

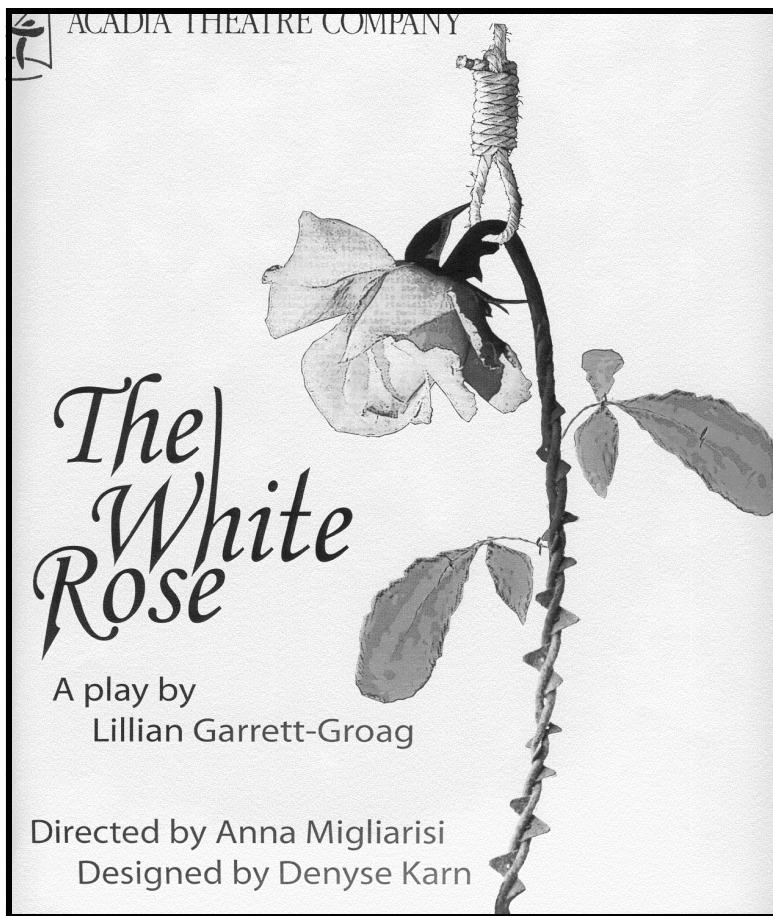


VOICE 4

❧ VOLUME 11.2 ❧ WINTER 2004 ❧ DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH ❧ ACADIA UNIVERSITY ❧

THEATRE REVIEW: *The White Rose*

By Ian Hussey and
Lindsay Taylor



The spring production of the Acadia Theatre Company was Director Anna Migliarisi's vision of *The White Rose* by Lillian Garrett-Groag. The play tells the heroic tale of a group of students attending the University of Munich during World War II. These students anonymously distributed five anti-Nazi leaflets entitled "The White Rose" across Germany and Austria between the summer of 1942 and the winter of 1943. The group was arrested, interrogated, and finally executed between February and April 1943. Although little is known of the arresting officer Robert Mohr, there is documentation which suggests that he tried to save the student activists at the last minute but failed. However, the sacrifices that the organizers of "The White Rose" made were not in vain: there are public memorials throughout Germany dedicated to their names, and memorial services are held yearly on the anniversary of their deaths.



REVIEW OF *The White Rose* (cont'd.)

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As the voice of Acadia's English Department on the fourth floor of BAC, *Voice4* is always looking for new student members to help. Tasks include interviewing, writing articles, and editing. Contact patricia.rigg@acadiau.ca if you would like to join us.

We entered Lower Denton through a hallway that had been covered in anti-Nazi graffiti. Once we sat down, we had time to observe the stage. The entire set was painted black: there was a staircase on either side of the stage and a catwalk set up between them. To the right of the stage, a small office-space was set up. All the music used in the production was composed by Czech composer Leos Janacek, with the exception of two pieces. For the most part, the music added to the overall tragic elements of the play. However, during the lighter moments when the cast danced, the other two pieces by Louis Armstrong and the All Stars served as effective contrast.

The costumes of the characters were interesting to note as well. While the five students were cast in earthly browns and blues, the "bad" Gestapo were cast in blacks and grays. Significantly, the characters Mohr and Bauer, Schindleresque Nazis, were cast in costumes that included colours of purple and tan. The symbols of nature and earth became a motif in the play as the character of Sophie Scholl commented on the audible noises of birds in the dead of winter. Each actor gave a performance worthy of the serious nature of the play. Loretta Yu, Jamie Loughead, Andrew Goulding, Joe Boyd, and Tony DeMatteis conveyed in powerful performances the idealism and determination that cost the students their lives but ultimately led to their being remembered today. Mitch Lusas played Robert Mohr, conveying his humanism as he struggles with the idea of executing young people the same age as his own daughter. Others in the cast, Steven Heisler, Matt Donahoe, Joey Miller, Alan Slipp, Jonathan Pratt, Shawn Maggio, Owen Thompson, and

Braeden Hurley gave convincing performances as officials involved in the prosecution of the students.

The technical use of spotlight was particularly effective during the covert protests and later, the capture of the students. The light was used to mimic a searchlight and spanned over the audience as well as onstage, perhaps evoking a question of one's own morality in each member of the audience. In every way, this was a production of which the Acadia Theatre Company can be very proud.

MINIFEST

★★★★NIGHT ONE★★★★
Reviewed by Shannon Cushing

Night One of Minifest 2004 showcased an incredible range of talent as Acadia students took the audience on a journey from an "Untitled" world of a puppeteer and his puppet to a world where reality is defined in unreal terms.

★UNTITLED Written by Claudia Marchand. Directed by Jonathan Pratt. Stage Manager: Stephanie David. Starring: Jeffery Hale and Robin Westhaver.

The story of a puppeteer and his puppet is much more than a simple tale of a struggle for inspiration in the hands of actors Jeffery Hale and Robin Westhaver. When the quest for literary excellence turns into a question of power, it becomes clear that nothing is as it seems. As a writer in search of excellence begins to lose control of his imagination, the audience is captivated by the realism of an utterly unrealistic character - a human puppet. The psychological intrigue of *Untitled* may seem out-of-the ordinary for some observers, but ultimately the idea that a truly good story cannot be controlled rings true for anyone who has pursued writing.

❖ **FIVE STAR** *Written by Noah Gataveckas. Directed by Loretta Yu. Stage Manager: Rob Patton. Starring: Rebekah Higgs, Ivan Ferguson, Bjill MacKinnon, Andrew Goulding, Kaethen Redding, Nuwanka Kottegoda, Mike Peddle, and Monique Melong.*

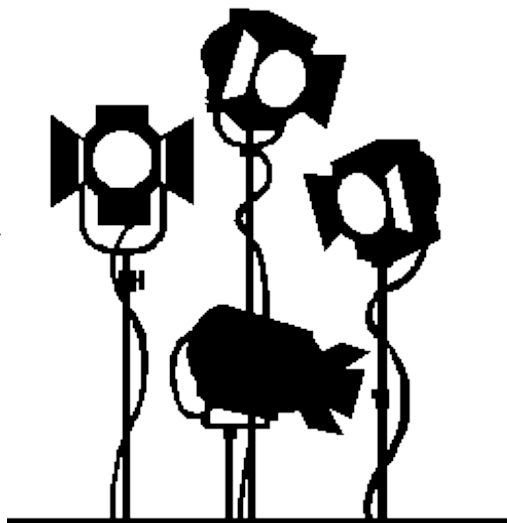
The moral of *Five Star* is that there are no happy endings in real life. Not exactly a message anyone wants to hear, but this play pulls it off superbly! In a twist on the teenage romantic comedies that have been ever-so-popular in the movie theatres these days, writer Noah Gataveckas creates a “teenage unromantic comedy” about the mundane realities of everyday life.

Interestingly, I have to admit that I, as an audience member, caught myself guessing with whom the characters would wind up living happily ever after in the end – I was certainly surprised when each of the characters wandered off into their futures alone. The crew of *Five Star* put together an amazing performance, recreating the day-to-day interactions of high school teenagers so superbly I found myself laughing along with their antics as I recognized some of the interactions from my own high school days. While this play was quite long in comparison to *Untitled*, every scene kept the audience’s rapt attention as the actors made use of the entire theatre space, making us feel as if we were actually a part of the action.

❖ **HARDLY WORKING** *Written by Jonathan Pratt. Directed by Jamie Loughhead. Stage Manager: Daniel Scott. Starring: Abigail Georgitis and Joe Boyd.*

Two people talking: while the concept may seem a tad simple, actors Abigail Georgitis and Joe Boyd use the basic tenets of dialogue to bring alive two vivid characters stuck in the trivialities of the working-life.

The play centres on the idea that one should strive for at least *some* satisfaction in life. As Tad (Abigail Georgitis) forces Francis/Fry to voice out-loud the realities of his mundane 9-5 existence (which may have rung very true to audience members), the two characters undergo a sequence of witty verbal-sparrings in the process of transforming quiet “personal assistant” Francis into lively “secretary” Fry. Combining a very memorable coffee-break scene (complete with actor Joe Boyd drinking a cup of real coffee), where Tad begins to awaken the spirit of Fry in Francis through a game of throwing paper



at a garbage bin, with a very realistic elevator scene made all the more realistic by imaginary buttons hovering in the air, *Hardly Working* was truly a delight to watch.

❖ **GAME OVER** *Written by Jonathan Pratt. Directed by Courtney McFadyen. Stage Manager: Donny Kitsen. Starring: Meghan Johnston, Gillian Ormerod, Katie Probert, and Alan Slipp.*

Actors Meghan Johnston, Gillian Ormerod, and Katie Probert transform an absurdly unreal situation into an entertaining and absorbing dialogue as they invite the audience

into the surreal world of... video games. Cast in the roles of X, Y, and Z, the actors did an excellent job of turning wholly fictional characters into human beings with human thoughts and emotions. The passion with which the martial arts sword-equipped characters explored the inside of an imaginary television set—and attempted to figure out what on earth the purpose of the shiny sticks glued to their hands was—kept the audience captivated right up until the game was indeed over. The appearance of “monster” Alan Slipp threw an intriguing psychological twist into the action, as the audience recognised the slayer of the “bad guys” as the character we control in video games being transformed into the bad guy in *Game Over*. Writer Jonathan Pratt did an excellent job of creating an unreal world from the flipped perspective of monsters versus heroes.

❖❖❖❖NIGHT TWO❖❖❖❖

Reviewed by Steve Hebert

On February 10, the Acadia Theatre Company presented Night Two of Minifest 2004 to a sold-out crowd in the Lower Denton Theatre. From the gritty writing of two emerging playwrights to the well-rehearsed performances of cast and crew, Night Two showcased a company rising to the challenge of staging a professional show in only four short weeks. The four one-act plays ranged from heart-rending tragedies to stimulating comedies, each one exploring the consequences and misunderstandings that arise from the gaps that estrange us from our selves and each other. The evening’s fare was seasoned with a dash of hope in the face of hardship that leavened the material and pulled the four pieces together.

❖ **BOTH SIDES** *Written by Jonathan Pratt. Directed by Matthew Donahoe. Stage Management by Maggie Rodger. Starring Hartley Jafine Beth Lyons and Dave Turcotte.*

Sitting through *Both Sides* after surfacing from Delila's tortured stream of consciousness was like catching an episode of the *Honeymooners* on the heels of *Apocalypse Now*. A thoughtful comedy about the agony of making sense of a failed relationship, the play solicited the audience to adjudicate the break up of Brady and Lizzie, two characters embroiled in a futile attempt to pin the blame on each other for their love's passing (think Woody Allen meets Bette Midler). Stan, a cross between the Lizard King and an evil pink fairy – and the only one able to rise above the slings and arrows of love estranged – mediates the ensuing war of words. The effective use of lighting and music carried the dreamlike setting that allowed both perspectives to emerge in a challenging final scene where the erstwhile lovers trade places and experience each other's perspective firsthand. On the whole, the play suggested the rich perspective that lies within our grasp if we can bring ourselves to stop, think, and listen.

❖ **JUSTIFIED** *Written by Jonathan Pratt. Directed by Tasha Walsh. Stage Management by Krista Rideout. Starring Braeden Hurley, Steve Heisler, Ali Welik, Kyla Tingley, Shawn Gregory, and Ashley Ballantyne.*

With the next play, the focus of the evening shifted from individuals coping with the consequences of past events to a group muddling through the throes of transformation. *Justified* opened in the middle of the action: Derek has started a fight and fled, abandoning the diffident Lowell to take the blows on his behalf. Brash and confident, Derek spends the play trying to move Lowell to stand up for himself while mutual friends try

to manage the conflict and bring the instigator to take responsibility for his actions. As the ensemble cast attempts to impel each other toward personal discovery, Derek and Lowell are hurled into a conflict that spells the death of Derek and the dissolution of the circle of friends. *Justified* is a fast-paced study of a group of friends whose time has come, and attending to its subsequent collapse offers all the fascination of watching a car-wreck in progress. Sometimes, it seems, it's just better to leave well enough alone.

❖ **NERVOUS CENTRE OF BALANCE** *Written by Jonathan Pratt. Directed by Tony DeMatteis. Stage Management by Katherine Sirman. Starring Shawn Maggio, Stephen Rothwell, Bjill MacKinnon, and Caroline Plant.*

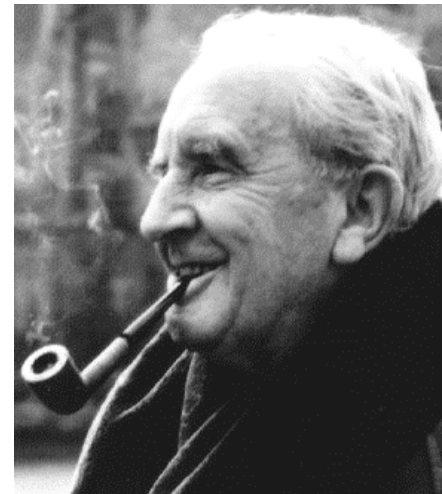
The curtain closed on *Nervous Centre of Balance*, a light, absurd finish to the evening's storm and stress. This last play offered a series of vignettes in the life of Dave, an unfortunate university student felled by an ear infection and confined to the couch for the weekend while his roommate and friends run amok. In a comedic twist of fate that would draw a smile even from Godot, his suffering is ignored and his privacy violated as the minutiae of his friends' existence slowly erode the sands of time. In his wretched state, poor Dave becomes just about meaningless and is even lost under a pile of clothes and rubbish for a full segment of the play (though he never moves from the couch). With a wink and a nudge, *Nervous Centre of Balance* reminds us not to take ourselves too seriously, and that reckoning only with what depends on our will may be the only way to remain sane, at least until we move into a place of our own.



COURSE PROFILE: ACADIA TAKES ON MIDDLE EARTH

By Clinton Percy

New to Acadia's English Department for the Winter 2004 semester is Dr. Kevin Whetter's course, "Tolkein: Author and Critic." Joining the likes of Shakespeare and Chaucer, Tolkein is now one of an elite group of authors with a course at Acadia devoted entirely to his career, rather than to the literature of his period. The course,



proposed for approval at the beginning of the 2002/2003 academic year, filled up almost immediately, suggesting that the work of J. R. R. Tolkein is indeed an area students are eager to explore. Due to the popularity of the recent movie trilogy, most people are familiar with Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings*. Dr. Whetter is very focused, though, on familiarising his students with a more rounded sampling of Tolkein's body of work, including his other mediaeval fantasy and his literary criticism.

Wetter says his class is a nice blend of English majors and avid *LOTR* fans – "a fairly disparate crowd." Though many students conceivably signed on because they enjoyed the movies, he insists that

the books are much better (as is always the case). The course also focuses on Tolkien's other masterpieces and highlights a few of the prominent Mediaeval works subject to his expert criticism. The spotlight remains focused on the popular trilogy, though, which Dr. Whetter claims is both more engaging and more accessible than anything else in the field. Whetter's hope for the course is that after teaching *The Lord of the Rings* and relating it to Tolkien's role as a literary professional, students will know and appreciate the whole of Tolkien's influence as an author and a critic, and move past recognizing Tolkien as the guy who wrote *The Lord of the Rings*.

The course is consistent with the requirements of any upper level English course here at Acadia. It is common knowledge that Tolkien's books are on the lengthy side, but Whetter has allotted enough time for each, and mixed in enough shorter pieces, to avoid daunting his students. Dr. Whetter insists that overall, the course is challenging but fair, and manageable for anyone who is not looking for a bird course: "as long as you don't expect a breeze, you'll be fine."

With the semester coming to a close, Professor Whetter is eager for feedback. The course will be taught again next year, and since there was a considerable waiting list this year, it will more than likely be full to capacity again. Showing no signs of slowing down, it appears that English 3473 "Tolkien: Author and Critic" will be around to provide Acadia English students with a deeper appreciation for *The Lord of the Rings* and the considerable genius of J. R. R. Tolkien's career for years to come.



WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH AN

ENGLISH DEGREE: CHRISTINE MCNAIR

By Abby Whidden

Christine McNair has the following advice for English students as they approach graduation: "Try to focus on your own desires and interests rather than on other people's expectations. Be open-minded about the possibilities."

Christine seems to have followed her own advice. Since graduating with an Honours English degree from Acadia, she has had poetry published in literary journals, worked as an editor's devil, and moved to England to take a postgraduate program in book conservation.

She worked for two years at



Gaspereau Press in Kentville. She explains that her job title of "editor's devil" comes from the "the old printing term for the printer's assistant," which is the printer's devil. The editor's devil is "a somewhat slang use of the term, roughly translating to an editorial assistant." Since Gaspereau Press is a small company that does everything in house, Christine was able to learn many different tasks and found that everyone was "generous in helping [her] improve [her] skills."

Christine found that her Eng-

lish degree was an asset because she had a strong background in Canadian literature, and recommends that anyone wanting to get into publishing be a "voracious reader of all kinds of literature." Her other advice is to talk to people in the industry, to get practical experience at university, and to read books on typography, book design, grammar, and editorial practice.

Experiences at the press led to her interest in bookbinding and conservation, so she decided to enroll in the program at West Dean College, which is unique because of its blend of practical work, historical studies, and conservation science. The program only admits six to eight students each year. She describes the workshop as

excellent and "set in a ridiculously English countryside, complete with rolling hills and sheep." Current projects include "repairing a 1631 *Psalmes of King David*, creating historical models of various bookbindings, muddling through an experiment on the tensile strength of linen thread, and

writing various essays on the history and ethics of book conservation."

She plans to stay in the program for a second year so that she can obtain her master's degree in conservation studies. After that, she intends to work at a conservation studio or an institution abroad, and eventually return to Canada to work here. In the meantime, she is continuing with her writing and just won Second Prize for Poetry in the 2004 Atlantic Writing Competition.

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LUNCH & LETTERS

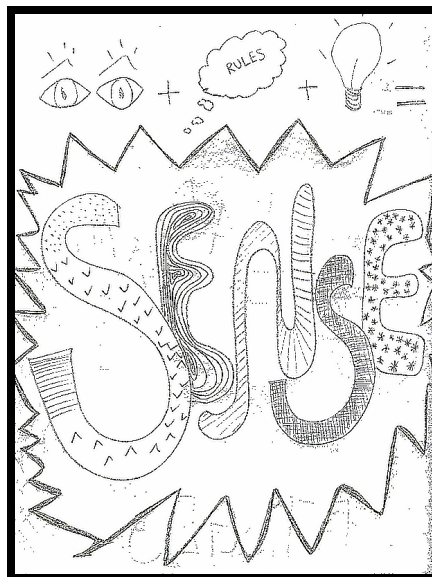
ANDREA SCHWENKE WYILE: THE PICTUREBOOK PROJECT

By Zsofi Koller

On Tuesday, January 13th, the first Lunch and Letters of 2004 kicked off with a picturebook presentation by Dr. Andrea Schwenke-Wylie's graduate class, Engl 5013, "Looking to See."

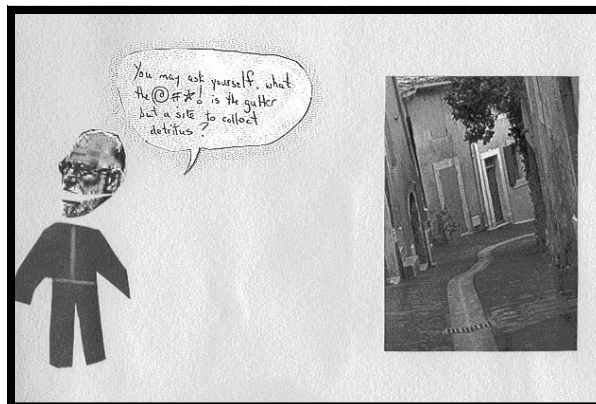
Over the fall semester each graduate student in the class created several picturebooks as a way to implement the theoretical ideas explored during class discussions and readings. Each student was responsible for producing a final picturebook as a culmination of the major ideas explored within the term. During this lively noon-hour discussion, each student had an opportunity to present his or her picturebook via powerpoint, and explain the processes of decision-making and production involved.

Fay Beebee's project detailed the holistic experience of creating a picturebook. Her clear pencil crayon illustrations featured a narrator who used both textual and visual guides to answer such questions as the following: "How is balance and harmony achieved on a page?" Beebee's book emphasized that, though the possibilities are endless, there are a few key design principles which contribute to a successful picturebook.



The next presenter, Dan Tysdal, explored the intricacies of framing as it pertains to picturebook theory by posing the humorous question: "Is your child a picture-book frame?" The book explored varying frame dynamics such as size, spacing, and how what is contained or excluded by a frame subtly but concretely changes the tone and meaning of a story.

Vance Comeau's picture book examined the possibilities inherent in the gutter, the overlooked but critical space which occurs between frames within picturebooks. Appropriately narrated by the talking head of Sigmund Freud, Comeau's book considered the subconscious leaps our minds take between frames, exploring



how the reader must fill in gaps to generate meaning in this process. Dr. Schwenke Wylie created a picturebook which delved into the potential of the page turn—an action integral to how a picturebook is read and understood, but is easy to overlook. Details such as placement of text on the page and dynamics of spacing greatly influence the impulse to page turn, and thereby impact the tone and speed of the story.

The presentations concluded with a book produced by Zsofi Koller which explored the relationship between words and image.

Taking T.S. Eliot's *Prelude I*, the illustration and word relationship in the picturebook toyed with various options such as symmetrical, ironic, metaphoric, or augmentative. Presentations were then followed by an informal discussion during which techniques for how each book was created were discussed.

Dr. Schwenke Wylie's

class demonstrated that the process of picturebook creation is considerably more nuanced than one might imagine. Elements such as page composition, framing, the page turn, what lies in the gutter, and the word/image relationship are easy to overlook but greatly impact the overall story. The combination of different approaches towards picturebook design and the ensuing discussion made for an informative and entertaining lunch hour session.



STEPHEN AHERN:

ROMANCING THE NOVEL

By Lindsay Taylor

On February 11th, Dr. Stephen Ahern gave a lunchtime presentation entitled “Romancing the Novel, 1680-1980”. He began by outlining some early romance



novels and stated that the appearance of the earliest “romance” novels is generally accepted as coinciding with the late seventeenth century works of Richard Allestree and William Congreve. Dr. Ahern then proceeded chronologically through the eighteenth century, discussing such novels as *Love in Excess*, *A Sentimental Journey* and an early Gothic novel, *Mysteries of Udolpho*. All the aforementioned novels feature heroines rather than heroes. Also featured are the characteristics of “emotional excess, hyperbole, and names”. That is to say, in the case of *Love in Excess*, the name of the victimized character, Amena comes from the Latin root “love” while the heroine’s name, Melliora, can be traced back to “best”.

It was logical that Dr. Ahern’s presentation should conclude in twentieth-century pulp romance fiction, with a brief introduction to Janice Radway’s 1984 critical work *Reading the Romance*.

Radway asserts that all romances “retell a single tale whose final outcome their readers always already know”. Dr. Ahern also characterized such romances as the *Harlequin* and *Silhouette* series as “emancipatory” fiction because it not only gives way to “hetero-normative” romantic fantasy, but it has the capacity to provide a place for lesbian romance as well.



BARRY FOX: WRITING AS REVELATION

By Lindsay Taylor

The last instalment of this year’s Lunch & Letters was given by Dr. Barry Fox on March 17th. His presentation contained an interesting case study of the way by which a former student came to a “revelation” while writing an essay question for one of his exams. While not detracting from the



importance of “traditional” essay writing, Dr. Fox asserted throughout the course of his talk the importance of realization as part of the writing process. The example of the student’s revelation that Dr. Fox showcased was an instance when her exam essay began to deviate from what was covered in class and explored thoughts that she had upon re-reading the poem on the exam.

This meeting concluded with a lively discussion about the necessity for and possibilities of revelations, with respect to students, academics,

I work very much on intuition, thinking that, well, a certain idea ought to be right. Then I try to prove it. Sometimes I find that I’m wrong, but that leads to new ideas. I find it a great help to discuss my ideas with other people. Even if they don’t contribute anything, just having to explain it to someone else helps me sort it out for myself.

~Stephen Hawking

and writers. Several members of faculty attested to their use of journals as a means by which to extract these “revelations” and the usefulness of such a medium to encourage discovery. Dr. Fox went on to pose several difficult questions, such as whether or not explorative writing has a place in today’s classroom.

Because revelations in writing tend to be personal and sudden and can be difficult to back up with substantiating evidence, it is often difficult for the writer to conform to the requirements and constraints of a formal paper. Although Dr. Fox stated that he struggles to reconcile his encouragement of “writing as revelation” with university policy, he concluded his talk optimistically, with the hopes of solidifying the place of revelations in his teaching philosophy



AUTHORS @ ACADIA

DONNA MORRISSEY:
ALIVE AND KICKING

By Abby Whidden

At the beginning of her reading, Donna Morrissey said that she felt unprepared because she had expected “six English students” to be in the audience; instead, she found BAC 237 packed to overflowing with almost a hundred people. However, the author of *Kit’s Law* and *Downhill Chance* showed no signs of nervousness as she regaled us with tales of her isolated Newfoundland hometown, The Beaches, on which she bases the setting of *Downhill Chance*. A natural storyteller, she also told us about the difficulties of translating *Kit’s Law* from the Newfoundland dialect to Japanese and gave the insight that people in Japan like the book because of its sense of spirituality and the presence of the elderly “alive and kicking and present in lives of the young.” They feel they are losing this part of their culture and are intrigued by seeing another culture in which these relationships are important.

Morrissey read two selections from *Downhill Chance* and one from her new novel, which she had just sent off to her publishers. This was the first reading from her third novel. Her reading was entertaining; she brought the content of her novels to life by speaking with the accent meant to be heard and by using the voices of the characters. To our surprise, she has had no acting training.

After the reading, Morrissey answered questions from the audience. Since she writes about small communities similar to her own and takes details from her own life, she addressed the issue of autobiography. She believes autobiographies are not possible for her



since she always starts adding things, and said that her community has reacted positively to her writing. When asked about what it feels like to write, she said that it’s stressful for her because she is always worried about money, but she doesn’t let that discourage her. She emphasized that writing is work: if you “work, labour, sweat,” then small bits of inspiration will come. She also encouraged hopeful writers to write every day; it’s a job.

MARILYN DUMONT:
THE REASON WHY

By Steve Hebert

Everyone seems to be writing these days. Would-be authors are as likely to be students investing in poetry time that would be better spent writing papers as they are to be parents struggling to write a novel between the dishes and the laundry. They share the self-conscious times we live in, when the oppressive weight of pages printed, bound, stacked and sold each day can lead those facing the blank page to wonder if this rendering of life in words has been overdone.

Marilyn Dumont shared

some of her own poetry with a select audience of Acadia students and faculty on February 3, giving the lie to cynical assurances that it has in fact “all been done”.

The award-winning author of *A Really Good Brown Girl* and *green girl dreams Mountains*, Dumont has taught creative writing at Simon Fraser University and Kwantlen University-College in Vancouver. Most recently, she was Writer-In-Residence at Windsor University, a position she has also held at the University of Alberta.

Her poems sing the joys and sorrows of her experiences growing-up in a Métis family of ten amid the foothills of Alberta. She writes about belonging and estrangement, about the clash of race, culture, and religion, about coping with a rich native heritage and a looming sense of loss. To hear and read Dumont’s poetry is to be transported to worlds both white and native, from the logging camps of her youth to the gritty streets of western inner-cities she would later visit. The result is a personal mythology where brothers are not born but fall from the sky, where self-



made gods are disenfranchised and “ghosted away” with drink, and

where fading memory informs present circumstance like a phantom limb.

While the pieces that she read were steeped in haunting sadness, they conveyed a sense of her as a poet striving to construct meaning from her suffering. When I later picked up her collections, I discovered an innovator experimenting in form that intensified prose and verse, and accentuated the sensual language that she spoke that night. She emerged from the words an activist and a writer, one committed not only to communicating her time and place, but also to celebrating the understanding that comes from the writing and the sharing.

the shape of water

the shape of water
between two limbs
is the proximity of siblings
knowing the flinching
in each other's veins
on certain nights when
grown-ups
take the form of jackals
over a thin spot
in each other
isolate a yearling
from old vanities, the herd
in high grass
pins it body the length of it
feels its life shiver
then feels nothing

the next morning
they are hangdog
and ponderous
like they didn't mean it
like tomorrow is another day
like the shape of water
between two limbs
could be different

~Marilyn Dumont 2002

GWEN DAVIES: THE LITERARY MAPPING OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY MARITIME LITERATURE

By Abby Whidden

On March 19th, professors, students, and community members had the pleasure of welcoming Dr. Gwen Davies back to the Acadia campus. Dr.

Davies, the former head of the Department of English, is now working at the University of New Brunswick, looking after 1346 graduate students as the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Associate Vice President of

Research. Although her duties are now primarily administrative, she continues research primarily in her areas of interest: the interactions between literature and history in the Nineteenth-Century and Canadian Literature. She is currently working on a project on the history of the book and a project with other Maritime professors on the literary mapping of Atlantic Canada.

Dr. Davies's talk was entitled "The 'Literary Mapping' of Nineteenth-Century Maritime Literature" but she spoke primarily on Eighteenth-Century Maritime authors such as Jacob Bailey, Jonathan Odell, and Deborah How Cottnam. She began by challenging Northrop Frye's contention in *The Literary History of Canada* that a garrison mentality influenced early Canadians writers because of the harsh, uninhabitable landscape. She argued that the geography of the Maritimes was different than that of Western Canada: it had a

"witnessed landscape," a landscape marked with human presence. As a result, the literature focused more on "manners, morals, and mercantilism" than on the threatening wilderness of authors such as Susannah Moodie. Even an early map of Halifax reflected the harmlessness of the land because of its orderly nature and its representation of butterflies, British coats of arms, and a harmless porcupine.



Davies also spoke on the literary community in the Eighteenth-Century Maritimes. While there were not many venues for publication, authors such as the Reverend Jacob Bailey circulated

their poetry through the mail system; friends would recopy the poems and send them on or recite them in public readings. Reverend Doctor William Cochran's *The Nova Scotia Magazine* was another way in which authors could transmit their works. There were over three-hundred subscribers of various backgrounds, from farmers to politicians. It featured agricultural themes, satirical sketches, and letters to the editor. Dr. Davies concluded by saying that Maritime literature is not focussed on "a fear of wilderness"; instead, "this clearly Maritime literature had always been focussed on figurative landscapes; it had always been focussed on the follies and foibles" of people.



EVENTS

ANNUAL ATLANTIC UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH CONFERENCE

By Lindsay Taylor

The 24th Annual Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference was held at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia from February 27th-29th. Each year, undergraduate English students from Atlantic universities gather to present and discuss papers they

have written, make contacts and get to know one another.

This year, Acadia University's English Department was represented by Chris Chisholm, Chris Hearn and Ian Hussey (who presented critical papers), Mpho Maruping and Sarah Balanoff (who presented creative papers) and

Ryan Davison, Mike Nordin and Lindsay Taylor (who observed the panels and participated in discussions). The sessions were divided by the subject or theme of each paper and most concluded with a spirited discussion of the papers.

MSVU coordinators Karen Macfarlane and Carmen Glasgow kicked off the festivities at the campus pub, Vinnie's, with an official welcome from the University President and faculty organizers. Following formalities, a "Bad Poetry Reading" ensued when selections were read from distasteful poetry—most of which has been published by otherwise esteemed poets.

Sessions began Saturday morning and were concluded for the day with a wine-and-cheese social and drama presentation. Then, participants were chauffeured on a double-decker bus through Halifax to Club Vortex for a buffet dinner and dancing.

There were several more sessions held on Sunday morning as well as a planning party, at which time it was formally announced that UCCB would hold the 25th Annual Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference next year.

The conference participants would like to gratefully



acknowledge the financial support that we were given from the Dean of Arts, the English Department and the English Society. Be sure to look for information on how to submit your paper next year and be a part of this valuable and rewarding experience.

MARITIME ENGLISH ENTHUSIASTS TALKING TOGETHER

By Lindsay Taylor

The first annual MEETT con-

ference was held February 6, 2004 at the Université de Moncton. MEETT Conference participants from Acadia were Chris Chisholm, Ryan Davison, Mark Gardiner and Lindsay Taylor.

The conference consisted of three talks by U de M professors, all of whom had recently published work in their specialties. The first presentation was given by Glen Nichols on his anthology of translated plays called *Angels and Anger*. He has worked to translate Acadian-French plays into English. Next, Theresa Quigley read and discussed passages from her mem-

oir *I Cry for Innocence*, which details her family's experience as Germans in South America during World War II.

We then adjourned to a pizza party for casual discussion and mingling amongst conference participants, presenters and other faculty from Université de Moncton. The conference then concluded with Louise Nichols' presentation and readings from her book entitled *Quite a Curiosity: The Sea Letters of Grace F. Ladd*, a compilation of

letters and diary entries from a Yarmouth native who spent a large portion of her time at sea with her hus-



band.

MEETT was a rewarding experience and it was impressive to see the U de M students take the initiative to organize a new event. We would like to thank the ASU for funding Acadia student participation in this venture.



ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENTS 2003-3004

By Shannon Cushing

With the guidance of Professor Andrea Schwenke Wylie, Zsofi Koller is undertaking for her thesis a discussion of “dark” themes, such as death, in children’s literature, specifically fantasy and picture books. Zsofi has taken perhaps the most roundabout path of all the Masters students in her quest for a graduate degree in English, first obtaining a bachelor’s degree in Biology, and then a bachelor’s degree in Philosophy, before deciding to “stop faking it as a scientist.” Zsofi says that the Masters “graduate class has been such a great, supportive group” over the past year. The main challenge Zsofi has encountered in doing her Masters is actually writing her thesis. She says, “...how do you tackle a hundred-page paper? I figured out I needed to write ‘mini-essays.’ Kind of like baby steps... five pages here, five pages there. Now I’ll see if I can knit those little segments all together.” Ultimately, Zsofi seems to have found her passion in English, not in Biology or Philosophy. “What I truly love about this degree is how English makes me articulate things that I was never able to express before—about myself, and the way I see the rest of the world.”

Supervised by Professor Lance La Rocque, Fay BeeBee is exploring how Terry Tempest Williams, an environmentalist writer, provides a powerful voice for nature and the wilderness through the use of erotic language and imagery. In January 2004, Fay graduated from Derby University in England with an undergraduate degree in English. Fay decided to do her Masters at Acadia because she wanted to study Canadian Literature, and because she wanted to experience a new culture. Fay says that after she went to Utah in February to meet with Ter-

ry, she scrapped her entire thesis, and then, “while I was playing squash, the new structure of the whole thesis came into my head and luckily I managed to write it down before it was forgotten.” Fay seems to be quite high energy, taking on many things at once. She plans to finish her thesis by the end of May, and then prepare for her PhD studies in the United States and finish two projects she has underway. Fay has a composition due to be published in an immigration anthology in Alberta and she is also working on a novel. “Write from the heart,” she says, “and from personal experience. You will find that as one door closes another door always opens.”



For his thesis, Daniel Tysdal is doing a reading of the short fiction of David Foster Wallace within the context of the postmodern American short story and contemporary short story theory, under the supervision of Professor Holdenreid. Before he came to Acadia to complete his Masters in English, Daniel studied in Saskatchewan, where he completed a certificate in Bartending and obtained an undergraduate degree in English. Daniel says there are two moments that have really stood out from the past year doing his Masters. “Going to Louisville for the 20th Century Literature Conference was great,” he says, and “having a chapter from my thesis published was also really exciting. It’s always nice to know that somebody is interested in what you’re investigating.”

Under the guidance of Professor Herb Wylie, Abby Whidden is

looking at the way in which Margaret Atwood, Ann-Marie MacDonald, and Gail Anderson-Dargatz have rewritten the figure of the fallen woman in *The Blind Assassin*, *Fall on Your Knees*, and *A Recipe for Bees*, which are primarily set in the early twentieth-century. Abby has taken a roundabout path on her journey toward doing her Masters in English. She started out as a biology major at Acadia, switching first to psychology and then finally to English in her third year. Abby graduated with a BA Honours in English in 2001, and went on to get a post-graduate certificate in Television Writing and Production from Humber College in 2003. Abby says she decided to complete her Masters in English “because I love studying and writing about literature. Even when my path has taken me elsewhere, I’ve kept coming back.”

Under the supervision of Professor Anna Migliarisi, Vance Comeau has undertaken an investigation into filmic melodrama as a politicized medium. Like Abby, Vance did his undergraduate studies in English at Acadia. Vance says he decided to do his Masters in English because it was an “excellent way to get a well-paying position overseas.” The biggest hurdles Vance has run into during his studies have been a few misunderstandings with the student loan people. For Vance, his fellow Masters students stand out in his memories of the past year. After Vance finishes his Masters at Acadia, he plans to head overseas to teach English in Asia. When asked where he sees himself in five years, he says “my bullet riddled body will be found in a bordello.”



Voice4 is a production of the students of the English Department of Acadia University. Each year a group of talented, committed, and energetic students write about department events, students, and faculty. This year's staff had the difficult task of continuing the process of generating the newsletter while the faculty editors were engaged in a labour strike. Thanks to all of you for making this issue possible.

Patricia Rigg, Wanda Campbell, Lance La Roque



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