



FACULTY OF ARTS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

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CHAIR'S REMARKS

Dr. Lyn Bennett

AFTER A YEAR OF LOCKDOWN and online classes, English and Creative Writing are back in the classroom. Though we are all still dealing with the pandemic some eighteen months later, it's good to be back on the beautiful (if quieter) Dalhousie campus. Not only is it great to see students in person after what seems an eternity, it's wonderful to finally have the opportunity to interact in person with some of our newer colleagues – in some cases, for the first time. In the past few years, we have welcomed Andrew Brown, Brian Gillis, Asha Jeffers, Heather Jessup, Margaret Robinson, and Bart Vautour to the Department, all of whom you met in the Summer 2020 *Newsletter*. With some arriving in the midst of a global pandemic, our new colleagues deserve our thanks for the role they played in what former Chair Jason Haslam described as “the Herculean task of converting our courses for online education,” and for doing so at an “astounding pace.” Baptism-by-fire may most aptly describe their departmental initiation, yet our newest members bring with them a sense of hope and renewal during a time when we may need it the most.

Our new colleagues' interests and accomplishments are many and diverse, but they deserve a quick recap here. In a nutshell, Andrew is an early modernist who focuses largely on drama, Brian specializes in American and Indigenous literatures and the language of the Cherokee people, Asha focuses on immigrant literature and gender studies, Heather is a creative writer who also specializes in contemporary Canadian literature, Margaret focuses on the work of decolonization as well as representations of Indigenous and sexual minority people, and Bart is a specialist in editing and textual studies who also works in creative writing and Canadian modernism. In addition to

our newer colleagues, we are happy to welcome back Tom Ue, who returned to us this term to pilot *Reading Literature and Science*, a new first-year course on a popular topic that offers additional writing support to its students. We are also excited to welcome back Camille van der Marel, who brings her wide-ranging expertise in Contemporary Canadian literature to our course offerings, and Brad Congdon, whose award-winning work in American literature and expertise in writing enriches our classrooms. We are also very happy to welcome back novelist and award-winning poet Sue Goyette, who is this year teaching three upper-level courses in Creative Writing. In ways too numerous to list here, our newest members build on some of our notable strengths while also bringing some fresh new perspectives to course offerings that this year include *African Diaspora*, *Indigenous Graphic Novels*, *Queerness in Detective Fiction*, *Editing and Publishing Literature*, and *Unconventional Love Stories*. Though our slate of courses for next year and beyond has yet to be decided, we're surely excited to see what comes next!

Though Dalhousie is maintaining the mask mandate until at least the end of this year, lifting of some pandemic restrictions means the return of our ever-popular Speaker Series, which this term begins with two in-person events. You can find the Speaker Series schedule as well as a piece by Heather Jessup on November's "Double Date" online series in this issue. Whether in person or online, I hope to see some of you there. In the meantime, I would like to offer Jason the sincerest thanks for so capably leading us through the worst of times, and to wish him and all of you a healthy and happy autumn and a safe return to the non-virtual world.

2020-21 DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES AND AWARDS

Every year the department recognizes several students with prizes and awards, all nominated by faculty members. These students and their work—especially during the disruption of last year—are inspiring! Congratulations to all!



AVIE BENNETT PRIZE

(for best essay in Canadian Literature):
Sam Sumner.

BENNETT CHITTICK PRIZE

(for an outstanding student in a 1000-level English course):
Emma K. Williams

PAUL MCISAAC MEMORIAL PRIZE

(for a student in the second or third year of study in English who demonstrates an enquiring and original mind):
Keanan Byggdin

SAMANTHA LI MEMORIAL AWARD

(established by family, friends, faculty, and students to honour the memory of Samantha Li, for a student who demonstrates intellectual reach and creativity, a passion for the exploration of literature and ideas, and generosity toward and engagement with fellow students and professors):
Tarini Fernando

MALCOLM ROSS THESIS PRIZE

(awarded to an outstanding MA or PhD thesis on Canadian Literature):
Dr. Kaarina Mikalson

2020-21 CREATIVE WRITING PRIZES

Fooshee Prizes in Poetry and Fiction

POETRY

- 1st place:
Wynne Clark-Squire,
“Dear Red Dress”
- 2nd place:
Kerenza Verburg,
“What Remains”
- 3rd place:
Maya Schwartz,
“Prairie Poem for Purim”

FICTION

- 1st place:
Keanan Byggdin,
“With Deepest Sympathy for Your Failures as a Father”
- 2nd place:
Maya Schwartz,
“The Vending Machine”
- 3rd place:
Ainsley Jackson,
“Quitting My First Job”

VARMA PRIZE FOR GOTHIC LITERATURE

- 1st place:
Anya Deady, “Now Serving Number Fifty-Five”
- 2nd place:
Neve McCormack,
“The Hanged Man”
- 3rd place:
Asher Cookson,
Untitled poem

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Meg Collins, “A Final Dinner”;
Shima Dolek, “Blanket”;
Andrew Wiley, “Cannulated”; and
Audrey Green, “Halifax Homes”

ON THE MARROW THIEVES AND BLOOD QUANTUM: A CONVERSATION WITH KRISTA COLLIER-JARVIS

By Michael Cameron

(Editor's note: this interview, by PhD candidate Michael Cameron, with PhD candidate Krista Collier-Jarvis, originally appeared online through the OpenThink Initiative (<https://blogs.daI.ca/openthink/>). This initiative, offered by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, empowers a select group of PhD researchers to engage with communities beyond the university.)



A still photo from the 2019 film *Blood Quantum* ([Blood Quantum still photo via IMBD](#))

THIS ARTICLE DISCUSSES THE RECENT DISCOVERIES AT THE SITES OF THE FORMER INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

IN MAY, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation revealed that it had [found the remains of 215 children](#) at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. Only weeks later, the Cowessess First Nation announced that they had [found 751 unmarked graves](#) at the former site of Marieval Indian Residential School. While Indigenous people have long known that these and many other sites have harbored such confirmations, the widespread surprise expressed in the wake of these announcements speaks to the need, both today and going forward, to listen to the voices of Indigenous people, many of whom have found literary fiction and film useful for grappling with such difficult subjects. In *The Marrow Thieves*, which I have [discussed before](#), Cherie Dimaline uses dystopian tropes and a post-apocalyptic setting to speak to the ongoing history of colonialism,

while Jeff Barnaby speaks to this same ongoing history in *Blood Quantum* by portraying a zombie horde threatening a Mi'kmaq reserve.

To discuss these works and their larger implications, I am privileged to invite my colleague and friend Krista Collier-Jarvis to contribute to this month's blog. Collier-Jarvis is a member of the Pictou Landing First Nation and a PhD Candidate in the Department of English. Her research focuses on intersections between the Gothic and Indigenous literature and film.

Q. Michael Cameron – What is the “Indigenous Gothic,” and how does it differ, if at all, from Gothic literature as it's traditionally been conceived?

A. Krista Collier-Jarvis – There are ongoing debates within the Gothic as to whether there is an Indigenous Gothic, so to simplify things and avoid falling

into the trappings of genre debate, let's just say there are Indigenous authors and filmmakers working in the Gothic and deliberately drawing on both Gothic tropes as well as Indigenous subtexts to interrogate the current colonial trappings of genre. According to Michelle Burnham, if there is an Indigenous Gothic it eschews settler mentality—that is, it deliberately rejects territorial borders and boundaries, it interrogates binary systems, and it questions Indigenous past, present, and future. The latter of these things is what piques my curiosity. While the Gothic has always been concerned with what Freud calls the return of the repressed, or history coming back to haunt us (ghosts), Indigenous Gothic is not rooted in the haunting itself, but in the ability to finally add Indigenous perspectives and voices alongside the national narrative. Indigenous Gothic

ON THE MARROW THIEVES AND BLOOD QUANTUM: A CONVERSATION WITH KRISTA COLLIER-JARVIS CON'T

does not rewrite history *per se* but rather writes another version of history alongside what is already there, but in doing so, seeks to reposition Indigenous peoples in a different haunting/haunted dynamic.

Q. MC – Some of the works you study overlap the Gothic and the dystopian/post-apocalyptic. How do these genres relate?

A. KCJ – Absolutely, they overlap in many ways. In fact, both Jeff Barnaby's 2019 film, *Blood Quantum*, and Cherie Dimaline's novel, *The Marrow Thieves*, have been discussed through a Gothic lens as well as through a dystopian/post-apocalyptic lens. While it is perfectly fine to situate Indigenous narratives within traditional dystopian parameters, we must also acknowledge that the Gothic and dystopian classifications are Eurocentric and somewhat limiting when applied to Indigenous narratives. For example, a subgenre called Indigenous Futurism can more accurately be applied. Eva Greyeyes argues, "Indigenous Futurisms is a method of healing. At its core, the movement is about envisioning a future from an Indigenous perspective. It's a way to step outside boundaries and imagine new possibilities." Indigenous Futurism is a response to the dearth of Indigenous representation in science fiction. Indigenous Gothic operates along a similar vein whereby we take horror and Gothic narratives where Indigenous peoples are largely absent, and we include them—both as creators and characters. How does the narrative change when we do this? Are the parameters of the genre so tight that they cannot be disrupted? Essentially, because these works are so new, we don't have answers to these questions yet, but I'm really excited to find out.

Q. MC – Why are Indigenous authors/creators gravitating to these genres today?

A. KCJ – In one interview, Barnaby admitted that he went into filmmaking because he was inspired by Alanis Obomsawin's documentary ([Incident](#)

[at Restigouche](#)) detailing the events in 1981 at Restigouche (the year *Blood Quantum* takes place). He believed that this was the best way to educate people, so we can deduce that possibly Indigenous creators are gravitating to these genres partly to communicate and educate their audience, but also, simply to diversify and increase representation. In a different interview, Barnaby refers to Indigenous horror as an Indigenous form of reconciliation. Therefore, we could also deduce that they present a way of working through trauma, but the best way to really understand is to watch and listen to interviews with these creators. Dimaline has often spoken about how her literature responds to the suicide epidemic amongst Indigenous youth, and how she wanted to create a hopeful narrative—*The Marrow Thieves*—whereby Indigenous youth had something for which to fight, and non-Indigenous peoples experience high rates of suicide instead.

Q. MC – Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* engages with the ongoing history of colonialism by imagining a future dystopia where settlers harvest the dreams of Indigenous people in institutions modeled after the Canadian Residential School System. How do you read the novel and its speculative setting as engaging with this ongoing history?

A. KCJ – I want to start by acknowledging the recent confirmations of our stolen children. There are no words to describe the emotional impact, and I have to admit that I start crying every time I think about the 215, the 751, and the yet uncovered Indigenous children. I read *The Marrow Thieves* prior to recent confirmations, yet I didn't see the schools in the novel as fiction really. I would most likely find the novel more traumatizing now, especially the scene with the death of RiRi. The most interesting thing about teaching this novel is that when students refer to the schools in Dimaline's world, they call them "Residential Schools." However, the schools in the novel are

not Residential Schools *per se* but are "modelled after them," according to the characters. What this says to me is that regardless of how much the schools in the novel may differ, that colonial narrative is not history—it's now, and it's ongoing, and we need to acknowledge the presence of it and do more.

Q. MC – Recently, I heard you give a talk on Jeff Barnaby's *Blood Quantum* in which you discussed the film as an example of "haunting back" and Indigenous resistance. Briefly put, how does the movie demonstrate this, and how might it speak to the possibility of justice and reconciliation?

A. KCJ – Firstly, thank you for attending my talk on *Blood Quantum*. The concept of "haunting back" was developed by Teresa Goddu, originally in reference to slave narratives, such as Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved*. Goddu posits that when oppressed peoples rewrite the stories that originally position them as ghosts or monsters or lesser, they are haunting back against the national narratives that created their oppression. As you might realise, this does not undo the oppressive structures but can powerfully disrupt them and force us to question the stability, the reliability, and ultimately the constructedness and vulnerability of these narratives (such as Canadian or American exceptionalism). Barnaby engages in haunting back in several respects throughout his film, but the one I touched on during my talk is the use of Shaney Komulainen's "iconic" photograph called "Face to Face" from the 1990 Oka crisis, which constructs a narrative of Canadian courage in the face of the monstrous Indigenous warrior. In Barnaby's haunting back of this image, he represents the same Indigenous warrior facing off against a zombified Canadian soldier, thereby positing the Canadian soldier as monster instead. This disrupts the national narrative of Canada as courageous and peacekeeping, and indeed, when I now see Komulainen's original photograph, I see zombies.

DALREADS PEDAGOGY ROUNDTABLE ON *THE MARROW THIEVES*

By the Members of the Roundtable

CHERIE DIMALINE'S multiple-award winning novel *The Marrow Thieves* was the DalReads selection for 2020-2021. The dystopian novel is set in a Turtle Island that has been decimated by the intersecting forces of white supremacy, climate change, and neocolonialism. In the world of *The Marrow Thieves*, Indigenous Peoples are being hunted, imprisoned, and tortured for their bone marrow because they are the only humans who have retained the capacity for dreaming. And dreaming, as it turns out, is vital for human survival.

Dimaline's novel is both prescient and harrowing. It is also brilliantly and unabashedly joyous in its assurance that Indigenous Peoples, and especially Indigenous youth, are the future for

both the world of the novel and, indeed, our shared world.

In January, members of the Department of English participated in a roundtable that explored the pedagogical possibilities of *The Marrow Thieves*. Co-organized by Margaret Robinson and Erin Wunker, the roundtable participants included Brian Gillis, Andrew Brown, and Aiden Tait. The roundtable was organized in collaboration with the DalReads Committee and hosted by Dr. Robinson. The panelists discussed topics ranging from theoretical approaches to teaching *The Marrow Thieves*, to the potential challenges of teaching the novel, to the vital necessity of teaching works that critique systemic structures of

oppression. The event was attended by members of the Dalhousie community, scholars and students from other local universities, and members of the public. Panelists' comments were followed by a question-and-answer session that brought these participants together in conversation, generating a rich discussion about how the experience of teaching *The Marrow Thieves* in Dalhousie's English department might offer lessons for teaching and learning with the text more generally.

The roundtable was recorded and is available for viewing and classroom use: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vnyx3qmM-cs>.

FALL SPEAKER SERIES

By Jason Haslam

WE ARE EXCITED TO BE ABLE

to return to our weekly speaker series after the hiatus caused by the pandemic. In addition to the Double Date readings (see the article in this newsletter) and the MacKay Symposium (organized by Martha Radice for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), we have a set of critical papers and panels, as well as our annual PhD and Honours colloquia. You can stay up-to-date on our series, find locations and other information, and see the Winter Schedule when it is ready, through our [website](#).

OCTOBER

- 1st** Department Meet 'n' Greet (Fireside Lounge, McCain Building)
- 15th** Leonard Diepeveen (Dalhousie, English): "The Crossword Craze of the 1920s, and The Terrible Things It Had to Say About Modernism"
- 22nd** Jason Haslam (Dalhousie, English), Karen Macfarlane (MSVU, English), and Julia M. Wright (Dalhousie, English): Gothic Atmospheres Panel
- 29th** MacKay Symposium: "Happiness in Troubled Times": <https://happinessintroubledtimes.ca/>

NOVEMBER

- 5th** Double Date: A Reading Series of Writing Couples I (Sponsored by the Canada Council for the Arts): Marilyn Simmons and Wayne Grady
- 19th** Double Date: A Reading Series of Writing Couples II (Sponsored by the Canada Council for the Arts): Cedar Bowers and Michael Christie
- 26th** PhD Colloquium

DECEMBER

- 3rd** Honours Colloquium

'IMMENSELY MOTIVATING' SCHOLARSHIP HELPED DRAW STUDENT TO DALHOUSIE FOR GRAD STUDIES

By Alison DeLory

IN THE CHAOS OF CHOOSING A GRAD school and anticipating a big move during the pandemic, Aiden Tait says learning they'd won the 2020-21 \$3,000 Lynne and Clyde Evans Scholarship in English at Dalhousie was "pure elation."

Originally from South Africa, Tait lived in Dubai before moving to Vancouver to complete high school. They did their undergrad at the University of British Columbia but was eyeing Dalhousie for their Master of Arts in English because the faculty aligned with their academic interests in contemporary fiction and media, children's literature and adaptation theory.

The Lynne and Clyde Evans Scholarship in English is awarded annually to an outstanding graduate student in Dalhousie's English department. Tait says the scholarship was a factor that further motivated them to choose Dalhousie. "I got up off the couch and was just screaming at my family and they said what's wrong, what's wrong? And I said no, you don't understand, this is great, this is fantastic!"

It was a bright spot in a difficult year, says Tait, with COVID-19 impacting their opportunities for paid employment. "That [funding] really just gave me the opportunity and incentive to move," says Tait, who, in anticipation of otherwise having to take out a substantial student loan, was feeling stressed.

Tait is now enrolled in the PhD program in English at Dalhousie, focusing further on Queer and BIPOC voices in the horror genre, with the intention of eventually pursuing a career in academia. They are already working as a TA in the English department helping first-year students gain more comfort and confidence in their writing. "It's exciting to watch them progress," Tait proudly says.

The scholarship, Tait says, is "immensely motivating" because it allows them to gain confidence in their writing and skills as an academic



knowing their research is worthy of support.

"[To the donors] I would say first, really thank you for supporting students who want to pursue academia. Thank you for giving us access to such a

wonderful school and such a wonderful institution. That accessibility and the ability to live well and study well is really quite incredible."

DOUBLE DATE: A READING SERIES OF WRITING COUPLES

By Heather Jessup

THIS YEAR THE CREATIVE WRITING

Program is hosting a Creating Writing Reading Series funded by the Canada Council for the Arts: *Double Date: A Reading Series of Writing Couples*. The series of four public presentations investigates the compelling, romantic, and perhaps at times vexing phenomenon of writers who not only make art but choose to also make a life together. By hearing writers speak to their creative practice as couples, read from their own work, and answer questions from the audience, we as writers and readers can learn more about the relationships we kindle with our most beloved humans and the relationships we develop toward our creative literary practices.



**NOVEMBER 5TH
3:45PM TO 5PM:**

MERILYN SIMONDS AND WAYNE GRADY (CREATIVE NON-FICTION)

The link for the zoom registration page is here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ICvnUoUKRCGryjTM4v_Kog



NOVEMBER 19TH 3:45-5PM:

CEDAR BOWERS AND MICHAEL CHRISTIE (FICTION)

The link for the zoom registration page is here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_00jNHli6TDWmZmMdxLgKXw



FEBRUARY 11TH 3:45PM-5PM

HANNAH MOSCOVICH AND CHRISTIAN BARRY (DRAMA)

Hannah and Christian will be joining us in person in the Scotiabank Auditorium

We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts. We also acknowledge the support of the Writers Federation of Nova Scotia.



Canada Council for the Arts
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WFSN
WRITERS' FEDERATION
OF NOVA SCOTIA



APRIL 1ST 7PM - 8:30PM:

TRUTH IS... AND BETH ANNE ELLIPSIS (SPOKEN WORD)

Truth and Beth Anne will be joining us in person in Rowe 101

A SELECTION OF DEPARTMENT UPDATES

ANDREW BROWN published a review of Samuel Fallon's book *Paper Monsters: Persona and Literary Culture in Elizabethan England* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019) for *Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America* (<https://doi.org/10.1086/712788>).

BRAD CONGDON has published the chapter "Masculinity" in the volume *Norman Mailer in Context*, edited by Maggie McKinley (Cambridge University Press, 2021; <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108774413.029>).

KATHY CAWSEY published "Lament during the Pandemic," a personal essay about reading and teaching Old English laments during a global pandemic, in *Pedagogy and Profession: New Chaucer Studies* (<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2cz733hs>).

KRISTA COLLIER-JARVIS has been elected as Vice President of the Graduate Student Caucus for the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English (<http://accute.ca>). She has also been offered a position on *Thinking through the Museum*, which will involve travel to Poland and Washington within the next two years to help coordinate workshops on decolonization for the National Museum of the American Indian and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

BRENNA DUPERRON has published the article "Ghostly Consciousness in *The Book of Margery Kempe*" in a special issue of *English Language Notes on Indigenous Futures & Medieval Past*s (58.2, October 2020; <https://doi.org/10.1215/00138282-8557960>). She also co-authored, with **Elizabeth Edwards**, "Thinking Indigeneity: A Challenge to Medieval Studies," in *Exemplaria* (33.1, 2021; <https://doi.org/10.1080/10412573.2021.1893095>).

JASON HASLAM received an honourable mention in the annual Ernest Redekop prize, for best article published in the *Canadian Review of American Studies*, for "Chain-Gang Gothic: *The Colonel's Dream* and the Spectacular Terrors of State Punishment" (CRAS 50.2; <https://utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/cras.2018.020>).

HEATHER JESSUP was in conversation with scholar Antoinette Lafarge on October 5th, 2021 for *Illuminations: The Chancellor's Arts and Culture Initiative* at the University of California, Irvine, to discuss fictive artwork, hoaxes, and Antoinette's new book *Sting in the Tale: Art, Hoax, and Provocation*. The link to the talk can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3UK5TZDqBM>. Heather also has a work of creative non-fiction—"Klein Bottle," about writing, parenting, and moving across the country in the middle of the pandemic—coming out in Winter issue of *BRICK: A Literary Magazine*, on newsstands shortly.

CHRISTINA LUCKYJ has been appointed McCulloch Chair of English, and her new book, *Liberty and the Politics of the Female Voice in Early Stuart England* is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press in April 2022 (<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/liberty-and-the-politics-of-the-female-voice-in-early-stuart-england/8AB66DAA106C3023233B76B404FB032D>). Her ongoing projects include her role as Section Editor of *The Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Early Modern Women's Writing* (for the Jacobean Period, 1603-1625) and as Editor of *The Winter's Tale* for the new Cambridge Shakespeare Editions.

ROHAN MAITZEN published "Austen in Nazi Europe," on Olivia Manning's epic Balkan Trilogy, in the 04 June 2021 issue of the *Time Literary Supplement*: <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/balkan-trilogy-olivia-manning-review-rohan-maitzen/>, and she was part of the TLS podcast to discuss it: <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/but-where-the-poetry/>.

AIDEN TAIT has had a selection of poetry published in *The Lamp* (<https://thelamp.itch.io/the-lamp-volume-11>).

BART VAUTOUR has published a chapbook, *I'll Learn to Listen / At the Trailing Edge of the World* with GapRiot Press: <https://www.gapriotpress.com/shop/p/bart-vautor-ill-learn-to-listen-at-the-trailing-edge-of-the-world>. In lieu of a book launch, GapRiot's Kate Siklosi recorded a podcast conversation he had with Samantha Bernstein called "Nostalgia Kills": <https://soundcloud.com/gap-riot-press/tracks>. He has also received a Canada Council Grant for a research and creation project called "Radio Futures."

JULIA M. WRIGHT, FRSC, is serving as member of the Royal Society of Canada Task Force on COVID-19 and chaired its working group on the Future of Higher Education. Their peer-reviewed policy briefing was published earlier this year: *Investing in a Better Future: Higher Education and Post-COVID Canada* (<https://rsc-src.ca/en/covid-19-policy-briefing-recent/future-higher-education/investing-in-better-future-higher-education>).

Congratulations to the following graduate students who successfully completed their degrees in 2020-21!

Master of Arts: Emma Faulkner; Gavin Foster; Kimberly Gilson; Ferron Guerreiro; Gabrielle Mills; Jenna Pierson; Matthew Rooney; Noelle Segato; Aiden Tait.

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