ENGLISH TIMES

The English Department’s faculty and staff will host
A GRADUATION RECEPTION HOUR
for our graduates and their guests
SUNDAY, MAY 23
at Anderson House
Immediately following Commencement

M.A. Candidates Receiving Their Degrees
AY 2009-10

Ben Charlesworth, 2010  Peter Murray, 2010
Keen Hahn, 2010  Isabel Pakowski, 2009
Matthew Henningsen, 2010  Arezu Rahimi, 2009
Samantha Keefe, 2009  Toufiq Sarwarzada, 2010
Christopher Lanzen, 2009  Thorsten Schwaben, 2010
Jin Lee, 2010  Michelle Simon, 2009

ENGLISH MAJORS
Keegan Allen
*Ashley Beman
Kayla Borden
*Rachael Cohen
Robert Cooper
*Elizabeth Davidson
*Joseph Demartino
Stephanie Dube
Peter Dunkel
Gabriella Englander
Jacob Ferrell
Clare Fitzgerald
*Kiera French
Louisa Gaylord
Karrie Hanson
Timothy Hart
*Fana Hickinson
Michael Jokinen
Kaytie Keane
*James Kobialka
Adam Kohrman
Hattie Krakow
Jessica LaFleche
Daniel McDonald

Don’t miss
Academic Spree Day
April 28

Congratulations to Steve Levin on his Reappointment!

Graduating Seniors

Charlotte Mcgrew
Lucas Neustadt
Daniel Nye
Natalia Orlovsky
*Daniel Parker
*Emma Siemasko
Brittany Smith
*Alexander Stammyer
*Kristina Taylor
Luke Tozer
Kristen Wachenfeld
Christopher Wiklund
*Angela Woodmansee
Anushka Zafar

*Recipient of Departmental Honors

ENGLISH MINORS

Kimberly Bullock
Rachael Guerrieri
April Lambert
Marissa Millman

Inside this issue:

1 Front Page News
2 From the Chair
3 Undergraduate News
   Academic Spree Day
4 Writing Contest Winners
5 Graduate Business
   From the Director of Graduate Studies
7 From our Faculty
8 International News
   Dept./University News
10 News From our Alums
12 Faculty List

We’re on the web! www.clarku.edu/english
Clark University, Department of English, 950 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610
Undergraduate—phone: 508-793-7142, email: engUG@clarku.edu  Graduate—phone: 508-793-7630, email: engMA@clarku.edu
FROM THE CHAIR

As this semester draws inexorably to a close, the English Department has seen a number of changes. First, my predecessor in this gig, Ginger Vaughan, announced in February that she is going on phased retirement starting in the fall. That means she will be teaching one semester for the next three years, to segue to a well-deserved position as Professor Emerita and Research Professor. We have mixed feelings; on the one hand, we will miss her dreadfully, but on the other, we will still be able to hear her raucous laughter for at least half a year during the next three. Did someone mention an extended retirement party? Let us raise our glasses in grateful appreciation for all the things she has done with and for the Department. Ginger, you deserve all the accolades that will inevitably come your way. As a young assistant professor, I remember when you first arrived on campus; I have seen you grow magnificently into your roles as teacher and first-rate scholar and persuasive administrator. We have been through many years’ experiences together, you and I, have seen the whole Department effectively transformed, and I feel that, though you may be leaving as an every-day colleague, you will never retire as a mentor and a friend. God speed!

Speaking of personnel changes, a number of us surrounded Steve Levin in the hall a while ago, chanting “Three more years! Three more years!” upon receiving the news that the university had reappointed him. We are delighted that this important career step is accomplished, and look forward to a successful tenure appointment after that time. Concerning our other personnel case, we are still waiting for word on Betsy Huang’s tenure review; normally candidates are not informed of the university’s decision until the end of the spring semester, and because of the more-than-usual number of tenure cases across the university this year, we are certain that we will be waiting until then. But we’re optimistic, and have the champagne on ice, as it were.

Also, I’d like to extend my grateful appreciation to Shirley Riopel-Nelson, our department secretary, who retired in March. As many of you know, she ran a tight ship, and her knowledge of how to get things done around the university was legendary. The department certainly appreciates all the work she did for us these past few years, and I hope she gets to do the traveling in retirement that she has always hankered for. In the meantime, Edie Mathis, who, I’m sure, many of you alums remember, has kindly consented to serve as an interim while SunHee and I peruse the wealth of applications for the position. We hope to have someone in place by the summer to take hold at the beginning of fall semester.

Elsewhere in this English Times you’ll find SunHee’s report of the record number of MA students who successfully defended their theses in order to walk for graduation in May. And you’ll discover the winners of our various contests, as well as the large number of fine Honors Theses being completed this year. Congratulations to all of them! In fact, congratulations to all our English major graduates. You’ve been an inspiring, imaginative, inimitably impressive class, you majors of ’10. Best of luck in your futures!

Now if the weather cooperates, I’ll air out my umpiring gear and take to the diamond to savor some of the gifts of summer. May you all have pleasant and fruitful summers!

Jay Elliott
Professor and Chair
Undergraduate News

Congratulations to English Department Undergrads Selected to Phi Beta Kappa
Senior English majors Catherine E Gabis, Joseph Demartino, Daniel K. Parker, Emma Simasko, and Angela J. Woodmansee were each elected to Clark University’s chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

Don’t Miss Academic Spree Day
Wednesday, April 28

English Department Presentations
Tilton Hall Posters 12:00-4:30

Kaytie Keane ’10, “Who We Were and Who We Are: A History of Hysteria” (Sponsor: Meredith Neuman)
Joseph DeMartino ’10, “Schism: A Possible Fractured Future” (Sponsor: Jay Elliott)
Timothy Hart ’10, “Not my Woods, Not my Problem: Nature as Mirror in the Poetry of Robert Frost” (Sponsor: Meredith Neuman)
Ashley Beman ’10, “Time’s Definition of Revolutionary: Look Back in Anger and Osborne the Informer” (Sponsor: Steve Levin)
Angela Woodmansee ’10, “Oh get me Through. Through thus in-between: Language, Identity, and Life on the Borders of the National Community in Three American Memoirs” (Sponsor: Fern Johnson)
Kiera French ’10, “The Art of Love and the Art of Translation: Ovid’s Ars Amatoria” (Sponsor: Meredith Neuman)
Karrie Hanson ’10, “Re-writing History: Collaborating Fact and Fiction” (Sponsor: Meredith Neuman)
James Kobialka ’10, “The Hourglass Effect” (Sponsor: Meredith Neuman)
Rachel Cohen ’10, “Convention, Negotiation, and Collection in the work of Zora Neale Hurston” (Sponsor: Meredith Neuman)
Emma Siemasko ’10, “Platonic In The Poetry: Desire and a Chapbook” (Sponsor: SunHee Gertz)
Alexander Stanmyer ’10, “Monsters, Androids, and AI: Evolutions of (Post)humanity in Science Fiction” (Sponsor: Betsy Huang)

Winners of the English Dept. Writing Contests
(Sponsor: Jay Elliott)

Prentiss Cheney Hoyt Poetry Contest
Daniel McDonald ’10, “New York Haiku—Fall”
Elizabeth Decasse ’11, “Neurovan”
Emma Siemasko ’10, “Endings”

Betty ’79 & Stanley Sultan Short Story Contest
Charlotte McGrew ’10, “Ravenna”
Matthew Furman ’13, “A Drink”
Natasha Ochshorn ’11, “That Brooklyn Bullshit”

Loring Holms & Ruth Dodd Drama Contest
Natasha Ochshorn ’11, “Pluto”

Seniors, Don’t Miss Senior Brunch
Tuesday, May 12

Senior Brunch is served to graduating seniors by faculty, staff, and administration. This year’s Senior Brunch is Tuesday May 18, 12:00-1:00 p.m. in the University Dining Hall, followed by award presentations. The menu is not traditional dining hall fare. Last year’s menu included eggs benedict, stuffed French toast, cheese blintzes, fresh fruit, and yogurt. Come see who will be serving you from the English Department!
2010 WRITING CONTESTS WINNERS

**Prentiss Cheney Hoyt Poetry Contest**
1st - Daniel McDonald ‘10, “New York Haiku—Fall”
2nd - Elizabeth Decasse ‘11, “Neurovan”
3rd - Emma Siemasko ‘10, “Endings”

**Betty ‘79 & Stanley Sultan Short Story Contest**
1st - Charlotte McGrew ‘10, “Ravenna”
2nd - Matthew Furman ‘13, “A Drink”
3rd - Natasha Ochshorn ‘11, “That Brooklyn Bullshit”

**Loring Holmes & Ruth Dodd Drama Contest**
1st - Natasha Ochshorn ‘11, “Pluto”
2nd - Maxie Kalish ‘11, “Kibitz and Kissing”

Read the winning entries on the English Department website.

Thanks to everyone who submitted entries to the writing contests. We appreciate your interest in creative writing and your willingness to share your work with us. We had a large pool of many fine entries to consider.

English Department work-study student Micah Martin has been working hard all year shelving books for the new department library.

Thanks to his efforts, the department library is now open and ready for use. Please feel free to stop by the library, located in the basement of Anderson House.
GRADUATE NEWS

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

Writing on the day after the Health Reform Bill was passed in the House of Representatives, I cannot help but feel something perhaps akin to the optimism tinged with trepidation that many of our graduating English majors and M.A. students may be feeling as well.

We mark our life phases along with our accomplishments on the calendar and with rituals, whether we’re celebrating birthdays or having finally acquired that driver’s license. Sometimes, we develop personal rituals that underscore a personally important day or particular accomplishment. When I complete a piece of scholarly work but before I embark on the definitively dull task of editing, for example, I open a new package of No. 2 pencils and carefully sharpen each one of them before placing them on my desk, one after the other in an orderly row. With them, I start sketching out a new project or two, a ritual that allows me to tackle the editing job without too melodramatic a sense of martyrdom, for I know that through my next project, I will soon again experience the joy derived from learning.

The House Bill and Graduation differ from such celebrations and rituals in ways too obvious to warrant detailing here. They also differ from each other in myriad ways. Yet, with the passing of the House Bill as well as with the completion of requirements for Graduation, a similarity emerges when elation is tinged with the trepidation stemming from considering attendant concerns. Because the House and our soon-to-be Graduates can mark their success, the date is duly noted for posterity’s sake, celebratory rituals are plotted and performed, and colleagues and friends are encouraged to partake in the revelry. Somewhere in the back of our minds, however, we know that it will take considerable discipline, much hard work, and luck to implement medical insurance reform as well as to conduct our post-graduation lives. We prepare for that best, I think, when we invest joy in celebration, for such joy is not only a stamp of approval for past efforts, but also a promise forward.

So as you celebrate, Seniors and Masters of the Arts, take joy in your accomplishments. As part of the joy in your success, know that we are proud of you. And for all of you, graduating or not, have a great summer!

SunHee Kim Gertz
Director of Graduate Studies in English

Thorsten Schwaben is graduate representative to department meetings and graduate student council meetings.

Four English Department Graduate Students Participate in Clark University’s Eighth Annual Graduate Student Multidisciplinary Conference

Four English Department graduate students presented papers at Clark University’s Graduate Student Multidisciplinary Conference April 7:


Marilyn Squier, “A Bear Deprived of her Whelps: Complications with Dual Mothering in Anti-Tom Fiction” (Sponsor: Jay Elliott)

Dianne Berg, “‘Draw, if you be men’: Cultural Clashes in the Swordplay of Romeo and Juliet” (Sponsor: Virginia Vaughan and SunHee Gertz)
Congratulations to the Following M.A. Candidates Who Passed Their Oral Defenses and will Soon be Receiving Their Degrees:


Keen Owen Hahn, Directed by Professor Huang, March 26, 2010, “Speculative Fiction and the (Super) Constructs of Oppression: Towards a Deconstructionalist Aesthetics.” Read by Professors Levin and Elliott.


Thorsten Schwaben, (Germany), Directed by Professor Gertz, March 19, 2010, “Echoing the Holocaust through Maus: Literary Themes and the Narrator.” Read by Professors Levin and Scheiding.

News from Peter Murray

Peter was admitted to the Ph.D. program in English at Fordham University with free tuition, health insurance and a graduate assistant stipend.

Peter’s paper, “Going around in Circles: The Cosmological Dimensions of the Envoi to Geoffrey Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde,” was accepted for the 27th Annual New England Medieval Society Graduate Consortium. This year’s topic is Medieval Perspectives: From the Mundane to the Marvelous.

Matthew Henningsen to Pursue Ph.D.

Matthew was admitted to the Ph.D. program in English at Marquette University with a teaching assistantship.

Matthew will be teaching English over the summer in Thailand through LanguageCorp.

Dono Sunardi Presents at Conference

Dono was informed by the University of Rhode Island Graduate Conference Committee that his paper was selected for presentation at ”Carried Across: Translations, Temporalities, and Trajectories,” to be held on Saturday, April 24, 2010 at the University of Rhode Island.

English Department faculty, staff, and graduate students. September 2009.
Some News From Virginia Vaughan

Virginia Vaughan has recently published with co-editors Fernando Cioni and Jacquelyn Bessell (Clark MA 1994, Ph.D. 1996) a collection of essays, *Speaking Pictures: The Visual/Verbal Nexus of Dramatic Performance*. The anthology is published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and includes an essay by Professor Vaughan, "Enter a Turk and a Moor: Signifying the Other in Early Modern English Drama," and another by Professor SunHee Kim Gertz, "Staging Arthur, the Future King: Signs of Edward, the Black Prince." The contributors participated in a conference on this topic in Luxembourg during the summer of 2007 sponsored by the Henry J. Leir-Luxembourg Program.

Professor Vaughan will also co-chair a seminar on "Shakespeare and Race" at the Shakespeare Association of America, which meets in Chicago April 1-3.

Aimee Sands Published

Aimee Sands’ poetry collection *The Green-go Turn of Telling* has been accepted for publication by Salmon Poetry in Ireland. New work is also forthcoming in the following literary journals: *FIELD*, *Poet Lore*, and *Measure*.

Poetry Collection By Susan Richmond

Susan Edwards Richmond’s new poetry collection, *Increase*, has been released by FootHills Publishing. The chapbook is inspired by the Harvard Shaker Community, which Richmond explored while poet-in-residence at the Fruitlands Museum.

Professor Johnson Presents at Conference

Professor Fern Johnson presented a paper on April 12 titled "Official Language Policies and the Paradox of Rights versus Restrictions: A US Perspective on the EU" at the New Challenges for Multilingualism in Europe conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The conference was sponsored by LINEE (Languages in a Network of European Excellence) and brought together experts in four related subfields: Language, Culture and Identity; Language Policy and Planning; Multilingualism and Education; and Language and Economy.

Professor Gertz has Book Published

In addition to the article published in Professor Vaughan’s anthology (see this page), Professor Gertz had another article accepted for publication, and her latest book appeared. Her article will be coming out in *Semiotica* and is entitled, “Fame and Politics: The Persuasive Poetics of Leadership.”

In addition, her book with Palgrave Macmillan Press came out this April and is entitled: *Visual Power and Fame in René d’Anjou, Geoffrey Chaucer, and the Black Prince*. From the back cover: Reading semiotically against the backdrop of medieval mirrors of princes, Arthurian narratives, and chronicles, this study examines how René d’Anjou (1409-1480), Geoffrey Chaucer’s *House of Fame* (ca. 1375-1380), and Edward the Black Prince (1330-1376) explore fame’s visual power. While very different in approach, all three individuals reject the classical suggestion that fame is bestowed and understand that particularly in positions of leadership, it is necessary to communicate effectively with audiences in order to secure fame. This sweeping study sheds light on fame’s intoxicating but deceptively simple promise of elite glory.
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Silya Fehn, a candidate for a PhD in English at the Universität Münster and the contact person for international students, was in residence at Clark for a month. During this time, she participated in a variety of activities and delivered two papers—one for the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Program and another for the English Department Colloquium—on her thesis topic, “In the Beginning was Auschwitz’- Second Generation Post-memory Writing”

Dr. Alexandra Ganser, an Assistant Professor from the Universität Nürnberg, won the Ebeling Fellowship to conduct research on her second book at the American Antiquarian Society. She presented some of her findings at the English Department Colloquium, with a talk entitled, “The Pirate in Transatlantic Literature around 1700.”

DEPARTMENT/UNIVERSITY NEWS

Professors Betsy Huang and Steve Levin will be on Sabbatical
To pursue scholarly projects, Betsy Huang and Steve Levin will be on sabbatical Fall 2010.

Professor Virginia Vaughan not teaching Fall 2010
As part of her phased retirement, Virginia Vaughan will not be teaching classes Fall 2010.

9th Annual Undergraduate Shakespeare Conference of New England
Saturday, April 24, 2010, at The College of the Holy Cross
Keynote Speaker: Scott Maisino, University of Massachusetts

Don’t miss the Central Massachusetts Undergraduate Shakespeare Conference, convening this year on Saturday, April 24th, at The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA.

Students from various consortium institutions will present research projects and papers on the writings of William Shakespeare. The theme for the conference is “Truth and Consequences”.

Sponsored by: Colleges of Worcester Consortium, Inc.
Clark Hosts Play Festival

Clark University’s Theater Arts Program is presenting “The Clark New Play Festival” in a three-week series:

Series A: April 6-10, Series B: 14-18. Series C: April 20-24. 7:30 p.m., (Matinee in Series B on Sunday the 18th at 3:00 p.m.) Free with College ID/ $5 for general public. Held at The Michelson Theater in the Little Center on Charlotte Street in Worcester.

Clark University will host its first play festival, consisting of nine plays and over 50 actors. According to Doreen Manning of Worcester Magazine:

“A creative spin on Theater Arts at Clark University aims to be the newest opportunity for Worcester to catch fresh, raw talent as The Clark New Play Festival matches nine student plays with nine student directors and more than 50 actors in three weeks, from April 6-24.

A collaboration between two Theater Arts classes– Professor Gino DiLorio’s Playwriting II class and Professor Raymond Munro’s Directing Seminar– The New Play Festival is the first time a group of Clark Playwrights, directors, and actors will be challenged to complete a full production from thought, to paper, to stage in just one semester.”

The article also goes on to quote our very own work-study Camilla Smith, who is directing one of the plays, “Olive My Love,” written by Betty McCarthy.

“The opportunity to direct a college show is huge,” says Smith. The idea of working with mature pseudo-adults in a space that was meant to have a show in it excited me greatly.”

Other students with majors or minors in English are also participating in the Festival. Ashley Beman, an English major and playwright for the Festival, was quoted in the same article as saying, “Being involved in this exciting Clark theater family makes all of the experiences... more than worthwhile.”

Laura Menzie, a minor in English, is directing a play, and Chelsea Long, who is also an English minor, wrote one of the plays and is directing another. English majors Mark Robson, Heather Howe, Alex Tennant, and Beth Davidson are all appearing in the play festival as actors.

Finally, English major Natasha Ochshorn’s play won first prize, and major Maxie Kalish’s play won second prize in the Loring Holmes and Ruth Dodd Drama contest.

For more information, or to make reservations, call 508-793-7356, or e-mail clarkarts@clarku.edu.

The full article is located at http://worcestermagazine.com/content/view/5258

A Fond Farewell to Addi and Joel

A fond farewell to two of the English Department work-study students, Addi Rancourt-Walker and Joel Hinton, who are graduating this year. We wish them the best in their future endeavors. Addi and Joel, you will be missed!
NEWS FROM OUR ALUMS

We would love to hear how you're doing, what you're up to, and your opinions on what is important to you. While we won’t be able to include everything, we will try to include all updates on what you’ve been doing since leaving Clark.

Alex Abramovich, B.A. '96, is writing a book on American Music for Penguin Books. Alex is currently a writer/editor/adjunct in New York City. Check out his article on the next page.

Steve Bruso, M.A. '09, has been accepted to Fordham University’s PhD program in Medieval Studies with a full tuition scholarship, plus a living stipend. He will also be marrying his fiancée, Colleen Wimberly, this Summer.

Ashley Cataldo, M.A. '06, is in the Ph.D. program in History here at Clark. She is studying for her orals in the fields of Major American, Special Eighteenth Century and Outside Atlantic World. She is also working at the American Antiquarian Society, indexing an online manuscripts collection and answering reference questions.

Genie Giamo, M.A.'07, has an article forthcoming in the August issue of Language and Literature (put out by Sage publications): “Talking Back through ‘talking Black’: African American English and Agency in Walter Mosley’s Devil In a Blue Dress.”

Tara Hedayat-Zadeh B.A. ’09, has accepted a position at the Bahá’í World Centre, located in Haifa, Israel. The Bahá’í World Centre is the spiritual and administrative heart of the Bahá’í community. She will be working in their Office of Israeli Affairs, which interacts with local and national administrative bodies and the diplomatic community on a range of affairs.

Aaron Joslow, B.A. ’05, writes us: “Hello, everyone. An English major’s dream come true!: Wiley approached my company Rally Point Webinars, LLC about writing a book on business marketing and webinars. It’s hard to believe that a year after launching our company, we’ve piqued a publisher’s interest. Not quite a novel, but a business book is a start. If anyone is interested in what we’re up to, please check out our latest newsletter: http://www.rallypointwebinars.com/thepoint.htm. Thank you Betsy, Ginger, Lisa, Bill (in memory), and everyone else who made me edit so many sentences over four plus years.”

Sarah Lennox, M.A. ’07, was accepted to the Ph.D. program at the University of Florida with a full ride. Also, her paper “Going around in Circles: The Cosmological Dimensions of the Envoi to Geoffrey Chaucer’s TROILUS AND CRISEYDE” was accepted for the 27th Annual New England Medieval Society Graduate Consortium. This year’s topic is Medieval Perspectives: From the Mundane to the Marvelous.

Jennifer McCollum, M.A. ‘06, is completing her dissertation on demonic possession and zombic reanimation in the Victorian novel in the Ph.D. program in English at the University of Washington.

Helen Clare Taylor, M.A. ‘87, is now a full Professor of English at Louisiana State University in Shreveport where she also directs the Master of Liberal Arts Program. “As I was teaching the Book of Margery Kempe in my Medieval Studies graduate seminar last night, I was reminded of how much I owe to Drs. Gertz and Vaughan who helped me so much when I was a graduate student at Clark and turned me into a scholar.”

FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL ALUMS

Sandra (Kraemer) Jablonske (University of Trier, Germany) M.A.’06, is beginning the Ph.D. program in English at the University of Kent in the UK.

Christoph Lanzen, (University of Mainz, Germany) M.A. ’09, successfully finished his graduate studies at the University of Mainz in February and is hoping to become a Ph.D. student there. Christoph’s focus will, probably, remain on Puerto Rican literature and psychoanalysis. He is currently working as a substitute teacher for a high school near Frankfurt.
Undergraduate Alum Alex Abramovich writes Salinger Article
Twenty-one years ago in the LRB, Julian Barnes accused J.D. Salinger’s erstwhile biographer, Ian Hamilton, of ‘reverse reductivism’: ‘Normally, the biographer establishes the course of a writer’s life and then uses it to “explain” the work,’ Barnes wrote.

With Salinger’s life largely unavailable, or where available obscure, Hamilton finds himself doing the opposite: deducing the life from the work . . . ‘A Perfect Day For Bananafish’, one of Salinger’s most elusive stories, is discussed in terms of a. Salinger’s visit to a hotel at Daytona Beach; b. the history and genealogy of the Glass family; and c. the stylistic break it represents from ‘The Inverted Forest’, published a month earlier. ‘Bananafish’, Hamilton records in passing, is ‘spare, teasingly mysterious, withheld’. Sure, but what’s it, well, about? How does it work as a story, what do the bananafish signify, why the suicide? Hamilton merely notes that the ending was to prove ‘a seminar talking point for years to come’, as if the seminarists were wasting their time.

Well, Hamilton died in 2001; Salinger died last week, and the seminarists are still at it: a quick JSTOR search suggests that they haven’t yet gotten to ‘Bananafish’s’ bottom. But when I read the story, I can’t help thinking of my old thesis adviser, Stanley Sloan, who’d started out writing literary fiction, but ended up teaching, alongside Sylvia Plath, at Smith. (Stanley “fired” – one year appointment ending next year; Plath wrote in her diaries. ‘He volatile, enthusiastic, “immature”’, they secretly jealous of him spending over a year on a “non-academic project” – a novel. ‘And so it went, among the seminarists.’)

Happily, Stanley ended up elsewhere, with tenure and a beige Cadillac convertible. I took a bunch of his classes. One day, midway through a course on The Waste Land, someone (possibly me) asked about the ‘silk handkerchiefs’ – testimony of summer nights – floating in Eliot’s Thames. Those handkerchiefs had probably been used as prophylactics, Stanley said. And then he told us that in the New York of his youth, floating condoms would have been called ‘banana fish’.

The reference is almost impossible to nail down: There are a number of “X fish” terms that refer to condoms floating on bodies of water, the OED’s editor-at-large for North America, Jesse Sheidlower, told me when I asked him to help me locate the phrase. “Coney Island whitefish” is probably the best known, and “Hudson River whitefish” is another. But I think I’ve only heard “banana fish” in this sense once, and I can barely find any evidence for it online.

But when I flipped through its pages with Stanley’s definition in mind, this most elusive story seemed to tilt on its axis and snap into place. What’s ‘A Perfect Day For Bananafish’ about? Among other things, it seems to be about sexual gluttony and/or disgust: bananafish ‘lead a very tragic life’, Seymour Glass tells his young companion, Sybil Carpenter. ‘. . . they swim into a hole where there’s a lot of bananas. They’re very ordinary-looking fish when they swim in. But once they get in, they behave like pigs. Why, I’ve known some bananafish to swim into a banana hole and eat as many as 78 bananas . . . Naturally, after that they’re so fat they can’t get out of the hole again.’

‘What happens to them?’ Sybil asks.

‘Oh, you mean after they eat so many bananas they can’t get out of the banana hole? . . . I hate to tell you, Sybil. They die.’

If Stanley’s right, Seymour’s just done us, Sybil and Julian Barnes the favour of explaining his own, forthcoming suicide. (His disgust, which is also self-disgust, turns self-prophylactic.) And, in fact, the more I look at it the darker, and more sexualised, ‘A Perfect Day For Bananafish’ seems to become. ‘Sex Is Fun – or Hell’ is the headline of the magazine article that Seymour’s wife, Muriel, is reading when we first encounter her, 22 words into the story. And if Seymour’s conversation with the (unsupervised) young girl strikes you as a bit off, consider the very first mention of bananafish, which comes just after Sybil’s declaration of something like sexual jealousy (“Sharon Lipschutz said you let her sit on the piano seat with you”):

‘Ah, Sharon Lipschutz,’ said the young man. ‘How that name comes up. Mixing memory and desire.’ He suddenly got up to his feet. He looked at the ocean. ‘Sybil,’ he said, ‘I’ll tell you what we’ll do. We’ll see if we can catch a bananafish.’

‘A what?’

‘A bananafish,’ he said, and undid the belt of his robe. He took off his robe . . .

The surrounding passages read like the treatment for a perfect Coen Brothers’ movie; they’re coded, moving, but crazed. If Seymour’s mixture of ‘memory and desire’ is an obvious Waste Land reference, what about Sybil’s ‘canyar-yellow two-piece bathing suit, one of which she would not actually be needing another nine or ten years’?

‘It was really just an ordinary silk handkerchief,’ another character explains. ‘You could see when you got up close.’

The italics are mine: according to the seminarists and SparkNotes editors, Sybil’s innocence – and Seymour’s too-pure-to-live-ity – are stark rebukes to Muriel’s meanness and materialism. But what if Salinger had something smeary, and more ambiguous in mind? What if his story – which appeared in the New Yorker 62 years ago last week – was also about the thrill of getting a good, dark joke past the magazine’s famously prudish editors?

The information we gather about breeding success, as well as population size and distribution, is helping guide our management strategies at the Virginia Coast Reserve. Our oystercatcher research partners include the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Collaboration Up and Down the Coast
While the work we do here with other local organizations is important to oystercatcher conservation at the state level, the Virginia Coast Reserve is part of a larger collaborative effort along the Atlantic coast.

In fact, the Conservancy has played a lead role in the Atlantic Coast American Oystercatcher Working Group since the network’s inception. The group formed in 2000 just prior to the American oystercatcher’s listing as a species of high concern in the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan.

Group members work together to learn more about the connectivity of oystercatcher populations along the Atlantic Coast and to promote and guide additional research and conservation. Sharing information obtained from tracking banded oystercatchers, for example, is enhancing our understanding of migration patterns and population trends.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Louis Bastien, Ph.D.
Lecturer. Professor Bastien is a committed Generalist who teaches a wide variety of undergraduate courses, from Introduction to Literature and First Year Seminars to intermediate level classes in romance, tragedy, and Major British Writers I and II. He also teaches an advanced seminar in Mythopoetics, a study in Modernism.

James P. Elliott, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair of English. Trained as textual editor in the field of American literature, Professor Elliott has been associated with the Edition of the Writings of James Fenimore Cooper for over twenty years.

SunHee Kim Gertz, Ph.D.
Professor of English, Director of Graduate Studies in English. Professor Gertz's research and publications are concerned with semiotics and western European literature in the late Middle Ages. She also researches links between Asian and European literatures.

Betsy Huang, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English. Professor Huang teaches and teaches representations of ethnic and racial identities in 20th-century American literature and popular culture.

Fern L. Johnson, Ph.D.
Professor of English. Professor Johnson is a sociolinguist specializing in the study of gender, race, and culture in language.

Esther Jones, Ph.D.
E. Franklin Frazier Chair, Assistant Professor of English. Professor Jones’ research interests include Black Diaspora literature and culture, Black women’s literature and feminisms, Womansist theology, historical fiction, speculative fictions, folklore, and genre studies.

Lisa Kasmer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English. Professor Kasmer’s research and teaching interests center on 18th- and 19th-century British literature, gender studies, postcolonial studies, and print culture.

Stephen Levin, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English. Professor Levin specializes in contemporary British and postcolonial literature, transnational cultural studies, and critical and literary theory.

Meredith Neuman, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English. Professor Neuman teaches and researches in the fields of early and nineteenth-century American literature.

Virginia M. Vaughan, Ph.D.
Professor of English, Department Chair. Professor Vaughan specializes in Renaissance literature, especially in Shakespeare, but as a cultural historian, she is also interested in appropriations of Shakespeare’s texts from the 17th century to the present.

Jessica Bane Robert, M.F.A.
Writing: Sense of Place
Expository Writing
President John Bassett, Ph.D.
William Faulkner
Steve Bruso, M.A.
Not teaching Spring 2010
Tim Connolly, M.A.
Not teaching Spring 2010
James Dempsey, M.A.
Feature Writing
Michael Eldridge, S.A.G.
Intro to Screen Writing
Rachel Gans–Boriskin, M.A.
Culture and the News
Matthew Henningsen, TA
Major British Writers II
Gino DiIorio, M.F.A.
Director, Theatre Arts Program
Shakespeare: Page to Stage
Ethan Myers, M.A.
Introduction to Literature
Jen Plante, M.A.
Director of the Writing Center & Writing Program
Writing: The Beats
Susan Richmond, M.F.A.
Not teaching Spring 2010
Heather Roberts, Ph.D.
Not teaching Spring 2010
Aimee Sands, M.F.A.
Not teaching Spring 2010

Marilyn Squier, TA
Introduction to Shakespeare
Vicki Stiefel, M.A.
Writing For Magazines
Advanced Fiction Writing
Dono Sunardi, TA
Short Story
Lucilia Valerio, Ph.D.
Introduction to Literature
Contemporary Latina(o) Literature
Johannes Weinreich, TA
Major American Writers II

Emeriti Faculty

John Conron, Ph.D.
20-century American literature
Serena Hilsinger, Ph.D.
Modernist literature and women writers.
Stanley Sultan, Ph.D.
Poetry, fiction, and drama of modernist writers, as well as critical theory, literary history, and theoretical issues in literary history.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is located on the first floor of Corner House. Free one-to-one assistance for all members of the Clark community. Any writing. Any level. Any discipline. They’ll work with you at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment, call 508-793-7405 or visit www.clarku.edu/writing to learn more.

The Center for Community Engagement and Volunteering (CEV)

The CEV is located on the first floor of Corner House. The Center assists students in finding a community service placement suitable for a particular class requirement or personal interest. Office hours are 9-5, Monday-Friday. You may also contact Micki Davis, CEV Program Coordinator, at 508-421-3785 or cev@clarku.edu.

Editors:
SunHee Kim Gertz
Terri Rutkiewicz
Staff:
Joel Hinton
Andrew Young