

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

# THE anecdote

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, AND LINGUISTICS



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ALUMNA WINS NEA FELLOWSHIP —  
STUDENTS ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL  
— NEW FACULTY BOOKS

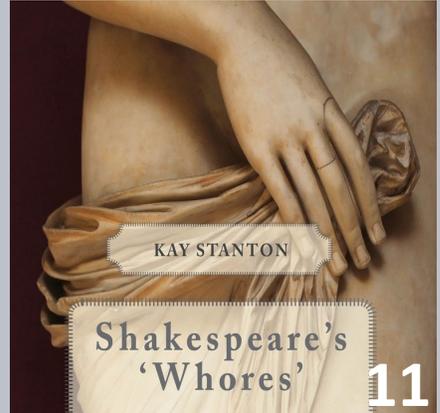
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## a letter from the chair

**A** couple of weeks ago I received an email message from Brad Cathey, an alumnus of the English department who graduated in 1976. During his time at CSUF, Brad told me, he was a music major who decided (“I’m not sure why,” he admitted) to minor in English. He had never been much of a reader, but his experience in our department changed all that. Minorng in English, he said, had a profound impact on his later life. Now a graphic designer, Brad spends much of his time at work writing and helping clients create “short, punchy ad copy.” And he spends much of his spare time reading. In fact, he’s just completed his fourth reading of George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*.

But he credits his success at his job in large part to his undergraduate training in English. Brad wrote powerfully about the value of studying English, so I’ll just quote him directly:

“One other way literature has helped me: I’m more articulate on my feet. Back in college I made a pact with myself to look up every word I didn’t know. I’d write them in the back covers of my dictionary. Now, it’s my iPhone and Siri, but I’m still doing it. Last night it was ‘abstruse’—that Edith Wharton! So there’s hope for the glazed-eyed student sitting in the back row. They just might turn out to be a reader, a writer, and a speaker. Or maybe a graphic designer like myself. In any case, I’ve learned that words are powerful, and the ability to string them together in an engaging way is even more so.”

I loved receiving this email. It’s always wonderful to hear from our alumni and to learn what they’ve been up to since leaving CSUF. It’s gratifying to the department faculty and staff to learn about our former students’ suc-



cess, and it helps our current students to see the paths those before them have taken. This semester, for example, we’re hosting an alumni panel where seven recent graduates will speak to current students about various careers that are suitable to English majors. Recently, we’ve had a handful of alums reach out to the department for interns, offering our current students invaluable work experience and professional develop-

ment opportunities. And this newsletter gives us yet another opportunity to bridge the gap between our current and former students—showcasing the accomplishments of both groups and, hopefully, fostering communication between them.

Why did Brad Cathey email me in the first place? He was looking to track down a professor he had in 1976. She had a lasting influence on Brad’s life and he wanted to thank her. He remembers her taking extra time out of class to help him and says that her words still “ring in his ears” when he writes today.

We hope that all of you leave the Department of English, Comparative Literature, and Linguistics with memories like Brad’s—memories of transformative experiences in the classroom and with your professors. So if you find our words still ringing in your ears long after you’ve left our classrooms, drop us a line and tell us about it. We’re still here, talking about words and books and writing. We’d love for you to join the conversation.

Yours,

LANA L. DALLEY



# VICTORIAN COLLECTIONS

BY ANDALEE MONTRENEC

The preeminent Victorian Studies  
scholarly association in the western United States  
comes to CSUF  
for its annual conference

The annual conference of the Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies Association of the Western United States (VISAWUS) took place at the Marriott at California State University, Fullerton on October 16-18, 2014. The conference, on “Victorian Collections and Collecting,” was brought to Southern California by associate professor **Lana L. Dalley**, VISAWUS Vice President and Chair of the CSUF English Department.

The conference featured sessions on a variety of topics relating to collecting in the age of Queen Victoria, including “Hoarding, Obsession, and Monstrous Collections” and “Decadent Assemblage, Decadent Legacies.”

The panel on “Sherlock Holmes, Collecting, and Curating,” for example, touched on recent trends in scholarship about the work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and contemporary writers who have reinvented the larger-than-life detective for modern audiences. The presenters summarized their research on the ways popular media has humanized the Victorian Holmes through modern adaptations. Sumangala Bhattacharya’s “A Raj of Holmeses: Postcolonial Revisions of Sherlock Holmes” focused on China Mieville’s *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes*, a 1999 novel chronicling the adventures of Sherlock Holmes in Tibet. Her paper emphasized the importance of new approaches to this literary figure, particularly those informed by postcolonial theory.

Before the conference, some attendees enjoyed a tour of the Knohl family collections at the Fox Pointe Manor. Noted collectors of Victoriana, Howard Knohl and Linda Eastman also presented slides from some of the 80,000 art pieces included in their collection at one of the conference’s plenary sessions. They extended a warm invitation to anyone interested in conducting research on parts of their collection, providing students with an opportunity to participate in a scholarly project to produce more information about a lesser known collection.



From top: Carol Eastman (right), curator of the Knohl Collection, explains items from the collection; Anne Helmreich gives her keynote address; and (from left to right) Kellie Holzer (Virginia Wesleyan), Sumangala Bhattacharya (Pitzer), Lindsay Dearing (Louisiana State), and Bryn Gibben (Seattle U.) at the “Sherlock Holmes” panel

Katie Snyder, a CSUF graduate student who assisted at the conference, commented on the experience: “As an English grad student who was rather unfamiliar with Victorian literature, it was an incredible opportunity to be able to attend the conference. Hearing papers and presentations on ancient Egypt in Victorian England were of particular interest to me. Thanks to the keynote speaker Anne Helmreich, I was captivated by the idea of museums popping up all over England, indicating a rise in an obsessive collecting of the past in this vast empire.”

Art historian and Senior Program Officer for the Getty Museum, Anne Helmreich discussed museum curation in London in her keynote address, “Why did the Victorians Collect?” Helmreich posed a series of questions about the value of preservation and the way in which collections were presented in Victorian England. Her address also explored the art selection process of museums and how curators make the decision to arrange objects into groups. These decisions, she said, affected a museumgoer’s conception of his or her own Victorian identity. She closed by weaving that discussion into a larger argument about how museums relate to history and national identity.

The conference engaged attendees with contemporary approaches to scholarship and unique views of the life and culture of the Victorian era. Asked to comment about her favorite session, “Collecting Recipes,” CSUF graduate student Caitlin Curtis said, “I really enjoyed the panel about Victorian women and their recipe books. It was interesting to learn about how these women carried these books everywhere, and they served as almost a personal journal as well as a treasured domestic document.”

The unique opportunity to host the VISAWUS conference at Cal State Fullerton coincided with Dr. Dalley’s graduate seminar in Victorian literature that semester, providing students with an opportunity to learn about Victorian society beyond the literary realm.

# distinguishing professors

The college awards its highest honor to an English faculty member

**P**rofessor **Irena Praitis** was awarded the 2014 Distinguished Faculty Member award by the CSUF College of Humanities and Social Sciences (H&SS). It is the highest honor the College bestows on its faculty.

The Distinguished Faculty Member Award is intended to represent those faculty who have distinguished themselves through a record of superlative teaching, scholarship, and service. Praitis, the awards committee noted in its award letter, had “demonstrated a consistent level of excellence across research, teaching and service” since joining CSUF as an assistant professor in 2001. The committee added that Praitis is “the embodiment of what CSUF should be: a home for serious research and creative production, where both are always in the service of student learning.”

A poet of unusual productivity, Praitis has published over 5 books of poetry, 58 individual poems in journals or anthologies, 8 scholarly articles or book chapters, and a number of smaller publications such as book forewords, reviews, and encyclopedia entries. Her work has a global reach. She has been a



Fulbright Scholar and a two-time Pushcart Prize nominee who has been invited to give readings of her poetry internationally.

English majors have repeatedly recognized and enthusiastically responded to Praitis. In the past ten years, she chaired over 49 Master’s students’ projects and informally mentored countless others. She can often be seen having long, serious conversations with students, using her expertise to help them achieve their goals.

Seeking new challenges, Praitis recently accepted an appointment as CSUF’s Interim Director of Freshman Programs. “I feel

fortunate to have had such a great experience in the English department which provided me with the support necessary to win the Distinguished Faculty Award and prepared me for the position of Interim Director of Freshman Programs,” Praitis said. “No matter where I travel on campus, I know the English department will always be home.”

In recognition of the Distinguished Faculty Member award, Praitis received a plaque from the H&SS Dean’s Office and was recognized at the 2014 commencement ceremonies.

# LANGUAGE LEARNING

English students present their research on classroom language diversity

BY BRIANNA NAUGHTON

A group of Cal State Fullerton English students teamed up with assistant professor **Bonnie Williams**, popularly known as “Dr. Bonz,” to present their research at the Annual Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in Tampa, Florida in March 2015.

The team was comprised of graduate and undergraduate students who had previously taken English 305: English Language in America with Dr. Williams. Williams suggested building on the work they had done in the class and presenting the fruits of that research at one of the biggest conferences for teachers of writing: the CCCC, colloquially known as “4Cs.” Seven students participated in the months of planning and practicing: Morgan Anderson, Kayla Dufour, Jana Heyman, Brianna Naughton, Tulou Pirouzian, Eric Rodriguez, and Louis Wischnewsky.

Of the seven, undergraduates Dufour and Wischnewsky as well as graduate students Heyman, Naughton, and Rodriguez were able to fly out and present the team’s research at a 4Cs workshop on “The Risks and Rewards of Linguistically Standing Your Ground: Understanding, Rethinking, and Advocating Linguistic Diversity in the Classroom

and Beyond.”

Armed with guidebooks they had researched and written, the team offered ideas on how educators could embrace



From left: Eric Rodriguez, Brianna Naughton, Bonnie Williams, Jana Heyman, Kayla Dufour, Louis Wischnewsky

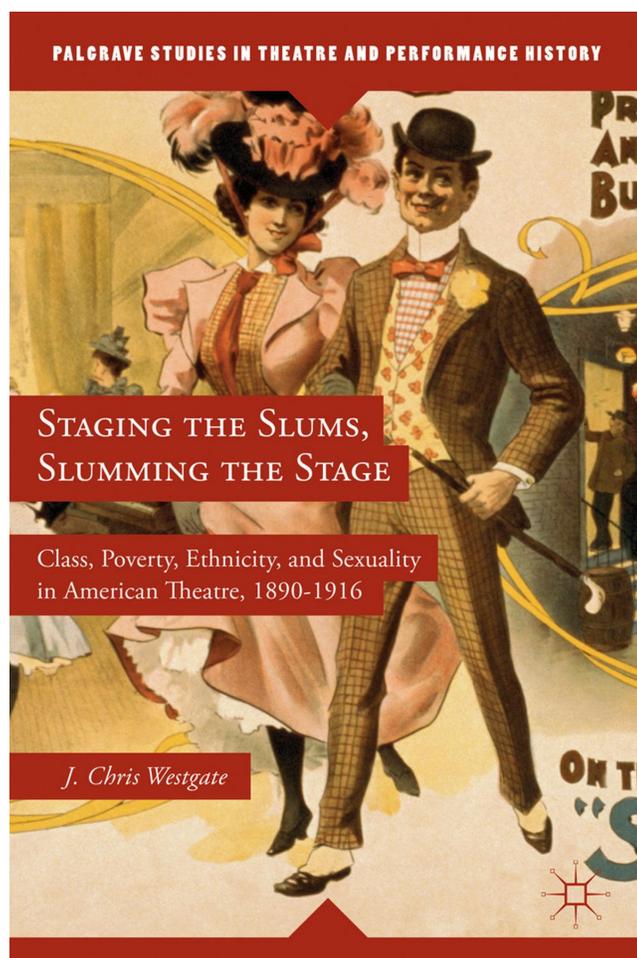
language diversity in the classroom and engage students in new and exciting ways. One idea the team proposed was modernizing Shakespeare’s “To Be or Not To Be” soliloquy from *Hamlet* to read in a California “Valley Girl” sociolect, to demonstrate to students that the English language, like all living languages, is constantly changing. The group also presented an interactive board game that gave attendees the opportunity to practice speaking di-

verse languages and dialects.

The students’ presentation was a great success. 4Cs is the premiere academic conference for scholars of college-level writing, and the students felt lucky not just to present their work in such an environment, but to have the opportunity to network with some of the most prestigious names in the field of composition and rhetoric. Though presenting was a bit nerve-wracking, the students rose to the occasion.

In addition to presenting their own research, the students attended a number of other presentations and workshops. They were able to see their CSUF professors outside the classroom, presenting their research to other scholars. Assistant professor **Martha Webber** looked into how composition crosses curricular boundaries, while associate professor **Steve Westbrook** presented the idea of bringing social action and technological experimentation to creative writing classes. All the students agreed that going to Tampa was one of the best things they could have done on a personal and professional level. New friendships were formed, memories were made, and connections in the field of composition and rhetoric were forged.

J. Chris Westgate's new book, out now from Palgrave Macmillan.



the city's all a  
**STAGE**

A new book uncovers a largely forgotten period in American theater history

Associate professor J. Chris Westgate's new book, *Staging the Slums, Slumming the Stage: Class, Poverty, Ethnicity, and Sexuality in American Theatre, 1890-1916* (Palgrave) was warmly received by critics when it was published in late 2014. One critic heralded Westgate's "bold new approach," adding that the book "unearths a period in American theatre history that has lain mostly fallow for over a century." We sat down with Westgate to talk about the book, teaching, and contemporary drama.

**TA: First, congratulations on the new book. This is a tremendous scholarly accomplishment. Many academics go as much as ten years between books, but if I'm not mistaken, this is your second monograph in three years, correct?**

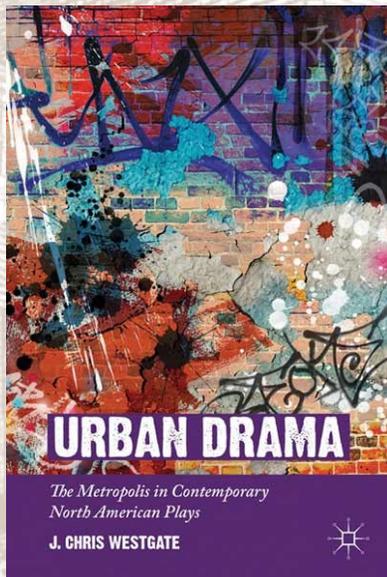
JCW: This book comes hard on the heels of the first, but that's mostly just because I enjoy writing books. Well, I should say I enjoy the *research* involved in writing books. The actual writing can be a slough, but that's true for most, I imagine. It's the opportunity to learn something new that really motivates me. There are always new subjects, new methods. This book, for instance, is a work of theater history, unlike my first, which was dramatic/cultural criticism. I talk about this with my five-year-old son a lot, about the sheer pleasure of learning. I talk about it with my students, too. New research invariably finds its way into my classes. It's part of teaching.

**Your first book, *Urban Drama: The Metropolis in Contemporary North American Plays*, made the case that a number of recent playwrights aren't just setting their plays in cities, they're making their work about cities, exploring how social dynamics are shaped by spatial dynamics and vice versa. Does your new book build on that earlier one?**

Indirectly. In my earliest attempts to synthesize the materials involved in this book, I did actually think about trying to use some of what I had done in *Urban Drama* to develop the framework for *Staging the Slums*. As I kept working, however, it became clearer that my concerns weren't primarily with New York City (as in *Urban Drama*) but rather with entire categories of social being, from class to ethnicity to gender. Certainly the spatial distance between the Broadway plays that I examine and the slum subjects that they represented is a crucial

element of *Staging the Slums*, but it isn't the primary concern of the book, which focuses instead on these works that I call "slum plays" that were helping to bring our modern concepts of class, poverty, and ethnicity into being.

**So are there any broader conclusions that you draw from these two books? They're both about theater and cities, but they take place almost a hundred years apart.**



Westgate's *Urban Drama: The Metropolis in Contemporary North American Plays* (Palgrave 2011)

Although I didn't intend to do so, I did discover a number of intriguing resonances between the study of New York City during the Progressive Era, about 1890-1920, and the study of New York City and Los Angeles in the contemporary period. Many of the Progressive Era's concerns about race, culture, ethnicity, and class are still important to the ways that cities are imagined and negotiated, but in different ways. During the Progressive Era, for instance, many of the plays I examined were complicit in the establishment of those concerns. They were helping to demonstrate the ways that Broadway theatergoers were different (better, they thought) than their Bowery counterparts. During the contemporary era, the plays were more often about concerns like rioting, gentrification, or homelessness, which were depicted to reveal the ways that those things had been naturalized in the urban environment and to suggest the need to overturn them.

**Both of your books are very interested in cities, but not, like, St. Louis or Phoenix. It's always New York, Los Angeles. Where did that interest come from? Did you grow up in someplace**

**like that?**

I grew up in Northern California and never visited New York or Los Angeles until I was an adult, though I often tell the story about my first trip to New York City, which was about nine years ago, and how I felt immediately "at home" even though it was nothing like where I had grown up or where I lived at the time. As for why the books have featured New York even more than Los Angeles, there's a fairly simple reason: New York not only was the testing ground for much in theater history but as a result now has remarkable archives on that history—which, of course, I need to write the books.

**One of the interesting things about your work is that you're really engaged with contemporary drama. You regularly review new theatrical productions, you've interviewed Oscar-nominated playwright José Rivera, and so on. What do you think is one of the most exciting trends in drama these days?**

My favorite contemporary playwright is Sarah Ruhl, who already has more than a dozen plays to her name like *Dead Man's Cellphone*, *Eurydice*, and *The Clean House*, which was nominated for a Pulitzer. There's something really exciting about the way that she addressed issues like death, relationships, or cancer with humor and honesty and originality. Ruhl is still relatively young, in her late thirties or early forties, so she could have many years of writing ahead of her. If she does, I believe she might be the best playwright of her generation.

**So what's next? Are you starting to think about a new book project?**

I'm getting interested in plays that represent socially-taboo diseases like syphilis and how that might relate to the establishment of public health, which includes education, prevention, and treatment. This could easily be another study of Progressive-Era theater since this is when medical science was developing the understanding of and treatment for diseases like syphilis—very much against mainstream opinion about the disease, which was generally understood as a mark of immorality. Yet I could also see this becoming a study that might include AIDS plays during the 1980s and 1990s when, once again, public opinion inhibited the advancement of treatments of socially-taboo diseases.

# ON T

Students study nature writing

BY APRIL

*In the summer of 2014, associate professor **April Brannon** took a small group of students to the Appalachian Mountains to experience a new type of class. It would not be a conventional “study abroad” experience, but instead an opportunity to “study away”: to read American nature writers while in a part of the American wilderness most students had never seen. Here she remembers the experience.*

**K**yle swooped his flaming marshmallow through the air while I read lines from Walt Whitman’s “Leaves of Grass.” It was the end of the day, and I was sitting around the campfire with ten undergraduates in Hot Springs, North Carolina, a tiny town located on the Appalachian Trail.

Four days earlier, we had left the California beaches for a CSUF creative writing class situated deep in the Smoky Mountains. For more than half the students, it was the first time they’d been out East, and for me, an English professor, it was the first time I’d been into the wilderness with students.

English 306: Writing the Appalachian Trail was designed with the intention of putting students’ experiences on the trail in dialogue with assigned course reading and writing assignments. In it, students read and discussed nature and travel writing while sitting under North Carolina’s Sugar Maple trees. They used field guides to identify the names of plants and animal species and, as part of a volunteer project, they pulled invasive species from the trail, becoming part of a small army of volunteers who maintain the trail without government assistance.

The night of the campfire, we had hiked 12 miles along steep mountain ridges. Since the Appalachian Trail is approximately 2,100 miles, our hike covered just a toenail of the total distance of the path, yet in those 12 miles, we saw a rattle snake hang from a branch like a cursive *y*, a baby salamander the color of ripe tomatoes, and Azaleas in the first bloom of summer. It was spectacular.

We also experienced what it was like to be so deep in the woods that the only thing we could see in front of us were trees, and we saw how mist floats over the peaks of the Smokies, giving

# TRAIL

in the Appalachian Mountains

BRANNON

Photo credit: Woodport Commons

them their name.

We stopped at a lean-to, which is a three-walled structure where hikers spend the night on the trail, and there we found a log with entries from people who had passed through. One hiker, whose trail name was Cupcake, quoted Robert Frost: "But I have miles to go before I sleep,/And miles to go before I sleep" while another, Left-Foot, was less philosophical: "Five miles to Hot Springs. I can't wait for a cold beer!"

The students left messages too, writing, "The Smokies rock!" and "CSUF was here!" before continuing on in their hike.

That night at the campfire, we were tired but happy as we turned marshmallows over flames, and students shared favorite memories from our adventures. Lauren said that she liked rafting the French Broad River, even though she had been initially scared to go; Stephanie was thrilled to use her field guide to identify the animal species who left scat on the trail; and Kyle, a non-English major and self-declared non-writer, said his favorite part was a 1,000-word stream-of-consciousness writing exercise.

Nicole mentioned fireflies in the starry sky, while Bethany

talked about the feeling of accomplishment that came with the completion of a 12-mile hike. Chris, who had served as a leader throughout the class, was the last to share. He said that he was proud to be part of our class, a group of Californians, who worked hard as volunteers on the Appalachian Trail. He talked about how it felt to protect nature, and how we, as a group, had come together with a common goal.

As a teacher, I couldn't have been prouder, and as I sat there, breathing in the mountain air, I thought about the entry in the trail log: "CSUF was here!"

Chris was right. We had left our mark on the trail through our volunteer work. But we had also left it through our presence on the trail, through our questioning and learning about nature and ecology, and through the stories we wrote and shared and the trail stories we would continue to share once we got back to California. The Appalachian Trail is now part of us, inscribed in our memories and part of our histories, and in a very small, but not insignificant way, we are now part of its history, too.

Yes, indeed, CSUF was here.

This article was previously published in a slightly different form in the OC Register.

# SHAKESPEARE'S SISTER

A faculty member investigates Shakespeare's erotic politics

*Professor Kay Stanton has authored over 30 articles and book chapters, has been published in reference works such as The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare and A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare, and has presented her research on Shakespeare at over 90 conferences in 12 different countries. That research has culminated in her new book, Shakespeare's "Whores": Erotics, Politics, and Poetics (Palgrave 2014). We spoke with her about Shakespeare, teaching, and the annual Cal State University Shakespeare Symposium.*

**TA: You've been teaching and doing research at the nexus of gender studies and Shakespeare studies for quite some time now. In the past few years you've contributed to scholarly books on feminism and Shakespeare, the female tragic hero in English Renaissance drama, and similar subjects. Tell us a bit about the genesis of your new book, *Shakespeare's "Whores": Erotics, Politics, and Poetics*. Did you first begin thinking about the subject with that essay you wrote for Burnett and Manning's *New Essays in Hamlet* (AMS, 1994)?**

KS: Actually, my thinking on that subject started even earlier. Shortly after I finished my Ph.D., I presented a paper where one of the other presenters said of *Othello's* Bianca, "Well, she's just a whore." That casual and sanctimonious denigration annoyed me tremendously, so I wrote a paper defending Bianca for the next conference. Over the years, I kept returning to how Shakespeare's male characters scapegoat female characters through that label and how critics have

too often sided with those characters, continuing the problem of the double sexual standard in contemporary society. When I was invited to contribute a chapter to a new volume on *Hamlet*, I realized that I could make a new contribution by analyzing images of prostitution in the play, which had never been done before. That essay has since become one of my best known works, and though I had originally intended to reprint it as a chapter in this book, I had so much else to say I ended up only referencing it.

***Shakespeare's Whores* is one of the all-time great scholarly book titles. What does it mean to talk about "whores" in the context of Shakespeare?**

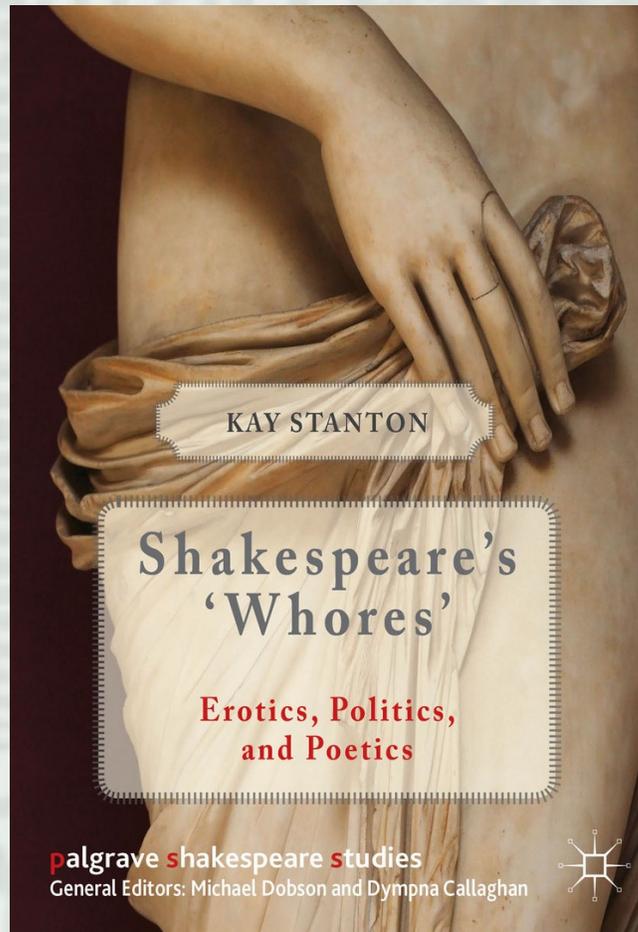
There are additional terms of sexual denigration that male characters in Shakespeare use against female characters, but that word is the one most recognizable today because it is still used to bully and insult women. When a man calls a woman that name, he is reducing her to her sexuality and treating her as a person not entitled to any kind of respect. In Shakespeare's time and ours, the word supposedly refers to a professional sex worker, but it is really used to insult women not only in regard to their sexuality, but in their attempts to self-actualize in any realm that the patriarchy determines to be for men only. In other words, the word simultaneously has sexual, social, and political power. The book does discuss the few female professional sex workers in Shakespeare, but for the most part it examines and advocates for the female characters who desire a full and satisfying life.

**You write in the book that many women have long viewed Shakespeare as “one of our greatest advocates.” Do you see the book as contributing to an ongoing body of knowledge about Shakespeare’s proto-feminism?**

Yes, although Shakespeare isn’t just a “proto-feminist”; his feminism is thorough and profound. Over the centuries, women readers and actresses have realized that he is one of our best advocates, and many women authors were inspired by him in their own work. In 1975, literary critic Juliet Dusinberre wrote a book, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*, making the case for the Bard as a feminist. If readers are more attentive to what the female characters say about themselves rather than what some male characters say about them, there should not be any confusion on this issue. In the face of terrible societal controls and restrictions on their behavior, many of Shakespeare’s female characters nonetheless overcome obstacles and accomplish amazing things, such as *The Merchant of Venice’s* Portia, who in male disguise functions brilliantly as a lawyer, or *All’s Well That Ends Well’s* Helena, who (not in disguise) succeeds in curing the king when all of the male doctors had failed. In five plays Shakespeare shows female characters in male disguise being accepted as not only competent but outstanding in so-called “male” jobs. I think that he uses these disguises to prove that when society can regard a woman’s qualifications and job performance as it does those of a man, the women and the society will succeed.

**You’re well known for organizing the annual CSU Shakespeare Symposium, which has been a campus and community tradition for over twenty years now, right?**

Shortly after I joined the faculty I created the CSUF English Graduate Student Conference, which has become the Acacia Conference. For the first two years, I coordinated the Conference myself, but as the years went on, the graduate students took it over, which of course is a very good development. Because the Graduate Student Conference had worked out so well, in the following year after I’d started it, I



decided to create a Shakespeare Symposium for my fellow Shakespeareans at all of the CSU campuses. Although the Acacia Conference has stayed on our campus as an annual opportunity for our students, I wanted the CSU Shakespeare Symposium to move among the CSU campuses. I have coordinated it at our campus several times, but it has also taken place at Pomona, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Stanislaus, where it will be again this year.

**You have a long history of working closely with students in a number of different ways: in your classes, as the faculty sponsor of the student Shakespeare club, and with the annual Shakespeare Symposium, which frequently includes student research. Did any of that faculty-student interaction make its way into Shakespeare’s “Whores”?**

Yes. I open the second chapter with an account of an incident that happened in a seminar on Renaissance drama I taught some years ago. For her presentation, one of my female students wore a red dress and asked if any women in the room had ever been called a “whore.” My hand went up, as did several others’. The student went on to say that the first time she’d been called a whore had been when she was five years old and happened to be wearing a red dress. Of course, she didn’t understand the insult, but she knew it was a hateful characterization of her. But for that presentation, she, a happily married mother of

daughters, was proudly wearing a red dress to show her triumph over that word. I was inspired by that incident to try to help female students who may encounter that insult by showing them that Shakespeare is on our side. In that chapter I examine every use of the word “whore” in Shakespeare’s canon: 59 instances, 51 of them from 21 male characters and 8 from a total of 5 female characters, with only one of them, sex worker Doll Tearsheet in *Henry IV, Part 2*, “owning” the term by using it in regard to herself. All of the others reject the term and the attitude about their sexuality that it connotes; they believe in and assert a right to erotic enjoyment.

# poet on the RISE

An alumna  
wins a  
prestigious  
NEA  
fellowship

**P**oet and novelist **Jennifer Givhan** (BA '07, MA '09) was awarded a 2015 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Poetry Fellowship. Out of a record 1,634 eligible applicants this year, Givhan was one of only 36 authors to receive the prestigious fellowship.

Givhan was raised in the Imperial Valley in the desert of Southern California, a formative experience she feels is reflected in her poetry. One major theme of her poetry, she says, is “the complex relationships many Latina women have with family.”

She began publishing while still in graduate school—her first publication was with CSUF’s student-run literary journal *Dash*—and quickly amassed a lengthy list of publications. Her Master’s project, under the direction of professor **Irena Praitis**, served as the basis for many of her future publications. Her poetry has appeared in over eighty literary journals and published collections, including prestigious venues such as *Prairie Schooner*, *Indiana Review*, *The Columbia Review*, and *Best New Poets 2013*. She’s also been named a PEN/Rosenthal Emerging Voices Fellow, a St. Lawrence Book Award finalist, and a Vernice Quebodeaux finalist for her poetry manuscript *Red Sun Mother*.

The poems in *Red Sun Mother*



## KARAOKE NIGHT AT THE ASYLUM

When I was eleven, Mama sang karaoke  
at the asylum. For family night, she’d chosen

Billie Holiday, & while she sang,  
my brother, a fretted possum, clung

to me near the punch bowl. I remember  
her then, already coffin-legged—

mustard grease on her plain dress,  
the cattails of her hair thwapping along

with the beat. The balding headstones  
of the others,—quarantined from

their own mothers and sisters and daughters—  
I wondered if, like us, they too were strange

alloys of sadness & forgetting  
the words to the songs. I was a grave-

digger then. A rat fleeing ship. Mama,  
who hadn’t sang to me since I was a baby &

never again, was the lynchpin—  
I’m still turning & turning the screw.

—Jennifer Givhan

deal with themes of infertility, adoption, and motherhood. In particular, Givhan says, they look at “attitudes toward the ‘barren’ woman as she emerges in Mexican and Mexican-American” culture.

She is currently at work at several major projects. The first, a novel titled *In the Time of Jubilee*, is about a young woman who loses a child and begins carrying around a doll as a surrogate daughter. It is currently under consideration by publishers.

The other project she’s pursuing is her poetry collection, *Karaoke Night at the Asylum*. (See the title poem at left, which first appeared in *Indiana Review*.) It was a finalist for both the 2014 Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize and the Prairie Schooner Book Prize. She says she plans to use the NEA Fellowship to polish and submit the manuscript for *Karaoke Night at the Asylum* to publishers, as well as to work on new poems she hopes will become a new collection.

Givhan recently completed her MFA in Poetry at Warren Wilson College. She is currently living in Albuquerque, New Mexico with her husband and two children, teaching in person at Western New Mexico University and online at The Rooster Moans Poetry Cooperative. Readers can follow Givhan’s writing and publications at her website, [www.jennifergivhan.com](http://www.jennifergivhan.com).

# a life in TEACHING

The department remembers a devoted teacher and colleague

BY BRUCE SWANLUND

On October 7, 2014, my friend and mentor **Jason Taylor**, a lecturer with the California State University, Fullerton English Department, passed away after a three-and-a-half-year battle with renal cell carcinoma. He was 41 years old.

He first came to Cal State Fullerton as an undergraduate. He pursued a degree in Biology, but he was really interested in everything, including medieval history and kung fu. It was through some mutual friends in the German Club that he met his future wife, Heather Whitney. Before graduating, he switched his major to Communications, with a double Minor in English and German.

After graduating, Jason returned to CSUF to pursue a Master's in English. It was during that time that his love for teaching was ignited. In his final year in the program, his mentor and favorite English teacher, professor **Atara Stein**, became ill. Knowing she would not be able to complete the semester, she made the extraordinary recommendation that Jason be allowed to take over her graduate class on the Byronic Hero.

After completing his Master's degree, Jason was hired by the English department to teach writing. He was a serious, dedicated instructor. He wrote a pair of textbooks, *Building Blocks* (Kendall Hunt, 2011), coauthored with Herschel Greenberg, and *The Little Book of Don'ts* (Kendall Hunt, 2012), to help beginning writers overcome the daily challenges with which he saw them struggle.

While Jason always felt most at home on the Fullerton campus, he also worked at a number of other schools, including Santa Ana College, Cal State Long Beach, and UC Riverside.

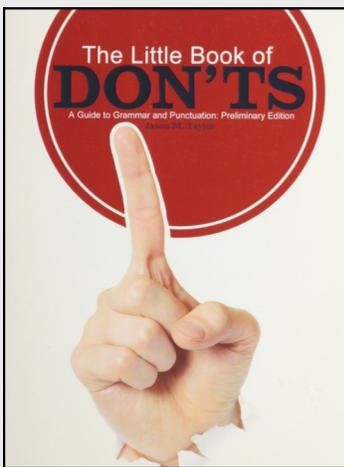
Jason was also a practicing Roman Catholic, a member of the Knights of Columbus, and an avid reader and writer of science fiction. He was also a lifelong martial artist. In addition to being a teacher of both kung fu and women's defense, he was a co-founder of the Historical European Martial Arts Alliance; the founding instructor of the Medieval Swordsmanship Class at CSUF; a co-founder of Swordscholar, a nonprofit sword school for children; and the creator of KRON, a mar-

tial arts club that combined some of his favorite things: martial arts, weapons, medieval



scholarship, and, most importantly, teaching. Jason loved teaching.

Six years ago, when I saw a sign advertising a CSUF class in Medieval Swordsmanship, I had no idea that I would meet a person that would have such a profound impact on my life. All I expected was what the sign promised: Survive the Zombie Apocalypse. (The class worked, too. Like I said, Jason was a great teacher. I have yet to die in a single zombie attack.) It was in that class that I first met Jason. We had a great time swinging



Taylor's *The Little Book of Don'ts: A Guide to Grammar and Punctuation* (Kendall Hunt, 2012)

swords at each other and learning how medieval knights fought. I did not yet know that he would help shape my own career.

But serendipitously, that summer I was assigned to be his Graduate Student Assistant, and when I was hired by CSUF as a new student teacher, I asked him to be my mentor. He readily agreed and we worked together to design my first few courses. Later, he was integral in getting me an interview for a part-time position at Santa Ana College. And he continued his role as my mentor, helping me reshape my classes as I learned from him how to juggle jobs at multiple campuses with different student populations. I was honored to call him my friend.

Three and a half years ago, Jason was diagnosed with cancer in his right kidney and had to undergo an emergency nephrectomy. Knowing that he would be unable to finish his semester teaching, he spoke on my behalf to professor **Sheryl Fontaine**, then the Chair of the English Department, and recommended I take over his classes, just as professor Atara Stein had done for him nearly a decade before. It was as if his teaching career was acquiring a kind of morbid symmetry. Determined to not let him or the department down, I took over his classes and finished the semester.

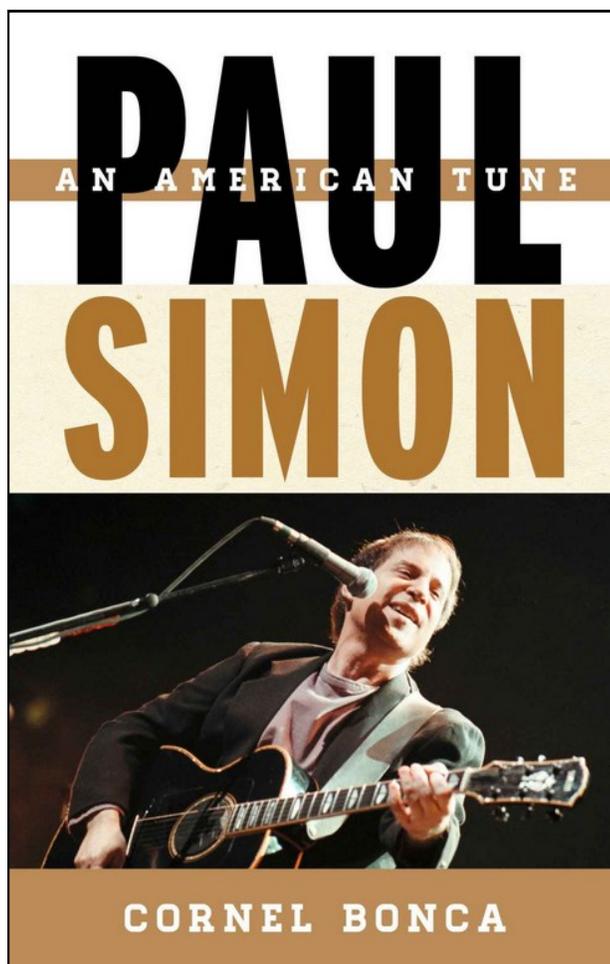
He seemed to bounce back quickly after the surgery. Within a year, he returned to teaching a full load of classes at two different campuses.

But last Spring his health began to deteriorate again, and he received the devastating news that the cancer had not only returned, it had metastasized. The doctors tried a volley of drugs, radiation, and other treatments, but it eventually became apparent that it was unstoppable. His liver failed and he soon retired to hospice where he spent his remaining days in the arms of his loving wife, surrounded by his close family and friends.

At his funeral he was again surrounded by family and friends, but also by a number of the countless other lives that he touched: colleagues, bosses, teachers, sparring partners, authors, publishers, and, most importantly, students.

Jason Taylor was a sword fighter, martial artist, author, mentor, husband, and teacher. He was also my friend. And he will be missed.

Cornel Bonca's *Paul Simon: An American Tune*, out now from Rowman & Littlefield.



# A NATIONAL GUITAR

A new book explores Paul Simon's fifty-year career

Professor **Cornel Bonca** has published essays, reviews and literary criticism in places like *The New York Observer*, *Salon*, *OC Weekly*, and *The Los Angeles Book Review*. His book *Paul Simon: An American Tune* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) was recently published, and we spoke with him about Simon's career, songwriting, and his unflagging interest in America.

**TA: You've written on David Foster Wallace, Don DeLillo, Phillip Roth, and other contemporary writers. What led you to write a book on Paul Simon? Like another writer you've studied, he at times seems preoccupied by what DeLillo calls "American magic and dread." Did you feel Simon has some similarities with some of the other writers you study?**

CB: My publisher is doing a series on pop figures, and at first I wanted to write on Springsteen, but someone had already snatched him up, so I decided on Simon. But it was an easy choice. He's somebody that I've kept faith with most of my life. Like Springsteen, or Jackson Browne, or the Clash, REM, and Pearl Jam, Simon has always been someone whose records I bought as soon as they came out, and when I'd come home, I'd do that thing my generation does where you sit cross-legged in front of your speakers and you listen to the record (or CD, now) with the lyrics in front of you and you take it all in. And, yeah, Simon's American-ness is a big lure. Many of the most important books by the writers you mentioned are obsessed with the American idea: *Infinite Jest*, *White Noise*, *Underworld*, *Goodbye Columbus*, *American Pastoral*, and frankly I'm a sucker for that stuff. My parents were both immigrants, and growing up the American dream was a pretty palpable presence in my house. Simon's songs about it—"America," "An American Tune," his first solo album, *The Paul Simon Songbook*—helped shape my early ideas about America as much as *Gatsby* or *Walden* or Emerson's essays ever did.

**One thing that struck me was the idea that Simon's album *Graceland* (1986) represented a turning point in the way he writes songs. Previously, he said, he had "planted" ideas; with *Graceland* and afterward, he began trying to "discover" things that were already there. What did he mean by that?**

When Simon was young, he was a pretty self-serious and pretentious guy who thought of himself as a "poet," and his song lyrics were self-conscious and deliberate: he knew American youth was supposed to be "alienated," so he wrote "The Sound of Silence"—which is a great song, but it's filled with received ideas (mostly from T.S. Eliot) that he picked up in college (he was an English major) and he "planted" those ideas in his songs. By the time he wrote *Graceland*, he'd changed



his whole method to something much more intuitive and sort of aleatory. He'd let images and phrases float through his head for weeks, even months, and slowly songs would shape themselves around them, even if they weren't logically or narratively connected. So he started "discovering" his lyrics in this sort of semi-subconscious way. Some of his greatest songs, like "The Boy in the Bubble," were written that way.

**At times you make the case that Simon is a kind of generational balladeer, gazing back at the failed potential of the 1960s with songs like 1973's "American Tune" or, later, at the uncanny "days of miracle and wonder" of the mid-1980s with songs like "The Boy in the Bubble." But on the other hand, generational ballad-writing is not the only thing he's doing. Do you think there's an aesthetic or thematic arc to Simon's nearly six-decade-long career? Are there certain lyrical interests or musical habits that he's developed over time?**

Thematically, Simon's interests are straight-ahead humanist: it's all about love, death, God, art, struggles with meaning. In the beginning, he wrote

about this stuff from a '60s quasi-counterculture point of view, and some of it's pretty callow—"The Dangling Conversation," etc. But Simon never got stuck in the '60s. *Still Crazy After All These Years* is a quintessentially '70s document, a post-'60s-hangover, pre-yuppie record. *Hearts and Bones*, *Graceland*, *The Rhythm of the Saints*—they're all pop rock for people who aren't young anymore—in fact, they're some of the records which stretched pop's ability to deal with adult, mature themes.

Musically, Simon's been a polyglot from the beginning. Amazing, really. When he was fifteen this Jewish kid from Queens was making these records that incorporated Hawaiian sounds, and long before *Graceland* made "world music" safe for white people to like, he was writing music that borrowed from Andean folk, samba, New Orleans jazz, calypso, reggae, all sorts of stuff. A lot of songwriters—the guys from Vampire Weekend, for instance—are in awe of Simon for exactly that ability of his to master all these forms of music and then make them his own.

**When I was reading the book, I realized I'd been mishearing one of Simon's lyrics. (I'd heard "I'm empty and aching" instead of "I'm eighteen and aching"—which of course is much better—on "America.") When you were revisiting these songs, most of which I'm sure you'd heard many times before, was there anything that surprised you? Anything that was more or less interesting than you'd remembered?**

The first thing that surprised me was how cringeworthy some of the early pretentious stuff was lyrically, songs that I thought were cool and "meaningful" when I was younger. Simon's such a great melodist, though, he can usually put over even those songs. But most of the surprises were positive. "Peace Like A River," from the first solo album, is great Paul Simon, and I didn't realize that till I wrote the book. So is about half of his last album, *So Beautiful So What*, which he recorded when he was 69 years old. It might be the best pop album ever written about an older guy looking over the far horizon toward death. It's got real sublimity to it.

# TEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT AN ECOCRITIC

The department welcomes **Nicole Seymour**, a specialist in the study of literature and the environment



In the Fall of 2014, **Nicole Seymour** joined the department as an assistant professor. Trained at Vanderbilt University, Seymour was already working as a professor at the University of Arkansas before CSUF was able to lure her back west. We sat down to compile a list of ten essential things to know about the department's newest faculty member.

**1. She's a professor of literature and the environment, and**

**she knows what you think about that.** She's familiar with the stereotypes. "Sure. The hordes of Teva [sandal]-wearing, crunchy-looking people championing Thoreau, Emerson, or [Barbara] Kingsolver," she acknowledges. But that stereotype, she says, doesn't reflect the current state of the field, nor its growing diversity. "I'm trying to connect questions of social justice to the environment and to do that through different types of texts," she continues. "Basically, I'm an ecocritic, which means putting the

environment at the forefront of whatever I'm reading. It means looking at the environment—in a novel or story or film or anything, really—as something to critique, something at the center of the narrative, not just the setting for whatever else is going on."

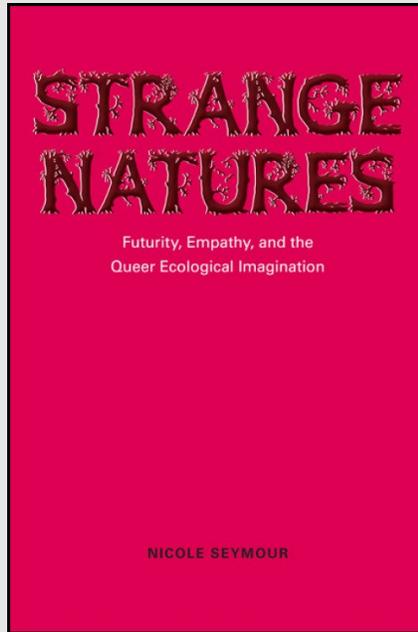
**2. She's also a queer theorist.** Typically, queer theorists and ecocritics have tended to be different people. The two subfields haven't always gotten along, Seymour explains, in large part because of a problem with the word "nature." For queer theorists, "nature" has often been something of a dirty word. "It's historically been used against LGBTQ people," Seymour says, "frequently in the sense of being 'unnatural.'" But for ecocritics, needless to say, nature has long been a positive rallying cry, not something to be viewed with suspicion. Seymour's work tries to bring those two groups together.

**3. Besides, classifying something as "natural" isn't as straightforward as it seems.** Her 2013 book, *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination* (University of Illinois Press), makes the case for a hidden tradition of "queer environmentalism" in contemporary American literature and film. The book also tackles the basic problem of how ecocritics and queer theorists talk about nature itself. "I bring those two groups together," Seymour explains, "through a re-reading of classic queer literature and film, texts that people for the most part have never categorized as 'environmental' at all." In doing so, she uncovers a secret legacy of an environmental consciousness in a body of literature that long seemed to deny such a thing.

**4. She's always been a California kid.** Born and raised in Long Beach, Seymour grew up going to the now-defunct San Pedro store The Sea (a "crazy store," she recalls, "filled with old boats and whale skeletons and fisherman's floats and seashells and junk") and eating pickled eggs and pretzels at Long Beach tavern Joe Jost's. She studied American literature and culture at UCLA before going on to Vanderbilt University in Tennessee for her PhD.

**5. And she really wanted to be a California kid again.** After graduate school, Seymour accepted a position as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Louisville, where she taught and wrote the bulk of *Strange Natures*. She then accepted a permanent, tenure-track posi-

tion as an assistant professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Shortly after arriving in Little Rock, though, she received a fellowship at the prestigious Rachel Carson Center at Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich, Germany and took a leave from Arkansas to pursue that opportunity. While she was there, CSUF was lucky enough to hire her away, and she joined the faculty in the Fall of 2014.



*Seymour's Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination* (University of Illinois Press, 2013)

**6. Yes, now that you mention it, she supposes it is surprising that there's a Rachel Carson Center in Germany.** Carson, of course, was the American marine biologist whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* is frequently credited with launching the modern environmental movement. So what's a center named for her doing in Munich? "The directors wanted a name for the center that was related to the environment that the average person might know," Seymour says, with the smile of someone who has had to explain this hundreds of times, "and they also realized there were virtually no research centers named for women. So: Rachel Carson Center."

**7. She's thrilled with the students at Fullerton.** Having worked at institutions all over the world, Dr. Seymour has seen all sorts of students. But the students here, she says, are especially smart and fun. "They seem very culture-savvy, very media-savvy," she says. "There's a lot that

they already know."

**8. She wants you to know there's more to American environmental literature than Henry David Thoreau and John Muir.** Her new book manuscript, *Bad Environmentalism: Affective Dissent in the Ecological Age*, examines how the often self-serious environmental movement might be undermining itself by ignoring certain parts of the population. As a corrective, she's looking at a set of unconventional examples of environmental-minded texts: the 2003-2006 MTV nature program parody *Wildboyz*, the 2006 Mike Judge film *Idiocracy*, and the performance art of activist group Queers for the Climate, among other things. These are all, she says, texts that "see humor not as an alternative to environmental politics, but see it as a crucial technique of environmental politics."

**9. While she's at it, she also wants you to know there's more American environmental literature than, well, American environmental literature.** Seymour is at work at another book, too, one she's coauthoring with Katherine Fusco, a professor at the University of Nevada at Reno, on the work of contemporary American filmmaker Kelly Reichardt. Reichardt is a forerunner of the international "slow cinema" movement in which people make slow, quiet films in which nothing much seems to happen. But her films, Seymour notes, "are actually an important portrait of contemporary times of emergency." After "spectacular catastrophes" like Hurricane Katrina, 9/11, or the Great Recession, her films explore the aftermath: people waiting in line, trying to make a phone call. She "captures the ways in which spectacular emergencies actually play out in very unspectacular slow ways," Seymour explains.

**10. She is a very, very serious tiki bar enthusiast.** Tiki bars exploded in popularity after American servicemen returned from the South Pacific after the World War II. But despite growing up long after its heyday, Seymour has had an affinity for tiki culture for as long as she can remember. "I'm not sure what it is: growing up in Southern California, having Hawaiian family members, the general influence of the Polynesian islands on the region," she muses. But she is currently turning her guest bedroom into a tiki lounge, and she has been to nearly every tiki bar still operating in Southern California.

## ALUMNI UPDATES, 2014-2015

**Charles Ardinger** (BA '07, MA '10) is teaching writing and an online "History of Science Fiction" course at Coastline Community College.

**Lauren Bailey** (BA '13) is a PhD student at CUNY Graduate Center. She was recently awarded a research grant to study archives of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century household ledgers.

**Nicole Bailey** (BA '10, MA '13) is working in the Education Department at PBS SoCal.

**Matthew Berger** (BA '11, MA '13) was recently accepted into the PhD program in comparative media at USC.

**Melissa Buell** (BA '10) teaches English at Eastside Christian School in Fullerton and is the author of the young adult fantasy novels *The Seventh Blessing* (TLT, 2011) and *The Hidden Blessing* (TLT, 2012).

**Caroline Carpenter** (BA '08) is completing a PhD in English at Claremont Graduate University. She is currently writing a dissertation edition of some previously unpublished early seventeenth-century plays.

**Jane Dimick** (MA '09) is completing a Ph.D. in Education (Culture and Curricular Studies) at Chapman University. She recently co-edited a book, *The Critical Graduate Experience: An Ethics of Higher Education Responsibilities* (Peter Lang, 2015).

**Sean Gantka** (BA '05, MA '08) is working as a Production Manager on "The Loud House" at Nickelodeon Animation. He and

a partner also recently sold a show to Nickelodeon and they are currently in series development for the show.

**Steve Harrison** (BA '80, MA '95) retired from teaching junior high English for Chino Valley Unified School District and has opened Hillside Fine Art, a new gallery featuring California Art Club artists, in Claremont.

**Cory Jackson** (MA '08) just published her fourth young adult novel, *Ignited* (Kensington, 2014). Her debut novel, *If I Lie* (Simon Pulse, 2012), was honored by the LA Public Library as one of the Best Teen Books of 2012.

**Michelle Jetta** (BA '08) received her MA in literature from Cal Poly Pomona in 2010. She now is a technical writer and project manager at Glidewell Laboratories.

**Chris Johnson** (BA '07, MA '11) was recently accepted to the University of Georgia School of Law.

**Stephanie (Keeton) Johnson** (MA '10) is working on a PhD in Comparative Literature at Emory University. She recently received a grant to study in Ireland and is working as a research assistant for *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*.

**Lindsay Kerstetter** (BA '11, MA '14) is teaching 7<sup>th</sup>-grade language arts in Florida.

**Calee Streza Lee** (MA '11) founded Xist Publishing and will be launching a part-

nership with Reading Rainbow this fall.

**Laura (Durica) Leeper** (BA '08, MA '13) is a freelance writer who teaches and tutors at Coastline Community College.

**Linda Mendoza** (BA '07) will graduate in May 2014 with an M.Ed in Counseling from USC.

**Janessa Osle** (BA '09) completed an MA in British Literature at San Diego State. She is currently working as a Developmental Editor at an art publishing company.

**Lauren Frances Scott** (BA '10) received her MFA in Creative Writing from Bath Spa University in England in September 2014.

**Amber Gillis Singham** (BA '07, MA '09) is a full-time English and Humanities Instructor at El Camino Compton Center.

**Jennifer Simonson** (BA '04, MA '08) is a tenured English instructor at Clovis Community College Center.

**Ashly Steele** (BA '13) recently completed her Master's in education in curriculum and instruction from CSUF.

**Melissa Utsler** (BA '96, MA '99) is an associate professor of English at Chaffey College.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Don't see your name here? Find us on social media or email Carlen Pope at [cpope@fullerton.edu](mailto:cpope@fullerton.edu) and let us know what you've been up to.

Call your department. It misses you.

## STUDENT RESEARCHER HONORED

Raina Karim, a graduate student in English, received the prestigious Outstanding Student Scholarly and Creative Activity Award for her research into Urdu literature. The award is presented annually to one undergraduate and one graduate student in each college in the university. Karim's independent research forms the basis of her Master's project, under the direction of associate professor **Ellen Caldwell**.

Karim's project introduces noted Pakistani author Firoz Alam through her translation of his short story "Dog Bite." Set in a rural village and based on Alam's own experience, the story recounts the tragedy of a teenage victim from the perspective of a young medical student, torn between his faith in his medical training and his belief in the powers of the spirit world. Karim's translation adds to the canon of comparative literature with this portrayal of Pakistani Muslim culture while also revealing the medical challenges confronting developing countries. Currently, no major world literature anthologies include contemporary Urdu literature. To correct this, Karim plans to submit the story to *World Literature Today* and *Two Lines*, both peer-reviewed journals that publish translated literary works. Thanks to Karim's research, Alam's extensive body of work will finally reach a wider audience.

In the course of her research, Karim consulted the personal libraries of local Pakistani writers, contacted experts in India and Pakistan, and interviewed Indo-Pakistani writers living in Southern California. The Outstanding Student Scholarly and Creative Activity Award is one of the highest honors the university confers on its student researchers. Advisor Ellen Caldwell says that Karim's "close reading of the text and her remarkable ability to set Dr. Alam's short story within the context of the vast array of Urdu literature constitute solid scholarly achievement as well as a labor of love for her native tongue," adding that she has "gained enormous appreciation for Urdu literature and culture" through Karim's work.

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 · *Paul Simon: An American Tune*. New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2015.  
 · "The Sob in the Spine." *Los Angeles Review of Books* 24 October 2014.
- David Hernandez**  
 · "Parking FAQ"; "The Prophecies of B.B. Guthrie"; "Thirteen"; "The Universe." *Blackbird* 13.2 (2014). Online.  
 · "Building a Joke." *Boston Review* (March/April 2015): 64.  
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- Brian Michael Norton**  
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 · Review of Bernard Comrie and Zarina Estrada-Fernández's *Relative Clauses in Languages of the Americas: A Typological Overview* (Benjamins, 2012). *International Journal of American Linguistics* 81.2 (2015).
- Irena Pratis**  
 · "Lyrics." *Southwest Review* 99.4 (2014): 537.  
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 · "Lost October." Coauthored with Jacob Weisman. *Field of Fantasies: Baseball Stories of the Strange and Supernatural*. Ed. Rick Wilber. San Francisco: Night Shade,

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 · *Shakespeare's "Whores": Erotics, Politics, and Poetics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- J. Chris Westgate**  
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- Conference Presentations/Readings**
- Emily King**  
 · "Crisis Discourse: Why Some Students Won't Participate in Discussion." Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference. Reno, NV.
- Stephen J. Mexal**  
 · "The Problem with Liberalism: Gender, Freedom, and Contingency in the Life and Poetry of Ina Coolbrith." Western Literature Association Annual Conference, Victoria, BC.
- Brian Michael Norton**  
 · "Disenchantment or Defamiliarization?: Physico-Theology and Early Enlightenment Aesthetics." American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA.
- Amy Novak**  
 · "Ghost Sickness: Beads, Spirits, and Trauma in Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife*." American Comparative

## FACULTY PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS, 2014-2015

- Literature Association Convention. Seattle, WA.
- Natalie Operstein**  
 · "Phonological Adaptation of Spanish Loanwords in Zaniza Zapotec." International Conference on Mesoamerican Linguistics. Los Angeles, CA.  
 · "Spanish Loanword Adaptation in Zaniza Zapotec." American Indian Seminar, UCLA. Los Angeles, CA.
- Irena Pratis**  
 · "The Last Stone in the Circle." Poetry presentation. Great Writing Conference. London, England.
- Nicole Seymour**  
 · "High Peaks, Flat Affect: Ironizing Climate Change Documentary." Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference. Montreal, QC.  
 · "Like a True Nature's Child": Landscape and Environment in the Transgender Road Trip Novel." Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900. Louisville, KY.  
 · "Climate Change is a Drag and Camping Can Be Campy: Queer Environmental Performance and New Ecological Identities." UC Davis Humanities Institute. Davis, CA.  
 · "Documentary Film and the Ironies of Climate Change." Invited presentation at the University of Nevada at Reno. Reno, NV.
- J. Chris Westgate**  
 · "He Won't Do": Working Class Contestation of Broadway's Fascination with the Slums in Progressive-Era New York City." Mid-America Theatre Conference. Kansas City, MO.  
 · "Dissolution by Stages—and then—the Worst": The Specter of Syphilis in *The Dawn of a To-morrow*. Comparative Drama Conference. Baltimore, MD.
- Bonnie Williams**  
 · "The Risks and Rewards of Linguistically Standing Your Ground: Understanding, Rethinking, and Advocating Linguistic Diversity in the Classroom and Beyond." Conference on College Composition and Communication. Tampa, FL.
- Heping Zhao**  
 · "The Rhetorical Scope of 'Wen' in Liu Xie's *Wenxin Diaolong*: An Examination of Vincent Shih's Translation of the *Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*." Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai, China.  
 · "Parallels from Yonder: A Few Observations of Chinese Rhetorical Thoughts." Keynote speech. European Center for Science Education and Research. Bucharest, Romania.



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