



Annotations

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Talking Badgers

Any good linguist will tell you that American English is constantly in flux. It shifts and flexes, evolving to fit each new wave of immigrants that come to the United States. Like a living organism, it grows and contracts, adapts and conforms.

As a result, over the past two centuries our English has sponged up the verbal tics and eclectic vocabulary of dozens upon dozens of nationalities, cultures, and ethnicities.

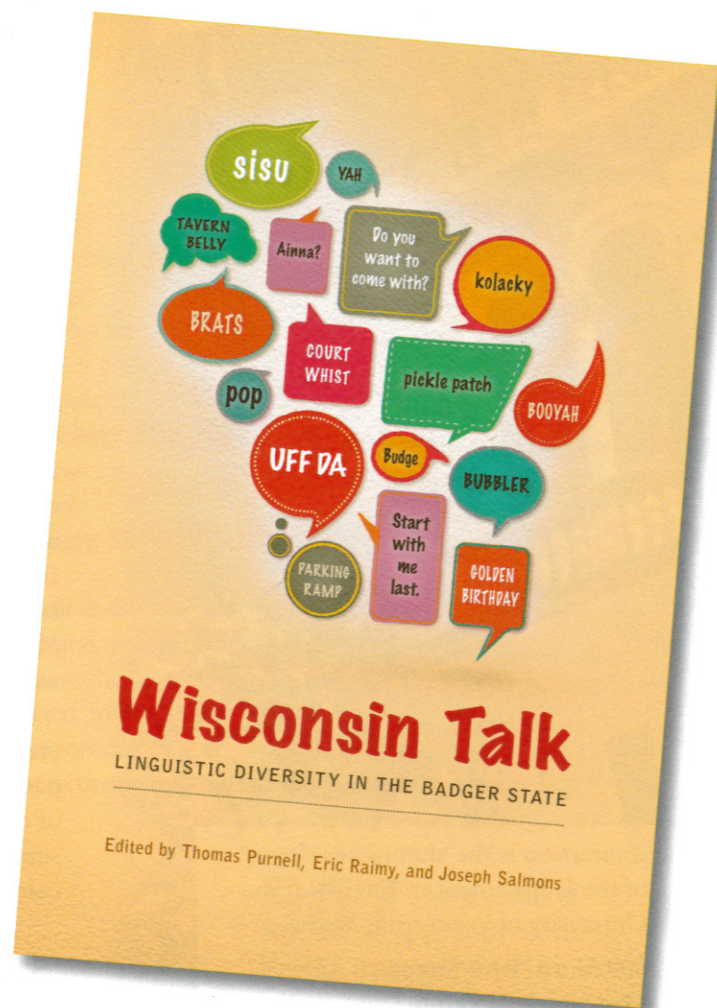
As UW-Madison English Professors Thomas Purnell and Eric Raimy have found, Wisconsin is a perfect microcosm for studying these evolutions of the English language. In *Wisconsin Talk*, a new book due out this summer from the University of Wisconsin Press, they and their collaborators trace the linguistic patterns that define spoken English – or, rather, Englishes – in Wisconsin. The project not only traces the history of some of the state's more recognizable verbal idiosyncrasies, like the pronunciation of “beers” or the usage of “bubblar,” but also maps the deeper currents that have shaped the landscape of the English language in Wisconsin.

“What was eye-opening about this research was being able to see the way that language serves as a marker for the things going on below the surface,” Raimy says.

Wisconsin English, he explains, is the product of a complicated network of causes. These include not just the regular influxes of new immigrant groups – such as Poles, Germans, Swedes, Hmong, and, most recently, Latinos – but also subtler markers, like membership in a particular trade group or a particular church denomination. And, as the book makes clear through a number of maps, geographical lines like rivers, roads, and county lines could lead to even smaller micro-level shifts in the language. Neighbors separated by a state highway or a lake could, in fact, speak differently from one another.

The book itself is the culmination of almost nine years of research, writing, and, of course, talking. The project began in

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Building a Strong Foundation



Jessie Reeder

Theresa Kelley,
Chair, Department of English

This will be my last report, as Chair, to the alumni, students, and friends of English at UW–Madison. My term ends in August, when my successor and colleague, Caroline Levine, will take over the post.

Much has changed in the Department over the last three years. First and foremost, we have strived to make the English major and, indeed, the whole program better for our undergraduates.

Faculty and students have worked collectively to reshape the major in response to the field's increased attention to the global contexts of

English across time. Our faculty has worked very hard to craft the new major and get it ready for its fall 2014 rollout.

At the same time, we moved to alleviate roadblocks to completing the major. English is among those liberal arts majors that offer students the intellectual training and analytic skills they will need to become curious and able contributors to our society; as such, we acknowledge the great benefit that double- or even triple-majoring offers to students at UW–Madison as they prepare themselves for entering a changing, challenging workforce.

We are now able to offer undergraduates more opportunities than ever before. With the new Badgers in the Big Apple program – crafted in partnership with Student Career Services, the UW Foundation, and one of our extraordinary alumni, Nan Rubin – our students are now keyed into summer internship opportunities in New York City and Chicago, and we are continuing to develop more across the country.

Closer to home, we have continued to invest in our community. We repurposed part of our department library for a new undergraduate lounge that will be completed later this year. We just launched a new, more interactive website that features better, more accessible content for our alumni and students. And, last but not least, we are proud to support the Madison Undergraduate Society in English (MUSE), a club for English majors created and sustained by a dedicated group of undergraduates.

English at UW–Madison continues to thrive amidst recent fiscal challenges. To all of you, the alumni, students, and friends who have made this possible, I extend my thanks on behalf of my colleagues across the Department.

Please stay in touch by visiting our website at:
<http://www.english.wisc.edu>

Annotations is the alumni newsletter of the Department of English at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

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Design and production by
University Communications
and Marketing

The Next Chapter



University Communications

Gary Sandefur, Dean
College of Letters & Science

There's a sense of excitement as spring arrives at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Soon, more than 2,000 undergraduate students in the College of Letters & Science will walk across the stage during May commencement, joining the ranks of more than 193,000 liberal arts alumni like you.

The moment will be bittersweet. This summer, I will step down as Dean of the College and return to the faculty of the Department of Sociology. I am excited to return to the classroom, but will miss working with talented personnel across the College.

In this time of transition, I am grateful for the many intelligent, driven, and loyal colleagues who care deeply about L&S and our students. Departments like English continually strive to improve the student experience. Over the past two years, English has hired five new faculty members, all of whom bring unique perspectives to the discipline. The Department has also played an integral role in the University's new Digital Studies Certificate Program, helping to ensure our students continue to sharpen their skills using the latest technology.

You should feel proud of this vibrant, engaged community of faculty, staff and students. I am confident that the next chapter of the College will be exceptional.

The next chapter begins in the fall. You play a vital role in helping to ensure the continuing value of a degree from UW–Madison. I invite you to stay connected. Join the Wisconsin Alumni Association and be a Badger for life. Make a gift to support our students and faculty. Hire UW graduates and bring Badgers into your career network. And remember to come back to campus often – we enjoy seeing you.

I appreciate your feedback. Thank you for all that you do.

On, Wisconsin!

Alumni Gift Nook

Your gifts, large and small, are crucial to us in maintaining our reputation as a leading national humanities department. We are so thankful for the many alumni gifts that, among other things, assist undergraduates, support top faculty and graduate students, and fund visiting speakers and events.

If you wish to contribute online, you may do so with our automated form through the University Foundation at www.supportuw.org/giving?seq=2597

If you would like to mail a contribution, please make your check payable to University of Wisconsin Foundation – Department of English and send it to:

University of Wisconsin Foundation
U.S. Bank Lockbox, P.O. Box 78807
Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807

You will receive a receipt and a note of thanks for your contribution.

ENGLISH BY THE NUMBERS

300 The number of students who have participated in the **Odyssey Project**, a free year-long course designed to help low-income students discover the writing and critical thinking skills that humanities courses can help foster. The program, founded by English Professor Emily Auerbach, is now celebrating its tenth year. Find out more at: www.odyssey.wisc.edu

6 The most recent, and final, volume of the **Dictionary of American Regional English**. Fast on the heels of the fifth volume published last year that completed the dictionary proper, Volume VI includes a complete index by region, usage, and etymology, as well as the full text of the original questionnaire and regional usage and social maps. DARE is now hard at work on digitizing its project. Read more about it at: www.dare.wisc.edu

507 The number of currently enrolled English majors who will be served by our new **Undergraduate Lounge** on the seventh floor of Helen C. White. The space occupies half of the current Department Library and is designed to give students a space to congregate, study, read, and talk between and after classes. It was made possible in part through generous gifts from our alumni and friends.

A Gift for Future Generations

Now more than ever, gifts from our alumni and friends make a world of difference to our undergraduate majors. With rising tuition and cost-of-living expenses, our students are faced with numerous financial obstacles to their educational passions and professional aspirations. Thankfully, we have an exceptional body of alumni and friends who, through directed and discretionary gifts every year, help our English majors stem the rising tide of educational debt.

Directed gifts help our donors directly support the things they value most in the Department, such as scholarship funds and research projects. For instance, this year the English Department is pleased to add the Dorothy Classen Urish Scholarship, which recognizes outstanding senior majors. Jack Urish (BS '70, English) created the scholarship in honor of his late mother, Dorothy Classen Urish, who was an English high school teacher in Stoughton, Wisconsin. Even as he has gone on to thrive in the business world,

Jack has always maintained the love of reading that he fostered as an undergraduate English major (he still spends some three or four hours a day reading). More than anything, though, Jack believes his mother would be pleased to know she is being remembered with a scholarship that helps a young English major study the great works and develop a love of writing just as he did at the University.

Likewise, donations to the Department of English Fund, known as **discretionary gifts**, allow our alumni and friends to support the larger educational and research mission of the Department. The Chair uses this fund throughout the course of the year in order to support the diverse academic and enrichment needs of our faculty, staff, and students. Just this year, the fund made possible everything from an undergraduate class trip to the Chicago Humanities Festival, to renovations for the new Undergraduate Lounge, to faculty travel for the purpose of



Jack Urish in front of his El Camino on Bascom Hill.

interviewing potential new faculty hires. Such gifts are an indispensable tool for meeting the constantly evolving needs of the Department and its students.

For more information about how to make a gift, please visit www.english.wisc.edu or contact Toni Drake at the UW Foundation at 608-263-1658 / toni.drake@supportuw.org.

MUSE and the Literati Conference

Madison Undergraduate Students of English, or MUSE, has a lot to be proud of in its inaugural year. In the words of current President and MUSE founder Kristin Prewitt, "MUSE strives to give undergraduates within the Department a sense of community." This year, the organization took part in outreach projects with the Madison Senior Center and Writers in Prison. They also hosted their first undergraduate conference, Literati, in March, with the theme of "On the Margins." The keynote speaker, Mary Agnes Edsall, is a current UW Solmsen fellow and gave a talk titled



"Myth, Memory, and Culture: Reflections on Literature and the Emotions."

There are very few opportunities for undergraduates to present conference papers; while there are four undergraduate conferences in the Midwest, Literati is the first one that is connected to a top research university. Students at the conference received a unique opportunity to enter into sustained critical and intellectual dialogue, and attendees came from a variety of institutions, including Bowdoin, Macalester, St. Thomas, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Iowa.

A Tale of Two Karens

The job market for any college graduate is, of course, challenging right now. Fortunately, English majors have help available from two Karens in preparing to join the workforce.

Karen Redfield (Ph.D. '11, English) is the English Department's undergraduate advisor. Before becoming advisor in Dec. 2011, she taught college writing and literature classes in geographical locations as diverse as Madison, New York, and Bolivia, and spaces as varied as homeless shelters, factories, and a medium-security prison.

Karen Knipschild (BA '93, Journalism and Communication Arts; MS '06, Continuing and Vocational Education) is the new career advisor for English majors. Before coming to the English Department, she served as the Assistant Director of the Short Course Program in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, where she advised students in all areas of their academic progress, raised enrollment by 40 percent through statewide recruitment, and taught the program's English composition class.

Both Karens are working to help the more than 500 English majors capitalize on all their skills and talents. An English education affords many benefits to undergraduates that they may not immediately realize, including excellent communication and writing skills and the ability to interpret and analyze a variety of texts. Many students are also able to successfully balance schoolwork with part- or full-time jobs.

Knipschild has put together a series of workshops for students, including a Values Workshop designed to help undergraduates explore marketable talents and skills, as well as possible careers to match those abilities. She also intends to offer career panels and

workshops on internships and the job search process, including advice on cover letters, resumes, and the most useful job search engines for various fields.

Redfield sees the need for a stronger sense of community in the English major, and her work with students reflects this goal. Her office is always stocked with Kleenex and chocolate; a cheery blue wall and two yellow chairs create a comfortable environment for her advisees.

Both Karens believe in the importance of alumni support for current majors. If you are interested in volunteering your time to appear on a career panel, Knipschild would be delighted to hear from you. In addition, if you would like to tell her what you are doing with your English degree and how you arrived there, she would love to hear your story. You can contact her at kknipsch@wisc.edu.



Emily Madsen

Karen Redfield (left), Karen Knipschild (right)

The department welcomes three new faculty members



Emily Madsen

JOSHUA CALHOUN earned his PhD at the University of Delaware in 2012. He teaches courses in the Department on Shakespeare, 16th- and 17th-century lyric poetry, and the history of media.

Where is the most interesting place that your research has taken you?

One day while researching in England, I got to examine the only extant first edition of Totell's *Miscellany* (1557) at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, ride a roller coaster, and shoot a crossbow.

What has been your favorite discovery about living in Madison so far?

I've happened upon some intriguing bluegrass and folk music venues hiding out in the surrounding countryside. However, I'm not able to publicly discuss details. Runners-up: DJ Trichrome, the climbing wall at The Sett, the Chazen Museum, and donut muffins at Marigold Kitchen.



Emily Madsen

MARK VARESCHI comes to the Department after earning his PhD from Rutgers University in 2011. He teaches undergraduate courses on Restoration and 18th-century literature and culture.

Where is the most interesting place that your research has taken you?

Most of my work is in 18th-century English literature, so I was a little surprised to find myself at a two-week institute at UCLA hosted by the Institute for Practical and Applied Mathematics, learning about things like latent dirichlet allocation.

What famous writer or poet do you think you would have been best friends with and why?

This is kind of funny question for me because my book project is on anonymity and anonymous literature in the 18th century. I'm tempted to say "Anonymous" because she and/or he seemed to produce a whole lot in my period.



College of Letters & Science

KATE VIEIRA earned her PhD at UW-Madison and returns to us after teaching at University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign for two years. Her work in Composition and Rhetoric focuses around literacy and migration.

Why are you most excited to be at UW-Madison?

I am currently teaching a writing class called "Why is Writing Hard?" We often imagine that there is someone out there who is efficiently and painlessly banging out perfect drafts of fluid academic prose. But this person doesn't exist! What I love about this class is that we are demystifying writing and working through its challenges together.

Where is the most interesting place that your research has taken you?

I'm very lucky to be an ethnographer, so my research takes me to all sorts of interesting places! Most recently, I have been researching how immigrants use literacy to communicate with their loved ones abroad. I was in Brazil collecting data last year, and my next step is to compare what I learned in Brazil with a field site in Latvia.

Catching up with Cyrena Pondrom and Tom Schaub

When Cyrena Pondrom decided to retire last spring, she was unsure about how she would spend her time. Looking back, she writes, “What I wonder now is how I ever had time to teach two classes a semester on top of everything else.” She has been keeping busy by continuing work on her book project on T.S. Eliot, as well as continuing the active direction of five graduate students and one senior thesis student.

She reports that this year has been one of the most productive academic years. Her most pressing task was completing an essay on Gertrude Stein and opera that was due for a volume edited by her colleague Richard Began and another scholar.

In addition to her work on Stein, Cyrena presented a paper at the annual meeting of the T.S. Eliot Society in St. Louis entitled “Cultural Contexts for T.S. Eliot’s Understanding of Gender in the Early Twentieth Century.” In

the paper, she explored the way writers in Eliot’s milieu in the early 20th century in London regarded gender as unstable or essential, as “inborn” or “performed.” She will present another paper on Eliot, entitled “T.S. Eliot, Performativity, and the Concept of the Religious Life: Rereading *Murder in the Cathedral*,” at the American Literature Association in Boston in May. Both essays will contribute to her book on Eliot. She is also taking time to travel, with trips to Aspen and Kenya.

Tom Schaub is also staying busy. He is directing two dissertations, editing the journal *Contemporary Literature*, and researching a book on modern American fiction and political economy. This summer he will be presenting at the International Pynchon Conference in Durham, England, and in the fall he will deliver an invited lecture at the Catholic University of America.

Outside of academics, he is “playing more tennis than I have in

years,” working on his golf game, spending time with his three grandchildren, traveling with his wife, and taking piano lessons.

“I’ve played clarinet since I was 12, but piano teaches the structure of music so that I have an even deeper understanding of this sublime art,” he says. “Less grandly: playing scales, simple Bach and Mozart, even a little Philip Glass is just flat-out fun.”

“Retirement?” he adds. “That’s one word for it, but it feels more like I pushed the Reset button.”

Alumni Publications

Do you have a recent work of fiction, non-fiction, or poetry that you would like to share with the English Department community? Tell us all about it at annotations@english.wisc.edu and we will feature it in our new alumni bookshelf, available online at <http://www.english.wisc.edu/alumni-bookshelf>



University Communications

Radio Days

Chances are you've heard Jim Fleming (BA'70, English). His deep baritone has long been a staple of Wisconsin Public Radio, where he has worked as a reporter, morning news anchor, program director, arts show host, and associate director in his almost 40 years at the station.

Currently, as host of *To the Best of Our Knowledge*, a nationally-syndicated radio show airing twice a week, Jim leads his listeners through stories and interviews on everything from the oeuvre of Philip K. Dick to the habits of procrastination to the rise of urban beekeeping.

As a student at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in the late 1960s, Jim found himself enthralled by the pleasures of the written and spoken word. An avid performer who acted in campus productions and sang with the Tudor Singers, Jim was naturally drawn not just to the power of the spoken word that public radio offered but also to the kinds of broad, thoughtful inquiry that it allowed him to pursue.

In turn, Jim's radio career has had a decidedly literary bent as well. As a producer for *Earplay*, a radio drama show in the 1970s and 80s, he worked with famed playwrights Edward Albee and David Mamet. On *To the Best of Our Knowledge*, Jim regularly features major contemporary authors like Michael Ondaatje, Mary Karr, and Jonathan Lethem. And as the current host of the perennially popular *Chapter-a-Day*® – a WPR mainstay for almost 80 years – Jim brings listeners a chapter of new and classic books, including fiction and non-fiction, every weekday.

Though his career path is perhaps not the most conventional for an English major, Jim has long considered it a natural outgrowth from what he learned as an undergraduate.

"I really believe that English majors learn how to think and to understand widely," he explains. "You can't really read literature without wanting to know more about art, and physics, and biology, and math. To be interested in literature is to have an intellectual interest that celebrates inquiry, in all its forms."

And like any good book, Jim's shows have a way of giving their audiences something new or unexpected.

"Sometimes you think you know everything about the world. But I learn something new all the time," he says. "And that's why I enjoy this program: there's always someone out there who has a way of looking at the world that I had never even considered before."



Jim Fleming

Photo courtesy WPR Image Archive

ALUMNI UPDATES

Stay in touch!

Keep our community of English alumni up-to-date on the big events in your life with our new online "Alumni Notes." Tell us about new jobs, new publications, new adventures, and the changes in your life, large or small, via our online form at <http://go.wisc.edu/457x9g>.

“There is Elbow Room to Think Here”

The imprint and legacy of Helen C. White

While some graduates may remember the days when the English Department made its home in Bascom Hall, many others are only familiar with the Department in its current location, Helen C. White Hall.

Yet what do most students know about Helen C. White herself? A picture of White, white-haired and matronly, looks benignly out over students who board the building's two main elevators. That may be the extent of a student's knowledge of the Renaissance woman who is certainly much more daring than her tidy, buttoned-up suit might imply. For example, though the photo is in black and white, it is quite likely that the suit in the picture was a bold shade of amethyst.

White (1896–1967) began her remarkable career at UW–Madison in 1919 as an English instructor and Ph.D. candidate. She became the first female scholar to achieve a full professorship at UW–Madison in the College of Letters and Sciences and was the first female chair of the Department from 1955–58 and again from 1961–65. She remained on the faculty until her death in 1967.

Well-known and well-loved on campus for her introductory Shakespeare courses as well as her penchant for wearing purple, the professor of 16th- and 17th-century English literature also found time to write historical fiction alongside her scholarly works. Over the course of her career, White became the first female president of the American Association of University Professors, and was an American



Photo courtesy of UW Archives, #S04590

delegate to UNESCO conferences as well as an award board member for the Fulbright and Marshall Scholarships. She also held 23 honorary degrees and was named an Honorary Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire courtesy of Queen Elizabeth.

Helen C. White Hall was completed in 1969, two years after her death, and named for her in June 1970. What would she have thought of the building named in her honor? Perhaps she would have liked less concrete gray and more mauve.

UW–Madison Archives has put together a flickr set of images from Professor White's life here: <http://go.wisc.edu/lmwfjh>



Photo courtesy of UW Archives, #S04589

Answer to back-page question: Helen C. White appears in the photo in the center of the second row.

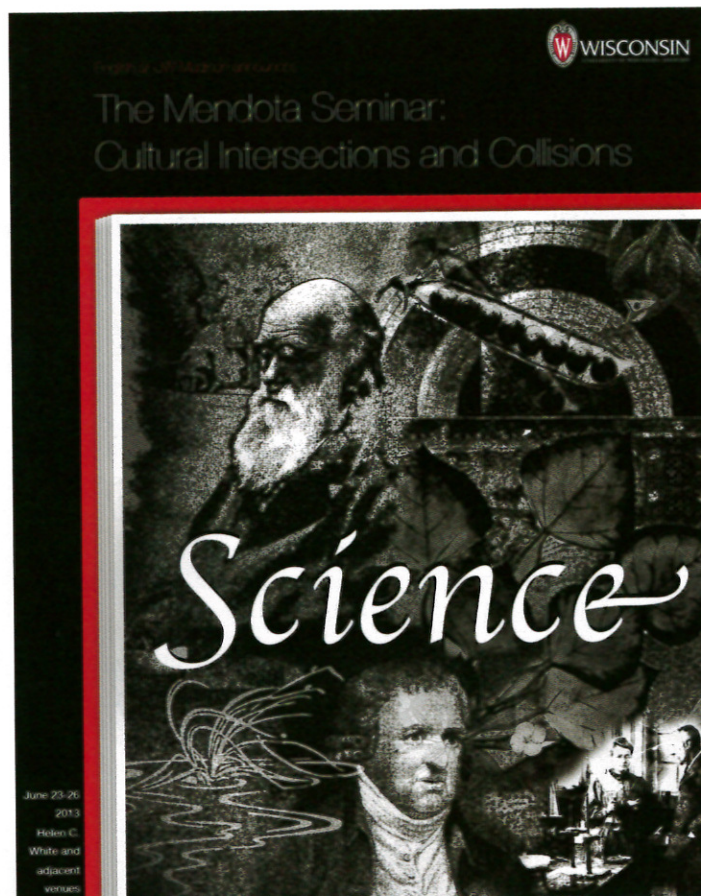
Announcing

The Mendota Seminar June 23–26

The English Department is excited to announce the inaugural Mendota Seminar, a new series of talks and discussions for alumni and friends. The seminar is spread over four days in June, featuring an opening reception and dinner with faculty, morning talks from top-notch campus researchers, and a variety of afternoon events.

For 2013, the seminar will focus on the intersection of science with literature, writing, and linguistics. During the seminar, our faculty will explore a diverse array of scientific practices and methods, from technological expertise to the environment.

For more information on speakers, registration, costs, and the schedule of events, please see the Mendota Seminar website: www.english.wisc.edu/mendota



Featured Speakers:



David Krakauer
Director,
Wisconsin
Institutes for
Discovery &
Professor of
Genetics



Joan Hall
Chief Editor,
*Dictionary
of American
Regional English*



**Caroline
Levine**
Professor of
English



Rob Nixon
Rachel Carson
& Elizabeth
Ritzmann
Professor of
English

Talking Badgers

continued from page 1

2004 and, with the help of Knapp and Wisconsin Humanities Council grants, it soon included the help of eight undergraduate researchers and four graduate students who returned to their own communities around the state to do research. From that initial groundwork, the project expanded to cover a vast array of local dialects: it deals with, among others, Native American dialects in Rhinelander, Cornish and Midlands dialects in Mineral Point, Hmong dialects in Wausau, and African-American and Hispanic dialects in Milwaukee.

Both the book and the larger project are designed to provide an educational service for the state. In 2009, Purnell and Raimy were awarded a Baldwin Grant for their unique contribution to the Wisconsin Idea, which helped them to share their research

with many communities throughout the state at town halls, libraries, and community centers. Moreover, *Wisconsin Talk* is written for a wide audience, with an eye towards both in-state educators at all levels and professional linguists who are just beginning to probe the topic. Though focused on Wisconsin, the book also invites consideration of these questions throughout the U.S., especially at a time when our country is revisiting well-worn questions of immigration, identity, and our native tongues.

"All of this is part of a bigger picture," says Purnell. "These questions – about how immigrants should adapt to a new culture, about how the English we speak shapes our identity – are more pressing than ever. There's a history to this, and it continues to change."

RECENT RELEASES FROM FACULTY MEMBERS

Ariel's Ecology: Personhood and Colonialism in the American Tropics, 1760-1820

Monique Allewaert
University of Minnesota Press, 2013

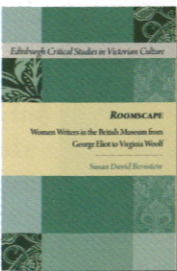


Professor Allewaert's first book explores the forms of personhood that developed out of New World plantations, from Georgia to Haiti, and extended into colonial metropolises.

Integrating political philosophy and ecocriticism with literary analysis, *Ariel's Ecology* shows that persons in plantations were impacted by a web of environmental stresses, such as the humid climate or the demand for sugar, that explicitly attuned them to their interactions with nonhuman forces.

Roomscape: Women Writers in the British Museum from George Eliot to Virginia Woolf

Susan David Bernstein
Edinburgh University Press, 2013



Roomscape examines the significance of the British Museum Reading Room for women writers, a place that had a profound effect on how they wrote about reading and

writing spaces in their works. Rather than viewing the Reading Room as a bastion of class and gender privilege – an image established by Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and upheld by feminist scholarship – this book draws on archival materials to suggest the rich and varied ways that women authors drew on the storied space.

Clandestine Marriage: Botany and Romantic Culture

Theresa Kelley
The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012

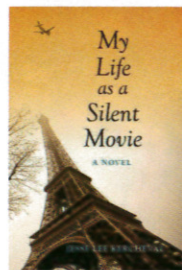


Romanticism was a cultural and intellectual movement characterized by discovery, revolution, and the poetic as well as by the philosophical relationship between people and

nature. Botany sits at the intersection where romantic scientific and literary discourses meet. *Clandestine Marriage* explores the meaning and methods of how plants were represented and reproduced in scientific, literary, artistic, and material cultures of the period.

My Life as a Silent Movie

Jesse Lee Kercheval
Indiana University Press, 2013

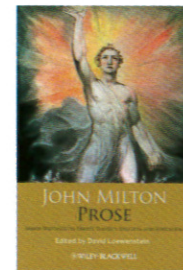


After losing her husband and daughter in an auto accident, 42-year-old Emma flies to Paris, discovers she has a twin brother whose existence she had not known

about, and learns that her birth parents weren't the Americans who raised her, but a White Russian film star of the 1920s and a French Stalinist. A story about identity and the shaping function of art, *My Life as a Silent Movie* presents a vividly rendered world and poses provocative questions on the relationship of art to life.

John Milton Prose: Major Writings on Liberty, Politics, Religion, and Education

David Loewenstein, Ed.
Wiley-Blackwell, 2013



Regarded by many as the equal of Shakespeare in poetic imagination and expression, Milton was also a prolific writer of prose, applying his potent genius to

major issues of domestic, religious, and political liberty. In this superbly annotated new publication, Professor Loewenstein offers the most authoritative single-volume anthology yet of Milton's major prose works.

Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses

Susan Stanford Friedman and Rita Felski, Eds.

The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013



What does it mean to read and teach comparatively in an increasingly transnational world? In this landmark edited collection, Professor Friedman and her co-editor bring

together sixteen senior scholars of transnational and postcolonial studies to discuss the theories and methods of comparison. Ultimately, the book argues for the importance of greater self-reflexivity about the politics and the methods of comparison as we continue to read, research, and teach.



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Photo courtesy of UW Archives, #S06944

Can you find Helen C. White in this 1922 photograph
of the English Department faculty?

See page 9 for the answer.