THE BROADSHEET

The Legacy of Voices: English Awards 2016

By Bridget Kennedy



April 27, 2016 marked the third annual English Awards Ceremony at Merrimack College. The event gathers together members of the Merrimack College English community to celebrate noteworthy accomplishments. I am always amazed to see just how close everyone is in our program—faculty, students, and alumni working together and supporting one another at every turn.

Department Chair Professor Steven Scherwatzky served as master of ceremonies and Professor Ellen McWhorter, founder and advisor to our chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, opened the ceremony. Professor Scherwatztky's tribute to Professor Marykay Mahoney, who will be retiring this spring after 29 years of service to the English Department, and Professor McWhorter's encomium of Sigma Tau Delta chapter president Jamie Hayes's accomplishments reinforced my belief that the Merrimack English department takes pride in the family it has created, no matter how long a person has been a part of it. Witnessing the event reminded me why I chose Merrimack's English program: I always feel like I am part of a supportive community that challenges and encourages its members to strive for excellence.

Professors Scherwatzky and McWhorter distributed Sigma Tau Delta certificates of membership and pins to the following inductees: Kileigh Stranahan, Catherine Tenore-Nortrup, Kiera Duggan, Bridget Kennedy, Jessica Bruso, Dakota Durbin, Rachel MacKelcan, Victoria Lambert, Megan Carignan, and Rosemary Morton. Induction opens the door to new challenges and opportunities in college and beyond, and I found myself getting excited when I heard Professor McWhorter share with the group her vision for the future of the chapter, which could include customizing a group community service project, and securing enough funding to send regularly a group of students to the Sigma Tau Delta annual convention.

Professor Scherwatzky distributed graduation cords to Marisa Auger, Erin Beausoleil, Miranda Frezza, Jamie Hayes, Julia Lemieux, Emily O'Brien, Daniel Sullivan and Alyssa Zahoruiko and (*continued on next page*)

An official publication of the Merrimack College English Department, The Broadsheet *is published four times during the academic calendar year. Its mission is to celebrate the English Department's role in promoting the literary arts on campus, to acknowledge the accomplishments of faculty and students, to profile students and alumni, and to create a forum in which issues relevant to English studies can be discussed.*

then presented cash prizes to this year's winners of the annual Reverend John R. Aherne Poetry Contest, Jacques Denault (first place) and Jamie Hayes (second and third places). Jacques performed beautifully a recitation of his winning poem "Black and White" and he was followed by Jamie Hayes, who read her second and third place winners, "Liminal Spaces" and "Siren Song."

Listening to keynote speaker Krysten Hill, a former member of Sigma Tau Delta herself, might have represented the highlight of the afternoon. She electrified the Writrer House audience with a reading of her original poetry. A native of Kansas City, MO and a recipient of the MFA from the University of Massachusetts (at Boston), Hill's poetry has appeared in a number of publications, including *MUZZLE*, *PANK*, and *Write on the DOT*. Hill encouraged the Sigma Tau Delta inductees and future graduates to "find writers who speak to you" while embracing the challenge of "separating your voice form those who influence you." Her dynamic, explosive reading style and the riveting substance of her poetry, which focused on the influence of mothers, inspired listeners just as much as her advice. I was struck by her charisma, and found here relatable, and passionate. We could not have asked for a more inspirational keynote speaker.

Interview with Jamie Hayes

Jamie Hayes has had a busy senior year. She took second and third places in the Aherne Poetry Contest, and she presented a paper at the 2016 Sigma Tau Delta Convention . As things are winding down in the semester now and graduation awaits just around the corner, I had the opportunity to talk with Jamie about her experience at the conference, which she also spoke about during the Awards ceremony.


Jamie Hayes

How does it feel to have a paper published?

Well this paper wasn't actually published; it was selected for presentation at the Sigma Tau Delta International Conference. Publications run separately so I would've had to submit it again to one of Sigma Tau Delta's journals to have it considered for that. However, I did just have three poems published in their journal *Mind Murals* just a few weeks ago in March.

What was your overall experience of participating in the conference? What were your expectations? What did you learn from this?

My experience was really awesome! I mean, don't get me wrong, I was super nervous to present, but it was a really positive and welcoming environment. Everyone who was there was truly just interested to hear what you have to say, and nobody's going to ask any questions at the end of the panel to heckle or set you up to fail. They're looking to set up a dialogue that weaves together the work of all the panelists. I sort of knew what to expect as far as my panel went because our thesis paper panels for senior seminar in the fall helped to prepare me.

What is the paper about?

My paper focused on the poem "The Young Housewife" by William Carlos Williams. I discussed the prototypical cultural ambivalence towards the New Woman of the 20th century that is displayed in the poem through the lens of the male speaker, and how that misogyny persists today in our society and in modern critical essays about the poem itself.

If you could do it over again, what would you change?

Hmm...well I'd definitely want to go to a warmer city! But actually, I'd like to stay for longer in order to be able to see more panels and participate more fully. It would be awesome also if we could've brought more students along; some of the colleges present brought whole groups of students from their Sigma Tau Delta chapter, even ones who weren't presenting.

Interview with Professor McWhorter



Photo by Kevin Salemme

Professor Ellen McWhorter is the faculty advisor for the Merrimack College chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. I had a chance to ask her about what Sigma Tau Delta brings to the Merrimack English community. Her passion for teaching and supporting her students is obvious in the responses she had to my questions.

How do English Awards Night and Sigma Tau Delta help promote the success of the English Department here at Merrimack?

More than anything else, I think the Awards Ceremony builds community. It brings together students, professors, parents, alumni, and speakers to celebrate what we who encounter you in the classroom already know: our students are incredibly talented. Sigma Tau Delta also celebrates talent and gives students an opportunity to connect with like-minded peers outside of class, but it also promotes recognition of the success of the English Department on the national level (through the annual convention, specifically).

What is the nature and purpose of the conference?

The annual convention is designed for undergraduate students to present their original work in a conference setting. It provides a chance to take the next step in professionalization for our students who might want to pursue careers in higher education—or just share their work with a broader audience. If you're interested in networking, the convention makes that possible. And if you're interested in meeting other brilliant English majors, it makes that possible too. The convention vibe is always so warm and supportive.

Why do you encourage students to submit papers?

Personally, I want them to have the kinds of experiences that we enjoy inside our classrooms outside them too. The convention highlights the possibility that students will see that their talent and love of literature could turn into a professional life.

How many Merrimack students have been published or awarded since the college joined Sigma Tau Delta?

We've had two students present at annual conventions and one student, Jamie Hayes, have her poetry published in *Mind Murals*. I'd like to see those numbers double in the next year!

Sigma Tau Delta Inductee Interviews

I also had the chance to interview three new members of the Merrimack College Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta: Victoria Lambert, Kiera Duggan, and Megan Carignan.

Victoria Lambert (2017)

Why did you decide to become an English Major?

Honestly, I chose English as my major because it was the only subject in high school that I truly excelled in. Remaining in this major is a testament to how important this field truly is in my life.

What do you want to do with your English degree (teach or write, for example)? Do you plan to publish anything?


Victoria Lambert

I actually want to work in the field of publishing. After Merrimack, I plan to get my doctorate in my field (or in a program that combines it with my other major, Communications) and then pursue a career at a publishing firm, specifically one that produces children's literature. I'm also aspiring to have my own work published and I would also consider teaching at the college level someday.

What English class has been your favorite so far in college and why?

Several of my classes have involved reading the works of Emily Dickinson, and I have such a high appreciation for her poetry so, naturally, I loved those classes. I have really enjoyed taking classes where I am free to express my thoughts and ideas about the literature we have read. “Modern American Literature,” “ Poets of New England,” “Creative Writing: Poetry,” and “Creative Writing: Fiction” would certainly top my list.

What is your favorite book or who is your favorite author and why?

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee is, in my opinion, the greatest novel in the history of American Literature. It's the only novel I've read completely more than once. I'm fascinated by the work of southern female writers and Lee's masterpiece is no exception. *Mockingbird* is just so beautifully crafted and reading it (as well as reading *Go Set a Watchman*) fills me with nostalgia and awe.

Kiera Duggan (2018)

Why did you decide to become an English Major?

I've wanted to be an English major since the 3rd grade, which is when I really started to get into reading. I didn't know what that entailed at the time but I decided on it then, and my love for reading and writing only grew as I got older. I think what's really interesting about the study of literature is that it's so analytic, but in such a different way than the sciences and math. I really love dissecting great works and seeing how they connect with people both on a global and individual level.


Kiera Duggan

What do you want to do with your English degree (teach or write, for example)? Do you plan to publish anything?

I'm not totally sure at the moment. Of course I would love to publish, but I'm not sure that will feasibly happen right after graduation. Right now I'm interested in graduate school and maybe working in publishing.

What English class has been your favorite so far in college and why?

All the classes I've taken have been great so far, but I really love Sophomore Seminar; we always have really insightful discussions. I leave every day feeling inspired and excited about what we're doing. It's really fun to be in class with only English majors and I'm so glad that this is something we have at Merrimack.

What is your favorite book or who is your author and why?

My favorite author right now is Pierce Brown, who wrote the *Red Rising* trilogy. He's an absolute genius with plot and constantly takes his stories in crazy directions in the best way; whenever I read his books I feel really inspired to work on my own writing.

Megan Carignan (2017)

Why did you decide to become an English Major?
I am a double major in English and Business with a concentration in Marketing. I have always liked editing, writing, and reading, but I prefer the technical side of writing more than creative. I want to use both degrees in order to work for businesses.


Megan Carignan

What do you want to do with your English degree (teach or write, for example)? Do you plan to publish anything?
I want to either use my English degree for editing, technical writing, public relations, or marketing. I do not plan on publishing any novels.

What English class has been your favorite so far in college and why?
I enjoyed all my English classes throughout college, but some of my favorites were "Road Trips" and "The Undead Eighteenth Century"

What is your favorite book or who is your favorite author and why?
I don't really have a favorite book, but I love the symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter*.

Congratulations to Professor Ellen McWhorter

The English faculty is delighted to announce that Dr. Ellen McWhorter has been promoted to the rank of associate professor and granted tenure at Merrimack College. Professor McWhorter received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champagne) in 2009, specializing in Modern American literature. Professor McWhorter has published her scholarship in *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Rethinking Marxism: a Journal of Economics, Culture and Society*, and in the *European Journal of American Studies*. Her course offerings, which include "Literature of the Harlem Renaissance," "Modern American Poetry," and "Poets of New England," are among the most popular in the English program. Next semester she will be team-teaching a course called Inequality and Justice in Life and Literature with Dr. Brittnie Aiello from the Department of Criminology. Founder of the Merrimack chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, Professor McWhorter continues to serve as faculty advisor. She is also currently leading the English Department's program assessment process.

Common Core Scholastic Standards and the Threat to Fiction (part 2)

By Jessica Bruso

In the last issue of *The Broadsheet*, I reviewed "The Fiction of Language and the Language of Fiction" by Michael Holquist. The article focused on how Common Core standards are migrating away from literary fiction and instead focusing on nonfiction and informative/transactional texts. I believe that literature should remain an integral part of the English curriculum. It is one of the many reasons why I am an English and Secondary Education major. I want to teach literature to high school students because I believe that the ability to analyze a work of fiction and elucidate its meaning helps students gain a better understanding of communication. Reading about important world issues like racism or sexism in the form of fiction makes the topics easier for students to process and connect to their own beliefs and opinions. Just as Holquist observes that mechanical narratives, such as the iconic "Dick and Jane" books he read in first grade, seemed to him at the time devoid of life, when what we read fails to capture the imagination, we do not learn from it. Fiction not only invigorates language; it makes it more enjoyable for students, because they are able to relate what they are reading to their worlds and their lives.

In my own experience, I read literary fiction almost exclusively with only poetry to supplement it. At my private school we followed our own curriculum and it was not until recently that I learned not every school operates in this way. My favorite book is *Jane Eyre*, a novel I read independently for an out-of-class assignment when we had the flexibility to choose a work of our own. During my senior year, I begged my AP English teacher to have the entire class read it. While this upset many, I could not have been happier. We took an in-depth look at characters, socioeconomics, and morality in the novel. This class fostered discussion and debate, challenging my initial beliefs about the book I read my sophomore year. My English teacher always kept our lessons lively and interesting to every student. We would write plays, debate characters, and present our interpretations of different works to the class, which gave us the opportunity to conduct discussion. One of my favorite experiences in the English classroom was composing a creative monologue. After reading *The Secret Life of Bees* in ninth grade, each of us wrote a monologue to (*continued on page 7*)

introduce a character to the group and have them talk about their lives and personal values. Upon completing the exercise, we each performed it in front of the class in the school's theater. This was one of the most memorable English lessons I ever had. Looking back on these experiences, I can clearly see why I was inspired to become a teacher. Those activities drew us within the circle of fictional narrative and inspired us to consider the author's choices and book's themes. When English classes use this model, they promote self-understanding for the students as well as an understanding of what life is like for people in other places and times. They encourage empathy. I believe that this is the best way to teach English and I had a feeling that others would agree. I reached out to other Merrimack students, asking them what they thought about the shift away from literary fiction. All of the responses I received supported keeping fiction in the high school curriculum. They were introspective, insightful and remained firm in the conviction that fiction is crucial to education. Here is what some of my fellow students had to say:

"I love literary fiction because the lessons taught are the same as non-fiction, but in a more relatable manner. To take this away from classes will kill the imaginative learning that some students crave and that some students can only learn from." Ashley McLaughlin '19

"It needs to be practiced in the same manner that I had during my high school career and should not be diminished in any fashion as a result of a new shift towards preparing for tests and overall comprehension in any mechanical sense that lessens any English and literary lovers' creative sides". Brad Wall '16

"Literary fiction is at the centerpiece of my love for English—some of the most prevalent themes that students should learn [originate]...in literary fiction." Matt Hyzdu '18

"I think that the shift away from literary fiction will have a negative impact on students throughout their academic careers and their lives. Analyzing fiction is part of the way that people expand their horizons and the way they think, teaching people multiple ways to approach a problem and relate to people better. Cutting fiction could [prove] a fatal [blow] to the future of English departments in colleges, [curbing] future authors, and creativity in general." Bridget Kennedy '18

"I do not like the shift away from literary fiction. Fiction has helped me in many ways [cultivating my intellect and my emotions]. Being able to discuss a novel with a group of people is a great way to expand socially as well as mentally, as sometimes you are trying to convey what you think in a way that people understand. Emotionally, fiction has helped me escape when times were hard, so the memories of English teachers praising my love of reading deeply inspired me to continue my interest in the subject. Literary fiction is important for children, as it teaches them not only to be good thinkers but to be good friends. It teaches them that if they are going through a difficult time, they are not alone." Rosemary Morton '17

"Fiction is fun and unique and imaginative and that is what we should be teaching students of all ages to be like. There is nothing fictitious about the positive way that fiction impacts a child's mind."

Dakota Durbin '18

"You take fiction out of schools you're going to bleed this society dry of its creativity. That can't happen."
Rachel MacKelcan '18

Bookish

by Rachel MacKelcan

With all the words we use and all the tools we keep neatly tucked away in our pencil holders, you wouldn't think that two English majors (who are also creative writers) would have the kind of voices that would belong on the radio. But if you were to spend an hour listening to my roommate Christina 'Chrissi' DiMartino and I on our show, "Bookish," you may change your mind. While some students our age spend Thursday nights pretending that the weekend is a lot closer than it actually is by celebrating what our generation calls "Thirsty Thursday," Chrissi and I spend our nights "turning up" in a different way. We turn up the volume on our WMCK radio show.

When I was a high school student, my sophomore year History teacher always joked that a friend of mine and I should have a radio show, because he found that the way we bickered was amusing. But four years later and four years wiser, I never would have imagined that I would end up doing the exact thing he joked about. In the early months of the 2015-2016 academic year, Merrimack College introduced a new program to campus, WMCK radio. The club issued a "call for DJ's" and both my roommate and I responded to the call. "The first meeting was nerve-racking; there were so many students with all these ideas, unlike myself, and they actually had a clue as to what they wanted to do," Chrissi says. As I left the meeting I was sure of one thing: schedule be darned, I wanted to have my own show. The only problem was that I didn't have a host, so I talked to Christina. "We soon found that though we each wanted shows, we didn't have cohosts, so we teamed up and suddenly 'Bookish' was born," Chrissi recalls.

So what is Bookish? Bookish is our way to be heard, to express ourselves and do the one thing you don't really see writers do. We put music to the madness and pull the words from the page, forcing them to get up and move for a while. But what does that mean? Well, as much as I would like to take credit, the original idea for the show was designed by Chrissi, who, while reading one of the many books she has on her shelf, decided that she was going to create the perfect music playlist to encapsulate the ideas of that book. Essentially, instead of scoring movies, she scores books, and she's actually really good at it.

Since that first playlist Chrissi has continued to develop her talent and currently has over a dozen in her archives, featuring artists such as Adel and Taylor Swift as well as tracks from various Broadway productions. So the only real difference between when she started and today is that now she gets to share them with the Merrimack community every Thursday at 7pm.

With WMCK in its first year, Chrissi and I are still trying to emerge onto the campus scene and attract more listeners, but even though our listenership seems to be relatively small right now, we both have a lot of hope going forward. So what do we want students to know? Well, the main thing is that our show isn't just about books we read over the summer; it's also about the ones we're reading in class and, spoiler alert, we are so much more informative and illuminating than Sparknotes! Think of it as a book club on the radio, one in which we have too much fun for it all to be legal. What listeners need to realize is that we aren't just giving overviews and playing songs; we're having thoughtful discussions and, in the case of the books we read in our courses, talking about the things professors have been teaching us.

So far we have covered course-assigned books, such as *V for Vendetta* (from Literature and Film, taught by Professor Plunkett) and *Frankenstein* (from Sophomore Seminar, taught by Professor Vatalaro), and discussed new books, such as Harper Lee's *Go Set a Watchman*, the playlist for which follows:



Go Set A Watchman

Blackbird	The Beatles
How to Return Home	Natalie Weiss
Everywhere	Michelle Branch
Fences	Paramore
Never Grow Up	Taylor Swift
Keep Breathing	Ingrid Michaelson
The Only Thing Consistent	Chix 6
You're Not Sorry	Taylor Swift
Aint it Fun	Paramore
Aftermath	Adam Lambert
Candies	Hey Monday

We discuss issues of race, sexuality and the use of iconic villains, while also hitting other topics that we have touched on in our coursework, such as the value of suffering and stubbornness of the body. You see, as English majors we already have the upper hand at being able to identify the key themes that writers tend to touch upon, making it easy to pick songs that tend to resonate with those popular and cultural issues.

V For Vendetta

City of Sin	Escape the Fate
This Ain't a Scene, It's an Arms Race	Fall Out Boy
Sally's Song	Amy Lee
Young God	Halsey
Take Me to Church	Hozier
The Hanging Tree	James Newton Howard
Radioactive	Imagine Dragons
American Blood	Passion Pit
Garden	Pearl Jam
Yellow Flicker Beat	Lorde
Do You Hear The People Sing?	Les Miserables Cast

For example, during our *V for Vendetta* broadcast we showcased songs that incorporated the dark but beautiful tones of this anarchist novel. We incorporated discussions about both the film *V for Vendetta*, which featured Natalie Portman, as well as the graphic novel by Alan Moore, who, as we learned in class, never wanted his vision to be turned into a movie. We discussed the importance of community and the power of icons (the Guy Faux mask) and how both of these topics continuously transcend culture as well as literature.

Frankenstein

Monster	Lady Gaga
Losing my Religion	R.E.M
Monster	Skillet
Haunting	Halsey
Seven Devils	Florence + The Machine
Hurricane	Cast of Hamilton
Control	Halsey
Thank you for the Venom	My Chemical Romance

In our *Frankenstein* show we discussed the body, gender roles in society, loss and Mary Shelley, as she was one of the most established female writers of her time. Songs comprising the playlist we composed for the book evoke a haunting feeling, with tones of beautiful hardship and pain, reflecting the main emotions that emerge in the novel. I remember this show being particularly exciting because we had been talking about *Frankenstein* in depth for a couple of weeks in our Sophomore Seminar class. It was a great way to sum up the novel and discus the reoccurring themes that we had dealt within class.

All in all , Bookish isn't just a radio show; it's a conversation. It's an opportunity for all of us to really get involved and talk about the books that inspire us, as well as the ones that we struggle with. It's a way to turn the soundtracks of our lives into the soundtracks of our favorite books and think outside the box a little more in terms of what reading is and what it can be.. And as English majors and DJ's we are in an even more perfect place because now we can not only get our ideas and our interests out there, but we're also able to tell you the kinds of things you want and need to hear. "It's like studying, only you don't actually have to do any of the work" explains Chrissi. And even more importantly than that, we are taking some of our conversations off campus by tweeting at some of the authors that we have been talking about, and so far, we have received two responses! One from Courtney Sheinmel, the author of *Positively,* who said that she would not only tweet out to her followers but that she would also listen into our show! The other response was from Lauren Oliver who wrote *Panic,* which we covered in the second week of April.



As my article draws to a close and the year comes to an end, it's time for me to sign off for one last time, but don't worry: Christina and I will be returning to you live at our same time (7 o'clock on Thursday) in the Fall. So keep on reading and stay tuned for music and more on our show and feel free to find us on twitter and Facebook for more updates on what is coming next.

Lights, Camera, Action: Inside Nordic Noir

By Rosemary Morton

From a young age, my mother instilled in me a love for anything creative. Theater, film and books were a common discussion topic in my house. Creative expression has always been a gateway to understanding people from varying cultures and circumstances. In many respects, I have understood literature and theater extremely well from taking part in English courses and theater shows; however, the prospect of examining films closely represented unfamiliar terrain for me—something I had never attempted. But, since I love movies as much as theater and literature, I decided to take a new film offering in the English program called Nordic Noir.

Taught by Professor Kevin Plunkett, this course introduces many different films and television shows from Scandinavia. But why the title Nordic Noir? Noir is often described as being something dark or mysterious, but a better term to explain the focus of this course and the meaning of noir is to think "mystery." Most of the things we study in class are related to this genre. Figuring out the murder and the many ways in which filmmakers in this specific part of the world keep their viewers off balance serves as one of the main activities in the course. I recommend this course to anyone who likes the mystery genre and is curious to find out how it differs in another part of the world.

Workload is one of the main concerns that students often take into account when it comes to choosing courses. Professor Plunkett divides the workload for this course between Facebook posts, a blog on Blackboard, quizzes, and a paper. Most of the work involves watching the films, and this requires the largest amount of time. I find the requirements manageable, because I generally watch the films over weekends or at night. I take pleasure in the fact that you are able to have dinner or a snack while "watching" your homework. For me, this aspect of the course has become a breath of fresh air, since I do not have a lot of time to watch shows during the school year. English majors would definitely like this course, because it departs from the more conventional reading and writing assignments to which most of us have grown accustomed. The point of intersection between this film course and other courses English majors might take it is that it concentrates on a different form of storytelling.

My fellow classmates enjoy the course as much as I do. Bradley Wall, for example, has told me, "my favorite parts of the course are the choices. They are really great and different enough that everyone can see how many issues in society can shape a piece of work." Brad also noted that he likes the Facebook Blog, because there is much information out there about this specific genre, though many Americans do not know that much about it. Brad believes that one of the challenging aspects of the course is availability of the films. "Having the trouble finding the material saddens me a bit," he said, "because they should be (and are) internationally renowned and enjoyed."

Brad recalls that his enthusiasm for the course was fueled after he attended Professor Plunkett's Writers House presentation on the same topic last fall. "I knew that it was the course for me and...passion steered me towards it. I hope that in the future the English department will have many different film course options; that will allow anyone to pick the right one that fits your personality." He added, "The relevancy of Nordic Noir in today's world is something I took more notice of, especially when a few classes had passed. I now see the merits of having such a subset of a genre that can really focus on what it wants to do." The startling thing about this Scandinavian art form is its (*continued on page 12*)

relevance—even to Americans. Not only does one learn about topical issues, but the entire culture in general. "I learned how the small nations that make up the region called Scandinavia set up what is now called Nordic Noir. The intricacies of how society impacted the citizens of each different country...segues perfectly into how much in-depth our discussions [became] in class and in our posts. I did not know about the varying cultures and cultural practices of Scandinavians and how this fits our modern and globalized world," said Brad.

Micaela Trent praised the Nordic Noir genre because it "grabs your attention like a good book. I feel like everything we have been assigned to watch really pulls you in." I, too, have found the course material highly entertaining. I revel in the fact that so many of the mysteries are "slow- burn," meaning these narratives take time unfolding, and keep the viewer on the edge of her seat. Some viewers might find this feature boring or they might become impatient; however, for Micaela it introduces a type of storytelling with which she was unfamiliar. Micaela recalled, "I would say my perception of Nordic Noir was born by taking this course. I was never really exposed to this type of genre, as I am more of a fantasy fan; shows like 'Vampire Diaries' or 'Charmed' caught my attention more. This course helped me to understand these shows and their Noir elements. I was seeing material that I would have never picked up on my own. I tended to avoid shows that have subtitles, because I didn't want to focus so much to understand the stories. However, two shows, 'The Killing' and 'The Bridge,' are so refreshing compared to American Crime dramas. These shows take the extra time to solve the mystery, which allows them to be more realistic; also having a strong female lead makes both of these shows fantastic as well."

One of the most important points that Micaela brought up involved the idea that we are learning about a new culture in Professor Plunkett's course. "I feel like I have learned so much about Swedish and Danish culture, especially in the way that they produce crime drama. Crime isn't just a form of entertainment." Yet, though Brad and Micaela acknowledged that learning about different cultures represents an important element of Nordic Noir, they emphasized that we are also learning a lot about film craft, including, for example, lighting. "These visual aspects are important, as they make a difference/create differences between individual films/TV shows," Micaela stated. "I have learned that I shouldn't judge a movie by its subtitles just as one shouldn't judge a book by its cover. This is a course that will open you up to a new genre you may not have been exposed to and I think students would enjoy it as much as I have."

When I spoke to Professor Plunkett to get his thoughts on how well his new course has been running, he said that teaching it has been very enjoyable and has helped him discover new things about this wonderful art form. He said, "This course is the first world cinema class offered at Merrimack. The great challenge of this was about how I used my trip [which he took during his sabbatical leave] to offer something unique that would begin a line of other classes offered by the department." It's been an eye-opening experience for him and he remains passionate about it. "The aspects of the course, such as subtitles, introduce students to a new culture while presenting them a new challenge," he said. "I enjoy the course because it offers students a challenge while still being a meaningful experience. The idea of teaching something that I have learned is a gift."

My classmates and I agree that Professor Plunkett's passion infuses the course material and assignments, the Facebook Page serving as a good example. I was excited to use this new platform, because I hadn't done one before in any of my other courses. Professor (*continued on page 13*)



Plunkett told me he wished he had planned to have students make greater use of the Facebook Page, particularly by integrating it into our class discussions. Introducing Facebook represents one way that Professor Plunkett was able to connect to his students and I look forward to reading all the posts. According to Professor Plunkett, "this course is a journey and introducing something like Facebook is just part of that journey." The journey informing this course became even more intriguing once the "non-noir", that is, the "real", world started rubbing up against what we have been studying, providing me with a greater sense of why studying English is so valuable. The issue that kept popping up was the refugee crisis occurring in some Scandinavian countries resulting from the war against terrorism. Professor Plunkett suggested that Nordic Noir actually predicted these events. This possibility scared me, because it brought fiction into reality and, consequently, blurred the lines between what is real and what is not. "I never realized how relevant the subject is. It still stuns me that these dramatic stories reflect our class and the outside world," Professor Plunkett remarked. The relevance of English studies remains a popular subject for debate, but taking this course has proven to me that what I have been learning is essential. Issues raised by the course material we have been studying, such as immigrants and their rights, remains a major issue in our world.

Professor Plunkett also illuminated an interesting fact about the actors in this genre. Compared to the glamor so familiar to Hollywood film stars, European actors exhibit a more down-to-earth attitude. Professor Plunkett said the difference emerges because the countries in which these actors live and work are relatively small; many of them appear in the same films or TV shows. Acting to them is not glamorous; it is work.

If you are someone who already enjoys watching films, Nordic Noir provides an enlightening look at the craft exercised by directors and actors in the making of these films/TV shows. In many ways the course provides English majors with the same type of experience they might expect in English classes that focus on other narrative forms, such as novels or short stories; however, it will expand their interpretive skills, so that they can apply them to stories told visually.



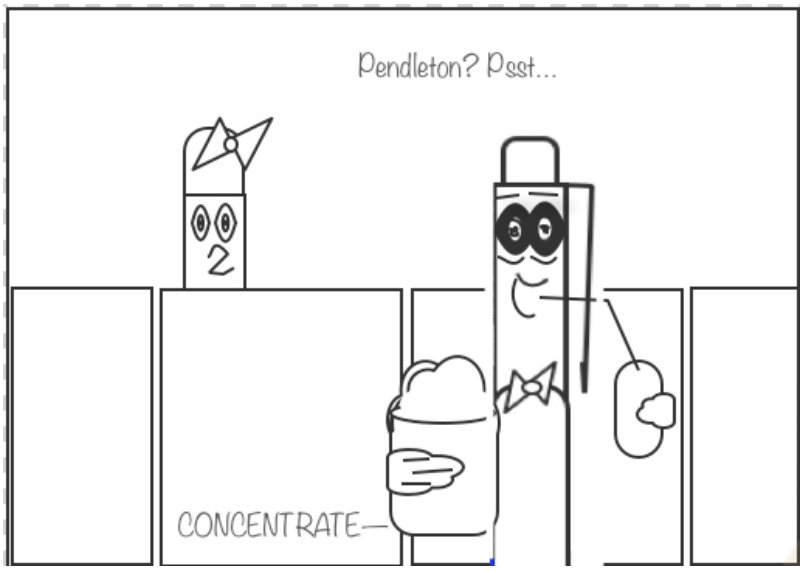
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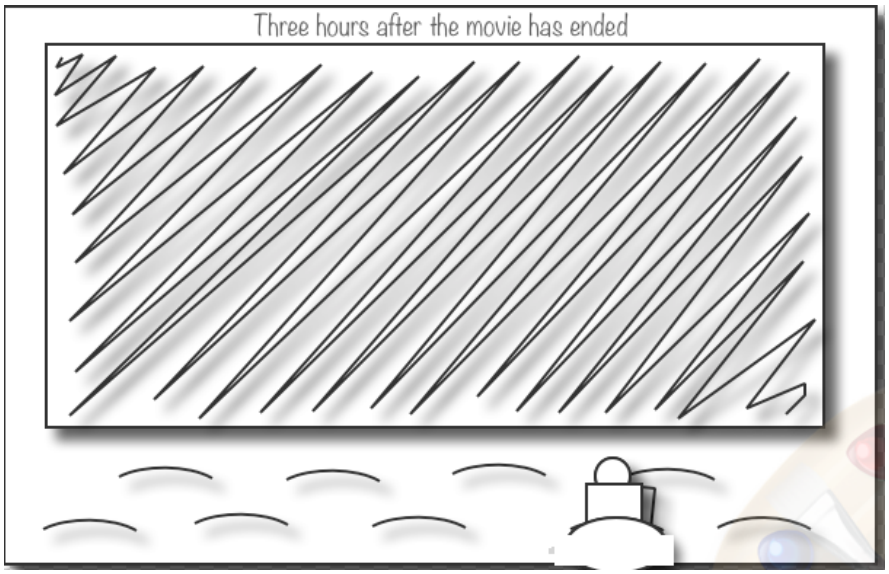
The Marvelous Adventures of Penny Pennyworth and Pendleton Pennwood

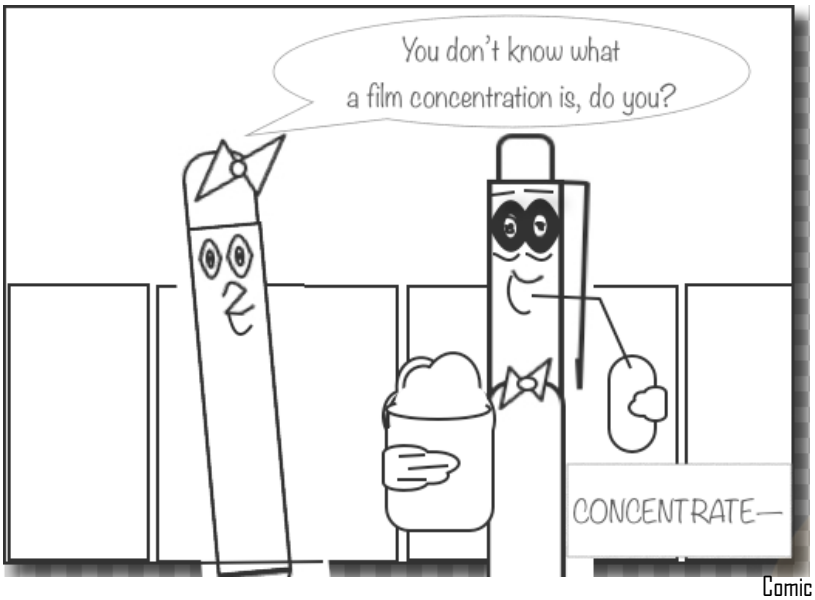
After months of planning, The Broadsheet staff is excited to introduce its first ever original comic characters, Penny and Pendleton, in "The Marvelous Adventures of Penny and Pendleton." Created by Rachel MacKelcan, the comic, which will now be featured in every issue of The Broadsheet, is meant to bring a little more humor to the lives of our readers, as well as showcase the endless opportunities that we, as English majors, have the ability to pursue. If Penny and Pendleton can do it, so can we!

The Marvelous Adventures of Penny and Pendleton

"A trip to the Cinema"







Comic by Rachel MacKelcan '18

Go Set a Watchmen Review

By Kileigh Stranahan

To Kill A Mockingbird was the very first book I read in high school that didn't feel like a chore. I remember that I actually finished it before I was assigned to, because I couldn't put it down. Many of us fell in love with this novel and craved more. So when I had discovered that Harper Lee's long-awaited *Go Set A Watchman* was finally being released, I knew it was a must read.

In *To Kill A Mockingbird*, a six-year-old girl named Scout narrates her daily life and the events that occur in Maycomb, Alabama in the 1930s. Her biggest concerns are what game she is going to play with her older brother, Jem, and what book her father, Atticus Finch, an attorney, will read to her that night. Atticus decides to defend an innocent black man accused of raping a lower-class white woman. Atticus is criticized and ridiculed by all of Maycomb for defending a colored man, but to me he appeared to be honorable and fair.

Now, in *Go Set A Watchman* 26-year-old Scout, or Jean-Louise, returns to Maycomb to visit her sick and elderly father after living in New York City for several years. Shortly after her arrival, she discovers that her father and her long time boyfriend, Henry Clinton, are not the men she had always presumed they were. Atticus, once the defender of black man, was caught sitting in on a Klan meeting. Finding this out sickens Jean Louise, and she loses all respect for her father. In the end, this shift in perspective compels her to become more independent and enables her to form opinions independent of her childhood hero.

It is believed that Harper Lee wrote *Go Set A Watchman* prior to *To Kill A Mockingbird*, but never released this novel. Apparently, she conceived the idea to write the American classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* from her *Watchman* draft. Although I did enjoy reading it as a sequel to *Mockingbird*, it is doubtful that *Go Set A Watchman* would have been successful as a stand-alone novel. The build-up and excitement surrounding the debut of *Watchman* set the bar pretty high. As someone who knows and remembers Scout, Atticus, Jem and Cal so well, I enjoyed reconnecting with them. However, without *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Go Set A Watchman* does not give you the same attachment to its characters. Those who loved the morality and heroism of *Mockingbird's* characters are thrown into complete disillusionment and those who are not as close to *Mockingbird's* characters are left with holes in the plot and missing critical details about its characters.

Although now living in New York, Jean Louise remains the same stubborn and quick-witted person she once was as a child. Her father, Atticus Finch, the hero of *To Kill A Mockingbird,* is declining with age. When Jean Louise arrives in Maycomb she quickly discovers that things are not the same as they used to be, or at least as she thought they were. She is shocked when she catches Atticus and Henry Clinton at a citizen's council meeting (another way of saying Klan meeting) and disgusted when she realizes that the people she knows and loves espouse racist views.

At one point, Atticus, for example, exclaims, "Do you want Negroes by the carload in our schools and churches and theaters?" This question vexes the *Mockingbird* lover. As one recalls from *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, Atticus was the only one in the town who would defend an innocent black man. Although in that narrative Atticus fails to prove Tom Robison innocent, *Go Set a Watchman* explains the outcome as a not-guilty verdict—the first inconsistency I came across. *In To Kill A Mockingbird*, (*continued on page 16*)



he fights off the Klan and teaches Scout never to judge someone "until you've walked around in their skin", but embraces a different philosophy in *Go Set A Watchman*.

To Kill A Mockingbird is written from Scout's point of view, while *Go Set a Watchman* unfolds in third person. In *Mockingbird*, we can only see Atticus through the eyes of a naïve young girl. This leaves the reader to question whether or not the heroism and anti-racial actions that characterized Atticus reflected respectable intentions. On the other hand, the reader could deduce that Atticus became racist and more conservative over time and let down Scout and Harper Lee fans all over America.

After reading this novel, I believe Atticus is and always has been a bit of a bigot, but this aspect of his character was just not brought to light in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. I really didn't like that *Go Set A Watchman* established Atticus as racist, because it runs completely counter to what readers think of him already. Usually, I tend to enjoy the unexpected in a novel; however, reading his anti-civil rights and racist arguments disturbed me too much to enjoy the shock.

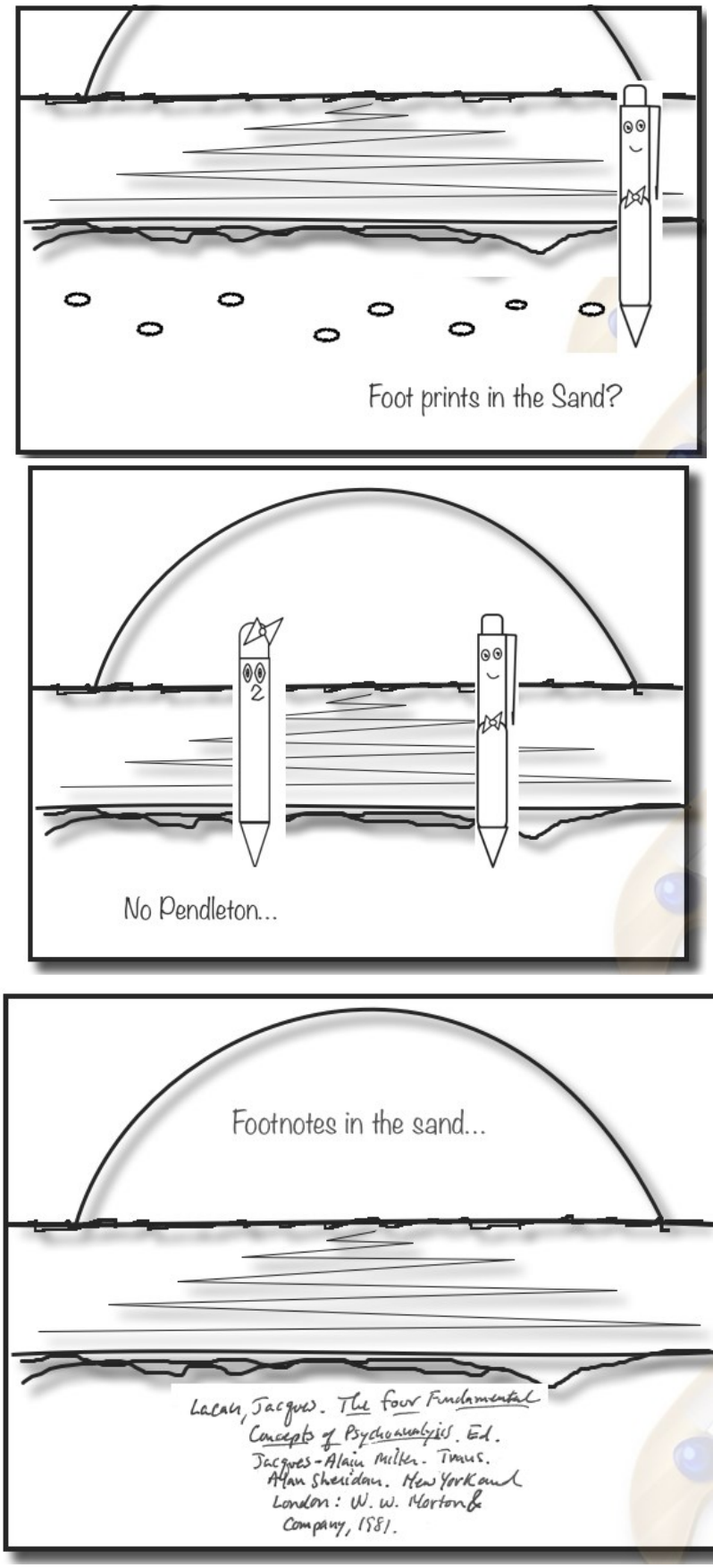
Although I hated the change we see in Atticus, I loved the stability and reversal of gender roles we get from Scout. She is the same direct woman that she was as a young girl. She has no intention or desire to get married and sticks up to the men in her life with little to no hesitation—not common for a 26 year old women in the 50's. She has to hold her tongue and roll her eyes at all the passive young women who surround her that take their husbands' words for law.

This assertiveness results in a huge blow-up on Atticus. She tells her father that she will "never believe another word you say to me again. I despise you and everything you stand for." This anger and feeling of betrayal liberates Jean Louise from her father's influence. For the first time in her life, her thoughts are not the result of Atticus's influence. The novel quickly shifts from a story about the bigoted community of Maycomb to the story of a maturing young woman learning to self-govern.

While there were many things that irked me about *Go Set A Watchman*, such as the reversal of Atticus's views and a few narrative inconsistencies, I would recommend reading this as a sequel to *To Kill A Mockingbird*. This novel allows you to reconnect with beloved Scout through nostalgic flashbacks and helps you get to know her as a grown woman. One big disclaimer to *Mockingbird* lovers: prepare yourself for heartbreak and an unbalanced feeling while reading Harper Lee's new but old novel.

The Marvelous Adventures of Penny and Pendleton

"Long Walks on the Beach"



Comic by Rachel MacKelcan '18

The Broadsheet

Production Staff

Jessica Bruso

Bridget Kennedy

Rachel MacKelcan

Rosemary Morton

Kileigh Stranahan

Faculty Editor:

Professor Paul Vatalaro





Krysten Hill held the Writers House audience spellbound during the powerful reading she performed consisting of her original poetry during the English Awards Ceremony. She told the crowd that, while she would not put herself in the category of spoken-word poets, whom, she said, are doing some of the most exciting work in her field, she believes all poets have a responsibility to read their own works well.







