



# Department of English, Film, and Theatre Newsletter

Fall Edition

October 2012

*"Sundry jottings,  
stray leaves, frag-  
ments, blurs and  
blottings"  
Robert Browning*



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## Message from the Head

*Dr. Arlene Young*

The academic calendar has a wonderful rhythm of its own, with great surges of activity and anxiety interspersed with periods of reduced teaching and service pressures that allow us to devote time to the reading, writing, and intellectual reflection that feeds our research. Rather than a "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," the fall is one of the periods of activity. This fall is especially exciting for us, a season of spring-like promise, because for the first time in five years we have hiring committees at work. The prospect of interviewing committed new scholars and of hearing about their research interests is exciting for all of us, although for those of us serving on the committees, the process will also entail an extra surge of activity and no doubt some anxiety. The same is true for the members of the Theatre Program, who are very involved in the design and development of a theatre in the old Taché building. This is

work that most of us never see, but that will ultimately have an enormous positive impact on our Department. And we also have a project coming to fruition—although not a misty mellow fruitfulness—and that is the new, or perhaps I should say renewed, Media Lab, with its expanded space, capacities, and potential for enhancing teaching and research. On behalf of the Department, I want to offer sincere thanks for the time and effort that everyone involved—faculty, support staff, and students—has made and continues to make in ensuring the excellence of our programs through the hiring processes and the tremendous work entailed in the renewal of important facilities. We thank you for your activity and we appreciate the costs of the anxiety. Too soon it will be December, when you will have a brief retreat into reading, writing, and reflection.



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Arts

The Affect Project will hold its first public event at the Millennium Library on November 13<sup>th</sup> from 12:10 - 1:10PM. Jason Leboe-McGowan (Psychology) and Neil McArthur (Philosophy) will be panel members for a discussion of the manipulation of emotion in public discourse. They will be joined by respondent Tracy Whelan, from the Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communication at the University of Winnipeg. The title of the panel is "Does Truth Matter Any More? Plato, Colbert, Truthiness, and the Role of Emotion in Public Discourse."

## Message from the Associate Head

*Dr. Lucas Tromly*

Since taking up the Associate head position, I've had a number of my earlier suspicions about the department confirmed by first-hand experience. Seeing the energy our adjunct instructors invest in the pursuit of plagiarists proves to me how lucky we are to have them (the instructors, not the plagiarists). Being in a room full of department heads gnashing their teeth in frustration over the power the new computerized classroom allotment system had over their lives was illuminating, even as it reminded me of all the times that universities have struck me as faintly de-

pressing places. But the suspicion that has been driven home most forcefully is how much the department relies on our indefatigable support staff, and how much we owe them. Every time we lose Darlene, Mabelle, or Marianne to some well-deserved time off, the effort required to get on in their absence is huge. As an already busy term gets even busier with departmental reviews and hiring committees, I think we should all be grateful to Darlene, Mabelle, and Marianne for keeping this ship of fools afloat. Happy sailing, everybody!

## Message from the Graduate Chair

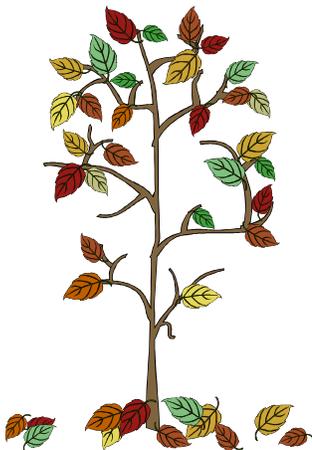
*Dr. Vanessa Warne*

The academic year is off to a great start for our graduate students. A Welcome Session was held in September to provide new students with useful information on our program and with a chance to meet together. We also had a SSHRC Application Information Session that was very well attended. Both incoming and returning students have been hard at work developing excellent projects for their applications and mastering the strange ways of the SSHRC website. I'm grateful to the faculty members who've devoted

time not only to writing strong letters of recommendation but also to working closely with students on their Programs of Study. I'm also grateful to successful SSHRC applicants Nadine LeGier, Sheila Simonson and Sandy Annett for generously sharing their applications with other stu-

dents. I think we have good reason to hope for lots of success in this year's SSHRC competition but, in the short term, I'm pleased to see so many students benefitting from the prompt to develop their projects and from the opportunity to improve their application writing skills.

In other news, we are busy preparing for the External Graduate Review that is on our near horizon. I look forward to this process and to the chance to benefit from the insight and advice of our reviewers. I'd like to thank faculty and students, both past and present, for providing the information we need to prepare for the Review. I should note that we hope to begin work soon on a series of Professionalization Workshops for our students; please let me know if you have any ideas for topics and/or if you're willing to give a presentation. In closing, I'd like to wish our students well for their year ahead. I'd also like to thank Mabelle Magsino for her patience and for the guidance she has given me as I find my feet as Grad Chair.



## Staff News

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**Dr. Jonathan Ball** just published a new book, *The Politics of Knives* (Coach House Books). Ball's third book in four years, *The Politics of Knives* features a hybrid of poetry and prose about the interrelation of narrative and violence.

**Michelle Faubert** went to the ultimate Romantics conference this summer in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. The organizers arranged for us to visit the Villa Diodati, on the shores of Lake Geneva, where Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*. On the same day we visited the former home of Madame de Staël and, after driving through the beautiful vineyards around Lausanne, we ended the day in the fortress of Chillon, which inspired Lord Byron's poem, "The Prisoner of Chillon." A long hike on another day saw us replicating William Wordsworth's "D'oh!" moment in unknowingly accomplishing his great goal -- crossing the Alps between France and Switzerland at Simplon Pass -- about which he created one of the key Romantic passages about the power of the imagination in Book VI of *The Prelude*. My favourite Romantic moment? The view from my hotel window: I could clearly see Mont Blanc, about which Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote so movingly in the poem of the same name.

**Chris Johnson** presented his paper on Bruce McManus' adaptation of *The Three Sisters* at the CATR conference in Waterloo in the spring. This fall, Little Theatre of the Gray Goose and Adhere and Deny produced his play, *Duet for a Schizophrenic*, at Ace Art. This March, he'll be directing the premiere production of Bob Smith's new play, *The Pluto Shot*, for this year's Black Hole season.

**Phyllis Portnoy's** latest article, "Laf-Craft in Five Old English Riddles (K-D 5, 20, 56, 71, 91)," has just been published by Neophilologus as 'Online

First', and will appear in the next print version of the journal.

This May, **Moti Shojania** presented a paper titled: "Food for Worms" and Other "Grave Matters": Re-Membering the Body in Forensic TV Shows," at the Canadian Popular Culture Conference.

In August, she was appointed Acting Dean of Studies at St. Paul's College.

Upcoming presentations include:

--"Call me Esmail not Ishmael: The Obsessive Quest for Home Ownership in *The House of Sand and Fog*," to be given at the Canadian Association for American Studies in Toronto, October, 2012.

--"Kant and Kubrick: Re-framing Enlightenment in *Barry Lyndon*," to be given at the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, April 2013.

--"Beckford's 'Orientalism': Re-Orienting the Ironies of the Imperial Self in *Vathek*," in Paris at the XXth International Congress for Comparative Literature, July, 2013.

**George Toles** has published several essays in the past year: "'Cocoon of Fire': Awakening to Love in Murnau's *Sunrise*" in *Film International*; "Adding Up the Gestures: What We See of Harry Lime" in *Cinema Journal*; and "'Brando Sings!': The Invincible Star Persona" in Aaron Taylor's edited collection, *Theorizing Film Acting*. [Routledge] Another essay, "Luxury and Largesse in Film," will be appearing in *Movie* within the next month or so. Forthcoming publications (due in 2013) include essays on *Mad Men*, *Don't Look Now*, and Martin Arnold's installation, *De-Animated*. He is still working on his monograph on the films of Paul Thomas Anderson for University of Illinois Press.

## Staff News (cont'd)

George is collaborating with Cliff Eyland on a book of mini-narratives to be entitled *Facebook Updates*; Cliff will be doing the illustrations. And he is putting together a collection of essays on star acting (most of them previously published) for Murray Pomerance at SUNY Press. George will be directing an independent production of Kenneth Lonergan's play, *Lobby Hero*, in May. *The Assignment*, a feature-length video narrative collectively created by George's Film Production course, will be screened at the Winnipeg Cinematheque at the end of November. (The cast includes David Arnason, Marilyn Loat, and Adriana Chartrand.) This year's Film Production course is working on a film noir project, loosely based on Lionel White's pulp crime novel, *The Big Caper*.

**David Williams** has been asked by editors for the MLA's *Options for Teaching* series to contribute to a forthcoming volume on *Teaching Representations of the First World War*. In two digital editions, his latest book, *Media, Memory, and the First World War*, is now available in more than 1100 university and college libraries in some 40 countries.

**Arlene Young** presented a paper entitled "Dickens and the Ethics of Emotion" at the British Association for Victorian Studies Conference in Sheffield, UK in August and a paper entitled "Commuter Networks Prototype: The Victorian Omnibus" at the North American Victorian Studies Conference in Madison, WI in October. She will be giving a public lecture on Victorian ghost stories ("Ghosts of Christmas Past") at Dalnavert Museum on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

### Alumni News

**Dennis Cooley**

Service: participated on several panels and conducted a workshop at a Kenora writing festival; guest professor for classes on Canadian poetry, T.S. Eliot, and Robert Kroetsch at the University of Manitoba; executive member of the University of Manitoba Retired Associate; part of the committee that organized the Manitoba Writing Symposium for May 2012.

Jurying: poetry judge for Northwestern Ontario Writers' Workshop; one of the poetry judges for the League of Canadian Poets' Lambert book award

Talks, panels, readings: guest professor in a class visit on the vernacular, University of Windsor; a talk on Robert Kroetsch for the English Language, Literature and Creative Writing. Departmental Distinguished Lecturer. University of Windsor; a reading at the Kenora writing festival; reading at the University of Manitoba / Universität Trier Conference in Germany; talk in Calgary on Robert Kroetsch's legacy, "Detection West: Third Biennial Western Canadian Studies Conference."

Editing: two book-length poetry manuscripts on behalf of Turnstone

Publications: a poem in *The Society*; five poems in *Congerries*, an on-line poetry zine; a Cooley interview in *Congerries*; two poems in an Australian on-line magazine, *Jacket*. Three chapbooks: one with Wrinkle Press, one with Olive, and one with above / ground press.



## Staff News (cont'd)

Forthcoming: a poem with "Truck"; a review in *U of T Quarterly*; two poems in an anthology of international poetry; an essay on the origins of Turnstone Press forthcoming in *Prairie Fire*; a new book

of poems, *abecedarium*, from the University of Alberta Press.

In submission: a book-length collection of essays on Robert Kroetsch.

## Congratulations

**Alison Calder** is on the longlist for the CBC Poetry Prize for her poem, "Blind Children at the Museum, 1913."

Manitowapow, the anthology edited by **Warren Cariou** and Niigaan Sinclair, has been selected for Manitoba's On the Same Page program.

**Meira Cook**, an alumna of our PhD program, is shortlisted for the Walrus Poetry Prize: Readers' Choice.

**Michelle Faubert** received a Faculty of Arts Teaching Excellence Award.

**Guy Maddin's** "Keyhole" won the Borsos Competition for Best Canadian Film at the Whistler Film Festival. The film was co-written by **George Toles**.

Former student Gretchen Derige honoured **Adam Muller** at the Student's Teacher Recognition Reception.

**Struan Sinclair's** novel, *Automatic World*, is one of the four finalists in the Manitoba Reads competition.

**Bob Smith** has been selected to receive a University 1 Excellence in Teaching Award.



## The University of Manitoba Literary Society

Last semester saw the birth of the U of M Literary Society—a collectively governed student group of writers, performers, and avid readers who come together to introduce one another to new ways of approaching literature and the art of writing. Having finished last year with our tremendously successful B(L)AKE SALE, raising almost \$400 for a Northern Manitoba youth literacy program, we are keen to begin some fresh new projects such as creative writing workshops with the CCWOC's writers in residence, an end of year student journal of critical and creative writing, in addition to fundraisers such as writing

competitions and bake sales. We are also excited about some of the many local literary events such as the Thin Air festival, the Master Playwright Festival, and the Stone Soup Stories plus other readings at McNally Robinson. As we are very eager to welcome new student members and other literary critters within the department, we encourage you to contact us with any questions or ideas that you may have. Finally, we would like to give a big thank you to all of last year's members along with the DEFT staff and faculty who have made our birth so successful!



## Theatre & Film Alumni

*Dr. Chris Johnson*

**Joseph Aragon's** musical, *Bloodless: The Trial of Burke and Hare*, is being produced by Theatre 20 in Toronto this fall.

**Tim Bandfield**, the Theatre Program's teaching assistant, has a role in a movie, *Deserted Cities*, which is being shot in Winnipeg this winter.

**Mike Bell** won an ACTRA award for his performance in *The Lucky Christmas*.

**Jeremy Bowkett's** play, *The Maple Route*, will be produced by Theatre Incarnate this season.

**Simon Bracken** performed in *Cymbeline* and *The Matchmaker* at Stratford this season.

**Sean Carney** has published a new book, *The Politics and Poetics of Contemporary English Tragedy*, with University of Toronto Press.

**Jonas Chernick's** new film, *My Awkward Sexual Adventure*, was screened at the Toronto International Film Festival this year.

**Ari Cohen** performed in Soulpepper Theatre's production of Mamet's *Speed-the-Plow* over the summer.

**Deco Dawson's** film, *Keeping a Modest Head*, won the Best Canadian Short award at this year's TIFF.

**Barbara Gehring's** play, *Girls Only*, was produced in Denver, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh last season, and is currently running in Houston.

**Ivan Henwood** has a new job as Associate Producer at Winnipeg Jewish Theatre.

**Maria Lamont** directed the Pacific Opera Victoria production of Donizetti's *Maria Stuardo* last April.

**Ross McMillan** and **Sarah Constible** have co-authored a new play, *Through the Window*, which

Shakespeare in the Ruins presented as a reading at the Carol Shields Festival of New Works at Prairie Theatre Exchange in May.

**Bruce Michalski** has a new job as Publicity and Marketing Coordinator at PTE.

**Stephanie Moroz** makes her professional acting debut this fall in the Persephone Theatre/Western Canadian Theatre Company co-production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*; she plays Cecily. Stephanie completed her training at Studio 58 in the spring.

**Carson Natrass** directed *Footloose; The Musical* at Rainbow Stage this summer.

**Yvette Nolan** is directing *Café Daugther* by Kenneth Williams in the upcoming Native Earth Performing Arts season.

**Tracy Penner** performs in the Theatre Projects Manitoba production of Carole Frechette's *John and Beatrice* this fall.

**Steve Ratzlaff** performs in *The Brink* at PTE this fall.

**Christine Reinfort** began her acting training at Studio 58 in Vancouver this fall.

**Malcolm Rogge** has started graduate studies at the Harvard Law School.

**Anne Tuma** began her studies in the professional actors' training program at George Brown College this fall.

**Rylan Wilkie** performed at the Blyth Festival over the summer.

**Magally Zelaya** has a new job as reporter and anchor person for CBC Vancouver.

## Black Hole Theatre

### \* Presenting our 2012/2013 Mainstage Season \*

*The Importance of Being Earnest* By Oscar Wilde

November 20 - 24, 27 – December 1 at the Black Hole Theatre

Oscar Wilde's classic social satire on the triviality of social institutions kicks off the Black Hole Theatre Company's season. A trip back in time to Victorian era England where Jack Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff are up to some tricky deception is sure to engage and stimulate audiences. As Algernon's cousin Gwendolyn and Jack's young ward Cecily become fascinated with the fictional beings the men have created a hilariously confusing web of lies is weaved. Director Kelly Jenken's handling of Oscar Wilde's farcical masterpiece is sure to cause bouts of uproarious laughter.

*The Cripple of Inishmaan* By Martin McDonagh

January 15-19, 22-26 at the Black Hole Theatre

Comedy, candies and cripples are all in the recipe for our second mainstage production. In 1934, on the small island of Inishmaan, news spreads about a visit from Robert Flaherty to film *Man of Aran*. Some of the youth organize a boat trip to the neighboring island in hopes of getting a role in the film, but return one passenger short. 'Cripple' Billy Claven is taken to America for a screen test, leaving the people of Inishmaan to wonder what has become of him. With director Mike Long at the helm, playwright Martin McDonagh (director/writer of 2008's *In Bruges* and this year's *Seven Psychopaths*) takes us into the heart of Ireland and shows us just how crazy one community can get.

*The Pluto Shot* By Robert Smith

March 12-16, 19-23 at the Black Hole Theatre

The premiere of local playwright Robert Smith's explosive comedy *The Pluto Shot* closes out our season this year. In northern California in the early 1960's, when a nuclear test goes wrong, in a very controversial place and in a very public way, the conservationists, the cultists, and even the transcendental mystics are out in force. With director Chris Johnson tackling this new work, *The Pluto Shot* boldly forecasts a change in global weather.



Adults \$15,  
Students/Seniors \$12  
For exact performance  
times and dates please  
visit our web site,  
[bhtc.ca](http://bhtc.ca)

For Season Subscription  
inquiries and res-  
ervations, contact our  
box office at 474-6880

## Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture



As Warren Cariou is on a six-month sabbatical, Dr. Renate Eigenbrod of Native Studies is Acting Director of the Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture through December.

In September, Dr. Eigenbrod hosted a well-attended welcome event for Sally Ito, CCWOC's Fall 2012 Writer-in-Residence. Ms. Ito shared the stage with Leo Baskatawang, Native Studies M.A. student, and Robert Nicolas, M.A. student in the Department of French, Spanish and Italian, both of whom read from their creative theses-in-progress.

Since September, Ms. Ito has been busy consulting with writers, visiting classrooms, giving lectures and interviews, and blogging the University at <http://ucoll150.arts.umanitoba.ca/users/ccwocnet/>. She also facilitated a popular workshop entitled Autumn is You: A Poetry Workshop on Writing the Seasons, and has two more workshops forthcoming, Memoir on the Internet on October 24<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 – 2:15 pm, and Ekphrastic Encounters – Animating Art with Words on November 21<sup>st</sup>, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. The latter will be co-facilitated by guest poet Jennifer Still.

In other news, the Centre is delighted to announce that Ryan Duplassie and Agnes Pawlowska are the recipients of the 2012-2013 C. D. Howe Memorial Foundation Fellowships in Creative Writing and Oral Culture. For more information about their research, please visit [http://umanitoba.ca/centres/ccwoc/howe\\_fellowships/cd\\_howe\\_fellowships.html](http://umanitoba.ca/centres/ccwoc/howe_fellowships/cd_howe_fellowships.html)

Recently CCWOC has provided financial support to the Winnipeg International Writers' Festival, the Finding Your Voice program, the inaugural Manitoba Indigenous Literary Festival, and the Word on the Water Festival. As well, the Centre is bringing Eden Robinson to visit Dr. David Watt's classroom this month and our documentary entitled *What Are Human Rights?* is nearing completion. *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water*, co-edited by Warren Cariou and Niigaan Sinclair, just won Manitoba's On the Same Page contest, and CCWOC is in the midst of the 2013 Residency competition.

Finally, the Centre is pleased to be sponsoring Writing Horror Fiction with David Annandale on Tuesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

For more information about our workshops and to register, please email [ccwoc@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:ccwoc@cc.umanitoba.ca) or phone x1065.

For the next six months, Sarah Clark will be taking over for Lyle Ford as the Liaison Librarian for the Department of English, Film, and Theatre. She is available for class visits, instructional sessions, and one-on-one tutorials (for both students and faculty). If desired, she can also provide resources for specific courses or assignments through Campus Guides (the libraries' online subject guides), or look into purchasing specific items relevant to particular courses or areas of interest. Please feel free to contact her at any time with questions or to set up a meeting. She also encourages you to pass along her contact information to students. Sarah can be reached by phone (204-474-6590) or email ([sarah\\_clark@umanitoba.ca](mailto:sarah_clark@umanitoba.ca)).

## Centre for Globalization and Cultural Studies *Dr. Diana Brydon*

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Throughout the academic year from September 2011 to September 2012, the Centre has been actively involved in advancing the work of the project funded by SSHRC through its partnership development program: Brazil/Canada Knowledge Exchange: developing transnational literacies. We ran the team workshop at the Federal University of Sergipe in May 2012, with a focus on teacher training, involving over a hundred local students and teachers, running research-based workshops for local teachers, and sharing our research in progress. University of Manitoba students Riley McGuire (DEFT) and Julia Osso (Peace and Conflict Studies) took part in the meetings and helped facilitate research exchange among students, local secondary teachers, and professors. Our next set of workshops runs, with a two-day meeting at Glendon College, York University, from Oct 15-16, and in Winnipeg (all day Thursday Oct 18 at St. John's College, U of Manitoba and the afternoon of Saturday Oct 20 at the U of Winnipeg. On Oct 19 and the morning of Oct 20, we will share our research with participants in the conference of the Western States Rhetoric and Literacy group, who have chosen Transnational Rhetorics and Literacies as their theme this year, and invited our director, Diana Brydon, to deliver their opening keynote address on Friday Oct 19. Our partnership project is sponsoring 5 graduate students from Brazil to present on their research in relation to the project. Riley and Julia will also present on their work in progress, as will Dr. Bruno Cornellier (postdoctoral fellow at the Centre) and Jessica Jacobsen-Konefeld (PhD student, Queen's University, and an associate of the Centre).

The Centre has welcomed two other new research associates, Dr. Arlene Young and Dr. Serenity Joo (DEFT). The Director is sponsoring the application for a Banting postdoctoral fellowship from Dr. Terri Tomsy (currently a SSHRC postdoctoral fellow at the U of Alberta) on "Imagining Justice After Globalization." Her research links her to DEFT and the Centre. After a competitive process, the University of Manitoba has agreed to take this application forward to the national Banting competition.

The Centre played a significant leveraging role in Brydon's successful application as co-applicant on Principal Investigator Vanessa de Oliveira (Andreotti's team application to the Academy of Finland (Suomen Akatemia: <http://www.aka.fi/eng>), Culture and Society strand, for a project on "Ethical Internationalism in Higher Education in Times of Global Crises"). The Centre agreed to host several visiting postdoctoral fellows from the project, whose travel costs will be covered by the grant.

The Centre will host a visiting professor, Dr. Claudia Hilsdorf Rocha, from the Federal University of Campinas, Brazil, in January/February 2013.

The NEXT edition of the Department of English, Film, and Theatre newsletter is tentatively scheduled for publication in September 2013. If you would like to contribute to this upcoming issue please forward your submission/s via email to [Darlene.McWhirter@ad.umanitoba.ca](mailto:Darlene.McWhirter@ad.umanitoba.ca) by **August 12, 2013**. Submissions are to be submitted electronically and should be in "finished" form. Suggestions and contributions are always welcome!

## Spotlight on Research: Dr. Bob Smith

Thomas Toles



Inspired by Aristophanes, Bob Smith's *The Pluto Shot* is a

jocular exposé about the politics of science in a time influenced by population explosion, climate change, Fukushima, and doomsday predictions. It will be running Mar. 12-16 and Mar. 19-23 in the Black Hole Theatre.

**Q: Tell me about your current research interests, particularly the play you're currently writing for the Black Hole Theatre, *The Pluto Shot*.**

A: It seems to be progressing towards something like a performance script. The first draft was actually completed last May and I've been sitting regularly with my brother, Bill Kerr. He's my dramaturge but we're closer than that; I think that's what happens in the process. We've had these very fraternal but also very professional conversations and they've led from draft to draft to draft to draft. So from May until July we did three rewrites of this. From August to September, another two. And the play has just progressed by leaps and bounds. My research interests got absorbed into the play. It's a play partly about science, partly about the way scientists have to deal with government, the corporations that employ them, and the American system that ties them to the very centre of society.

**Q: I've noticed some allusions to classical Greek theatre in your play. What specific theatre inspirations have you had for this play?**

A: Yeah, the play was inspired by Aristophanes, no

question. There were three plays by Aristophanes I had in mind: *Lysistrata*, *The Birds*, and *The Cloud*. They all figure in this play one way or another. I worked a little bit with pattern but mostly I was concerned with chorus and the relationship of the protagonist to that chorus.

**Q: Do you think there's something to be said by bringing together modern science with ancient civilizations?**

A: Yeah, I do. I think Aristophanes, particularly in *The Clouds*, was hell-bent on attacking abstract, pie-in-the-sky thinking and I think I'm rather concerned with science being a little more grounded than it is. So they seem to me almost a perfect match here. Aristophanes, I couldn't ask for a better model. And yet at the same time, [the play's] a little bit like a romantic comedy!

**Q: As a playwright, how do you feel relinquishing a script to a director?**

A: First, I wish I was a playwright, but I'm not. I'm learning. But the answer to the question is I think that there's a certain risk involved when you surrender anything you've been working on to someone else. And yet the very condition of theatre is that you do that. So you have to enjoy that to begin with, you have to accept that condition. There's a lot in this process that has to do with hearing others and learning from others. It's not eating your humble pie, it's actually listening carefully and learning. The play gets better and when it actually goes to workshop, it takes off. In the week between the first workshop and the last workshop, three scenes of the play were completely rewritten and, in effect, we got a brand new play. I've been relishing the process a lot.

## Spotlight on Research: Dr. Bob Smith (cont'd)

*Thomas Toles*

**Q: How has all your experience with theatre played into how you approach teaching literature?**

A: That's a good question because I think for a long time, when I wasn't writing regularly, literature was a more analytic exercise; and I don't teach it that way any longer. It's become a more synthetic exercise. I try to think from the point of view of the writer and try to encourage students to think from the point of view of the writer. And when we do that, we're reading entirely differently. All the literary devices are there but that's not the primary thing. The writer is actually working with pattern, with experience, and it alters your sense of how the writer interacts with the real world, or what we call the real world, to create the virtual world. And so the book, the poem, the play, the novel is not an artifact anymore. It's actually a process that's been worked through. What we're looking at is a culminating stage. With some play scripts, there may be yet another stage. The writer may take it back and do it again. Stoppard has done that, for example, and Friel's done that, and other major playwrights.

**Q: Would you say it's critical then to locate the author's intention?**

A: It's a funny thing. In the theatre we talk a lot about intention but in literature classes we're discouraged from doing that. Bill [Kerr] and I have talked about this. Maybe in theatre we know better and when we talk about the intention of the author, we already know the author is dead. For all intents

and purposes, the author is dead. So what we're looking at in some sense is making that author again in a new way and that's exciting to be doing. It's a little bit troubling when you're at the other end of the process and you're writing the play and you're listening to other people already working with your corpse. \*laughs\* But I think that's different than what we typically do in literature class.



And maybe it's instructive, I know I've learned from it a lot. I appreciate literature in a different way now.

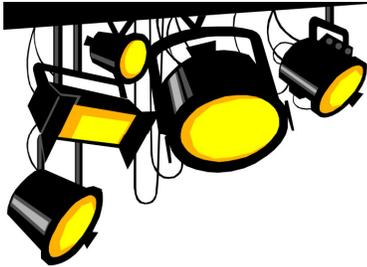
**Q: Finally, how did you get started writing this play and what are your plans for the future?**

A: I put another script aside to write this script. I was asked by Chris [Johnson] and Bill [Kerr] if I would be interested in writing a play for the company. I said: "Right now I'm working on a small cast play for a slightly older cast. I will lay that aside and I will

do this other one." This is a large cast play. And I wrote it primarily because it was a way of engaging two of my own children who are grown adults doing degrees in science. This was something we could talk about. We've had long distance telephone conversations about different aspects of this and they've enjoyed the joke and I've enjoyed the joke, so it was a way of staying in touch. But yes, I do have another project I'm working on. I don't wanna say anything about it. It's in medias res. It's in scenario form and so I'm not dreaming out loud.

## Spotlight on Research: Dr. Judith Owens

*Heather McLean*



Between writing on Shakespeare, Spenser, and Raleigh, preparing for three classes in both undergrad and graduate levels, walking her American Cocker Spaniel,

Abby Road, and horseback riding, Dr. Judith Owens finds the time for a "Spotlight on Faculty" interview, in which she discusses her current interests, her "longstanding" loves, and the "privilege"-- that "peek into lived lives"-- that literature provides.

**Your many areas of specialization are listed as Early-Modern (Renaissance) literature and culture, Spenser, Shakespeare, pedagogical culture, Ireland, and London. What gave rise to these particular passions?**

Well, it sounds like a lot but really it's a cluster; they are all interrelated. Years ago I took a graduate course [here at the UofM] in 16th Century literature, and got hooked on the Renaissance. So this cluster of interests is longstanding. One of the things that fascinated me about Spenser, from the start, is just how much his poetry engages with his time--even when his language and conventions are deliberately archaic. Spenser spent most of his adult life in Ireland, so the interest in Ireland grew from that connection. Part of what fascinated me about the Irish connection is that even though Spenser served what was a pretty oppressive English regime in Ireland, his poetry reflected a much more generous perspective. And what he does with language and poetic conventions continues to fascinate me.

And, as for Shakespeare--well who doesn't love Shakespeare? His work is so incredibly rich and inexhaustible. I become absolutely apoplectic with people who say Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare.

I suppose that part of what attracts me to the literature of the 16th and early 17th Centuries is its distance from us. It's very neat to get glimpses of lived lives, a privileged peek into other ways of being in the world that are both like and unlike our own. For me, that's thrilling.

**On what does your current research and writing focus?**

I am currently working on a book that has the tentative title "'Vertuous Lore and Gentle Noriture:' Shakespeare, Spenser, Raleigh and Early-Modern Pedagogical Culture," which is sort of an unwieldy title (and a reference to Book II of *The Faerie Queene*). In it I'm developing a new interpretive context within which to read these authors, or rather, selected works by these writers). I'm interested in the tensions between humanist education and familial instruction, and especially in how emotions, memory, and moral imperatives function in these two settings, sometimes in conflicting ways. Take Hamlet for example, a character who is pulled in diametrically opposed directions by his humanist education, and its counsel against revenge on the one hand, and by familial imperatives, or his love for his father, on the other. A similar divergence between humanist instruction of virtue and familial revenge can also be found in *The Faerie Queene*. Well, certain episodes in these texts intrigued me.

I have finished my research. In the UK I looked at archival collections of family letters and account books with an interest in emotion in family settings and relations.

**Do you have any new, budding interests on which you hope to work in the future?**

Well, maybe not so much 'budding' as, perhaps, left over from previous years' crops! I have a couple of things on the back burner that I'd like to return to--one is the intersection of technology and literature in the 16th Century. Technology shaped the thinking of poets. The water-closet, or its prototype, was invented by John Harrington in the 16th Century. In Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser alludes to the water closet just as the poet is distinguishing between Irish and English. I am interested in how technology undermines fundamental distinctions, how it realigns assumptions about human nature, and makes it more difficult to represent people as other, or different. In general I'm always interested in materialisms, and pets, and technology — these are cultural materialisms too.

## Spotlight on Research: Dr. Judith Owens (cont'd) *Heather McLean*

I'd also like to do more with emotional histories--and maybe something with emotion and animals in Spenser. I'm intrigued by the fact that Spenser gives a pet lamb to Una, a character in *The Faerie Queene* who represents, among other things, the truth of the Protestant church. Why a pet lamb? I mean of course there is the iconographic meaning but it is also very clearly a pet. The larger question is that of the place of emotion in Protestantism. The term 'pet' actually originated in the 16th Century --1539, I believe. It was used to describe orphaned lambs treated fondly, or pampered. It was a complaint about that sort of attention being paid to a 'mere' animal.

And, someday, I think I'd like to edit a scholarly edition of poetry or a play, probably Spenser's poetry. I'm always side-tracked by details, tangents. I remember I once spent an inordinate amount of time on St Bartholomew's Day, for [Spenser's] *Epithalamion*. I'm just fascinated by sideways and bi-ways; that's probably why editing appeals to me.

### **Can you recall a singular, most impressive academic experience, either as a scholar or as a professor?**

That's a tough question. No, not a single experience--and definitely not with any public event. I've been profoundly influenced at various points in my academic career, by reading critics who transformed my whole way of thinking and writing about literature, like Stephen Greenblatt, the Renaissance critic, for instance, or Geoffrey Hartman on Wordsworth--that blew my mind. And I've also been enormously influenced by professors, when I was a student, whose classes I would leave knowing that I was reaching for something that I didn't quite have a handle on yet. Then some time later I would have the pleasure of thinking, "Aaahh, that's what my professor meant!"

As a professor, getting to do archival research in the UK was memorable, particularly because it coincided with getting a tenure-track position. This had a powerful impact, because for the first time I was able to imagine or conceive projects, with the opportunity for grants to sup-

port them. Before that, it's too hard to imagine, you can't even begin to think.

I spent the whole winter before my first trip learning to read Elizabethan handwriting from a manual (and with the help of a colleague and friend in paleography) but I remember suddenly feeling panicky on the plane, wondering if I'd actually be able to read the real documents, not those selected for manuals! It turns out it wasn't a waste of SSHRC money; I was able to do it.



### **What, in your opinion, is the most rewarding text to teach?**

Another tough question--it will seem like I am evading it. Really, the text that I am teaching at the moment is always the most rewarding! It's easier in some ways to identify texts that are not rewarding in the classroom. For instance, I remember teaching Isaac Walton's *The Complete Angler*, a 17th Century meditation on fishing life. I really enjoyed it!

But the class did not. Maybe you really have to have an interest in 17thC literature...or in fishing, I don't know. There has to be a balance between the texts that fascinate you personally, for whatever idiosyncratic reasons, and those that will allow the students to really get a purchase on them.

The best works to teach are those with which students can really engage even if they are not immediately relevant to the students' lives today, those which surprise the students, once they get past the strangeness of the conventions or the language, with how pertinently and powerfully they can still speak to us today.

Dr Owens concluded our interview with an expression of deep appreciation for our institute and the academics comprising it, declaring: "What a great pleasure it is to work with the community of scholars at UofM, and in my department. We have great students here, nice to teach and nice to work with. And to get the feeling that your colleagues respect your work, take interest in it--that's very rewarding."

## Graduate Student News

### Message from the pAGES President

Dustin Geeraert/[umgeerae@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:umgeerae@cc.umanitoba.ca)

Greetings to all of our graduate students. This year we have a lot of new graduate students, which is great for PAGES and the Department. We are here to represent you as graduate students, to inform you about all sorts of important things, and to plan social events. Our first event this year will be a Halloween party, and we are also planning a Colloquium and Reception for mid-January, as PAGES has done for three years now. Additionally, our MA Creative Rep Jeremy Strong is running a writer's group, and there will be a reading event at some point in the winter term. If you as graduate students have any questions, concerns or suggestions, just get in touch with me or our other members. This year's PAGES is:

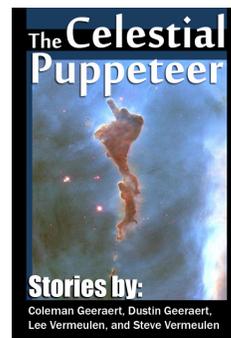
President: Dustin Geeraert  
 PhD Rep: Cameron Burt  
 GSA Rep: Kendra Magnusson  
 MA Rep: Caitlyn McIntyre  
 MA Creative Rep: Jeremy Strong  
 Social Convener: Breanna Muir  
 Treasurer: Katie Thorsteinson  
 Secretary: Stephanie George  
 Member at Large: Mandy Elliot

Best of luck for the 2012-2013 academic year!

### Book Release: *The Celestial Puppeteer*

DEFT PhD Candidate Dustin Geeraert, with three other authors, self-published a collection of short stories entitled "The Celestial Puppeteer" (print version December 2011, Kindle Edition April 2012). The stories span fragments, thought experiments, science fiction, satire, and fantasy.

The common thread running through the collection, as manifested most explicitly in "Careful With That Razor" (a response to Isaac Asimov's science-and-religion-reconciled tale "The Last Question") and the title story, is cosmic paranoia. An Amazon.com reviewer gave the collection four stars, remarking "Many of the stories are very bleak, some are 'black comedy' and quite a few have an anti-religious bent (which I liked)."



### Announcement - PAGES Colloquium 2012: Generating Genres

For the past three years, PAGES has hosted a colloquium in January for honours students, graduate students, and professors. This year's topic is genre. What defines a genre? Does classifying literary works (or plays or films) effectively describe or unproductively constrain them? How are the conventions of genre developed, defied or satirized? Does a given genre imply a particular theme or message? What about hybrid works?

We invite titles for short papers (5-7 minutes) to be presented at the colloquium on Friday, January 18th, 2013. Please send your titles, along with any time restrictions you may have, to PAGES president Dustin Geeraert at [umgeerae@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:umgeerae@cc.umanitoba.ca), before November 30th. The event will feature a free lunch, and will be followed by a wine and cheese reception. We encourage all honours, pre-MA, MA and PhD students, as well as all professors, to participate. The colloquium is a great opportunity to share your research and interests and meet others in the department.



## Graduate Travel Awards & Funding

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### Faculty of Graduate Studies - Graduate Student Travel Conference Travel Award

[http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate\\_studies/media/FGS\\_Travel\\_App.pdf](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/media/FGS_Travel_App.pdf)

The Faculty of Graduate Studies allocates funds to assist Master's and Ph.D. student with costs for travel, for presentations of paper, posters, or other creative work pertinent to their studies.

**One year trial: no deadline date.  
Please submit application before travelling.**

### Faculty of Arts - Graduate Student Conference Travel Fund

<http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/awards/3006.html>

To be eligible for a Faculty of Arts Graduate Student Conference Travel Award students must be:

- \*enrolled full-time in a graduate program in The Faculty of Arts;
- \*presenting a paper, or have another significant role, at the conference or workshop.

Grants are dispersed two times a year after the following application deadlines:]

**April 1  
November 1**

### University of Manitoba - Graduate Students' Association

[http://www.umgsa.ca/docs/Grants\\_Donations/conference\\_grant\\_application\\_form.pdf](http://www.umgsa.ca/docs/Grants_Donations/conference_grant_application_form.pdf)

Conference grants are available for graduate students attending or presenting at conferences. Applications are available online only, and grants will be disbursed monthly. Please complete your application once you have already attended a conference.

#### **NOTE:**

For more Graduate Award information, visit the Faculty of Graduate Studies Awards Database  
<http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/gradawards/>

Applications for Conference/Travel funding which require departmental approval/letter of support from the Department Head are to be submitted a few days in advance of the deadline to:

