



BYWORDS

Department of English Newsletter

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true

--Alfred Tennyson

www.english.umd.edu/bywords

HIGHLIGHTS

We're pleased to start this new year with banner news! Dr. Nariman Farvidan, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, approved the **Center for Literary & Comparative Studies**. The new center will actively promote and coordinate new and existing research and creative work for the University community and the world beyond. The formal approval of the Center, preceding the Department's move to Tawes Hall this summer, will further heighten the prominence of literary studies at the University of Maryland. The Center will take an active role in the organization of lecture series, the institutionalization of fellowship and fundraising programs, and faculty and graduate student development.

More details will be coming soon!

Department Welcomes Keguro Macharia

Keguro's office is Susquehanna 4130. Stop by and say hello!

"I was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya, traveled to the U.S. for my undergraduate and graduate education, and have moved from Illinois to Maryland. (My sister tells



me to add "Just like Obama!") I started as a poetry scholar, and twentieth-century American poetry remains my first love. When I entered graduate school, I was asked to choose among many interests—African American studies, Queer studies, Postcolonial studies, and African literatures—and couldn't. Fortunately, I entered the academy when interdisciplinary work was increasingly possible and valued.

My work-in-progress, "The Queer Black Diaspora: Race and Sexuality 1885-1960," takes up the question of how figures such as Frantz Fanon and Claude McKay move through space, and how that movement, diaspora in a word, is an intimate structure. I argue that sexuality has been as integral as race in shaping the historical, cultural, and conceptual notion of diaspora. I track the intimate dimensions of diaspora in figures including Edward Blyden, W.E.B. Du Bois, McKay, Jomo Kenyatta, and Fanon.

In my *peri-academic* life, I'm a member of the Concerned Kenyan Writers collective, formed in the aftermath of Kenya's turbulent post-election violence in 2008. We are a loose assemblage of academics and creative writers, journalists and film makers, who both analyze and create new paradigms for understanding Kenyan history, culture, and society. I'm excited to join the English department and hope to increase the focus on African-based writers and to offer courses in African literatures."

--Keguro

UPCOMING DEADLINES and DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

Reminder: All Faculty, Lecturers, and TAs teaching 200 level courses must submit a copy of your **Spring 2009 syllabi**.

We use these copies to answer inquiries from current students who need to finalize their class schedules, and former students needing transfer credits. Your syllabi on file has been a big help to new TAs when they're in the process of developing their own syllabi. Please help us by submitting your syllabus to Isabella Moulton at imoulton@umd.edu, and to english@umd.edu for our computer database.

Save the date!

APT meeting, Full Professors Only:
April 6, 2009, 10:00-11:00AM

APT meeting, All Tenure-track Faculty:
April 22, 2009, 9:30-11:00AM

DEPARTMENT EVENTS

The **Comparative Literature Theory Colloquium** series on translation will kick off on Friday, January 30th at 3:00PM in the Dean's Conference Room, Francis Scott Key Hall.

The **Critical Theory Colloquium** begins on Friday, February 13th at 3:00PM in Susquehanna 3109. **Chris Brown**, doctoral student in English, will present "The Incommensurability of Justice: Law and the African American Literary Tradition." **Christy DeSanctis**, doctoral student in English, will present "Negotiating Loss in Charles Chestnutt's *The House Behind the Cedars*."

Department Donates Teddy Bears to Charity

The 17th Annual Bonnie Johns Children's Fund Bear Drive collected 35 stuffed animals from the English Department this year.

The bears, lions, puppies, and a few monkeys congregated in the Main English Office through December before departing for new homes in the area. The cuddly creatures will bring joy to children in homeless shelters, foster care, and in crisis.

A big thanks to everyone who contributed!

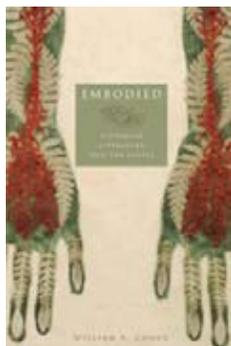


More articles on recent department activities are available on our [web site](#)! If you have an idea for an article, please e-mail englweb@umd.edu

William Cohen Explores Victorian Senses in New Book

December saw the publication of *Embodied: Victorian Literature and the Senses* from University of Minnesota Press. Cohen investigates sensory experience as he probes the question of what it means to be human in the Victorian age.

Embodied examines Victorian scientific discovery and literary representations of the body. Cohen weaves analysis of scientific writing, journalism, poetry, and novels to theorize a cultural history of the Victorian senses. Joseph Litvak, Professor of English at Tufts University, says, "Victorian literature has seldom been more unsettlingly physical than it is in Cohen's hands. *Embodied* shakes up our sense of the Victorians and so refreshes our senses themselves."



Cohen's book "anatomizes Victorian ideas of the human" with chapters devoted to Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, Anthony Trollope, Thomas Hardy, and Gerard Manley Hopkins. These authors provide focal points for a study on "the interior experience of sensation" where politics of gender, sexuality, race, and disability "come to be felt."

This fall, Cohen delivered a plenary address at the British Association of Victorian Studies 9th Annual Conference at the University of Leicester, providing an opportunity to share and discuss his research with a distinguished set of Victorianists. "The theme of the conference, "Victorian Feeling: Touch, Bodies, Emotions," dovetailed nicely with my interests. The lecture was very well received," says Cohen. The lecture, "Hopkins among the materialists," was an illustrated version of *Embodied's* final chapter.

Read more about *Embodied* [here](#).

Back Pages Reconnects Alumni With Graduate Program

Under the direction of Director of Graduate Studies **Kandice Chuh** and doctoral student **Jasmine Lellock**, the department has launched *Back Pages*, a quarterly digest that will keep alumni up to date on the latest happenings of Susquehanna Hall.

"One of the things I like best about being DGS is working across the wide spectrum of students in our programs, and hearing about their afterlives feeds into that enjoyment," writes Chuh.



The first issue spotlights new books by alumni, recaps the December graduation ceremony, and maps out opportunities for alumni involvement. Among the new books are film studies monographs from North Carolina State University professors **Marsha Orgeron** (*Hollywood Ambitions: Celebrity in the Movie Age* from Wesleyan University Press) and **Devin Orgeron** (*Road Movies: From Muybridge and Méliès to Lynch and Kiarostami* from Palgrave Macmillan).

Also of note is a new edited volume of critical essays from alumnae **Jeanne DelRosso**, **Leigh Eicke** and **Ana Kothe**. *The Catholic Church and Unruly Women Writers* was published by Palgrave Macmillan Press in 2007.

Back Pages has ordering information on Maryland English t-shirts and coffee mugs, so alumni can show off their school pride wherever they might be in the Terrapin diaspora.

Read *Back Pages* online [here](#).

FACULTY NEWS

In December, **Vin Carretta** gave a talk at the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston about the challenges of writing a biography of Phillis Wheatley, and delivered a paper at the Boston Area Early American History Seminar on eighteenth-century slavery in the Low Country of Georgia and South Carolina. In January, he spoke in New York City at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association on the reception history of Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*. Westminster Abbey has invited to speak in February at the dedication of a memorial to Equiano.

Tod Jones signed a new contract with the Philosophy Documentation Center for the publication of *Letters of Francis William Newman, Chiefly on Religion: The Braithwaite Correspondence, 1868-1897*. This is a collection of 145 letters from Newman to Robert Braithwaite that Tod transcribed while on Fellowship with the Armstrong Browning Library in the autumn of 2006. The collection will be published electronically, before April 2009.

Professor Emeritus **William S. Peterson** will speak about "The Pursuit of Pickering" to the Society of Printers in Boston on March 4. The illustrated lecture will describe his biography-in-progress of William Pickering, one of the most distinguished (and mysterious) English publishers of the nineteenth century.

At the MLA Convention in San Francisco, **Martha Nell Smith** and **Lara Vetter's** *Emily Dickinson's Correspondence: A Born-Digital Textual Inquiry* was published by Rotunda New Digital Scholarship, University of Virginia Press. This major scholarly edition can be accessed at <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu:8080/edc> [login: edc; password: dIck!n\$0N -- those are numerals after "d" and "\$"]. Enjoy, and please send any questions, suggestions, or other feedback you may have to mnsmith@umd.edu. Professor Vetter (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) is a Maryland PhD (2003).

Vessela Valiavitcharska has a forthcoming article in *Jahrbuch de Österreichischen Byzantinistik* (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Band 59 (2009), titled "Byzantine Oratorical Rhythm and the Classical Heritage."

STUDENT NEWS

Anna Bedford's paper, "Fantastic Interventions: Feminism and Environmentalism in Atwood's Speculative Fiction," was accepted by the Center for the Study of Women at UCLA for their upcoming annual conference, "Thinking Gender," to be held on February 6.

Heather Brown and **Jennifer Wellman** have been awarded a Teaching Assistant Development Grant by the Center for Teaching Excellence for their project titled "Developing English Department 200-level TAs by Facilitating the Exchange of Best Practices and Establishing Pedagogy and Policy Resources."

Tim Crowley's article, "Arms and the Boy: Marlowe's Aeneas and the Parody of Imitation in Dido, Queen of Carthage," appeared in the Autumn 2008 issue of *English Literary Renaissance*. It is available in PDF format through UMD E-Journals.

Jasmine Lellock has been awarded a Center for Teaching Excellence Teaching Assistant Development Grant for her project, "Using Collaborative Online Technologies to Enhance Writing Instruction." Jasmine also had her essay, "Of Guns and Other Weapons in Mary Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative" accepted to the forum "Early Modern Women and Material Culture," which will appear in Volume 4 of *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*.

Kelly Wisecup was awarded an ARHU Graduate Student Travel Award to support her participation in the Modern Language Association annual convention. Kelly presented a paper titled "'The Communication commonly call'd, Inoculation of the Small-Pox': African Medical Testimony, the Colonial Public Sphere, and the 1721 Boston Inoculation Controversy."

CONGRATULATIONS TO GRB WINNERS!

Tita Chico, Marshall Grossman, Sheila Jelen, and Brian Richardson won semester grants from the University's General Research Board.

Jason Rudy and **Vessela Valiavitcharska** won Summer awards.

Click [here](#) for more info.

UM Libraries Acquires Eighteenth Century Collections Online

"The Age of Reason has come of age," reads the Eighteenth Century Collections Online website. The database that Gale Digital Collections calls "the most ambitious digitization project ever undertaken" is now available to the University of Maryland community.



The University Libraries have partnered with the College of Arts & Humanities to purchase access to the remaining components of "Eighteenth Century Collections Online," a database encompassing digital images of every

page of 150,000 books published in the United Kingdom and the Americas between 1701 and 1800.

With full-text searching of approximately 26 million pages, the product allows researchers new methods of access to critical information in the fields of history, literature, religion, law, fine arts, science and more.

"This will be a boon to research, teaching, and scholarship in a large number of disciplines," says Tim Hackman, librarian for English and linguistics in McKeldin Library.

ECCO is now available through Research Port on the Libraries homepage (<http://www.lib.umd.edu/>) under numerous subject categories, including Literature: English Literary Works/Primary Sources.

The Libraries would like to thank Jim Harris, Dean of Arts & Humanities, and Kent Cartwright, English Department Chair, for working with us to make this purchase possible. Many librarians and departmental faculty were also instrumental over many years in acquiring this important resource.

Image: "The Storming of the Bastille," Jean-Pierre Houel, 1789

HISTORY of the ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

This year will mark the 150th anniversary of the Maryland English Department. Bywords will be celebrating our long legacy and the important role of the department in the university.

In 1902, the first undergraduate honors thesis in literature is noted in the catalog. Luther Eugene Mackall, from Calvert County, Maryland, wrote his thesis on "The Literary Works of William Shakespeare" (not extant). It was the only thesis that year on a topic other than agriculture.

Mackall later graduated with honors from the University of Maryland School of Law and went on to a successful law career in Baltimore. Mackall put his College Park-forged writing skills to use when he wrote *The Principles of Surety Underwriting*, the early 20th century's standard textbook on debt obligation. If, for some dark and twisted reason, you're curious about surety underwriting, Mackall's textbook has been fully digitized by GoogleBooks.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The next edition of Bywords will be released on Monday, February 16. Please send us any and all updates on new publications and accomplished accomplishments by Friday, February 13th.

*Please include dates, locations, and titles of papers/lectures/etc. in your news submissions.
Bywords e-mail: englweb@umd.edu*

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