions so deeply interested in skin—and in the feelings with which skin is so often associated—have come to be understood as somehow existing beyond the realm of the senses. For evidence of this latter view, we need look no further than Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, the 1932 dystopian novel that imagined a state bureaucracy responsible for creating the “feelies”—that is, films that enabled spectators not merely to see images and hear voices, but to feel everything on the screen through their senses. Crucially, Huxley is at pains to emphasize that these “feelies” are a degraded alternative to the High Art that he identifies with Shakespearean dramas such as *Othello*. Deconstructing the oppositions implicit in Huxley’s text—most obviously that between Renaissance tragedy as the bearer of some affect beyond touch and putatively inferior works that merely engender sensation—I am currently exploring why it is that we assume that the early modern theater is merely metaphorical in its touch. How did it happen that *Othello*—a play about the

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Graduate Student News

JOHN M. PECK presented a paper "Painting and the Work of History in Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*" at the 2008 International Conference on Romanticism at Oakland University (Oct. 16-19, 2008). He also presented a paper, "Hawthorne's Wordsworth: Romantic Allusions and Literary Identity in *The Scarlet Letter*," on December 1, 2008, as part of Emory's 2008-2009 European Studies Seminar. In May he will present a paper, "Putting 'The Thorn' in Hawthorne: Wordsworth and Atlantic Literature in *The Scarlet Letter*," at the 2009 North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Conference. John also received a fellowship from the Correspondence of Samuel Beckett Project for 2009-2010.

JENNY HEIL will be participating in the Futures of American Studies Institute this summer at Dartmouth where she plans to present a paper on James Fenimore Cooper's *Mercedes of Castile*.

MARC MUNEAL presented a paper entitled "Cleanliness, Godliness, Blackness: Color and Cholera in Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*" at the annual conference of the Nineteenth Century Studies Association in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was also recently awarded the Huntington's W.M. Keck Foundation Fellowship to do research for one month at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. Marc also received a Mellon Graduate Teaching Fellowship at Morehouse College for 2009-2010.

SARAH SCHIFF's article "Recovering (from) the Double: Fiction as Historical Revision in Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred*" was published in the Spring 2009 issue of *Arizona Quarterly*. Sarah also received an Emory Graduate Dissertation Teaching Fellowship for 2009-2010.

ERIN SELLS reviewed Jo Alyson Parker's *Narrative Form and Chaos Theory in Sterne, Proust, Woolf and Faulkner* in the most recent issue of the *Woolf Studies Annual*. She also reviewed Lucia

Perillo's *I've Heard the Vultures Singing: Field Notes on Poetry, Illness, and Nature* in Issue #14 of *The Other Journal: Intersections of Theology and Culture*. Erin is teaching as an adjunct instructor at Agnes Scott College in Spring 2009, teaching an introduction to literature course on the topic of "Sound and Fury." Erin has also been offered a Visiting Assistant Professorship in English at Emory.

CLAIRE LAVILLE presented a paper called "'Watch me': Self-mutilation and the ethics of spectatorship" at the annual conference of the Universities Art Association of Canada in November.

SIMON KRESS presented a paper titled "Delighting in the Pain of Others: Edmund Burke and the Troubles" at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference in Richmond in March. Also in March, he presented a paper titled "Hearing Is Believing: Seamus Heaney, Music, and Thomas Moore" at the American Conference for Irish Studies Southern Regional conference in Chattanooga. His poem "Metamorphosen" was selected as a finalist for the Agnes Scott Festival poetry prize, and he has two poems forthcoming in the journal *Sub-Lit*.

ELIZABETH CHASE presented a paper entitled "In search of an 'authentic sign': women's commemorative practices in the work of Deirdre Madden," at NEMLA in February and participated in the CHI Colloquium "International Modernisms between the Wars" in April, speaking on "Big house memories of the Anglo-Irish War in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*." She has received a Woodruff Library Graduate Student Fellowship for 2009-2010.

ROOPIKA RISAM will be presenting at the 2009 Latin American Studies Association Congress, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 11-14, and her paper

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Thoreau's Bed

The three chairs in Henry David Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond have become famous: "One for solitude, two for friendship, three for society." But although he tells us he had a bed, he says almost nothing about it.

This is surprising, because in a serious sense, Thoreau went to Walden not to sit down and chat but to get a good night's sleep. Living deliberately, fronting only the essential facts of existence, sucking the marrow out of life, living sturdily and Spartan-like, knowing what is mean and what is sublime – apparently none of these things can be done if one is "overcome with drowsiness" or if one's waking is induced by "mechanical aids." Throughout *Walden*—and especially in the oft-anthologized chapter "Where I Lived and What I Lived For"—Thoreau protests against the incursion of industrial time (being awakened by "factory bells") by highlighting its disruption of natural body patterns (rising to the sound of one's own "celestial music"). Industrialism has its own time, measured by the coming and going of the trains, and our bodies have another. Ultimately, the industrial world addicts us to its pleasures, which are really so many little traps to keep us awake enough to manage its machines and buy its products. Anticipating the 24/7 new cycle, Thoreau writes of a man who "takes a half-hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, 'What's the news?'" Most of us, he goes on, can hardly bear waking up without opening the paper; but in order to do this we must perk ourselves up with "coffee and tea." Elsewhere, he counsels a poor neighbor to give up "tea

and coffee" (as well as meat and butter), which "waste his system" and force him to "sustain the slavery and war and other superfluous expenses which directly or indirectly result from the use of such things."

Thoreau perceived modernity as a world of un-asleep, un-awake zombies, hooked onto machines, fuelled by electric jolts delivered by caffeinated beverages and sensational news stories, blindly purchasing and consuming, and occasionally being run over by the machines to which they are

enslaved as they walk in a somnambulist trance across the tracks. As such, his trip to Walden might serve as a protest not solely against social conformity, wasteful consumption, and the emerging capitalist system – as has often been noted – but against the modern commodification of sleep and wakefulness. Sleeping and waking: late stage capitalism has exploited these natural resources in ways that would have given Thoreau nightmares, as pharmaceutical companies, coffee chains, and mattress manufacturers have all figured out novel ways to produce bodies capable of servicing the ever-running machines. Glo-

balization – with its call centers in India ready to help you configure your modem at 3 a.m., and its jet-setting capitalists whose sleep cycles have come permanently untethered from time zones – only further blurs the line between sleep and wakefulness that Thoreau saw being eroded 150 years ago.

Thoreau imagined a world where he could wake in harmony with nature: "Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me." Implicitly,



he suggests that returning to an earlier mode of living – one that was not perturbed by the screech of the train or the necessity to hop aboard en route to one’s job in the factory – would return us to a world of healthful sleep and vital awakening. Contemporary historians would question that assumption. According to Roger Ekirch, sleep in the early modern period was no bed of roses. If your job was town crier, for instance, you might need to keep yourself awake by singing songs or ringing little bells; and if that didn’t wake up your neighbors, then crying out the presence of an intruder certainly would. The poor, in particular, had to take jobs that kept them up all night: baking bread, emptying cesspools, picking rags from the street, selling their bodies. Going back even further in human and natural history, it is hard to think of a time that would have been better for sleeping than the “restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth Century” from which Thoreau sought to remove himself. In 1850 in Boston at night, you probably wouldn’t have had to worry about a wild animal stealing you from a cave; if you were rich, your gas heat might have allowed you to sleep without having to throw more logs on the fire in winter; trains and canals probably brought you enough cheap food to keep your belly from rumbling all night.

In reality, Thoreau’s yearning for a perfect night’s sleep is as much a product of his time as were the industrial developments he railed against. The search for perfect sleep patterns could only have been dreamt up in a society confident of its own powers to control the environment it had helped create. Benjamin Franklin might represent the beginning of this era: He found it “healthy, wealthy, and wise” to control his sleep; he also wanted to control the night itself by installing outdoor gas lanterns along Philadelphia’s streets. Closer to Thoreau’s time and closer in some ways to his project, the first great wave of insane asylum construction was impelled by a belief that civilization and modernity had victims, but it also produced the means to compensate for their injuries. As Edward Jarvis, a chief promoter of the new asylums, wrote: “With the increase of wealth and fashion there comes also, more artificial life, more neglect of the natural laws, of self-government, [and] more unseasonable hours for food and for sleep.” All of these modern developments

threw the body and the mind out of their natural rhythms, and the modern asylum, through its strict temporal and spatial regulations, was his mechanism for restoring that balance. For Thoreau, the mechanism was going to Walden. But Thoreau differs from his early psychiatric contemporaries in proposing to liberate the sleeping body from regulation rather than trying to approximate a natural state through social and medical control. Whereas asylum physicians prescribed sleeping medications, punished patients who slept excessively, and even hovered over patients in bed to make sure they were not masturbating, Thoreau wanted to return sleep to a zone free of regulation other than the internal laws of our own “genius.”

Why, then, not at least describe his bed? There is something, finally, squeamish about Thoreau’s representations of sleep. Sleep is never portrayed as pleasurable; being fully awake (“To be awake is to be alive”) for him is the goal of life. He slept alone – apparently throughout his life – and that might be one factor. But leaving sex aside, were there other reasons to be afraid of going to bed? For many romantic writers – Hawthorne, Poe, Wordsworth – sleep is about loss of control, about a nightly descent into oblivion or the realm of dark inspiration bordering on madness. As far back as literary history goes, writers have tried to peer into the world of sleep to find its revelations of another world, sometimes frightening, sometimes titillating, sometimes revelatory. This could be a religious quest, as it was for authors of medieval dream poetry; a secular curiosity, as it was for Montaigne, who wrote of struggling to record the content of his dreams after he woke up; or a phenomenological or scientific inquiry, as depicted artfully in recent films like Richard Linklater’s *Waking Life* and Michel Gondry’s *The Science of Sleep*. All of these works try to pry open the door that locks when we wake; Thoreau never seems even to want to look in through the keyhole. He wants, above all, to control his world; to let go is to risk joining the ranks of somnambulistic zombies who never question what is happening to them: the mass of men who live lives of quiet desperation.

I hope one day to write a history of sleep which will explore how writers and thinkers made sense of those inner worlds of sleep over time, as

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his or her own material; in the future, researchers may be able to sit down at a computer that replicates the day-to-day activity of a writer such as Salman Rushdie and see with intense precision what was written or altered and when. And technology is changing not only the type of material available in the archive, but also the sensory experience of such work. It is common now to hear the tapping of keys on a researcher's laptop or the soft but persistent click of a digital camera.

Researchers may also hear a documentary being filmed, a curator giving a gallery talk, or someone teaching an instruction session to graduate or undergraduate students. For many students, such sessions are their first experience in an archive, and it moves from being a passive, auditory experience to a participatory, tactile one. Coming to the archives can feel a bit like entering a museum, and they expect "do not touch" signs. When they discover that they may, in fact, touch the manuscripts or rare books before them, they are at once eager and hesitant, often handling the materials with a certain reverence. What archival materials impress upon them is the materiality of writing. We are brought into greater contact with a writer and with his or her emotions and thoughts as we examine a manuscript and see where pen was pressed, in anger, frustration or excitement, or see a sheet that has been torn, crumpled, pressed flat and pieced back together. The tactile and visual sensation of such materials enhances our sense of the immediacy of literature, of the writer's volatile and urgent quest to convey meaning. For students, to see and to touch an author's draft or handle a book that he or she once owned, is to

gain an appreciation for the work of literary production. There is something about the experience of handling old books, paging through Civil War diaries, or deciphering manuscript lines that draws students in. Once they are hooked, they begin to seek out ways to return and to incorporate into their own writing the materials that make them feel closer to the writers whose work they study. They begin to see in them not simply an assignment, but an intellectual and sensory experience that is uniquely engaging and invigorating.

Of course, it is nearly impossible to talk about the sensory experiences of archival work without also talking about the attendant intellectual experience. Struggling to read someone's particularly bad handwriting is time well spent when one discovers that one piece of information that will help to solidify a unique and relevant argument. The process of archival work is one of discovery, and sometimes, it is a painful process. Not all of the sensory experiences of archival work are pleasant ones. Not all the chairs are comfortable; during an extended research project, sitting in them for nearly eight hours a day, five or six days a week, results in a fair number of aches and pains. But the benefits nearly always outweigh a few backaches, cramped muscles, or overtired eyes. The intellectual reward of finding that one piece—or, if we're really lucky, the several pieces—of uniquely useful information proves the distinct appeal of archival research.

Elizabeth Chase is a graduate student in the Emory English program and an archivist at MARBL, the Manuscript and Rare Books Library.

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me when I first tried to write a story again. It was almost a rebirth of some sort. But nowadays, my process of writing itself is not the unusual thing anymore--it's the content that I indulge in. I find that I simply cannot write about anything other than those adolescent years spent on the other side of the world. Every time I pick up a new thread of narration, I find myself reliving it entirely. And in this way, I think I've come full circle. Writing has allowed me to use the cultural shock of mov-

ing between continents to my greatest advantage. Having been both immersed and distant from it, I am a far better writer than had I lived otherwise.

At Emory, my biology major covers my interest in medicine, but my English/Creative Writing major pays homage to all those experiences that have shaped me. Some say it's an unusual combination. I think it was only natural.

Samyukta Mullangi is an Emory undergraduate who is majoring in English/Creative Writing.

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best ideas you ever had?” While this qualitative research won’t tell us what thought is, people’s intuitions about their mental processes may suggest future experiments and offer insights not revealed by empirical research. I suspect that people talented in visual or verbal thinking enter professions and choose friends who develop ideas in similar ways, so that in our respective departments we get the idea that everyone thinks the way we do. With complete confidence, a neuroscientist and former football player once told me that human thought had developed from hand-eye coordination, whereas a prominent literary theorist looked at me skeptically when I questioned whether thought was language. What else could it be?

I do not think entire fields of learning are “visual” or “verbal,” since within them individuals and projects vary greatly. In professional presentations, the natural sciences favor images over words. On the Society for Neuroscience webpage, for instance, poster-presenters are told to “minimize narrative.” At a meeting of 30,000 scientists, where scholars will be presenting their work in a space 1.7 meters wide and 1.1 high, these directions make good sense. At a gathering of literary scholars, on the other hand, audiences expect well-crafted texts, and talks improvised around series of images are often considered light-weight. These standards may reflect disciplinary values, but they don’t reveal individual researchers’ thought styles.

Recently, Elaine Scarry’s and Ellen Esrock’s work has shown the relevance of imaging to literary studies. Esrock argues that trends in psycholo-

gy, philosophy, and literary studies have convinced critics that mental images are at best irrelevant to reading, and at worst, detrimental. Since the rise of New Criticism until very recently, most literary scholars have felt that focusing on the images one forms while reading leads readers away from the text. Esrock disagrees, contending that critics should pay attention to readers’ images because they are an essential part of the way people make sense out of words on a page.

Scarry has gone even further, calling literary works “sets of instructions for mental composition.” Rather than distracting readers from interpreting literature, she believes, the images people form while reading shape their sense of its meaning. According to Scarry, masterful writers give directions on how to visualize so that readers imagine scenes as if they were actually perceiving them (244).

Teaching literature and writing gives us an extraordinary opportunity to study the way the human mind constructs meaning. Probably all of us explore possibilities and solve problems with words and images, but most of us are more skillful with one than with the other. Since words can be seen as well as heard, “visual” and “verbal” can’t be seen as separate categories. As a teacher, though, I listen carefully to students telling me they can see their ideas but not verbalize them. From their drawings and from the intense looks in their eyes, I can see how much I have to learn. *Laura Otis is Professor of English in the Department and is also the guest editor of this issue.*

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erotics of the hand and the handkerchief, about the difference that skin color makes, about deaths that arrive by means of the hand—should come to stand for a drama devoid of the senses? In the field of Renaissance drama, there is now a burgeoning scholarship on the history of the five senses. By scrutinizing early modern explorations of skin, we will soon have the materials for a richer history of tactility. And soon, I hope, we will also be better able to understand what it may have meant—and what it may mean now—to be “touched” by a play.

Patricia Cahill is Associate Professor of English.

Loose Canons

Loose Canons is published three times a year by the Department of English at Emory University.

Guest Editor	<i>Laura Otis</i>
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during recent election cycles. But I think it's most likely that undergraduates respond enthusiastically to Victorian Sensation fiction because it offers, in one melodramatic package, an opportunity to combine the different ways we ask them to read literary texts.

Sensation fiction embodies a fairly specific literary form, a narrative that combines the conventions of melodrama and detective fiction. On a formal level, then, the texts allow us to compare the features of different iterations of the novel, especially in contrast to the features of the period's most canonical novelistic form – realism. Further, precisely because these novels are outside the boundaries of the Victorian canon, they allow us to talk about the mechanisms of canon formation. This can be addressed either aesthetically (e.g., characterization vs. plot) or politically (philosophically engaged literature vs. mass culture literature); ultimately, the aesthetic and the political components of canon formation can be combined (why should the development of psychology be more critically valorized than the crafting of plot?)

The latter portion of this conversation starts shifting our perspective on the text from one that apprehends the novels as literary products to one that considers them historical artifacts that provide insight into the moment of their production. Here, sensation fiction really provides a way into

the ideological forces of the period. The critical clamor around the phenomenon invites us to evaluate more than the aesthetics of the novels; I ask students to consider the significance of the novels' authors and readers being predominantly female and what that tells about the fears surrounding transgressive women. We also consider the significance of the novels' popularity among middle-class readers combined with their recurring content of class-transgressing women who faked their way into being upwardly mobile; anxieties about the pliability of classed identity and the appropriate shapers of literary culture are telegraphed in the novels and the discourse around them.

Finally, the hysterical critical response to sensation fiction gives students a way to connect the nineteenth-century novels to their own cultural moment in which they very often hear about which film or music video either threatens the sanctity of the family or evidences the degraded nature of the artistic climate. They understand the phenomenon of backlash against enormously popular texts. Analysis of sensation fiction allows them to consider the ways that backlash says more about the cultural climate than it does about the text in question. All of that, delivered in a beach-reading package, makes for a fine addition to any syllabus or any bag of beach reading.

Rachel Bowser is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department and also a 2008 graduate of the program.

Graduate Student News continued from page 11 is called "Assata in La Habana: Intersections of Afro-Cuban Culture and Black Power in Gloria Rolando's *Eyes of the Rainbow*."

REBECCA KUMAR has an essay forthcoming, "Quiet Colonialism: Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*" in *Thirty Years After: New Essays on Vietnam War Literature, Film, and Art*, to be published by Cambridge University Press.

SHANNON HIPPI's essay, "'Things of the Same Kind that are Separated Only by Time': Reading the Notebooks of Medbh McGuckian" is going to be published in the Summer 2009 issue of *Irish University Review*, due out in June. My paper "Cribs and Collaborations in the Poetry of Nuala

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Ni Dhomhnaill" is going to be published in the collection *New Voices in Irish Criticism*, also due out in the coming months.

MICHELLE MILES received a Mellon Graduate Teaching Fellowship at Clark Atlanta University for 2009-2010.

JENNIFER BRADY received a Center for Humanistic Inquiry dissertation fellowship for 2009-2010.

JENNIFER HUGHES has accepted a tenure-track position at Young Harris College.

RACHEL BOWSER has accepted a tenure-track position at University of South Carolina Beaufort.

Faculty News

SALLY WOLFF KING lectured on Eudora Welty at the Sidney Lanier Cottage in Macon, GA, on April 14 and will chair a panel discussion at the Welty Centennial Celebration in Jackson, Mississippi.

A reading of JOSEPH SKIBELL's new play *10 Faces* was included in Emory Theater's Brave New Works Festival in February, and he also gave a reading from his new novel, *A Curable Romantic*, (scheduled for publication from Algonquin Books in 2010) at the Atlanta Limmud Festival in March.

DEBORAH ELISE WHITE's essay "The Burning Library: Benjamin, Hugo, and the Critique of Violence" will appear in the Spring 2009 issue of *European Romantic Review*. In March, she delivered a paper entitled "Inopportunities: Derrida with Lenin" at the annual conference of the American Comparative Literature Association hosted at Harvard.

MARK BAUERLEIN published commentaries and reviews in *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Weekly Standard*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Education Next*, and he edited *National Endowment for the Arts: A History, 1965-2008*, which appeared in February.

MARTINE WATSON BROWNLEY has received the 2009 Governor's Award in the Humanities for her scholarship, outreach and advocacy of the liberal arts as the founding director of Emory's

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well as how their ideas and representations related to changes in the outer world surrounding and conditioning sleep. Sleep is arguably the most private thing we do each day (we can be observed sleeping, but our sleep can't be observed, not even by our waking selves), and yet it has a social dimension. Wars, disasters, famines: These all affect the way we sleep, as do changing economic conditions, new technologies, scientific advances, and

Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry (FCHI).

WALTER KALAJIAN gave an invited lecture at Columbia University on "Traumatic Visuality in *Black Dog of Fate*." He also published an essay entitled "Cary Nelson: Expanding the Canon of American Poetry," in *Cary Nelson and the Struggle for the University: Poetry, Politics, and the Profession*, ed. Michael Rothberg and Peter Garrett (SUNY Press, 2009).

WILLIAM DILLINGHAM's book, *Being Kipling*, was published in September 2008 by Palgrave Macmillan.

WALTER REED has contributed an article on Mikhail Bakhtin to *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* being published by de Gruyter (online version launched Dec., 2008). He has also been invited to contribute a chapter on "Continental Influences on the Novel in England" to a forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. Alan Downie. (His proposed subtitle is "The English Improve What Others Invent.") He anticipates finishing soon *Possible Persons: A Theory of Romanticism in the Light of Bakhtin*, a book which has hitherto resisted finalization. And he has contributed a personal essay, "A Ritual of Family Reading," to Emory's new online *Journal of Family Life*, which was launched on May 1.

the availability of stimulants and depressants. Like Thoreau, I think of the way we sleep as an index of the way we live. But I'd also like to entertain a possibility that he was afraid to face: that its rich, sensuous, mysterious world might be valued on its own terms rather than as a gateway to better waking.

Benjamin Reiss is Associate Professor of English and the Department's Director of Graduate Studies.

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Medieval Monstrous” at the 2009 “Meeting in the Middle” conference held at Longwood University (VA) on March 27-29.

KATHRYN CROWTHER (PhD '08) recently had her article “Charlotte Brontë’s Textual Relics: Memorializing the Material in *Villette*” accepted for publication in *Brontë Studies*. It will appear in the spring 2010 issue. Katy is currently a Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow at Georgia Institute of Technology.

GREG JOHNSON (PhD '79) just published an essay review on Flannery O’Connor called “Flannery Fever” in the Spring issue of *The Georgia Review*.

LILLIAN CRATON (PhD '06) received the Young Faculty Teaching Award at Lander University. She also had a book chapter come into print in 2008, *Other Mothers* edited by Rosenman & Klaver and published by Ohio State University Press.

SU FANG NG (MA '96) will be a Donald D. Harrington Faculty Fellow at the University of Texas, Austin in the coming academic year 2009-10.

AIMEE POZORSKI (PhD '03) earned tenure and promotion to associate professor at Central Connecticut State University.

JENNIFER NESBITT (PhD '99) published two articles recently: “Under the Influence: Thinking Through Rum” in *ARIEL* 39.3 (July 2008) and “Race, Identity, and Genre in Sujata Massey’s *Rei Shimura* Series” in *Clues: A Journal of Detection* 27.1 (Spring 2009).

EVELYN HALLER (PhD '68), Professor of English and Chair of the Fine Arts/Humanities Division at Doane College near Lincoln, Nebraska, is among 25 contributors to *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* edited by Maggie Humm, which Edinburgh University Press will publish in April 2010. Haller’s chapter is on Woolf and dance. Haller will present a paper, “Willa Cather as an Inter-Ocean Modernist Grounded in the Classical Past Juxtaposed with the Chicago Sculptor Lorado Taft and His Art,” 18/Loose Canons/Spring 2009

at “Cather, Chicago, and Modernism,” sponsored by the University of Nebraska, at the University Center, Chicago, June 25-28, 2009. Haller will also present a paper, “Pound, Woolf, and Yeats: An Unexpected Confluence,” at “ROMA AMOR: Pound, Love, and Rome,” the Twenty-third International Ezra Pound Seminar in Rome, Italy, June 30 – July 4, 2009.

MAGALI MICHAEL (PhD '90) presented “Imagining the Other/Terrorist as Human: McEwan’s Gesturing toward the Ethical in *Saturday*,” at The Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900, Louisville, Kentucky, Feb. 19-21, 2009. She will also present “An Anti-War Novel for the 21st Century: Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*” at the International Conference on Narrative, Birmingham, UK, June 4-6, 2009.

BILL WANDLESS (PhD '02) has published new poetry in *Peregrine*, *The Roanoke Review*, *Compass Rose*, *Whiskey Island*, and *Red Rock Review*. His short story, “The Way of All Wishes,” appears in the third issue of *Shroud* as the winner of the magazine’s Photo Flash Fiction contest. He has been awarded a Summer Faculty Scholars grant by Central Michigan University to complete his first collection of verse, and he has also received the 2009 Distinguished Faculty Member Award, conferred by Central Michigan’s chapter of Sigma Tau Delta.

YOLANDA M. MANORA (Ph.D. '02) has been awarded tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of English at the University of Alabama.

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the first to concede, however, that for the unlucky poets whose words are commandeered, arguments like these seem cold comfort; I might as well wish for my car to be stolen by Richard Petty just so it could be driven by more capable hands.)

Earlier ages were characteristically more tolerant of plagiarism, and I say with some nostalgia that they may have been more sensible about it

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than we are. Few may have cared when Shakespeare recycled Plutarch (in fact, the word “plagiarize” does not appear in English until 1621), but it is obvious that honor codes and copyright laws have done little to deter writers from grazing on the literary commons. In April, 2006, the Harvard Crimson drew attention to the numerous plagiarisms in Kaavya Viswanathan’s popular novel, *How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild, and Got a Life*; Michael O’Neill, a Bush nominee in 2008 for the Federal District Court in Washington, was discovered to have “appropriated without attribution” substantial portions of an article he published in 2004 from a book review written in 2000 by another law professor; in 2002, the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin reached a private settlement with Lynne McTaggart, who claimed that numerous phrases and sentences from her own biography of the Kennedys had been plagiarized by Goodwin; and in 1986 Ronald Reagan slipped two lines of John Magee’s sonnet, “High Flight,” into his speech mourning the astronauts who lost their lives in the space shuttle Challenger: “We will never forget them,” Reagan said, “nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved good-bye and slipped the surly bonds of earth to touch the face of God.” (I watched that television broadcast when Reagan spoke those words, though at the time I did not know that he was channeling Magee, and I remember saying in amazement to my wife: “My God, the man is speaking in iambic pentameter.”)

That speech of Reagan’s is considered to be one of the great presidential speeches of history. We call it Reagan’s speech, and historians a thousand years from now will call it Reagan’s speech, even though Reagan didn’t write it. It was written by Peggy Noonan. Even more strange, Noonan herself sees nothing wrong in having her words—some of which, of course, were not her words—taken over by another person. “Ted Sorenson wrote Jack Kennedy’s inaugural address,” she says. “But in no way was that Ted’s speech. . . . The President inhaled it. . . absorbed it in its entirety. . . . And then he spoke it. And in the speaking owned it forever.” (I like to picture the scene if this defense were adopted by a student brought before the members of Emory’s Honor Council: “It’s not plagiarism because after I pasted that

paragraph into my paper I inhaled it.”)

I know that because I teach writing I’m supposed to condemn plagiarism with the fervor of a medieval inquisitor. But I can’t be that certain I’m right to do so. The modern idea of “plagiarism” develops out of long and complex histories of artistic emulation, professionalized authorship, and property law, and I have misgivings whenever I hold students to one standard but the authors I teach them to admire seem to follow another. Bertolt Brecht’s *Threepenny Opera* is by any account one of the masterpieces of twentieth century drama. Yet that play exists only by way of a network of intertextual and interpersonal thievery. Elizabeth Hauptmann translated into German a play written in English in 1728 by John Gay, and Brecht then staged Hauptmann’s adaptation as his own creation, successfully marketing it to a contemporary audience in a way that a relatively unknown woman writer would not then have been able to do. (“In literature, as in life,” the Marxist Brecht is said to have remarked, “I do not recognize the existence of private property.”) So who do I tell my classes wrote *Dreigroschenoper*? Not Brecht—or at least, not only Brecht, who, if you believe John Fuegi in *Brecht and Company*, seems to have contributed to the play little more than a brand name or trademark.

This is not to say that teachers of writing can’t ask their students to reflect on what constitutes honest achievement and what constitutes a betrayal of the trust we all owe one another. But plagiarism, or something very close to plagiarism, has often been an important component of literary production, and it’s disingenuous not to be open about it. How should we enjoin students from doing what many of the writers they come to college to read and to emulate have done? The intimate relationship between creativity and theft—*Henry VI* could not now be published because more than two thirds of Shakespeare’s lines were either copied verbatim or paraphrased from other sources—is wholly disavowed in our particular fiction of originality. When we teach writing I think we should start with the truth: writers are scavengers, picking over each others’ works like stray cats round a dump. If we want our students to be honest, we should maybe first be honest with them.

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An Apology for Plagiarism: Or, Nothing New Under the Sun

I have plagiarized the plagiarists of Sterne, who plagiarized Swift, who plagiarized Reboul, who plagiarized Guillaume des Autels, who plagiarized Rabelais, who plagiarized Morus, who plagiarized Erasmus, who plagiarized Lucian—or Lucius of Patras or Apuleius—for you can't tell which one of these three stole from the other two.—Charles Nodier, in an essay published in the Bulletin du Bibliophile et du Bibliothécaire (Paris, 1835)

Everybody reading this essay will know that both the main and sub-title are stolen. I cribbed the one from Sir Philip Sidney's essay, *An Apology for Poetry* (1595), and I took the other from an essay of the same title published in 1998 by Anne Fadiman, who in turn took her title from one of the translations of Ecclesiastes. Sidney's work has long been in the public domain, so I'm safe on that score. But I'm not expecting a call from the legal staff at Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, because Anne Fadiman isn't the only writer who thought that those five words, commonly attributed to Solomon, were too nifty to pass up. Google "nothing new under the sun" and you can see that the phrase appears in writings by Chaucer, Anne Bradstreet, Thomas Jefferson, Ambrose Bierce, a Missouri band called Coalesce, and David Boleson in a recent blog titled, appropriately, "Nothing New Under the Sun and the Cannibalization of Ideas."

I have sometimes heard people say that plagiarism is *the* cardinal sin for writers: "who steals [my] words," says the poet Neal Bowers, "steals breath and pulse and consciousness." But against such lofty proclamations I find dozens of proofs that the majority of authors have had few scruples when it comes to committing literary larceny. "Authors are like privateers," said Samuel Johnson, "always fair game for one another," and the roll call of literature's best and brightest seems to bear him out. Virgil stole from Ennius and was

proud of it; Shakespeare's famous and lengthy description of Cleopatra—it begins, "the barge she sat in, like a burnished throne"—was lifted almost word-for-word from Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*. Milton filched from Masenius, Sterne from Burton, and Poe (though he himself railed against the "sickening spectacle . . . of the plagiarist") from Benjamin Morrell. Coleridge dumped large amounts of Kant, Schelling, and Schlegel into his *Biographia Literaria*. Melville weighted down the manuscript of *Moby Dick* with huge chunks of quasi-scientific prose on whales penned originally by now-forgotten authors like Thomas Beale, William Scoresby, and Frederick Bennett, and Scott Fitzgerald stole his wife Zelda's diary and copied parts of it in his novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*.

I am among the first to concede that in most of these cases we can overlook the plagiarism because the copy is so much better than the original. When asked why he bothered to riffle through the work of a lesser poet, Virgil said he was "plucking pearls from Ennius' dunghill," and more than eighty generations of poetry lovers have excused him for doing so. Fielding had much the same proprietary attitude as Virgil; so did Dryden, Sterne, and Dumas père, who saw in the act of plagiarism a heroic will to dominate: "The man of genius," Dumas wrote, "does not steal. He conquers, and what he conquers he annexes to his empire." T.S. Eliot carried a similar argument into the twentieth century when he wrote in *The Sacred Wood* that "mature" poets were justified in their thievery because whatever they stole they made better by virtue of their intrinsic poetic superiority: "the good poet," Eliot said, "welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn." (I am also among

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