

# INSIDE TUCKER HALL

## FROM THE CHAIR OF ENGLISH

Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter! Thanks once again to Professor Jennifer Putzi, her team of student journalists (Joel Calfee, Rachel Coombs, and Kiana Espinoza), and Justin Schoonmaker in University Web & Design, for all the work they have put into planning, writing, and designing it.



In the last issue, I told you about the new faculty we welcomed into our community in the fall. Spring is a time of growth and renewal, but also of anticipated goodbyes. We will be very sad to say goodbye at the end of this semester to Kevin Kritsch, Annelise Duerden, Jenna Hunnef and Olaocha Nwabara. We wish them all the best as they pursue new opportunities elsewhere. We will also bid farewell to four colleagues who are retiring in the summer. No brief paragraph can do them justice, so here is just a tiny glimpse of what they have given to our department over many decades. John Conlee has delighted students with his courses on medieval, Arthurian and Celtic literature; Colleen Kennedy has introduced hundreds of students to the wonders of contemporary literature and film, and was the prime mover behind the St Andrews Joint Degree Programme; Nancy Schoenberger has mentored countless young writers in her

poetry and screenwriting workshops; and Sharon Zuber has supported generations of student writers in improving their writing, and in learning video production. We are so sorry to lose them, and we wish them well in their retirement.

In the meantime, the daffodils are opening, the Sunken Garden is filling with students, books, papers, and frisbees, and before you know it, we will be celebrating this year's English graduates. We wish you all the best for the rest of the spring and the summer.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Raitt'.

– Suzanne Raitt

Chancellor Professor of English, Chair of English

# SHAKESPLISH

By Joel Calfee ('20) and Kiana Espinoza ('19)

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When students begin their course of study in the English department at William & Mary, they often commence with the classics of the English literary canon, which includes the ever-daunting task of understanding the work of William Shakespeare. Many professors in the past have sought ways to relate his work to a young and modern audience, but none have ever considered the idea that a misunderstanding of Shakespeare's words may not necessarily be an error, but rather, an opportunity to analyze the evolution of language.

Paula Blank, Renaissance scholar and esteemed member of the English Department who passed away in 2016, tackled this objective in an innovative book that establishes a dialogue between our modern vocabulary and that of Early Modern English speakers. The result is *Shakesplish: How We Read Shakespeare's Language* (Stanford University Press, 2018), a book that is at once insightful and hilarious, declarative, yet open to opposition. The book stands alone as a piece of powerful academic work, while also being emblematic of the sense of community that exists within the English department, as well as within the William & Mary campus as a whole.

Elizabeth Barnes, the best friend and colleague of Paula Blank, was the catalyst for the publication of *Shakesplish*. After discovering the manuscript of the book on Blank's laptop after her death, Barnes decided that the work needed to be published. She described the process as



a "labor of love," and said: "I took on such a bittersweet task because I think it would have made Paula glad."

However, as a scholar of 19th-century American literature, Barnes knew that she could not complete the project alone. She turned to a couple of colleagues who quickly understood the importance of the project and readily agreed to assist. Erin Webster and Erin Minear—the other two Renaissance scholars in the department—offered their time and expertise to the project. Minear, who had worked with Blank in the department for years, wanted to preserve her friend's scholarship. Webster, however, was a new hire who had spent time with Blank during her interview for the position, but had never worked with her. Nevertheless, Webster explained that she was familiar with Blank's work from her

time in graduate school, and she actually referenced Blank's scholarship when she was applying for her current position at William & Mary because she believed Blank's work "inspired an entire generation of students." Minear said, "Liz, Paula and I were the community that hired Erin Webster. So then it felt personal, in that, even though she had met Paula only once or twice, we had a really good rapport.... In some ways like a continuation of that. In a sad way, but also in a community-building sort of way."

While motivation for the project within the English department stemmed from deep respect and friendship between colleagues who worked alongside each other in Tucker Hall, the sense of community and connection to Blank was felt beyond the department. President Katherine Rowe knew her personally, as they had befriended one another in graduate school. Rowe recalls Blank was one of the many reasons why she felt at home at William & Mary. Rowe revealed: "Paula is an important part of why I am at William & Mary. I came to give a talk about 20 years ago, and some members of the department were here then. And it was one of the most fun talks I had ever given. The graduate students, undergrads, faculty, staff were at the talk... And I thought, 'this is what an intellectual community should be.'" Professor Webster added: "it's very serendipitous that Katherine Rowe knew Paula Blank... but it seems fitting."

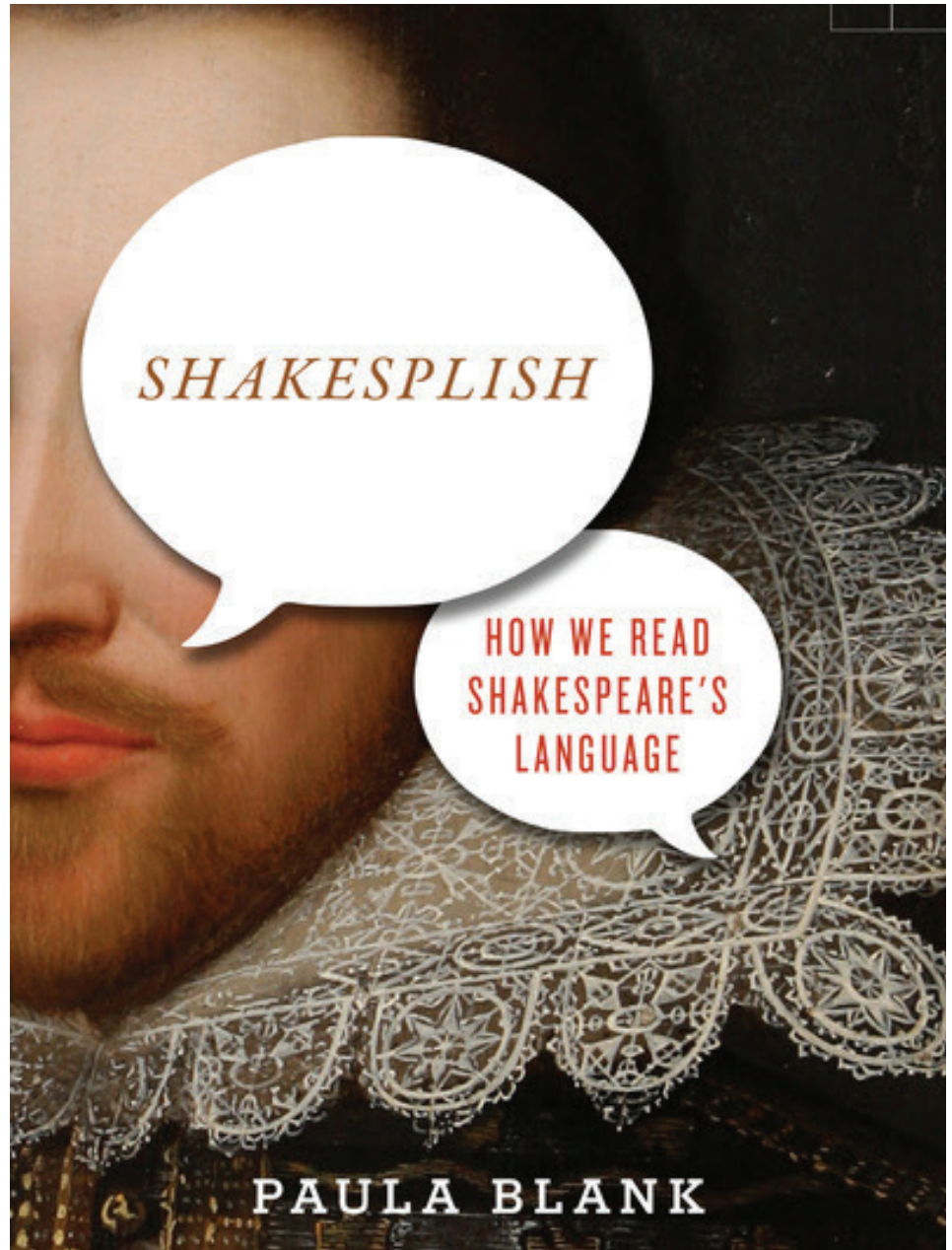
The collaboration between all of these faculty members culminated in the book party that President Rowe held in her home



at the end of January, a celebration of the publication of *Shakesplish*, as well as a commemoration of Blank. Rowe opened this event by saying that Blank “set the standard,” and she helped to establish more of an “interdisciplinary community” among scholars. Professor Barnes said about the book party: “You can see in that room what it meant, what the publication of this book meant to give us a sense of being a unit with Paula. I won’t even call it closure because it’s about keeping her with us. Her book will be downstairs behind the glass with everyone else’s... So, I think people are sort of interested in the camaraderie of the three of us working on this together and the honoring and remembering and missing—so much—of our friend.”

Student efforts were also involved in the publication of *Shakesplish*. Jackie Keshner, a class of 2019 Honors student in the department, also dedicated her time to the project. Keshner said, “Working on this book has been incredibly meaningful. As Professor Barnes was talking about, it truly was a labor of love for her, and also the dedication of the Erins... to bring this book into fruition. And now everyone gets to enjoy Professor Blank’s wonderful insights and... just the love that she put both into the book and into the classroom and into the English community around her.”

The publication of *Shakesplish* not only demonstrates the exceptional work of an intuitive academic, but also shows the ways in which Blank developed relationships with those around her. The way she interacted with her students and fellow faculty members, alongside her intelligence and expertise in her field, brought a community together to share her words with the world. In the book, readers will, of course, discover her intimate knowledge of Shakespearean language, but they will also hear the voice of someone who listened to her students and had a



gift for understanding not just Renaissance literature, but also the interpretations of others.

Professor Barnes said, “Sometimes you lose colleagues and then you lose not only the person that you knew and who was so talented in the classroom; you lose what’s inside their heads... and their particular way of putting things and writing them.” Yet, Barnes, in her labor of love, has ensured that the many novel ideas that were in

Blank’s head will not be lost. Barnes said: “She makes you read [Shakespeare’s] works in a different way and appreciate them in a different way. And not just by saying, ‘Oh this is what he would have meant.’ She’s really good about showing that the things that we think of, they matter, too.”

# HONORS RESEARCH

## IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

By Joel Calfee ('20)

As another school year draws to a close, another set of diligent seniors in the English department are putting the final touches on their Honors Projects. Fourteen seniors have dedicated countless hours to individual research and writing in order to finish up their theses, and the end result will be an essay or a creative piece of writing that will total about fifty pages in length and will be defended in front of an examination committee.

For many of us, especially those students who are considering doing an Honors Thesis, hearing the work that goes into these projects can seem impressive, but also terrifying. Professor Melanie Dawson, the English faculty member who directs the Honors Program, states: "it's like going straight from a swimming pool into the ocean." As Dawson acknowledges, this is a feat that many of these students have never come close to accomplishing in their past, and since "these have to be their *best* fifty pages... they will not even get to use everything they write." Nevertheless, while this accomplishment may seem taxing, the result is supremely satisfying. Not only is this an opportunity to develop an idea in your own direction, but as Dawson says, "you are taking something further.... It's an opportunity for someone to explore some form of pointed knowledge, or even to try to work two majors together."

Anna Wingfield, a senior completing her thesis on the influences of land ownership and the French revolution on the work of William Wordsworth, states: "the most rewarding part of this process has been the rich sense of interconnectedness I've experienced in researching... [and] understanding how our reaction to an issue remains deeply rooted in many different aspects of our lives." Additionally, Wingfield feels that her project has "encouraged [her] to be more patient/skeptical when analyzing any type of information."

Meanwhile, Brooke Stephenson, a student

completing a Creative Writing Honors Thesis about women taking ownership over their bodies, declares that she has "enjoyed the opportunity to challenge [herself] to work on a longer piece of fiction" and claims: "It's been interesting to learn how, unlike a short story, long-form fiction has room to explore themes along multiple paths and plot arcs, so that the reader (and writer) can keep rediscovering the conflict and the resolution throughout the piece."

While these students are excitedly finishing up their projects, a collection of seventeen rising seniors are currently enrolled in the 1-credit Honors Proposal Workshop in order to prepare for their honors work. Sixteen of these juniors have submitted their ideas to the Charles Center for funding, and they are already underway in developing their theses. However, while this system has been characteristically rapid in the past, that will be changing this upcoming fall.

Due to the fact that students were required to refine their ideas by the end of January in order to propose their projects to the Charles Center, Professor Dawson is thankful that the workshop is being offered this upcoming fall, instead of in the spring semester. Twelve of the current seniors received funding last year from the Charles Center. Dawson wants to continue to use this aid because she feels that it can help "jumpstart a project." Thus, moving the workshop forward and having students work immediately after Fall Break will allow them more time to deliberate and perfect their ideas before they present them. Meanwhile, as the interest in Creative Writing Honors continues to increase, the Creative Writing Program will be managing their own program next fall, which will hopefully allow for even more spaces for students.

Thanks to the new structure of the system, more students will likely feel inspired to pursue a thesis because there will be less of a time crunch. Although these projects may seem monumental, Professor Dawson

has faith in all of her students to accomplish their goals, and with the help of the library, and with outside research and potential funding from the Charles Center, Honors projects are becoming more and more accessible to students. We can only hope that the number of students completing these projects will continue to grow in the coming years.

### 2018-2019 English Department Honors Projects

Kate Avery: (In)Human Anatomy: Constructions of Whiteness and Otherness in the Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft

Devon Boyers: Untitled

Blake Hani: Trapped on Stage: Examining the Absurd in Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*

Jackie Keshner: Creative Currencies: Circulation and Sovereignty in Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*, Mary Wroth's *Urania*, and Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*

Caroline Kessler: Haunted Housewives: Shirley Jackson and the Domestic Gothic

Kelsey Llewellyn: Houses and Desire in *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Spoils of Poynton* and *Howards End*

Anna McAnnally: Discovering Affiliates: Reclassifying Emily Dickinson's Variant Poems

Ryan Onders: Billy's Burg: Investigating Colonial and Capitalist Constructions through Poetry

Stephen Ryan - Old and New Comedy: Greek and Roman Comic Drama and Henry Fielding's Novels

Brooke Stephenson - Mine: A Creative Writing Honors Thesis in Long-Form Fiction

Rick Stevenson: Gender Roles and Androgyny in the Works of Sherwood Anderson

Katie Williams: "He bids you stretch out your hands": The Sacred Hand in George Eliot's Early Novels

Colleen Wilson - Sensational Investigations: Social Decay and Reform in the Victorian Sensational Novel

Anna Wingfield - Wordsworth's British Empire: Property, Liberty, and the Slave Question

# POET PATRICIA SMITH VISITS TUCKER HALL

By Rachel Coombs ('20)



As part of the 2019 Patrick Hayes Writers Series, poet Patricia Smith was invited to give a reading at William & Mary on Thursday, March 14th. Smith is a renowned poet, playwright, journalist, and performer. Her latest collection *Incendiary Art* was published by Northwestern University Press in 2017 and received the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award and the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work in the Poetry category, among other honors. Some of

her other collections include *Life According to Motown* (Northwestern University Press, 1991), which draws inspiration from her childhood in Chicago, and *Blood Dazzler* (Coffee House Press, 2008), about the devastation and aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Smith began her career onstage at slam poetry events in Chicago. Her skill as a spoken-word poet certainly shone through during her reading when she began with a moving, emotional piece about a group of students she taught in Florida whose lives had been traumatized by violence in their community and the loss of loved ones. One student, whose mother had just passed away, found healing in the writing process and Smith's encouragement. Smith is passionate about expressing her belief in the power of poetry. She says it is essential to let people know—regardless of age—that “their voice matters and their story is worth being told.” She “[looks] at writing like a second throat,” and uses persona poems to take on perspectives in need of representation. She believes it is essential to “listen to the voice you’re not hearing.” Throughout *Incendiary Art*, which tells stories of gun violence, police brutality, and racial hate crimes, Smith gives a voice to the mothers of murdered victims who are often forgotten once a case is closed. She read a few pieces from the section “Accidental,”

with each poem drawing from a different real-life incident of murder and brutality against people of color, all told from the mothers’ perspective.

Although Smith often writes on subjects that are fraught with emotion, her poetry emanates such empathy and understanding that the reader cannot help but come back for more. Her work is incredibly well-researched, as she is insatiably curious and believes “everything should spark a question.” Her dedication and effort (she writes ten pages every single day) is a testament to her craft.

The reading was incredibly moving. Smith’s voice resounded throughout Tucker Theater as she read deeply personal pieces about memories of her father teaching her to cook “hot water cornbread,” or her experiences as a thirteen-year-old, as well as poems where she takes on the voice of a personified Hurricane Katrina and even Medusa. In a little over an hour she conjured up humor, grief, loss, violence, and compassion. Her work will stay with those who saw her perform long after she has left campus—as one enthusiastic attendant said, “she’s amazing.” William & Mary is incredibly grateful for her visit, her voice, and the creativity and passion she brought with her that will inevitably inspire students and faculty alike.



# ENGLISH MAJORS IN THE ST ANDREWS PROGRAM

*By Kim Wheatley, Professor of English, Colleen Wilson ('19), Madison Hauser ('19), and Anee Nguyen ('19)*

Ten years ago, William & Mary English Department faculty met in several lively Skype sessions with counterparts in the School of English at St Andrews University in Scotland to figure out a shared curriculum for English majors in the Joint Degree Programme. English was one of the four original majors in the Joint Programme (along with History, Economics, and International Relations); the program (launched in 2011) now includes Classics and Film and Media Studies.

Students in the program (known as WaMStAs) declare their majors when applying, and they spend two years at W&M and two at St Andrews. Their general education requirements differ somewhat from the COLL curriculum, and their major

requirements also differ from the regular W&M requirements. While at St Andrews, students take fewer, more in-depth courses (called modules)—only two per semester (all in their major) in the third or fourth year.

W&M's English Department and the St Andrews School of English have varying strengths: for example, we have more faculty specializing in American literature while they have more Romanticists. Faculty take turns doing spring break research exchanges. This semester, W&M English Professor Deborah Morse visited St Andrews during our spring break, and St Andrews Lecturer Kristen Treen will visit W&M during the last week of March. Faculty can also present their research at a biennial Joint Programme Symposium (this year's, on the

theme of Mobilities, will be at W&M March 27-29). Six W&M English professors and four St Andrews English faculty will be giving talks at the Symposium.

The Joint Programme currently has 28 English majors, including eight first years, two second years and eight fourth years at W&M. The eight current fourth year students all spent their first year at W&M and then spent their second and third years in Scotland before returning to Williamsburg to complete their degrees.

—Kim Wheatley

No, I did not acquire a Scottish accent from studying in the St Andrews Joint Degree Programme—to the great dismay of many of my American friends—but what I have gained from it is, nevertheless, incredible. In my academic experience, I was able to benefit from the scholarship of two excellent institutions. I found that the American system prioritized independent thought in literary analysis while the Scottish system prioritized academic rigor and engagement with existing scholarship. These approaches proved complimentary, and familiarity with both has helped me in upper-level coursework including my Honors thesis. Every day brought its own academic challenges—as well as the temptation to waste away hours walking in Colonial Williamsburg or on St Andrews' numerous beaches.

In my experience outside of the classroom, I enjoyed being immersed in two unique communities—the Bubble and the 'Burg—and discovering their history and traditions. When I look back on this time long years from now, I will remember with a smile crowding with fellow students into the Wren courtyard like so many penguins for the Yule Log Ceremony, ascending to the windy top of St. Rule's tower to see the sunset on St Andrews Day, or taking sweet study breaks with friends at Aromas or Jannetta's. This program has certainly made its mark on me and on my life; it has enriched my college experience far beyond my wildest dreams with a wealth of knowledge, a plethora of special memories, and bonds of friendship which bridge oceans.

—Colleen Wilson



I often get asked if I would do this program again.

The answer is yes. It will always be yes.

I entered college at a time when my life was turned upside down by family health issues and heartbreak.

The only thing that got me through freshman year was knowing that I was going to Scotland. St Andrews awaited. A whole new life, a whole new chapter, far away.

This is not an easy undertaking. It is not something you should sign up for lightly.

There are things that I've missed out on. Things I regret.

You don't get as many opportunities at both places. You've got to keep up with friends, and you've got to establish yourself quickly.

That doesn't mean there isn't room to make mistakes.

A lot of this program is either feeling sorry for yourself that you didn't get to do something that, having a normal 4-year college experience at one place, you would, or looking at what you gain.

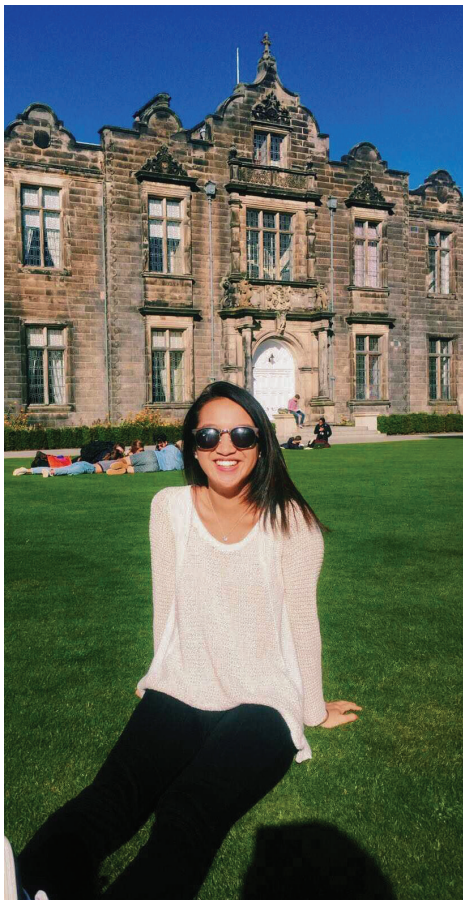
And you gain more than can be put into words.

For me, it was finding myself. Finding confidence.

For you, it might be something entirely different.

So yes, I would do it again. I wouldn't be the person I am if I had chosen something else.

—Madison Hauser



The Joint Degree Programme is an incredibly unique experience that is rather hard to capture in words. There is so much that happens in such a small amount of time that it feels I have a whole lifetime of stories to tell in order to fully capture what the Programme is like. The Joint Degree Programme is more than just a study-abroad experience; it allows students to experience two different academic and social university cultures much more in depth than a single semester or even a year would. My time in the Joint Degree Programme has been eye-opening and truly life-changing. My love for literature and writing was improved by being challenged at William & Mary and at the University of St Andrews. The difference

between the teaching styles and lectures exposed me to new ways of thinking and reading that confronted my personal bubble of perspective and made me a much more worldly English scholar. Everyone that goes through the Programme will tell you something different that they got out of it, even though we may have been in the same country at the same time. I loved my time in the JDP because though it was hard and I struggled to place myself in two countries with an ocean between, I grew with the hardships and I learned to make the Programme my own. I have become a much better human because of it.

—Anee Nguyen



# IN THE ARCHIVES: FINDING FANNY AND STELLA

*By Simon Joyce, Professor of English*



I've been working over the past few years on a book I'm calling *LGBT Victorians* which aims to uncover a larger body of evidence of non-normative genders and sexualities in the nineteenth century, and also more tolerant attitudes than the trials of Oscar Wilde in 1895—and his conviction for what was euphemistically termed “gross indecency with another male person”—might suggest. As part of this project, I've considered whether there were Victorians that we might now call *transgender*, and how we could identify them in the archives given that no such term existed then. Four years ago, I got interested in another trial

a quarter century before Wilde's of two people that historians always refer to as “crossdressers,” who were arrested in women's clothing at a London theater in 1870, charged with conspiracy to commit sodomy with others, and exonerated after a lengthy court case. Based on photographs of the pair, who called each other “Fanny” and “Stella,” I wondered if these might qualify as transgender Victorians. We now make a clear distinction, after all, between transvestitism or cross-dressing and being transgender, and I knew that they used female pronouns in letters to each other, had supportive parents who bought them

dressess, and were photographed in them over a long period of time. These two pictures of Stella, for example, were taken two decades apart, on two continents.

Fanny and Stella came from privileged backgrounds (the children of a judge and businessman, respectively) and could pay for qualified lawyers and medical experts to defend themselves. Because it was a jury trial, the transcripts were taken down by hand and recorded in massive volumes that are now stored in the Public Records Office in South London, near the botanical gardens at Kew. I visited the archive in a cold week in January 2016 which turned out



to be an eventful time in London because it was when David Bowie died. I should say I am not the first person to examine the transcripts. Fanny and Stella's case has been pored over by many scholars interested in the history of sexuality and I came to recognize particular pencil marks in the margins as the groundwork for the accounts I had read. Because I was looking to make a different argument, however, I was drawn to different information that had been overlooked by historians who had assumed that they were (a) crossdressers, (b) gay men, and therefore (c) actually guilty of the charges.

Looking at the transcripts gave me significant insights I couldn't have known otherwise. Even though Fanny and Stella appeared, after their initial arraignment, in the clothing we associate with men (and one even grew a mustache), witnesses and court personnel kept using female pronouns even when they were obviously trying not to—so the transcripts are dotted with misstatements and self-corrections. A coachdriver recalled, for instance, that one of the defendants "came out of the house dressed as a lady, and she said, 'my sister's not ready,' and he told me to drive to a Restaurant in Newcastle Street," with the first letter of "she" subsequently crossed through. Here's another inadvertently funny piece of testimony in the original handwritten transcription:

What was it that excited your suspicion about Mr. Boulton being a woman?

It was because she appeared so effeminate.

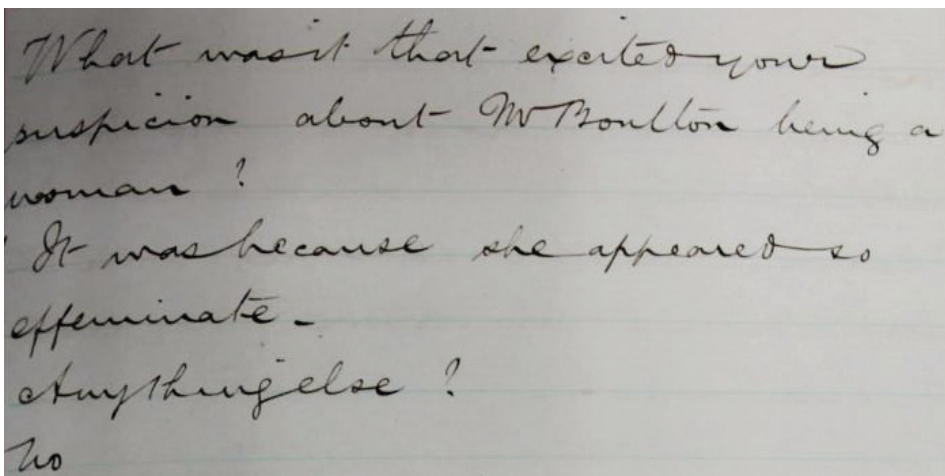
Anything else?

No.

In these examples, what people thought they knew and what they saw in front of them were at odds, and so they misspoke in what we might now recognize as Freudian slips that are only visible if we go back to the original source.

There was other information that supported my research instincts. Fanny and Stella had been under police observation for over a year, and scholars have wondered why they were finally arrested; in an eerie foreshadowing of our current discussions about transgender people's access to bathrooms, what precipitated their arrest was that Fanny went to a women's cloakroom to fix her dress. Prosecutors thought this was important enough to go to lengths to track down the cloakroom attendant, although it was hard to see how it helped their actual case: as Fanny's lawyer quite sensibly put it, "does a man go into a Ladies Retiring Room for the purpose of committing the detestable crime charged here?" Moments like this bring the past into an immediate and shocking dialogue with our present, which is one of the effects I want to accomplish with the research I'm doing.

An essay based on this research is out soon in a special issue, the first of its kind, on "Trans Victorians," the (greatly delayed) spring 2018 issue of the journal *Victorian Review*. I'd be happy to send a copy, talk about the work I'm doing, or answer any questions – feel free to email me at [spjoyc@wm.edu](mailto:spjoyc@wm.edu).



What was it that excited your suspicion about Mr Boulton being a woman?

It was because she appeared so effeminate.

Anything else?

No

*What was it that excited your suspicion about Mr. Boulton being a woman?*

*It was because she appeared so effeminate.*

*Anything else?*

*No*

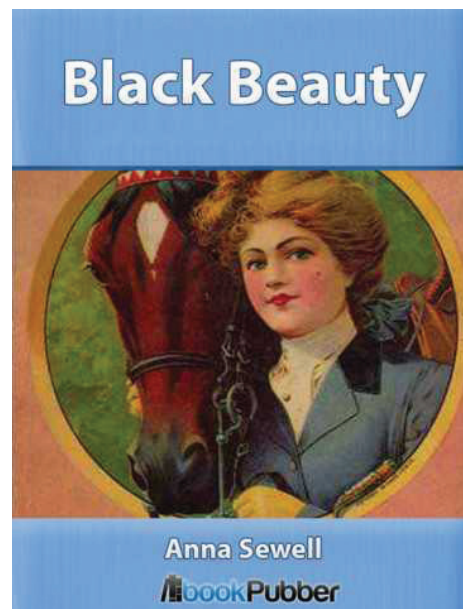
# COURSE SPOTLIGHT

## "VICTORIAN ANIMAL DREAMS," TAUGHT BY PROFESSOR DEBORAH MORSE



Professor Deborah Morse first became interested in Animal Studies because of her practice of rescuing animals. Adopting companion animals (like Phin and Rafe, pictured here) in the 1990s and beyond made her reconsider animals in Victorian fiction, her area of expertise as a professor in the English Department. "In 2001," she says, "I created a course—a simplified version of the course I teach now—on animals as metaphors" in Victorian British and American literature. Although most of her work up to that point had been on women writers like the Bronte sisters and feminist themes in the writing of Anthony Trollope, she went on over the next decade, to present work on animals at conferences, contributing to a nascent movement in Animal Studies. Eventually, along with Victorianist colleague Martin Danahay (currently a professor at Brock University in Ontario), she solicited work from others in the field and published a collection of essays titled *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture* (2007) with Ashgate Press. "This project has really become integral to my work and my thinking," she says. The collection has also had an enormous influence on the field, where it is regarded as a seminal work in Animal Studies and literature. The Victorian period

is central to changing perceptions of non-human animals, Professor Morse insists. "It was such a reformist era," she explains, "and people working for other reforms like abolition and women's rights also came out in support of what was then called 'humane treatment for animals.'" For example, William Wilberforce, one of the founders of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty (later the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in 1824 was a leader in the movement to abolish the slave trade in England.



This project, along with Professor Morse's appointment as one of the inaugural Fellows for the Center for the Liberal Arts (CLA) in January of 2014, prompted her to further develop her course on Victorian animal literature. In addition

to their responsibility to disseminate the new curriculum, Fellows were required to develop a COLL 200 course. As a COLL 200, "Victorian Animal Dreams" is now more interdisciplinary, with readings on natural selection, animal rights, animal emotions and cognition, and vegetarianism, among other issues. Students begin the course with novels written from the point of view of animals, such as Anna Sewall's *Black Beauty* (1877), Margaret Saunders' *Beautiful Joe* (1893), and Virginia Woolf's *Flush* (1933). Then, in a section titled "After Darwin," the students consider the impact of Darwin's theories upon biology, religious thought, narrative, and visual art, and read Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). The third section, "Imperial Animals," considers the function of the animal in short stories and novels that either take up or critique the politics of British imperialism. Finally, the students read the contemporary novel *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, by Karen Joy Fowler. Based on a real-life experiment from the 1930s in which two scientists, a husband and wife team, attempt to raise a baby chimpanzee as if she were a human child, the novel raises fascinating issues about animal rights activism and medical research. "As soon as I read it, I knew it would provide great closure to the course," Professor Morse says.

Because the course is a COLL 200, students from all over campus enroll. While half of the students are English majors, others major in biology, pre-med, and psychology. Other students come to the class because of their love for animals: many have had companion animals themselves and, as Professor Morse notes, "there is always at least one who has done intimate care of animals" such as horses. All bring a

unique perspective to class discussion and contribute to the interdisciplinarity of the course overall. One student explains, "The discussions in this class were amazing. I had never taken an English course where what I knew as a Biology major mattered. And I learned from the English majors too."

While the course has been hugely successful, Professor Morse doesn't hesitate to make adjustments each time she teaches

it. When asked about texts that she might add to the syllabus, she mentioned Eric Knight's *Lassie Come-Home*, from 1940, which was, of course, famously adapted for film just a few years later. Contemporary texts that she might assign include A.S. Byatt's "Morpho Eugenia," (1992) a novella that criticizes the stasis of a wealthy landed family in the moment evolutionary theory was born, and Paul Auster's *Timbuktu*

(2009), a novel written from the point of view of Mr. Bones, the canine companion of a homeless man. Summer reading list, anyone?

## WHERE DO YOUR GIFTS GO?

Have you ever wondered how the English Department uses your generous gifts? You don't have to give a lot to make an impact. Most of the experiences described below were funded by small donors who gave through our website at [www.wm.edu/as/english/support](http://www.wm.edu/as/english/support).

The **Concord Traveling Scholarship**, funded by David Gunton ('99) and Anne Rivers Gunton ('00), allows students to travel outside the United States and write about their experiences. The award this year went to Jessie Urgo ('20), who traveled to Argentina with her family, her maternal grandparents having lived in that country since the rise of Benito Mussolini in Italy and Francisco Franco in Spain. We published one of the poems that Jessie wrote based on that experience in the first issue of *Inside Tucker Hall*.

Generously funded by the Willis family in honor of John Willis Jr., a former William & Mary Professor of English, the **Willis Scholarship** is a merit-based scholarship to support English majors in experiences like study abroad, archival research, and Honors research. Bianca Bowman ('20)

was awarded the scholarship this year to support her study abroad experience in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Two **John Willis Jr. Faculty Awards** were granted this year: one to Professor Deborah Morse, who used the funding to make a literary pilgrimage/research trip to London over Spring Break; and one to Professor Jennifer Putzi, who will use it to travel to the Henry Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, Vermont, to study the work of poet Charity Bryant.

The **John R. L. Johnson and John R. L. Johnson, Jr. Fund** is used to support student research assistantships in the English Department. Students work with faculty on an assortment of tasks, including doing archival research, writing stories for the newsletter, reading proofs, and transcribing manuscripts, among others. Fifteen students were supported by the Johnson Fund this year, including Yi Hao, Joshua Luckenbaugh, Anna McAnnally, Monica Soto, Kelsey Vita, and Diana Worthen.

Funded by Ellen Lang, the **Lang Legacy Fund** supports academically distinguished students in the English Department. The

Fund supported Liza Buell ('19) and Peter Makey ('19) in the 2018-19 academic year.

The **Ann C. Shrieves Scholarship** provides a merit-based scholarship to support an academically distinguished student in the English Department. The scholarship is awarded in the fall of the student's senior year. This year's recipient was Noah Peterson ('19).

The **Paula Blank Student Opportunity Fund** was established after the death of Professor Blank in 2016. The fund provides professional development opportunities for students studying early modern literature. This year, the award went to Jackie Keshner ('19) who used it to do research for her Honors thesis on Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World* (1666) and Mary Wroth's "Pamphilia to Amphilanthus" (1621). Jackie did research at Washington D.C.'s Folger Shakespeare Library and Chicago's Newberry Library.



# ALUMNI UPDATES

We are eager to use the newsletter to update you on alumni activities and news! Please do write to us using the form provided on the English Department website at [www.wm.edu/as/english/alumnifriends/updates](http://www.wm.edu/as/english/alumnifriends/updates). Let us know if you'd like to have your update printed!

**Margaret Ashburn** ('85) tells us, "I'm excited to announce the publication of my book, *Marriage During Deployment: A Memoir of a Military Marriage*, published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2017. This marks my fourth publication about military family life. Two of the books, *Household Baggage: The Moving Life of a Military Wife* and *Household Baggage Handlers: 56 Stories From the Hearts and Lives of Military Wives* are being re-released this month by Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing (and are available on Amazon). After graduating from William & Mary, I served in the Army as a helicopter pilot for five years and was married to a soldier for twenty years. We raised two children as we moved around the country. I finished a Master's degree in English in 2002 and began teaching Freshman Composition as an adjunct instructor. There's more about my books at [HouseholdBaggage.com](http://HouseholdBaggage.com)."

**Cory Hitt** ('11) writes: "In 2018 I received my doctorate from the University of St Andrews in Medieval History (very much inspired by the work of Professor Monica Potkay), during which I was a Marie Curie Fellow on the EU-funded ITN 'Power and Institutions in Medieval Islam and Christendom.' My doctoral thesis focused on the rhetoric of norm transmission in Old French literature and law. I've since been hired as a fellow on the ERC project 'Civil Law, Common Law, Customary Law' at the University of St Andrews and am currently researching the rhetoric of Old French customary law, focusing on freedom and un-freedom."

And **Stephen Wing** ('68) writes the following note to the readers of *Inside Tucker Hall*:

"First, congratulations to the English Department's faculty and students for launching this attractive and readable newsletter! I enjoyed Volume 1, Issue 1 and look forward to the next one. Here is a bit of news you may find interesting:

Since college, military service, and graduate school, I have been practicing Landscape Architecture in Connecticut for four decades.

So imagine my surprise when I received a letter from a professor of English at Amherst College, Christopher Grobe. He was searching for the author of a poem he'd found in Anne Sexton's archive at the University of Texas, "To Anne Sexton from the Second Row." It was a poem I'd sent her with a note after a reading she'd given at William & Mary in April 1966. Grobe's essay, "From the Podium to the Second Row: The Vanishing Feel of an Anne Sexton Reading" is included in *This Business of Words: Reassessing Anne Sexton*, edited by Amanda Golden (University Press of Florida, 2016). Grobe includes and discusses a number of poems written with similar motivation by people from all over, including another W&M student, Thomas Roach. The poems are included with excerpts of our notes. Grobe considers her readings as performance art and laments the rarity of recordings of her readings (how technology has changed!). He cites the poems and echoes the idea of numerous critics that her readings were of a strong enough flavor to make some uncomfortable with her work per se.

It is the only poem of mine ever published outside *The William & Mary Review*."

## INSIDE TUCKER HALL

### Editor

Jennifer Putzi  
Associate Professor of English  
and Gender, Sexuality, and  
Women's Studies

### Student Journalists

Joel Calfee ('20)  
Rachel Coombs ('20)  
Kiana Espinoza ('19)

## GIVE TO THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT!

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