

JANUARY 2020

THE NEWSLETTER

The official newsletter of the Department of English & Writing Studies



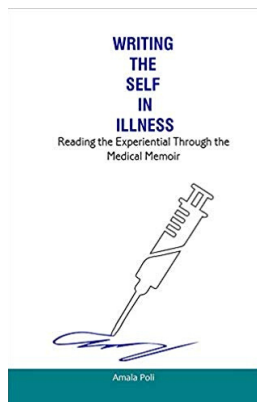
A message from the Chair

PROFESSOR MANINA JONES

Welcome to 2020. The year begins with a number of lively, creative, and thought-provoking events, including a stimulating Round Table on teaching race, organized by CUS Chair Madeline Bassnett, a GES-led initiative on preventing gender-based violence and harassment, and a Western Early Modern Society session on the cultural value of our library's unique collections. Next week, PhD alum Alex Kimball visits to read from her new book *The Seed: Infertility is a Feminist Issue*, and to lead a discussion about jobs and writing beyond the academy. We're also hosting visits by former Writer-in-Residence, storyteller Ivan Coyote, and Petra Kuppers, a disability culture activist, a community artist, and Professor of English, Women's Studies, Art and Design, Theatre at the University of Michigan. 2020 Writer-in-Residence Jane Urquhart began her term with a flurry of student meetings and several events at the London Public Library. And that's just January. As this newsletter demonstrates, there is a great deal of exciting work by faculty (retired and current), students, and alumni happening in classrooms, at conferences, and in print. Enjoy.

Research & Publications

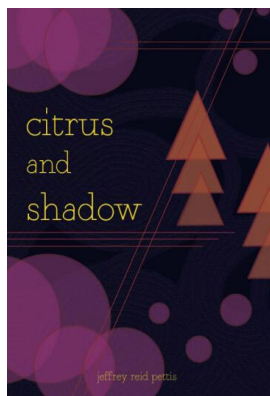
BOOKS



Writing the Self in Illness
by Amala Poli, PhD Student
Manipal Universal Press 2019

Writing the Self in Illness: Reading the Experiential Through the Medical Memoir attempts to understand the contemporary turn to health narratives through closely reading medical memoirs.

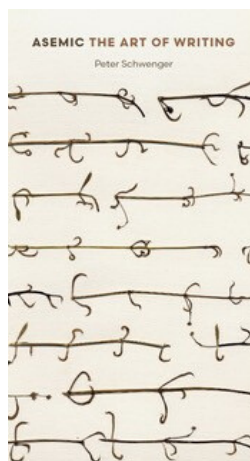
The author uses the term medical memoir for a narrative of illness that seeks to question, resist, and engage in a dialogue with prominent medical discourses and cultural perceptions. The book attempts to understand how individuals have reflected on their experiences of illness, redefined health for themselves, and responded to systemic and social depersonalization through the writing of memoirs. It encompasses select literary memoirs from the 1980s to 2017 that seek to explore perceptions of health and illness through various assimilations and rejections. In doing so, it also delves into the social and individual contexts of these memoirs to explore the embedded meanings and questions raised about love, hope, and recovery in the wake of illness. *Writing the Self in Illness* invites readers to a deeper exploration of the spectrum of health and its meanings for each of us.



Citrus and Shadow
by Jeffrey Reid Pettis, MA Student
Vocamus Press 2019

Citrus and Shadow is a chapbook of lyric poetry, thoughtful and measured, deft and curious. It is a poetry that explores the world, not by dissecting it or pulling it to pieces, but by holding it closely and paying it full attention. Its

challenge to the reader is that we also come to hold the world more closely, that we also pay it our full attention, so that we also can come to know it better.



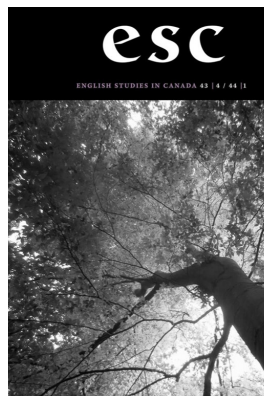
Asemic: The Art of Writing
by Peter Schwenger
University of Minnesota Press, 2019

In recent years, asemic writing—writing without language—has exploded in popularity, with anthologies, a large-scale art exhibition, and flourishing interest on sites like tumblr, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram. Yet this burgeoning, fascinating field has never received a dedicated critical study. *Asemic* fills that gap, proposing new ways of rethinking the nature of writing.

Pioneered in the work of creators such as Henri Michaux, Roland Barthes, and Cy Twombly, asemic writing consolidated as a movement in the 1990s. Author Peter Schwenger first covers these “asemic ancestors” before moving to current practitioners such as Michael Jacobson, Rosaire Appel, and Christopher Skinner, exploring how asemic writing has evolved and gained importance in the contemporary era.

Asemic includes intriguing revelations about the relation of asemic writing to Chinese characters, the possibility of asemic writing in nature, and explanations of how we can read without language. Written in a lively style, this book will engage scholars of contemporary art and literary theory, as well as anyone interested in what writing was and what it is now in the process of becoming.

JOURNALS



ESC: English Studies in Canada
Edited by Professor Allan Pero
University Alberta Library

ESC's operations and archive are housed in the Department of English and Writing Studies.

[Read latest issue here >>](#)

Research & Publications

ARTICLES

Adams, Stephen J. "Agnes Bedford: An Invisible Helpmate." Roxana Preda, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Ezra Pound and the Arts*, Edinburgh University Press (2019): 273-80.

McMurran, Mary Helen. "[Locke's Mythical Thinking: Metempsychosis in the Theory of Personal Identity](#)." *ELH: English Literary History* 86.4 (2019).

This article forms a part of a manuscript in progress on embodied soul in lyric and philosophy in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

Raine, Michael. "The Insect Woman, or: The Female Art of Failure." Lindsay Coleman and David Desser (Eds.), *Clients, Killers, and Kindred Spirits: The Taboo Cinema of Shohei Imamura*, Edinburgh University Press (2019).

Raine, Michael. "The Cold War as Media Environment in 1960s Japanese Cinema." Poshek Fu and Man Fung Yip (Eds.), *The Cold War and Asian Cinema*, CRC Press (2019).

Raine, Michael, Marcos Centeno. "Developments in Japanese Documentary Film." [Arts Special Issue: Japanese Transnational Cinema](#), Birkbeck, University of London.

Surette, Leon. "Deconstruction: A Misprision of Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce." *Philosophy and Literature* 43.2 (2019): 411-40.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

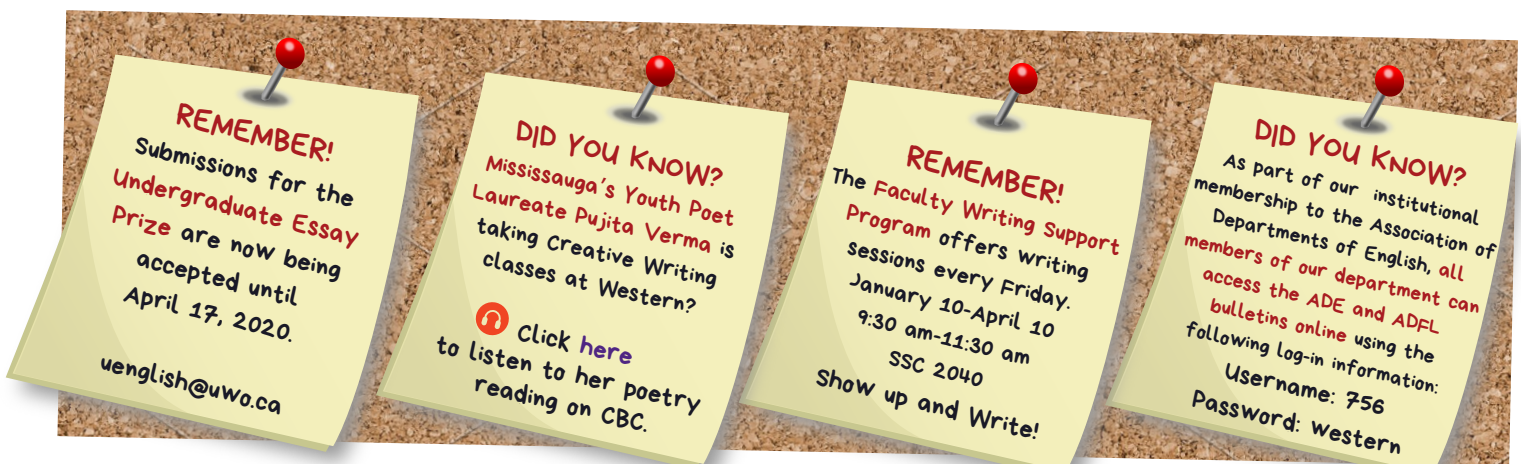
McMurran, Mary Helen. "'Nocturnal Reverie' and the Philosophy of Embodied Soul." Historical Poetics Symposium, November 2019, The University of Texas at Austin.

A collaborative working group of 18th and 19th scholars of poetry and poetics, the symposium is now in its twelfth year.

Raine, Michael. "The Sound of Exoticism on Wartime Japanese Feature Films." Transcultural Cinema Forum, October 2019, Kyoto University. Invited Speaker.

Raine, Michael. "Ersatz exoticism: the wartime vocal performances of Ri Koran/Li Xianglan." [Sounds of Exoticism in Cinema \(Noise, Music, Speech\)](#), November 2019, EHESS/Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3. Keynote Address.

Both of Michael Raine's presentations were part of a project on illiberal modernism in Japanese wartime image culture.



News & Events

Ivan Coyote at Western

Neither, Nor: How to Circumnavigate the Gender Binary in Seven Thousand Easy Steps

Join us on **Wednesday, February 5 at 7 pm** for the award-winning author, artist and educator as they grapple with the complex and intensely personal topics of gender identity, family, class, and queer liberation, always with a generous heart, and a quick wit. Ivan's stories manage to handle both the hilarious and the historical with reverence and compassion, and remind us all of our own fallible and imperfect humanity while at the same time inspiring us to change the world.

[RSVP here >>](#)



A talk by Professor Petra Kuppers

Ice Bar & Gut Botany: Creative Writing & Community Performance

Join us on **Thursday, February 6 at 3 pm** for a talk on creative writing and community performance. Petra is an internationally active disability culture activist, a community performance artist, Artistic Director of The Olimpias performance research collective, and a Professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Petra grounds her work in site-specific performance and disability culture methods. She has written academic books on disability arts, dance and somatic poetics, and medicine and performance, and she is currently working on *Eco Soma: Speculative Performance Experiments*. Her *Community Performance: An Introduction* (originally 2007, reissued in 2nd edition in 2019) is a foundational text in the field. Her creative books include the queer/crip speculative short story collection *Ice Bar* (2018), and the forthcoming ecopoetry collection *Gut Botany* (2020).

She is a fellow of the Black Earth Institute, an ecopoetic community that re-forges the links between art and spirit, earth and society.

In 2019-2020, Petra is the Hunting Family Faculty Fellow of the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Michigan.

[RSVP here >>](#)



Alexandra Kimball, PhD, Journalist & Author

Join us on **Friday, February 7 at 12:30 pm** for a reading and discussion of Alexandra Kimball's new book, *The Seed* (UC 3105), followed by "A Conversation about Writing and Careers Beyond the Academy" at 2:30 pm (UC 4401).

Alexandra is a writer and editor in Toronto. Her journalism and essays appear regularly in major publications across Canada. In 2015, she completed a month-long residency in Literary Journalism at the prestigious Banff Centre for the Arts. The essay that emerged from this process, *Unpregnant*, was published in the *Globe and Mail*, and was shortlisted in numerous best-of publications including *Longreads* and *Longform*. *Unpregnant* was also nominated for a National Newspaper Award in the category of Best Long Feature.

Her writing has been nominated for seven National Magazine Awards. Prior to her work in publishing, Alexandra did a PhD in English Literature at Western University. Her book on feminism, infertility and miscarriage, *The Seed: Infertility is a Feminist Issue*, was published by Coach House Books in April 2019.

[RSVP here >>](#)



News & Events

Poetry anthology looks to inspire climate action

Edited by Western English **Professor Kathryn Mockler**, a new online poetry and prose anthology has dedicated itself to confronting the climate crisis. In mid-2020, Coach House Books plans to publish the works, collectively called *Watch Your Head*, with all proceeds donated to climate justice and Indigenous groups.

[Read Western News article here >>](#)

[!\[\]\(d66ff64371a51729ac8c1cdaa685ba6f_img.jpg\) Listen to CBC interview here >>](#)

WATCH YOUR HEAD

A CLIMATE CRISIS ANTHOLOGY

Welcome 2020 Writer-in-Residence Jane Urquhart

Jane holds weekly office hours at Western on Tuesdays from 1:00 pm – 5:30 pm, in UC 2432. Please contact Vivian Foglton, vivian.foglton@uwo.ca (519-661-3403) for information, or to schedule an appointment.

Jane's Conversation about books events at the Central London Public Library (first floor, Tonda) begin with *Wuthering Heights*. Join her to share your thoughts about this book and others on Monday, February 3 from 12-1pm at Central Library. Other Conversations with Jane coming up: March 2: *Lives of Girls and Women* by Alice Munro and *So Long, See You Tomorrow* by William Maxwell, March 16: *A Month in the Country* by J.L. Carr and *The Blue Flower* by Penelope Fitzgerald, March 30: *Indian Horse* by Richard Wagamese.

[More details about Conversations with Jane series >>](#)



Jane Urquhart



PhD student Caroline Diezyn curated *Discovery of Witches* exhibit at Weldon Library (October 2019)

Sheetala Bhat, winner of the International Federation for Theatre Research's Helsinki Prize

Congratulations to Sheetala Bhat, winner of this year's Helsinki Prize from the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) for her essay "In-Between Love: Performance of Intimate Love as Making of Counterpublics in Mandeep Raikhy's *Queen-size*!". "The prize is awarded on the basis of academic merit and strives to promote the exchange and networking of new scholars in developing regions, and to encourage research in the field of theatre in their countries." In addition to the honour, Sheetala's expenses are paid for a trip to Galway, Ireland for the IFTR annual conference.



Sheetala Bhat

Western's Library Revitalization Project

In response to Western's Library Revitalization project and its implications for Weldon's print collections, the Nominations Committee reported that the following people have been acclaimed as members of the English and Writing Studies Ad Hoc Committee on Weldon Library: M.H. McMurran, T. Rajan, M. Rowlinson, J. Schuster and S. Hacker.

[Read more about the project here >>](#)



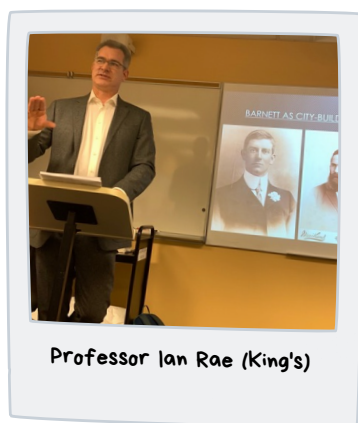
Click [here](#) to listen to Professor Kim Solga's 3MT talk about her research during the 3MT 2020 Celebration Kick-Off at Western University on January 7.

News & Events

WEMS: Scott Schofield & Ian Rae

On Friday, January 17th, the Western Early Modern Society hosted presentations by Scott Schofield (Huron) "Rare Editions and Unique Copies: Untold Stories from the Barnett Shakespeare Collection" and Ian Rae (King's) "What Good Are All those Books: Barnett as City-builder and Public Intellectual", and Blake Robertson, "Princes, Prayers, and Politics 'too much presented': the function of pencil markings in Fletcher and Massinger's *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt*." Held in Weldon Library, this panel was standing room only, with attendance by students and faculty from main campus, Huron, King's, and Brescia; Weldon, affiliate and London Public Library librarians; and representatives from the Stratford Archives. Ian and Scott were interviewed by CBC radio.

[Read CBC interview here >>](#)



Professor Ian Rae (King's)

Wordsfest showcased pros and local talent

Wordsfest is an annual event that takes place each November at Museum London. Spearheaded by Artistic Director Josh Lambier, the festival's aim is to connect academic disciplines, like the arts and humanities, with public life. Speakers from both national and local tiers attest to how people can engage in art – both professionally and personally. This year's theme was Southwestern identities.

[Read more about Wordsfest here >>](#)

Western leads celebration of Whitman legacy

This past fall semester, Dr. Schuster and his class "American Cult Classics" researched and installed an exhibit of Western's archival materials from its Walt Whitman collection. Whitman visited London, ON, in the summer of 1880, a guest of Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke, who was one of the first to join Western's faculty. This visit was the only time Whitman left the US, and it launched a wave of Whitmania across London and throughout Ontario that extends up to today. The year 2019 marked the 200th anniversary of Whitman's birth, and to celebrate the occasion the students and Professor Schuster curated an exhibit from the Whitman collection in the rare book room of Weldon, the largest collection of Whitman materials in Canada. Each item in the exhibit includes a short description condensed from research done by the students on the history of a specific book in Weldon's collection either written by Whitman or one of his local admirers. Students also wrote their own poems inspired by Whitman for a zine that was printed and added to the exhibit!

[Read more about Walt Whitman here >>](#)

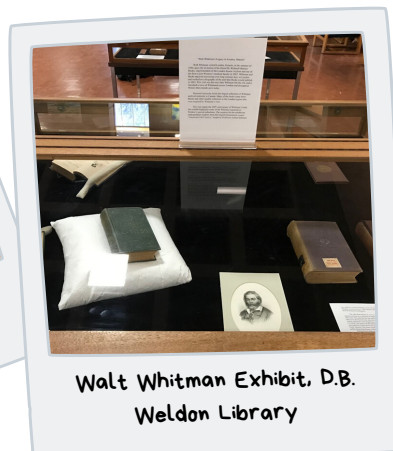
The Newberry's Center for Renaissance Studies Programs

The Center for Renaissance Studies works with an international consortium of universities in North America and Europe. It offers a wide range of scholarly programs and digital and print publications based in the Newberry collections, and provides a locus for a community of scholars who come from all over the world to use the library's early manuscripts, printed books, and other materials.

[View full list of upcoming CRS programs here >>](#)

Professor M.J. Kidnie highlights why students enroll in Destination Theatre (TS 3900G)

[Watch full video here >>](#)



News & Events

Fall 2019 Undergraduate Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to all of our outstanding undergraduate students who were recognized for their academic achievements during our annual Undergraduate Awards Reception in November.



CGS-M Workshops

Profs. Bassnett, Schneider, and Keep hosted several workshops to help undergraduate students with the challenges of applying for a Canada Graduate Scholarship.

UC outdoor renovation wins architecture award

The new plaza in front of University College won a local architecture award. The space called Kent Walk was reconstructed last year, becoming a plaza with seating that flows into the long path down University College Hill. London announced the Walk had won its Urban Design Award for public spaces and landscapes on November 7. The renovation was part of the Western's Open Space Strategy for pedestrian safety.

[Read full article here >>](#)

Shakespeare course fuelled fire for Executive Director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival

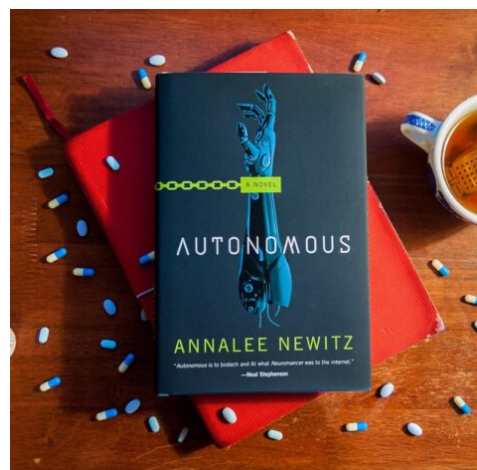
During her Convocation address, Anita Gaffney, BA'90 (English Language and Literature), MBA'02 described how an undergraduate Shakespeare course was a formative experience for her in her journey towards her position as Executive Director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. When Professor Manina Jones asked her who her Shakespeare prof was, it turned out to be Peter Auksi. I wonder if he knows!

[Watch Western Convocation address here >>](#)

Professor Chris Keep takes his turn on *Read. Watch. Listen.*

Read. Watch. Listen. introduces you to the personal side of our faculty, staff and alumni. Participants are asked to answer three simple questions about their reading, viewing and listening habits – what one book or newspaper/magazine article is grabbing your attention; what one movie or television show has caught your eye; and what album/song, podcast or radio show are you lending an ear to.

[Read full article here >>](#)



Summer 2019 PhD graduates

Warm congratulations to Dr David Alexander Carlton and Dr Patti Luedecke who successfully defended their doctoral dissertations in the Summer 2019 term. Our very best wishes for a happy and successful career and future!



Undergraduate students and alumni in the news

[Pujita Verma, Mississauga's Youth Poet Laureate and Writing 2220F student, reads a poem about light, stars and the solstice on CBC's Metro Morning.](#)

[Eternity Martis, BA'14 \(English Language and Literature/Women's Studies\), will release her debut memoir, 'They Said This Would Be Fun,' next spring.](#)

[Student Writer-in-Residence Gabrielle Drolet talks with CANADALAND about how journalists engage with Twitter.](#)

[Sam Maggs, BA'10 \(English Language & Literature and Film Studies\) puts sting back in classic Marvel character.](#)