



Department of English Newsletter

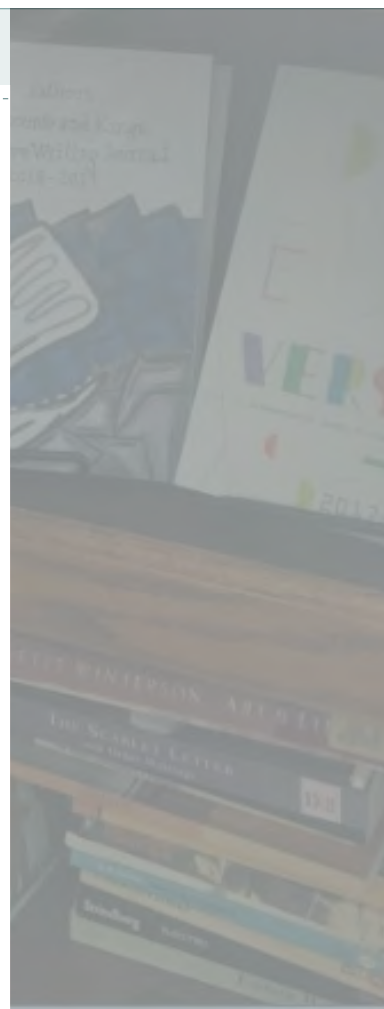
CHAIR'S REMARKS

This term's newsletter covers both the Fall and Winter terms of the current year, and as you'll see, they were productive—and fun!—terms, but also busy! As you know from our previous newsletter, our department has seen a number of retirements this year, and our profiles of those colleagues led several of you to send us your memories of their classes and your time in our Department. We loved hearing from you! You'll see excerpts from some of those letters sprinkled about this issue.

But English is also undergoing some exciting renewal. This year, in cooperation with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and other departments in the Faculty, we've been able to hire multiple new tenure-track colleagues for the first time in several years. We've also seen a number of our PhD students defend their theses, and, of course, many of our undergraduate and MA students graduate (we're looking forward to hosting this Spring's graduates and their families at a champagne social after convocation).

These events, and others celebrated in this Newsletter, are among the highlights of our year, as they recall for us—and we hope for you!—the benefits of English studies and of being part of the Dal English family. I'd be remiss not to thank all of you, too, who have helped make those events possible, and memorable, through your donations. On behalf of the whole department, thank you very much!

We really do enjoy hearing from our alumni—if you have any thoughts about this Newsletter, or memories of the department you would like to pass on, please feel free to drop me a line at Jason.Haslam@dal.ca.

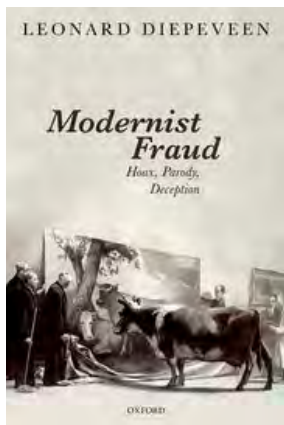


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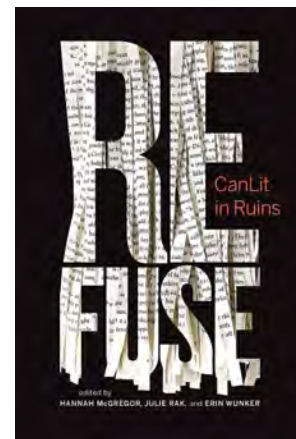
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“Focusing on literature and visual art in the years 1910-1935, *Modernist Fraud* begins with the omnipresent accusations that modernism was not art at all, but rather an effort to pass off patently absurd works as great art.” (Oxford University Press)



“The book features essays and poetry by 23 writers, including Alicia Elliott, Gwen Benaway, Kai Cheng Thom, and Joshua Whitehead. The writers question the existing framework, star system, privilege, and hierarchies in CanLit, speak to their own experiences, insist on accountability, and champion change.” (Quill & Quire on *Refuse: CanLit in Ruins*)

DID YOU KNOW?

Dalhousie’s first English professor, James De Mille (at Dalhousie from 1865-1880), was also a prolific and popular author. De Mille is primarily remembered for *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* (1888), published after his death and still in print because it is widely read and studied. It first appeared serially in *Harper’s Weekly* and then as a book. His other works of fiction include *The Martyr of the Catacombs: A Tale of Ancient Rome* (1865), *The Lily and the Cross: A Tale of Acadia* (1872), and a series of adventure tales that started with *The Brethren of the White Cross* (1869).

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

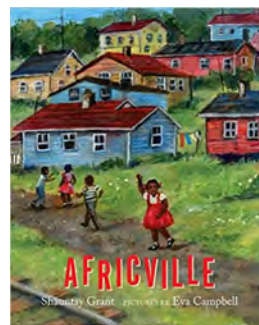
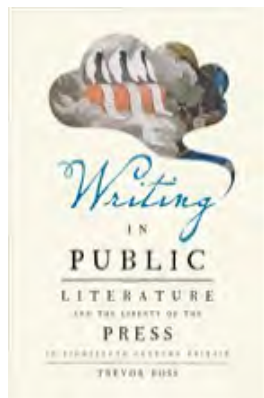
Lyn Bennett, *Rhetoric, Medicine, and the Woman Writer, 1600-1700* (Cambridge University Press, 2018)

Leonard Diepeveen, *Modernist Fraud: Hoax, Parody, Deception* (Oxford University Press, 2019)

Shauntay Grant, *Africville*, illus. Eva Campbell (House of Anansi Press, 2018)

Trevor Ross, *Writing in Public: Literature and the Liberty of the Press in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019)

Erin Wunker, co-ed. with Hannah McGregor and Julie Rak, *Refuse: CanLit in Ruins* (Book*hug Press, 2018)





Fathom launch at the newly renovated Grawood (1 April 2019; photo: Julia M. Wright)

FATHOM MARKS 36TH EDITION OF CREATIVE WRITING JOURNAL

By Claire Bennet

On April 1st, authors and editors came together to celebrate the launch of *Fathom*, Dalhousie and King's undergraduate creative writing journal.

This year marked the publication of the 36th edition of the journal. The team was pleased to have contributions from students across a variety of disciplines, and to be able to print over 80 pages of student writing! As an entirely student-run initiative, it is important to the *Fathom* team to uphold and highlight the creativity that undergraduate Dalhousie and King's students cultivate.

The launch brought together the full contributing team – authors, editors, and faculty supervisor Sue Goyette – to enjoy food, drinks, and readings of the pieces in this year's edition of *Fathom*. Some authors presented their pieces for the first time to an audience, having been inspired by the readings of their peers. This year's edition contains poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, so there is sure to be something within the pages of the journal for every reader.

Fathom encourages all writers, published or otherwise, to pursue their own crafts and express their voices in the creative world however they deem fit. Creative expression is unique, extraordinary, and should be accessible to all.

THINGS FORMER STUDENTS SAY...

Our last newsletter yielded some lovely comments from former students about our recent retirees.

Kiana Pace (BA 2015) writes, "I just read the newsletter and I wanted to pass along my congratulations to Dr. Baxter and Dr. Greenfield on their retirement.

I enjoyed being in their classes so much that I ended up taking several of their classes through my undergrad, influenced by not only their subject matter but also their teaching styles. As you may remember about me, I'm most comfortable blending into the background in class but Dr. Baxter had me reciting Renaissance Drama in front of the class without a worry, and Dr. Greenfield's teaching and assistance led me to the first 'A' in my undergraduate career.

Please pass along my congratulations and best wishes for a happy and exciting retirement."

THINGS FORMER STUDENTS SAY...

Ava Czapalay (BA 1986) writes, "I just received and read the summer newsletter. I enjoyed reading about the retirement plans of my former professors (John Baxter and Marjorie Stone) and catching up on the Department's news. . . . Receiving the newsletter today caused me to pause and reflect on my good fortune in choosing English as my major.

Like many first year students at Dalhousie, I decided to major in a science. One day, the Head of the English Department, Dr. Rowland Smith, asked me to meet with him and he encouraged me to consider English as a major and to consider taking it as an honours degree. I think that I was so flattered to receive advice from a faculty member that I immediately jumped ship and signed up as suggested. My parents were less enthused but, over time, became supportive.

My time with the English Department was great. I learned to think for myself; I learned to analyze, reflect and present my ideas. I learned to research and write papers; to discuss and debate. . . .

Today, I have a staff of 70 employees and lead the Higher Education Branch in Nova Scotia Labour and Advanced Education. I am always on the look out for Dalhousie English graduates, knowing they will be well-equipped to support the work of my Branch.

So, many thanks for the newsletter and best wishes to the retiring faculty and to the Department of English."

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Our undergraduate students continue to be active researchers. The Honours students presented early versions of their Honours essays (a new part of our program) at a well-attended and energizing colloquium in late November. Papers ranged from Chaucer to Shakespeare to Hardy, and from American pulp fiction to Canadian magic realism.

In March, a group of Dalhousie and King's students travelled with Professor Holly Morgan to St. Thomas University to participate in the Annual Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference. This has become an annual

roadtrip for our students, and is always a rewarding experience and a great opportunity to connect with English majors across the region.



Dal English students at St. Thomas University (with lots of snow!) (photo: Holly Morgan)

ANNUAL GRADUATE CONFERENCE

For nearly a decade now, the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students in English (DAGSE) has been organizing a graduate conference every year. It regularly attracts international participants as well as graduate students from across Canada, testament to the quality of DAGSE's work on the conference. DAGSE also continues to meet the challenge of finding conference themes that start with a "D."

Last year's conference, "(De)Composing Death," 10-12 August, featured speakers from UBC, the University of Toronto, Western, Queen's, McGill, and other universities in Canada, as well as the University of Vermont and Duquesne in the US.

This year's conference, "Devils and Daemons," will take place 8-10 August and will be just as intellectually energizing. For more details, see <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/arts/english/news-events/dagse-conference.html>.

APRIL LAUNCHES BRING MAY READINGS

Our undergraduate students contribute to, edit, and publish two journals: *Verso*, which publishes scholarship, and *Fathom*, joint with King's, which publishes students' creative work. On the *Fathom* launch on April 1st, please see page 3 of this Newsletter. The 10th *Verso* launch took place April 15th and was similarly well-attended and suitably celebratory for a decade! You can read issues of *Verso* for free online: <https://ojs.library.dal.ca/verso> !

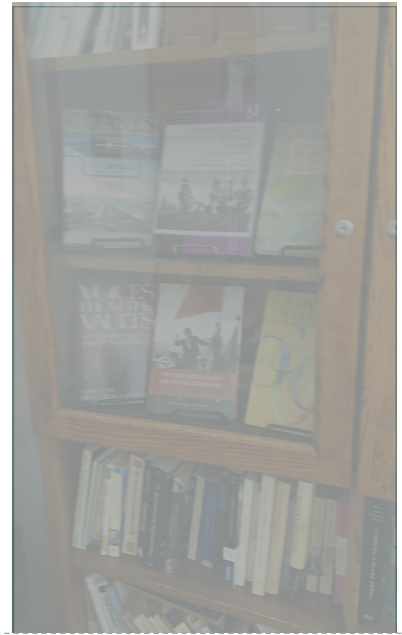
On April 11th, Professor Lyn Bennett launched a new SSHRC-funded website on *Early Modern Maritime Recipes*. The project is in collaboration with Professor Edith Snook (UNB), and they have partnered with the UNB Libraries. The site includes recipes (often called "receipts" in the eighteenth century) for food, medical treatments, and other uses. Take a look! Where else are you going to find a 1752 "Receipt for the Bite of a Mad Dog" or a 1765 recipe for gingerbread?

HAL-CON & WORD ON THE STREET

The department continues to be involved in community events.

In September 2018, a number of writers from the Dalhousie English community gave readings at the popular Word on the Street Festival, including Carol Bruneau, Shauntay Grant, El Jones, and Erin Wunker.

In October, faculty and graduate students presented panels based on their research at Hal-Con, the biggest sci-fi and fantasy convention in the Atlantic region. This is the fourth year that department members have organized well-attended panels at Hal-Con.



Civil rights leader Angela Davis was on campus last Fall. To see her talk and performances in her honour, including a performance by our colleague Shauntay Grant, go to <https://youtu.be/IFM26MDyIUo>.

KUDOS!!

The **Dalhousie Undergraduate English Society** has been awarded the Dalhousie Arts & Social Sciences Society award for society of the year. It's great to see our students get their DUES for all of their great work during the year!

The Dalhousie Review published a story by Shashi Bhat (who taught in our department a few years ago). The story, "Mute," was awarded the Writer's Trust/McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize for 2018.

Carrie Dawson has been awarded this year's FASS Service Award, for all of her excellent work for the department, FASS, and Dalhousie.

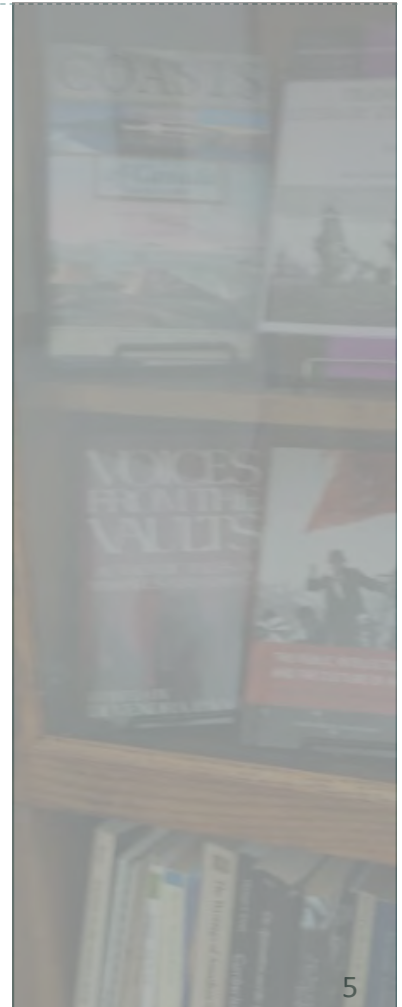
Shauntay Grant was nominated for a Governor-General's Award for her book, *Africville*. Her play, *The Bridge*, was also staged at the Neptune Theatre (see p. 6 for a review).

Graham Jensen (PhD 2018) was

awarded the university-wide thesis award for his dissertation, "Canadian Modernist Poetry and the Rise of Personal Religions." Graham is now at the University of Victoria where he is supported by a SSHRC postdoctoral fellowship.

Christina Luckyj's book, co-edited with Niamh J. O'Leary, *The Politics of Female Alliance in Early Modern England*, is winner of the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women Award for Best Collaborative Project published in 2017.

Julia M. Wright is now President-Elect of the Academy of the Arts & Humanities in the Royal Society of Canada. She will become President of the Academy in November 2019.



CREATING CONNECTION IN SHAUNTAY GRANT'S PLAY *THE BRIDGE*

“the audience . . . lives in the same realm as Anna, watching over the action that happens in the small town.”

The latest work from Halifax multidisciplinary artist Shauntay Grant comes in the form of a play. A co-production between 2b Theatre and Neptune Theatre, in association with Toronto's Obsidian Theatre, *The Bridge*, directed by Anthony Black, has been captivating audiences since its world premiere in January.

Set in a rural Black Nova Scotian town, the play revolves around two brothers, John (Jacob Sampson) and Eli Solomon (Jim Condrington), who suffer from a severed relationship due to past betrayals. Throughout the play, John continually tries to suppress the past while his son Samuel (Daniel Ellis) longs for more information about his estranged uncle and late mother, Anna (Sophia Walker).

At its core, the story seems to be overwhelmingly about connection—but not only between individuals. While John tries to erase any relationship between himself and his brother, he also denies the connection between present and past. The only reason for the growing fracture in the brothers' relationship is that neither of them has the strength to face each other and grant forgiveness for the mistakes of their younger days.

While there is no actual mention of a physical bridge in the dialogue of the play, the actors continually run across the eponymous wooden structure that dominates the space on stage. The bridge then comes to represent many different connections in the story. It is the bridge between brothers Eli and John, between John's home and the church, between life on earth and heaven, and between the

present and past.

The show features incredibly moving performances by all actors of this small cast. Most notable might be Walker, as she embodies the spirit of Anna who longingly watches over her husband and son from another realm. The additional characters of the three church-goers (Murleta Williams, Charla Williams and Chiamaka G. Ugwu) wonderfully play a sort of chorus who comment on John and Eli's history and gossip about members of the church.

At two separate moments in the play, the three choristers walk up to the front of the stage and start pointing to members of the audience, pretending to look upon the graves of deceased church members. They candidly gossip about their late community members while simultaneously sending prayers up to heaven for them.

These incredibly hilarious and well-scripted scenes with the choristers not only serve as moments of comedic relief, but also bridge the gap between actors and audience. It almost feels like the audience takes up the role of the deceased community members and lives in the same realm as Anna, watching over the action that happens in the small town.

In Shauntay Grant's new play, the past and present and living and dead are interwoven with each other in a layered and complex story about a brawl between two brothers. The relationships between family members and community members are revealed and examined in their most raw and emotional forms. With all these elements, *The Bridge* is undeniably a beautiful new piece of Nova Scotian theatre that will be cherished for years to come.

BY TARINI FERNANDO

DID YOU KNOW?

- Our MA program dates back to 1903. Our PhD program has existed since the 1960s—if anyone out there knows exactly when it launched, please let us know! Its 60th anniversary may be fast approaching.
- Three Presidents of the Association of Canadian College & University Teachers of English have come from our department. The first, Jim Gray (President, 1982-84), was given a gavel by a past-president, Jan De Bruyn (UBC). The gavel is still in use today to bring us all to order at the annual meetings of the Association.

DALHOUSIE ENGLISH ONLINE

Members of the department are creators and co-creators of some great online sites and resources. Here's a sampling!

- * Lyn Bennett (and Edith Snook): *Early Modern Maritime Recipes* (<https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/>)
- * Rohan Maitzen: *Novel Readings* (<https://rohanmaitzen.com/>)
- * Marjorie Stone: *Elizabeth Barrett Browning Archive* (<http://ebbarchive.org/index.php>)
- * Ron Tetreault (and Bruce Graver): *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (<https://romantic-circles.org/editions/LB/index.html>)
- * Judith Thompson: *John Thelwall: Words and Work* (<http://wordsandwork.johnthelwall.org/>)
- * Bart Vautour: *Canada and the Spanish Civil War* (<https://spanishcivilwar.ca/>)
- * Julia M. Wright: *Bibliography of Nineteenth-Century Irish Literature* (<http://irish-literature.english.dal.ca/>)

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Bookshelf images here offer glimpses of the department collection (photos: Julia M. Wright).



There was a nest of baby juncos outside the department office this past summer. We couldn't take a picture of the nest without disturbing the hatchlings (and kept our distance once we knew they were there), but the parent sometimes left the nest and posed for us. (photo: Jason Haslam)