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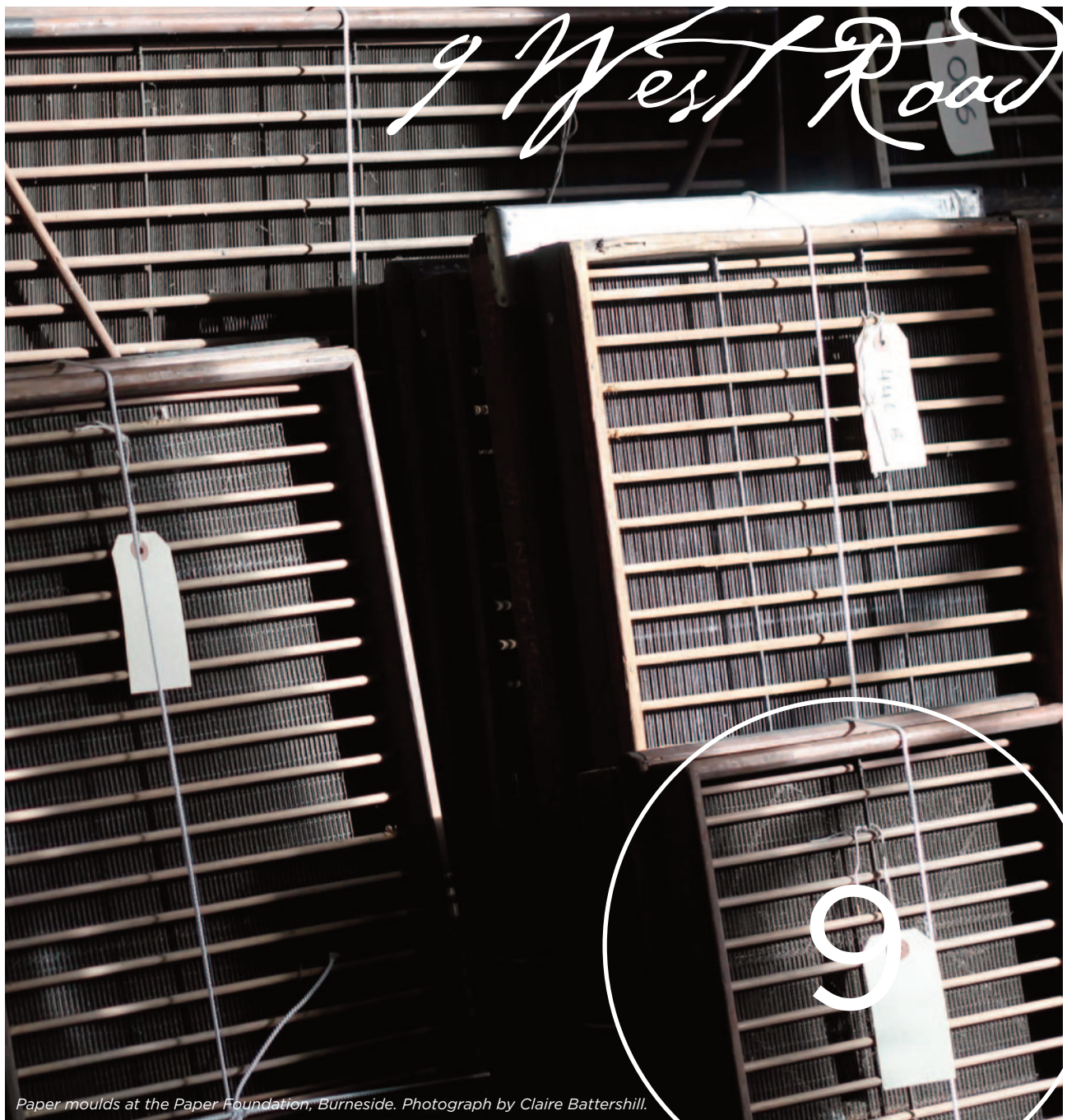
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# 9 WEST ROAD



*Paper moulds at the Paper Foundation, Burnside. Photograph by Claire Battershill.*

# REFRESHING THE FIELD

## CHAIR'S LETTER

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This is my third and final time occupying this space in *9 West Road*. In the next issue, my successor Professor Alex da Costa will have taken over. In my handover I won't know quite what to say about this bit of the job. I can't help feeling, having looked at the rest of the contents, that I am just delaying the moment when the really interesting stuff arrives. My colleagues' work, which you'll read about in later pages, is remarkable. The articles that follow should give you a sense of what I think is the wonderful vitality of our subject in Cambridge (and beyond as well).

I have had another encounter with the vitality of English literary studies as a result of participating in the current round of postgraduate admissions. Making decisions about applications for MPhil and PhD study is a very large piece of work shared across pretty much everyone teaching in the Faculty. It is quite an immersive process, and it's quite something to be immersed in. The range and depth of the talent and experience we see in the people who want to carry on with further study is impressive and gratifying. There's a melancholy side to the process in that there is a dearth of funding to support the successful applicants in taking these worthwhile steps into deeper knowledge and (if you'll forgive a terminology tuned to other audiences) a range of valuable transferable skills. The funding picture is getting worse at the moment rather than better, with the Arts and Humanities Research Council planning steps away from its current commitments to PhD funding (it withdrew from MPhil funding some years ago). A concerted University fund-raising campaign is surely necessary.

My aim here is not to stress the melancholy, but to point out something about our postgraduate applications and their relationship to the vitality of the subject I was observing before. It may not be known to all that many readers of *9 West Road* (the majority having taken the BA and set off on other paths) that MPhil and PhD applications require applicants to define their own research projects in careful detail, making and substantiating a case for the importance of their projects. There is plenty of independent thinking and engaging with other scholars at undergraduate level, so many applicants are well prepared, but it still seems noteworthy that people at the threshold of a research career are expected to identify the next steps in a field.

Things are very different in the sciences. Typically there a project awaits: applicants show their aptitude to join a group, and the group's research agenda defines what needs to be done. This could work in our subject too, and some of our PhD projects have moved some

way in this direction with our participation in Collaborative Doctoral Awards with such institutions as the British Library and the Bodleian Library. In general, it seems sensible that experienced researchers should define the projects they think will be most rewarding, and which the Faculty could support best. Perhaps the way that things have been done for as long as anyone remembers shouldn't be beyond question.

I get this far in the thought process, and then I rebel. I have learned a lot from reading postgraduate applications. I have gained access to fresh perspectives and signs of new intellectual priorities ahead. I have also found myself recalibrating my sense of topics or approaches that seemed to me to be on the wane, but which are in fact captivating to discerning, less jaded judges. This form of revitalisation for the subject seems indispensable to me, as I am sure it does to colleagues in other humanities fields. We have come to value these proposals, not just for what they tell us about the potential of the applicant, but as serious contributions to defining the state of a discipline which is rightly listening to the next generation as soon as they identify themselves as such.

Nearly all the projects proposed by MPhil and PhD applicants will change over time, some (but not all) in ways that assessors at this point can anticipate. That is fine – all plans have to change as things develop, and experience gained by the researcher, and offered by those advising, is bound to be beneficial. The main thing is that the people come to us with the plans. I don't think I (and perhaps other colleagues) spend enough time thinking about what this tells us about English, and what we might do with the conclusions we reached. In the meantime, it's something for which I feel grateful.

**Raphael Lyne**

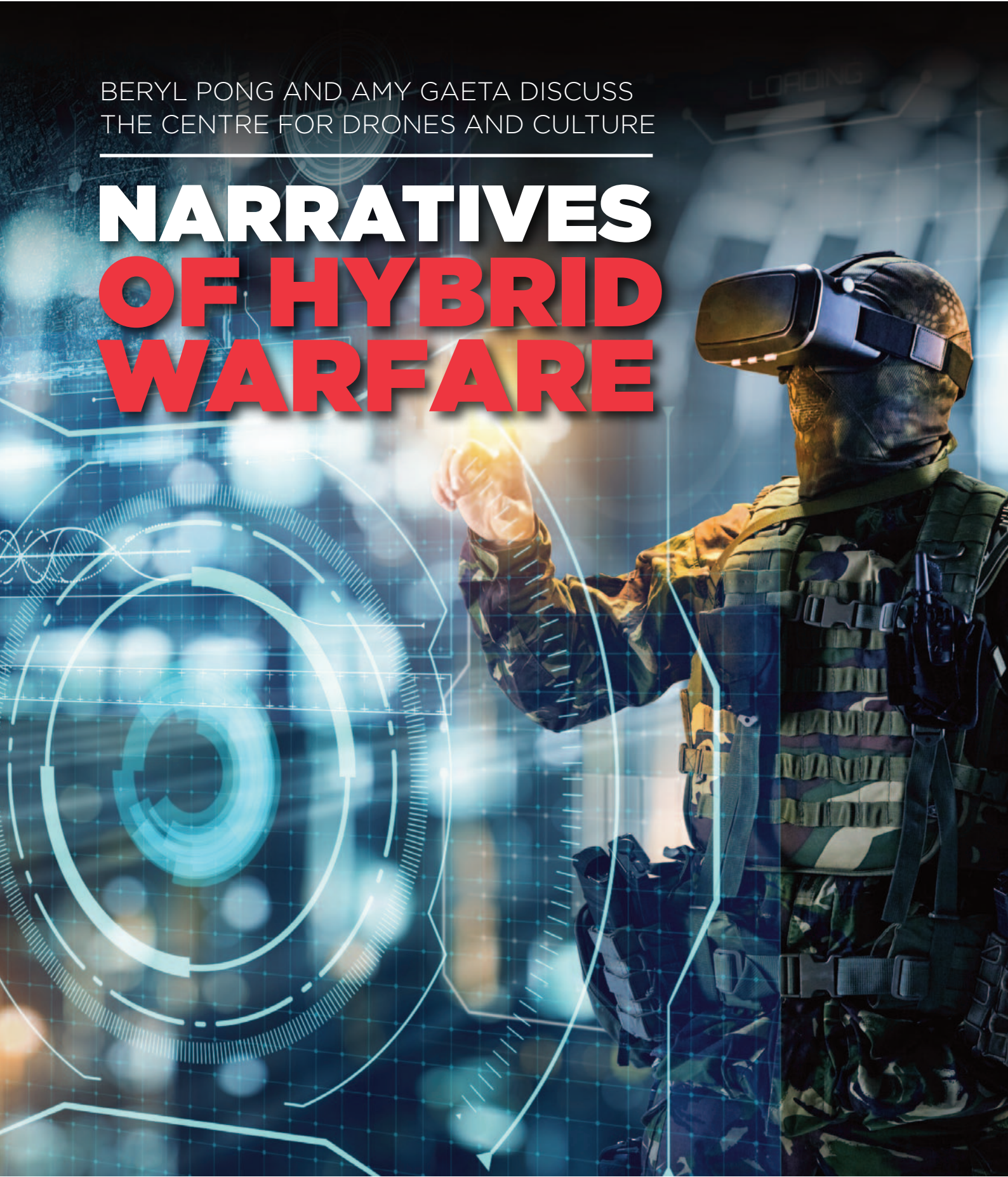
Professor of Renaissance Literature  
Chair of the Faculty of English  
Murray Edwards College



BERYL PONG AND AMY GAETA DISCUSS  
THE CENTRE FOR DRONES AND CULTURE

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# NARRATIVES OF HYBRID WARFARE





Funded by a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship, the Centre for Drones and Culture (CDAC) examines drone use in war, art, humanitarianism, and the study of the environment, focusing in particular on the roles that AI, simulation, and sensors play alongside drones in affecting how we interpret and experience our worlds – social, cultural, political, ecological. While working with an interdisciplinary team of co-investigators (from Politics, Computer Science, and Digital Media), we also collaborate with a number of non-academic partners – including the Imperial War Museum (IWM), the NGO Drone Wars UK, and the creative firm Human Studio – to advance a public understanding of drones as one whose ethics are intertwined with aesthetics. The aesthetics of drones are grounded in histories and theories of the aerial view, and are concerned with the politics of remote sensing technologies in both human and more-than-human worlds.

While drones originate in the First World War, they rose to prominence in the twenty-first century as a method of targeted killing through the Global War on Terror. They are active in the ongoing conflicts in Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Gaza, Yemen, and elsewhere. Drones alter the spatial-temporal boundaries of war: making the battlespace fluid and indeterminate, based on individual behavioural profiles rather than particular geographies; lifting the battleground into an elongated vertical spectrum of the air; and enabling different kinds of violence, from the sudden and unexpected drone strike to the prolonged anxiety of living under their surveillance. Drones are key weapons of what critics are calling ‘hybrid warfare’. As part of our work with CDAC, we collaborated with the IWM to organise the symposium ‘From Sniper to Smartphone: Hybrid Warfare and the New Face of Conflict’, which took place on 18 November 2023 at the museum.

With the advent of technologies that allow us to experience time and space in new ways, new challenges arise in how to depict contemporary war and military-civilian relations. The term ‘hybrid’ has been used to capture the essence of such shifts in warfare today, notably marked by Frank Hoffman’s 2007 paper ‘Conflict in the Twenty-First Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars’.

Others have contested the usefulness of ‘hybrid’ as it risks vagueness and fails to capture what is new about the battlefield today. The term’s capaciousness captures the nebulosity of what it is trying to describe – aspects of conflict that seem to trouble or collapse perceived boundaries between war and peace, combatant and non-combatant, kinetic and non-kinetic activity, and other distinctions that have traditionally been key to defining ideas of war. In one study on how ‘hybrid warfare’ is used by the British military, the authors note that the term’s usage tends to emphasise disinformation, misinformation, influence operations, psychological operations, sabotage, media manipulation, and propaganda.

Moderated by BBC Security Correspondent Gordon Corera, ‘From Sniper to Smartphone’ began with a roundtable debate on the histories, theories, and interpretations of ‘hybrid warfare’. Speakers touched on the need to examine what is ‘new’ and unique about hybrid warfare. One refrain was that digital interconnectivity provided new opportunities and risks for engaging in hybrid warfare, and that mobile technologies like smartphones and related data infrastructures meant that people could participate in hybrid warfare without necessarily being aware of their doing so. Although some speakers did not think it useful to get caught up in semantics, this conversation



highlighted that how we describe war will inform how we understand our own role within it, no matter our perceived positioning.

Because hybrid warfare can be a slippery concept, and because Russia is often discussed as a paradigmatic hybrid warfare actor in Western media, the event featured a dialogue on the Russia-Ukraine conflict which began in 2014 and developed into an invasion in 2022. Much of Russia's war against Ukraine happens in the information space, and the speakers discussed hybrid warfare as lived experience, including some of the strategies that Ukrainian civilians take to 'pre-bunk' influence campaigns. Given the newfound accessibility of large language models like Chat GPT and AI image generators, which pose major threats to the information economy, these reflections spoke to the ongoing crisis of truth and journalistic integrity.

The third segment of the symposium focused on the roles of artificial intelligence in what some call the new global arms race. Here, speakers emphasised that AI needs to be understood as including a range of techniques and concepts, not just autonomous weapons like drones. They encouraged the audience to think about the chains of agency and accountability involved in warfare technologies. The private sector – Big Tech – needs to be included in narratives and ethical standards regarding warfare as the sector plays a critical role in developing military technology and governments' digital infrastructure.

The symposium ended with a roundtable discussion on hybrid warfare's relationship to data, drones, and disinformation. A recurrent theme was the role of the individual and how they might relate to or respond to the use of hybrid warfare, especially when it comes to

disinformation, which tends to confirm individual beliefs and biases, especially on social media. Speakers debated the need for transparency when it comes to not only non-state but state uses of AI and autonomous weapons systems.

The symposium reflected on the importance of not simply resisting notions that certain technologies are synonymous with 'disruptive' socio-technical 'progress' but also, the idea that a necessary cost of their emergence is an extension and intensification of military practices. It prompted uneasy questions about the twenty-first-century battlefield and its entanglement with the digital landscape. While images of war regularly circulate on our social media feeds alongside mundane updates from friends and memes, it is evident that civilian-military relations are intimate in a different way than before. This shift is a site of possibility to rethink how the current global information and technological ecosystem, from the levels of production to regulation, affects how we engage with war and how war engages with us.

#### **Beryl Pong**

Senior Postdoctoral Researcher, Trinity College, UKRI Future Leaders Fellow, Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence

#### **Amy Gaeta**

Research Associate, Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence

# MAKING SENSE OF THE MISSING



In June 2023 the *London Review of Books* published a series of my essays in book form, as *The Family Plot: three pieces about containment*. And in January this year Penguin Allen Lane brought out what I still find tricky to acknowledge as a family memoir, *Missing Persons, or My Grandmother's Secrets*. It is not

that I have been especially prolific – both books are short – rather, I have been experimenting with treating similar topics through different genres. In *The Family Plot* I analyse official reports and documents dealing with Ireland's Mother and Baby Homes, psychiatric institutions, and the relationship between the law and abortion. I explore the way in which institutions (and that includes the oldest institution of all, The Family) use stories to justify their actions – the betrayal that is at the heart of storytelling. The raw materials that form the basis for these essays are psychiatric case studies and sociological accounts of asylums, the report of the Irish government Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes, and the texts of *Roe vs Wade* and the *Dobbs* ruling, which I read alongside

## The Family Plot Clair Wills



THREE PIECES ABOUT CONTAINMENT

experiential accounts of those who have landed on the wrong side of institutional borders: personal, literary and visual responses to incarceration, forced adoption, or illegal abortion.

In *Missing Persons* I begin with personal and family stories, and I try to use them to tell an institutional history from the inside out. Since the discovery ten years ago of nearly 800 babies and small children deposited in a septic tank on the grounds of a Mother and Baby home in Tuam, County Galway, the neglect and cruelty associated with the system have become well known, and often aired. I wanted to ask, why did it make sense for families to consent to the Mother and Baby homes and related institutions? To us, now, it seems pretty much unthinkable, yet the distance between us and the people who believed in the system (or believed enough) is very small. Sometimes the person who feels appalled by the cruelties of the system and the person who believed enough is the same person.

The trouble with trying to understand sexual, private, intimate behaviour, is that mostly people don't (or didn't) talk about it. The book is an investigation of

some family secrets, and it's also an account of a whole culture of secrecy around sex and sexuality which I trace from the period after the famine.

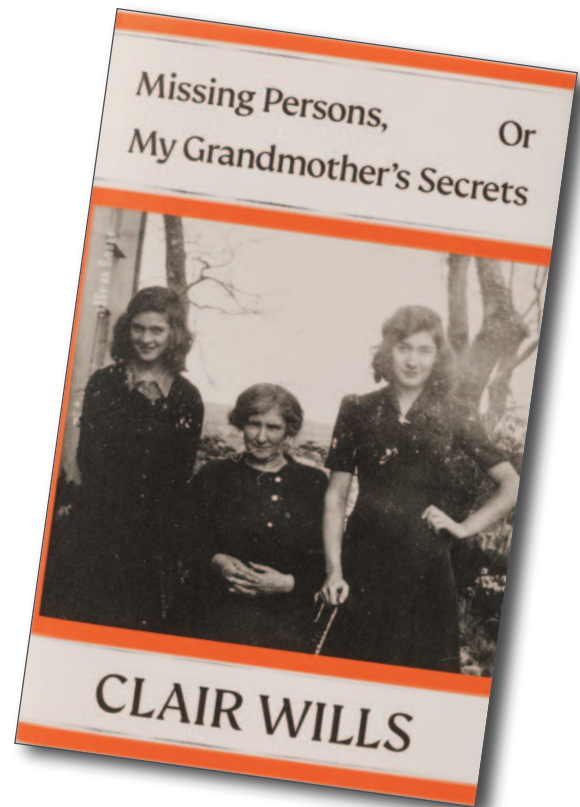
My grandmother was born in 1891 in a small farming community in West Cork. Put crudely, in the period before independence, when she was growing up, no-one was going to shop anyone to the authorities if they could help it, because the authorities were British: the poor law guardians, the workhouses, the RIC. I argue that keeping secrets in this period, particularly women keeping secrets between themselves, was a form of care. Women in rural Ireland had very little control over the direction of their lives, and very little autonomy. But if you fell pregnant in this period there were all sorts of informal ways in which a solution might be found. A child of an unmarried mother might be brought up as a child of an aunt or a grandmother for example. This was a culture in which women looked after each other by keeping quiet – in which they passed all kinds of private information amongst themselves, and they didn't pass dangerous information to others. I trace what happened when that informal practice of secret keeping met the bureaucratic institutions of the new Irish state, which offered to keep families' intimate secrets for them.

Secrets and silences are the subject of my book, but they are also the method. I wrote this book by trying to work out what was meant when things weren't said, or when a story didn't quite add up. I say in the book that we all know what it feels like to inherit a story, and a set of beliefs, we only partially understand. But I am convinced that the manner in which we inherit the past – how we know about it and how we think about it, not simply what we know about it – can tell us important things about how we live in the present.

*Missing Persons* is a book about interpreting stories, and it employs skills and methods of literary criticism and historical analysis that I have spent many years honing inside the academy. It has been released into a world where these stories had real life consequences. When I have spoken about the book the responses – often anguished and raw – come from survivors of the institutions, and their supporters and advocates. Discussions revolve around redress, reparation, and responsibility. I have received many, many messages from people who have their own stories to tell, and – especially in the United Kingdom, where 40% of the former residents of the homes live – no forum to tell them in.

#### **Clair Wills**

King Edward VII Professor of English  
Murray Edwards





# PAPER AND POETRY:

## A COLLABORATIVE SYMPOSIUM

We're surrounded by paper. Rustling broadsheets, Christmas party hats, voluminous reports that disappear under yet more paper in the form of tottering piles of books... In some ways, the impact of paper on our lives is obvious. But in other ways, paper is surprising and particular: a highly developed technology, a model for our digital documents, a springboard for writerly creativity, and a record of our past. Here in Cambridge, paper is gathering intellectual momentum. In the past few years academics in subjects from English Literature, Conservation, Mathematics, and History, have been coming together to talk about paper's past, present, and future, inspiring new projects and collaborations across departments.

A recent example of these papery projects took place in September 2023, during a two-day symposium at a paper mill in Cumbria. Created and convened by early modernist Georgina Wilson, medievalist Orietta Da Rold, and poet Vona Groarke, and generously funded by the Cambridge English Faculty via the Judith Wilson Fund, the symposium asked: what has poetry got to do with paper? Answering this question meant creating a radically different kind of event to the standard academic conference in which a group of scholars – often from the same discipline – jet in, present their research to a wall of acquiescing ears, and leave. Instead, we wanted to know what happens when you bring together academics, paper artists, and creative

writers interested in their writing surfaces to spend hours with their hands in watery vats, making paper and talking about their research. The symposium involved an extended day of paper-making, a session in the archives of the nearby Wordsworth Foundation (who hold the creative paper trails of both Dorothy and William), and then a day of critical-creative roundtables in which visual art, poetry, literary research, and conservation agenda were exchanged and debated. We heard about Virginia Woolf's envelopes, Shakespeare's wrinkles, stains, mould, and the impossible phenomena of the blank page. The event attracted an international cohort of artists, writers, and makers, whose breadth marked the generativity of this radical, experimental and open-minded format.

The symposium could only have taken place in the precise location where it did: namely, the Paper Foundation in Burneside, Cumbria. The Paper Foundation is a new institution founded in 2016 to celebrate, elevate and perpetuate paper. Master-minded by Mark Cropper and headed by paper-maker Tom Frith-Powell alongside Samantha Newby, the Paper Foundation is a paper-making business, a specialist workshop, and an artistic space whose primary role is to train craftspeople in the critically endangered craft of making paper by hand. The Paper Foundation produces sheets of beautifully hand-made paper for artists, printers, and writers, using techniques



that go back hundreds of years. The mill sits in the grounds of Ellergreen, the Cropper historic family home built by James Cropper, founder of James Cropper plc, and his wife Fanny in 1848 which nestles in the foothills of the English Lake District just north of Kendal. This house now serves as a home for the Foundation's significant (and growing) archives and collections of paper-makers and paper-artists. The full potential of these archives is yet to be realised, and during the symposium the collections were turned over and perused, sparking new ways of thinking about the relationship between paper-makers, artisans, printers, and writers.

The feedback from our cohort was ecstatic: the predominant plea being that we had spent more than two days at the Paper Foundation. Participants emphasised the impact of the symposium on their work, generated by the immersive paper-making sessions and the bringing together of such a radically interdisciplinary cohort from across different specialisms, career-stages, and continents. Buoyed by the moment of the event, we are now looking forward to publishing a special issue in the journal *Critical Quarterly* in 2025 which will fuse scholarly essays with creative contributions from our cohort. Despite the rise of the digital and the supposed decline of the analogue, we are not finished with paper; nor is paper finished with us.



*Photography by Claire Battershill.*

**Georgina Wilson**

Bye Fellow and College Teaching Associate,  
Jesus College

**Orietta Da Rold**

Professor of Medieval Literature and Manuscript Studies  
Fellow of St John's College, and Academic Director of  
The Cambridge University Library Research Institute  
(CULRI)



Finding a moment of brightness, photograph by Kasia Boddy, Sunnyside Rural Trust, Northchurch Allotments, January 2024

# SEASONS OF SANCTUARY:

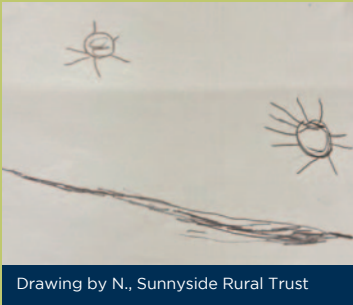
Bonnie Lander Johnson, Claudia Tobin and I were recently awarded a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to run a series of events drawing on our research on plants, gardens and sanctuary. The only stipulation was that the audiences and participants in these events would not be other academics or students.

Sanctuary is a complex concept, originally referring to a sacred place set aside for religious worship or a refuge for the persecuted, and now used in many different ways. Last summer, visitors attended Amnesty International's Sanctuary Festival in Hastings, highlighting the plight of refugees and the implications of the government's Illegal Migration Bill. But even more people made a trip to an owl sanctuary or took a holiday at the Sanctuary Beach Resort or soaked in a bath scented by products made by Sanctuary Spa.

Gardens have often been associated with sanctuary, in all its different senses. We are interested in exploring how those meanings might apply today.

Our first event took place on one of the coldest days in January – it was a good thing, then, that our destination was a place called Sunnyside. Sunnyside Rural Trust is a social enterprise based at three sites in Hertfordshire, offering training and work experience to people with learning difficulties – beekeeping, looking after chickens, garden maintenance and the cultivation of plants, some of which are vegetables sold on site and at local markets. Claudia and I visited the Northchurch Allotments, where we were joined by Holly Corfield Carr, a faculty alumna and currently bye-fellow at Murray Edwards as well as Lecturer in Poetry at the University of East Anglia.

Since it was a chilly day, we began indoors by looking at a booklet of paintings of different kinds



Drawing by N., Sunnyside Rural Trust

of garden, which featured people at rest and at work, alone and with others. Asked to think about what they liked to do best in the garden, the trainees told us

about weeding, daydreaming, listening to the sound of running water, feeding the birds, hacking back bushes, and sitting quietly with a colouring book. Holly gathered up the words and turned them into a poem of participles (soon to appear on the *Plant Life* webpage); she also encouraged the trainees to make up new words to describe how spending time in the garden made them feel. Our favourite was 'spouloring' (see if you can work it out!). We then went for a walk through the allotment, picking up objects and using small framing devices to identify bright spots: snow drops, sun puddles, someone's pink hat, a traffic cone. And then back indoors for a cup of tea and another poem.

Our second event, which took place at Downing College on 25th March under the auspices of the Cambridge Festival, was open to the public and focused on well-being. After we discussed different literary conceptions of the sanctuary garden, Sue Stuart-Smith, a Cambridge English alumna who is now a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, read from *The Well-Gardened Mind*, a book inspired in part by her grandfather's rehabilitation through horticulture after his experience as a prisoner of war. Along with her husband, the garden designer Tom Stuart-Smith, Sue has worked on several therapeutic and community gardens. The Serge Hill Project, a new initiative inspired by Sunnyside, is due to open later this year. The Downing event concluded with a visit to a new well-being garden at the college, designed by Head Gardener Jack Sharp and first seen at the Gardeners' World autumn show at Audley End in October 2023.

After winter and spring, we look forward to summer and our final event. This will happen in association with the Garden Museum in London, for whom Claudia is curating an exhibition on the garden sanctuaries created in their homes by Vita Sackville-West, Virginia Woolf and Ottoline Morell during the two World Wars. We will run a series of workshops

with groups from local schools, drawing on the objects and materials in the exhibition.


The least familiar of the three gardens in the exhibition is associated with Morell's home, Garsington Manor, which became a refuge for conscientious objectors and pacifists during the First World War, and inspired many of the artists and writers who gathered there, including Dora Carrington, Mark Gertler, Katherine Mansfield and Siegfried Sassoon. Woolf, meanwhile, found solace in her cottage garden at Rodmell and wrote several of her best-known novels in its apple orchard. In the early 1930s, she became a regular visitor to the colour-themed garden rooms cultivated at Sissinghurst Castle by (her then lover) Vita Sackville-West. Later, as war loomed, Sackville-West agonised in her 'Country Notes' columns for the *New Statesman* and *Nation*, about whether gardening was worthy of attention at all. 'Should I not believe that it is more important to concern oneself with the troubles and interests of the world, than to observe the first crocus in flower? More important to take an active part wherever one's small activity would be most welcome, than to grow that crocus?'

And yet to think of the garden as a sanctuary is not necessarily to suggest that it is unconnected to the world beyond. The garden might be a place of *ataraxia*, the Epicurean ideal of the absence of troubles, but sometimes a moment or two spent among the crocuses is precisely what is needed in order to address those troubles afresh. Robert Pogue Harrison's observation that what gardens do is 'make room for thoughts, vision, recollection, reverie' wouldn't be out of place in a seventeenth-century diary. But there is perhaps less difference than we might expect between the kind of reflections we encounter there and those recently expressed by Jenny Odell in *How to Do Nothing*, a bestselling book on 'resisting the attention economy'. Shortly after Donald Trump was inaugurated in 2017, Odell visited the Rose Garden in Oakland, California, created for the public in the 1930s as part of Roosevelt's New Deal. For Odell, the garden was not a place of retreat but of refusal; a place in which to reject one version of the world and imagine another. *Reculer pour mieux sauter*.

**Kasia Boddy**

Professor of American Literature

# AS GOOD LUCK WOULD HAVE IT



Some academics have telescopic powers of advanced planning. Teaching, conferences, publications: everything lines up with an obvious and compelling logic. I count myself very much in the other camp, of those whose intellectual lives are distinctly messy. I say this without pride or shame, just as a fact. When I look back at how my books and articles have come into being, chance has almost always played a significant role, not least the good fortune of friendship.

To give just one example of what I mean, I recently co-edited a Special Issue on John Henry Newman (1801–1890) for the journal *Religion and Literature*, but my part in its production was actually set in motion, serendipitously, more than two decades earlier. I was first stirred to think about Newman seriously in (of all places) a Tripos examiners' meeting. It was the early

2000s, and the Part II exam board was scrutinising a draft of the Practical Criticism paper, and we had paused over a short quotation: 'Style is a thinking out into language'. The exam paper attributed the apophthegm to John Henry Newman, but no further context was given. What, precisely, did this curious conceptual-prepositional tangle mean?

I can't remember whether our students rose to the challenge of successfully construing Newman's gnomic phrase in their summer exams that year. I remember only that I carried the phrase around with me for years afterwards, until the Michaelmas term of 2016, when a student reported having attended a faculty lecture on Carlyle's prose, and yet still being puzzled by his rebarbative style. The lecturer on Carlyle who had unwittingly enriched my supervision that day turned out to be Marcus Waithe, a longstanding friend. So I wrote to him suggesting we have lunch, to chew over our respective ideas about 'style', Carlyle's versus Newman's, and about prose style as such. From that lunch came the idea for our co-edited collection of twenty essays, *Thinking Through Style: Non-Fiction Prose of the Long Nineteenth Century*, which was published by OUP a couple of years later.

Although I started out with an interest in Newman's ideas on style, I soon became enamoured of his own. With George Saintsbury, I came to swoon at his writerly gifts, as 'one of the greatest masters of exquisite prose that the world has ever seen'. I became increasingly drawn into his theology too, and into the story of his extraordinary life, as someone who excited great love but also great animosity, even from some of his co-religionists. Reporting his latest activities to the Vatican in a letter of 1867, a fellow cleric referred to him as 'the most dangerous man in England'. Most of all, I came to admire how far the vicissitudes of his reputation expressed the integrity of his conscience. He really was, as Owen Chadwick once remarked, 'an eminent Victorian despite himself'.

While many of Newman's coevals have faded from view over the last century, it is notable how his standing in some ways continues to grow. In Rome, on 13 October 2019, I had the honour of briefing the Prince of Wales (now King Charles III) on the subject of Newman's canonisation, Newman becoming the first English person born since the seventeenth century to be declared a saint by the Catholic Church. It is fair to say that Newman did not sit easily with suggestions of his sanctity. There is, however, arguably a connection between the style of the man, as it were, and the elegance and profundity of his writings. It was a friend of mine, Dr Rebekah Lamb from the University of St Andrews, who helped me appreciate the force of this possibility. And it was, by extension of that logic, Rebekah's idea to mark the occasion of Newman's canonisation by memorialising the legacy also of his writings. Hence the Special Issue.

While Newman's range is simply too great to be able to capture within a single collection of essays, Rebekah and I designed the Issue to model that range, by genre and theme, and also by approach. It thus brings together scholars from an array of different disciplines,

including literary studies, philosophical theology, systematic and historical theology, classics, and psychology. At the same time, the Issue aims for coherence and relevance by having contributors address Newman's importance today, as a thinker and writer for our times.

In addition to the eight essays that make up the scholarly backbone of the Issue, we also solicited six much shorter reflections, from distinguished figures, public intellectuals and spiritual leaders. These highly focused, and often more intimate contributions offer something unavailable to the standard academic essay, and catch something of what Newman himself commended when appealing to his readers, *cor ad cor*. It was a special treat to include here not only such distinguished critics as, for instance, Lord Rowan Williams and the late Rev. Dr. Ian Ker (who sadly died while the Issue was in press), but also, directly remembering that day of Newman's canonisation in Rome, His Majesty King Charles III.

Following the publication of the Special Issue, we had planned a launch event that included a symposium at Oriel College, Oxford (where Newman had been a Fellow). It had to be postponed, but we hope to try again next academic year. It is not possible to know in advance what such gatherings might yield, but I am hopeful that simply having the time and freedom to discuss shared interests may spur new directions of research, on Newman or perhaps on some other topic entirely. I am certain only, on the basis of my experience, that academic collaboration cannot fruitfully be forced or instrumentalised. It is best, and perhaps only ultimately sustained by being open to unforeseen possibilities, and by nurturing the trust and goodwill endowed by personal amity.

#### Michael D. Hurley

Professor of Literature and Theology  
Trinity College



Copies of the special issue can be ordered here:  
<https://religionandlit.nd.edu/>

Image : Portrait of John Henry Newman, Birmingham Oratory  
© Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk

## 9

## INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS OF FACULTY: JENNIFER RICHARDS



I joined the Faculty of English at Cambridge in October 2023, as the new English (2001) Chair. Prior to that I held the Joseph Cowen Chair of English Literature at Newcastle University, where I was based for 28 years. I am

an early modernist, specialising in the late sixteenth century, the history of reading, voice studies, scholarly editing, book history, digital humanities, and ... bees. I have diverse interests, then, and several live projects but what holds all of this together is my interest in rhetoric. In my field, Renaissance literature, rhetoric is one half of the advanced speech arts, the other being dialectic. Our study of it usually begins in the male schoolroom, and with the many rhetoric treatises that describe its parts or list its figures. However, I have always been more interested in recognising that this so-called 'art' observes what persuades in everyday practice, prompting me to search for it in many different spaces. In the *Cambridge History of Rhetoric: The Renaissance*, which I am editing with Virginia Cox, we recognise that more people spoke, and spoke well and persuasively, than rhetoricians – and those who write their history – have always been willing to accept. Thus, my eloquent models are not only men, nor are they always human, while persuasion is not always linguistic.

This does not mean that I am not interested in the formal art, but that I am more likely to foreground those books that privilege practice over theory, like Omer Talon's *Rhetorica*. This little book, first printed in 1548, is concerned with the teaching of eloquent performance. So unimportant has this topic seemed in the history of Renaissance rhetoric that it still doesn't have a modern translation even though it rivalled the classical manuals in popularity. What is immediately

obvious about this book is that it is small; but it is small, I came to realise, not because the subject is slight, as is often thought, but because it is a prompt book – its content is as much off the page as it is on it. *Rhetorica* has two books. The first, dedicated to elocutio or style, offers an abbreviated list of figures with examples from Latin poets and orators; the second, which is very short, focusses on delivery (voice and gesture). The parts are paired: I imagine a boy in a schoolroom, matching the figures of speech with types of voice, tone and timbre. He would thus learn that a figure like *exclamatio* – O etc. – can express different emotions depending on the voice he uses: a mournful voice expresses pity, a sharp voice, anger, a hesitant voice, fear, and so on.

I am grateful to this little book because it gave me a way to foreground the importance of the physical voice in an art that had come to be seen as primarily scripted. This shaped the story I told in my last monograph *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance: A New History of Reading* (Oxford, 2019). It has also helped me to think more carefully about how to read *and* edit writers like Thomas Nashe for whom voice-awareness shapes their dynamic, shape-shifting writing. And it is also leading me to explore alternative 'schoolrooms' and to think about how cross-disciplinary collaboration might help us recover more inclusive histories of education.

In a totally unexpected way, it is also relevant to my newest project: a born-digital edition of Charles Butler's manual for bee-keepers: *The Feminine Monarchie or the History of Bees*. Butler was one of the first to confirm the sex of the dominant honeybee in a hive, and he thus realised he needed to understand the behaviour of bees differently. He left the study for the field, and, armed with a wind instrument, listened attentively to the hive, notating what he heard – the tooting and quacking of the queen and the virgin queens – to create a score of three staves for the first

edition of 1609. In the 2nd edition, 1623, he went further, imagining his book as a hive into which the reader enters, and he incorporated the staves of 1609 into a bee song in table-book format for four voices. Imagine yourself inside this hive, joining in the bee song, exploring what the queen bees are 'feeling' by tooting and quacking with them. (In the third edition, he created a phonetic alphabet for the human voice too.)

I am currently editing this unusual work with colleagues at Newcastle University to understand the evolution of Butler's thinking and his acoustic experiment in print. However, this work also provides the frame for a multi-disciplinary project, *Bee-ing Human*, that asks: how can we actually talk about the emotion-like states of social insects today with scientists adapting methods developed to understand human cognition for animals? For me, personally, in addition to the pleasure of working across disciplinary boundaries, with scientists and musicologists, this project is also an opportunity to think more about what an early modern book can be – a living, evolving artefact as well as a material object – and to explore how we can represent its energy in digital form. It has also given me the opportunity to think about what we are able to do, to think, and to imagine when we animate a rule-bound art like rhetoric and the printed page with the voice. Thus I come full circle to reveal that Charles Butler was not only an apiarist but a teacher of music, grammar, and rhetoric, and that his most successful book, his first print-publication in 1597, was an adaptation of Talon's *Rhetorica*, the schoolbook that links writing, voice, emotion.

**Jennifer Richards**  
English 2001 Chair  
Peterhouse





## INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS OF FACULTY: CLARE PETTITT



I arrived as Grace 2 Professor in the Faculty of English in January 2023 from King's College London where I taught for seventeen years. Before that I had been a College Teaching Officer and Director of Studies in

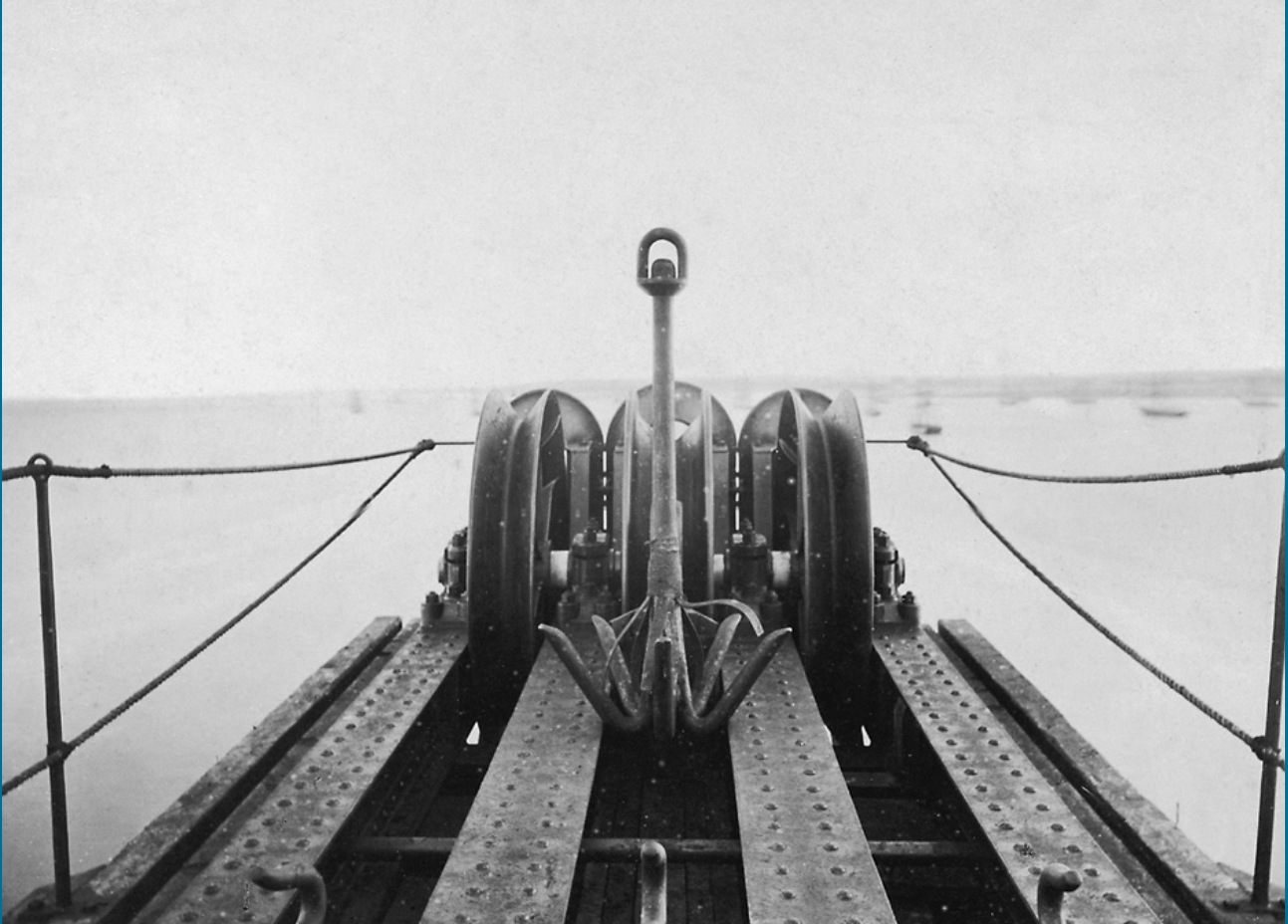
English at Newnham College Cambridge, so this marks a kind of return for me. Way back in the mid-1980s I arrived from Manchester to do the English degree here, at Emmanuel College. After graduating, I worked in London in a women's theatre company, in architectural journalism, for a pressure group campaigning to get more women into Parliament, and at a broadcast consultancy, before I decided that I needed to get back to study. I did my D.Phil. in Oxford and I like to think that my work reflects the historicism of Oxford combined with the literary attentiveness of Cambridge English. My research is broadly on nineteenth-century literature and culture, across British, European and American contexts. I am currently writing the third book of a trilogy on the importance of forms of seriality in the nineteenth century.

The first book in this trilogy, *Serial Forms: The Unfinished Project of Modernity, 1815-1848* came out in 2020 with Oxford University Press, and won the British Academy Rose Mary Crawshay Book Prize; the North American Victorian Studies Association (NAVSA) Book Prize; and the European Society for Periodicals Research (ESPRit) Book Prize. The second volume came out in 2022, also with OUP, and is called *Serial Revolutions 1848: Writing, Politics, Form*. It argues that this series of revolutions, and indeed the seriality of their transmission, makes 1848 a more pivotal and important moment in European and American culture and politics than has previously been understood. I argue that new media forms created a newly 'joined-up' Europe and put ideas of citizenship permanently on

the agenda in both Europe and America. The third volume will argue that the series and serial transmission became increasingly dominant methods for formatting and communicating information across ever longer distances from the mid-century onwards. I am investigating the intertwined international histories of literature and art alongside the development of digital coding and telegraphy and 'scientific' investigations into genetic and racial coding in biology. Through the literature, art and media of the period 1848-1914, the book will examine the mobilisation of information, both electronically and biologically, and show how it is crucial to the development of the globalised biopolitics which underpinned colonial growth, but which was also open to disruption and resistance.

My first monograph, *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* (2004) was about concepts of originality, authorship and mechanical invention in the nineteenth century, and my second, *'Dr Livingstone, I Presume?': Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers and Empire* (2007) examined a fraught moment in Anglo-American relations through an iconic meeting between two explorers in Africa. In the words of Biodun Jeyifo, Professor of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, it exposed the ways in which 'old and new racisms and fundamentalisms are co-implicated as much with high-minded liberalism as with conservatism and militarism.' In the third volume of my trilogy, I am returning to think again about the collision of racism and liberalism in the late nineteenth century.

Alongside my book project, I am working on a collaborative research project based at the university that gave me my first ever academic job: Leeds. The project is called 'The History of the Society of Authors 1884-1914' and is organised around under-explored archives in the British Library. This project takes me back to the work that I did on copyright and authorship at the beginning of my career, and I have just completed a chapter, 'Literary Property and



Grappling Hook used for lifting the Transatlantic Telegraph Cable, on the Great Eastern, 1865; National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

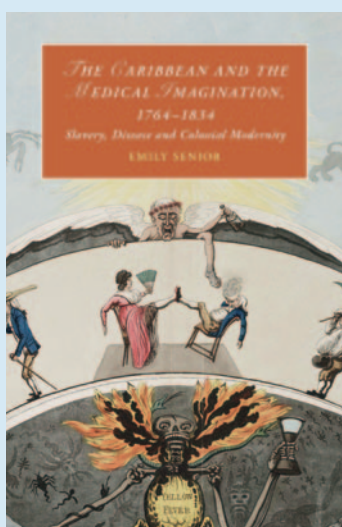
International Copyright Reform', which argues that settler colonialism and international legislation on intellectual property developed alongside one another. I am also planning another large collaborative project with University College London, The Courtauld Institute of Art in London, and the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. The project is called 'Idylls as Ecospheres: Botany, Colony, Culture'. We recently gathered to celebrate the publication of the first project book, *The Victorian Idyll in Art and Literature: Subject, Ecology, Form*, in which I co-authored a chapter called 'Multicolour as Disavowal: The Racial Politics of the Nineteenth-Century Idyll' with art historian Caroline Arscott. I am looking forward to working with the Kew art collections and the expert botanists based at Kew to ask how nature writing, literature, fine art, botanical illustration, ornament, and architecture were profoundly affected by changing ideas about plant morphology.

I am excited to return to Cambridge and to a new generation of undergraduates, M.Phil. students, and PhD students. Teaching at all these levels is already proving a rich and stimulating experience, and I am discovering more and more synergies with colleagues, sometimes in unexpected places, so I am greatly looking forward to building more research projects together.

**Clare Pettitt**

Grace 2 Professor  
Emmanuel College

## INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS OF FACULTY: EMILY SENIOR



I arrive in Cambridge this year as Associate Professor in Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century, having previously been Reader in Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Literature at Birkbeck, University of London and having taught at the University of Warwick and the Open University. What I love most about teaching the eighteenth century is the challenges it

presents in asking us to engage with a social and linguistic world both familiar and radically different to our own. Thinking with and through that dualism helps students develop a unique sensitivity in reading and critical thinking.

My research interests lie in understanding literatures written in the context of expanding empires, colonial power structures and Atlantic slavery. Much of my work, including my book *The Caribbean and the Medical Imagination*, focuses on the Caribbean as a fulcrum of global modernity. As the hub of the trade in people, plants, animals and goods, the colonial Caribbean was also the site of new ideas, natural philosophical systems, disciplines and material and textual forms emerging from the intermixing of African, Asian, European and Indigenous cultures. Huge numbers of scholarly volumes have been dedicated to comprehending the dawn of the European Enlightenment and its textual productions; I am interested in studying how the Caribbean played a significant role in the changing literary forms and disciplinary structures associated with the transition to modernity. This understanding of literature as emerging from a set of historical global movements

grounds my teaching. Students often arrive excited to study very recent world literatures; I hope many will also go on to consider world texts as part of a longer unfolding of global patterns of reading, writing and thinking.



St Vincent botanic garden

My work on colonial materials leads me through scattered archives – fragments of colonial lives dispersed across the Atlantic. Such a piecemeal body of texts has led me to work with a number

of external organisations: galleries, museums and archives with collections related to empire and enslavement. My focus here is on finding new ways to collect, collate and catalogue such materials in ways that might do justice to the experiences of colonised individuals, and to draw attention to less-studied authors writing amid the horrors of empire.

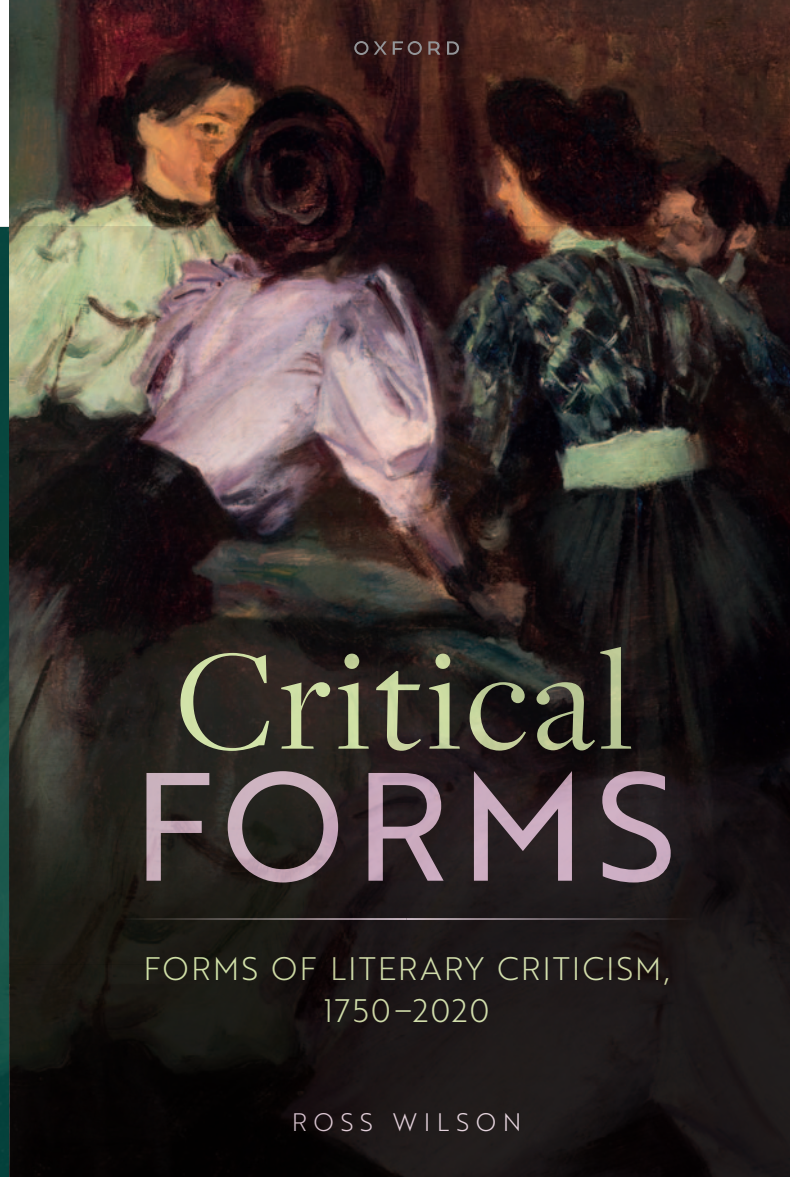
Part of that work with external organizations involves dialogue around the ‘uses’ of literature and literary study. Having arrived in Cambridge at a moment when the study and teaching of literature face huge challenges at all levels of education—whether in debates about primary-school grammar drills or the pressure on A Level students to study STEM subjects—I see my role as one of advocacy for the kinds of thinking, speaking and writing we do in English. Training critical thinkers to engage with words to the fullest scope of their intellectual and imaginative potential is what I have come to Cambridge to do, and I can’t wait to get started.

### Emily Senior

Associate Professor in Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century







# CRITICAL FORMS



Somewhat over fifteen years ago, I applied for a fixed-term lectureship in the English Faculty. The lectureship was to be in ‘Criticism’, very broadly conceived, and candidates for the position were asked to give details of some lectures they would offer if appointed. I duly proposed a set of lectures for the paper still at that date called ‘the English Moralists’. My lectures would explore a series of *German* thinkers, from Kant and Hegel to Marx, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard (reasoning that ‘English’ in ‘English Moralists’ had not been taken too literally for a long time, perhaps I hoped that my definition of ‘German’ might stretch to include the Danish theologian and controversialist as well). One of the eminences on the interview

panel asked how I would account in my lectures for the significant *generic differences* between the writing of thinkers such as, for example, Kant and Nietzsche. It was a good question. I can’t remember what I said in response – probably for the best – but it was not a convincing answer. In thinking about my lectures, I had been chiefly concerned with ideas like the categorical imperative, objective spirit, alienation and ideology, *ressentiment* (great waves of which I was about to feel when I didn’t get the job), and the teleological suspension of the ethical – and what had they to do with such lowly questions as the genre of the writings in which they were set forth? Anyway, my chances of getting the job were un-teleologically suspended there and then.

That fateful question has stuck with me – in the way questions we don’t manage to answer tend to stick with us – and it has shaped the ways in which

I have thought about intellectual history generally and the history of literary criticism specifically. How have the forms of literary critical writing – prefaces, selections, reviews, lectures, dialogues, letters, biographies and autobiographies, in addition to the much more readily recognised essays and monographs – shaped the practice of literary criticism itself? This is the question I try to address in my recent book, *Critical Forms: Forms of Literary Criticism, 1750–2020*.

The relation of literary criticism to literature and the question of what kind of writing literary critical writing is have been fundamental to recent considerations of what has come to be called ‘creative criticism’. Indeed, the attention given in recent years to the loose set of practices of literary critical writing that are actively engaged in adding to and redefining (as well as commenting on and evaluating) literature itself was – in addition to the painful episode in that interview all those years ago – a key context for the writing of *Critical Forms*. The theory and practice of creative criticism (if I may be allowed another autobiographical aside) played an important role in my own professional history: the first teaching position I actually did manage to get was at the University of East Anglia, one of the institutions where (in the United Kingdom at least) creative criticism was pioneered. More broadly and importantly, the attention that creative criticism has garnered, alongside its actual practice, may be traced to a range of intellectual, institutional, and cultural factors that have come to bear on the way that literary critical writing is theorised and practised. The belated impact of twentieth-century literary avant-gardes on the practice of literary criticism, the critique of prevailing assumptions about critical objectivity and a renewed attention to rhetoric, and the impact of cultural studies and literary theory more generally have all, in different ways, had an impact not just on the conception of literary criticism, but on its practice in writing. A danger arising from the confluence of these factors that historians of creative criticism have identified and, in some cases, sought to guard against is literary criticism’s dissolution into a resuscitated belle-lettrism. But far from giving up on the attempt to develop knowledge about literature and taking refuge in devotion to personally cherished books and poems instead, creative criticism, some of its defenders

have claimed, engages in a thoroughgoing reconsideration of how thinking about literature happens, how literary-critical knowledge is arrived at, and on what assumptions it rests. The kinds of dispassionate commentary and evaluation – even the kind of sceptical critique – often taken to be essential to literary criticism is frequently just the kind of inventive practice lauded by latter-day proponents and defenders of ‘creative criticism’, rather than being opposed to it.

*Critical Forms* is not an instance of creative criticism, nor, particularly, a defence of it. Yet while all but one of the book’s chapters address the literary-critical writing of other critics in various forms (as listed above: prefaces, selections, etc.) going back nearly three centuries, the last chapter is a doubtless foolhardy attempt at critical dialogue. Undeniably, *Critical Forms* is an academic monograph about the variety of forms in which literary criticism has been practised. But there is something of an anomaly lurking in that description, especially in the way ‘monograph’ (a near cousin of ‘monologue’, ‘monomania’, ‘monolith’, and the rest) glowers across at ‘variety’. Surely the form of a treatment of the various forms in which literary criticism has been practised ought itself to be various. Samuel Johnson famously (and truly) said: ‘You may abuse a tragedy, though you cannot write one. You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though you cannot make a table.’ While I do not take myself to be abusing or scolding anyone in *Critical Forms*, I nevertheless felt that I wasn’t quite licensed by Johnson’s assertion, since, even if I cannot make a table, I do at least try to write literary criticism. Thus the case for adopting a different form of writing at some point within *Critical Forms* seemed to me persuasive. For what it’s worth, the concluding dialogue has so far amused, informed, annoyed, and worried different readers of *Critical Forms* – including myself – in roughly equal measure. I hope you might like to read it (the whole book, in fact) and judge for yourself.

**Ross Wilson**

Associate Professor of Criticism  
Emmanuel College



Every now and then I'm asked to supervise undergraduates who are writing dissertations with a language angle. In 2022 I was asked to supervise Sophie Macdonald who comes from Gibraltar. She wanted to focus on Gibraltar literature. Go find Gibraltar literature, I told her. She came back with novelist M. G. Sanchez and playwright Rebecca Calderon. There must be more, I said, go interview your grandparents' generation for stories. Sophie's not what you call compliant: instead she went and interviewed the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister, the ex-Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and she didn't ask them for their nursery rhymes. She asked them about their language, and their sensitive, detailed, well-informed replies read like a plangent wail of lament for Gibraltar's dying mother-tongue, Llanito. I asked her what she thought about this and she told me that for Gibraltar, loss of Llanito would be the biggest tragedy she could imagine - so I figured I better do something about it.

Llanito is the modern name for the historic Hispanic Western Mediterranean contact-language that has been spoken by Gibraltar's civilian citizenry over the three hundred years that Gibraltar has been British. Predominantly Andalusian Spanish, it contains words from Genoese, Haketia (Judeo-Spanish), Menorcan Catalan, Portuguese and Darija Arabic. It is unofficial, unwritten, has no established spelling system, and because it is in retreat, what can be expressed in it is now limited. Few Gibraltarians speak it as a monolingual language nowadays, most codeswitch it with English. Right now it's age- and social class-

## GIBRALTAR, LLANITO, AND MARLBORO MEN



graded, with Llanito-speaking grandparents not always able to understand their monolingual-English grandchildren, yet only addressing them in English - even if they don't fully command it themselves - because English is supposedly better. Schooling is in monolingual English and has been since the Clifford Report of 1944, so no child avoids full competency.

Colleagues who work on dying languages go to the world's language hotspots, the Northwest Pacific Plateau, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Central America, Eastern Siberia, Northern Australia, where habitat is under stress and language-loss is symptomatic of loss of other kinds of diversity. I bought a Pret sandwich and got on Easyjet.

At the other end, superficially everything looks fine. 'With an unemployment rate of only one per cent and a GDP of £1.5 billion, Gibraltar is one of the most affluent places in the world' says Blacktower Finance. But languages die out when their speakers have suffered trauma, and Gibraltar's is not hard to identify. Most of the civilian population was evacuated during the Second World War. In 1969 Franco closed the land-border with Spain for sixteen years. Twentieth-century schoolchildren received corporal punishment from the Christian Brothers for speaking Llanito, and were still rebuked well into the 1980s. The language of the British Garrison, the social elite, was English. The last UK-based battalion left in 1991 and today the Rock is littered with dangerous structures blocking the coast, abandoned military constructions too massive and expensive to destroy, never part of the civilians' heritage but theirs to deal with nonetheless. There's nothing quite like a militarised landscape to tell you this is not yours, even when it is.

So my task was to turn around a linguistic situation which few had really noticed, in a fought-over country to which the main players never go. I had to ask the Gibraltar government for £2 million, which is what the University of Cambridge costs my project at, to analyse, describe and revitalise Llanito. The Minister laughed at me of course but took me to dinner and introduced me all round, a magnificent welcome which for this sociolinguist could not have been better. And come election time, he put saving Llanito into his party's manifesto. I'm now seeking funding from the British Government.

Working in the Faculty of English, I know the power of literature for bringing different language varieties to attention. One of our project partners is Gibraltarian author M. G. Sanchez. You may enjoy reading this extract from his novel *Marlboro Man*:

*Picture a long stretch of coastline. At one end there is point A, at the other point B. You are in a launch. You have just dropped off your load at point A and now need to sail thirty miles to point B. Suddenly, a larger, faster, more powerful boat appears behind you intent*

*on stopping you by any means. How do you manage to reach point B without getting forced ashore, shunted aside, or rammed and sunk? Well, the first thing you do is you pray. To Jesus, to Allah, to la Virgen del Carmen, to Neptune, to Nemo the fish – to whoever, in other words, might be out there and prepared to lend you a hand in this terrible hour of need. Then you play to your strengths, you capitalise on whatever advantages you have over your pursuers. The boat behind you may be faster than you and have a bigger engine, but you are in a smaller, more manoeuvrable vessel, with the ability to swerve and take sharper corners. If you veer off at the right moment, you will be able to wrongfoot your pursuer, to send him in the opposing direction for a few precious seconds. Normally, what you do is you wait until the son of a bitch is just behind you. You wait and wait and wait, keeping calm, holding your nerve, resisting the temptation to do anything stupid. Then – when his bow is practically scraping against your stern – you pull out the throttle and turn your steering wheel rapidly to the left or to the right, causing the awkward, clumsy beast to briefly lose its bearings.*

*Ideally, though, you don't want to be performing last-moment manoeuvres of this sort. Ideally, you want your chasers to keep their distance, to treat you with respect. The only way you can do this is by travelling as close as possible to the shoreline, in just a few feet of water. It's all about brinkmanship, about utilising your strengths and exploiting your adversary's weaknesses. Phantoms have a V-shaped, but essentially flat keel and can travel in very shallow water; la Turbo and la Dos Motores – big lumbering bastards that they are – will run aground in depths of less than seven or eight feet. Of course, if you draw too near the shore, you yourself will come a cropper and end up stranded there like an injured seagull floating in front of a killer whale. This is why the guardias and the customs men sail as close as they can to the shore themselves – waiting for you to slip up, hoping to cajole you into an error of judgment. But here's the thing: just as you can run aground or hit a submerged shopping trolley, they can also come to grief on an uncharted sandbank or get their propellers tangled in a fisherman's net. What kills your enemy, as the old saying goes, can very well end up killing you too.*

M. G. Sanchez, *Marlboro Man* (Gibraltar: The Dabuti Collective, 2019), pp 94-98

Sophie got a first for her dissertation.

**Laura Wright**  
Professor of English Language



# ASPIRATION AND FRUSTRATION IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

When people ask me how long I took to write my recent book I find the question difficult to answer. Its roots lie deep in my childhood. I grew up in apartheid-era South Africa in a bubble of white suburban privilege. But from a young age I knew something was sorely wrong with the country.



## Writing, Politics and Change in South Africa after Apartheid

Christopher Warnes

Perhaps it started one evening in 1985 when, as a child sitting cross-legged in front of the television, I noticed on the news small flame-shaped icons on the map right next to the city where we lived. I asked my parents what 'state of emergency' meant and found their answers unsatisfactory. It certainly hit home to me that things weren't normal when, as a teenager on a compulsory cadet camp, we were made to sleep in the open only to be woken up with live tracer bullets being fired over our head. This was apparently for our benefit as all white males were expected to do their duty and defend white society from the scourges of communism and African nationalism. Shortly before my eighteenth birthday I received a letter instructing me to report for military service to 7 Infantry Battalion, Phalaborwa. Phalaborwa was notorious for its harsh training camps, and, even more, its heat and its dust. On completion of training I could look forward to being deployed to the war zones of Namibia and Angola.

I did not report for duty. I applied for deferment and headed to the place furthest from Phalaborwa I could find, the University of Cape Town. The early 1990s, the years of my undergraduate study, were some of the most violent in South African history. The apartheid government, crippled by sanctions and drained by conflict, was forced to release Mandela from prison in February 1990. There followed four years of arguments, factional struggles, nefarious dealings, strikes, protests, mass marches, and boycotts. Universities had long played an important role in resisting apartheid, and as students, we were at times treated to teargas and high-pressure water cannons. But behind the scenes, at a national level, political negotiations for an interim constitution were proving successful, and, to everyone's great surprise an election date was announced: 27 April 1994. We were jubilant. I recall a lecturer weeping openly as the old South African flag was lowered for the last time on the UCT campus.

South Africa's first democratic elections are sometimes referred to as a 'miracle'; 'we are the rainbow people of God' said Archbishop Tutu. With Mandela at the helm, hope surged. The myriad laws that made up apartheid were repealed, one by one, superseded by the most advanced human-rights friendly constitution in the world. Teargas, water-cannons and worse were replaced by rainbows, rugby world cups, and reconciliation. The moment of South Africa's freedom changed me immeasurably. Through the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission we learned the scale and scope of apartheid atrocity. As a student of English and Political Studies, it was not difficult to understand how apartheid grew out of the settler colonialism that preceded it. The end of formal apartheid meant new spaces for thinking, speaking and being. It meant learning how to denaturalise the narratives that underpin oppressive practices and world views. It meant demystifying the ideological mechanisms that had kept apartheid and its precedents in place for so long. In short, it means understanding, in ways both personal and political, the moral necessity of decolonisation.

*Writing, Politics and Change in South Africa after Apartheid* (CUP, 2023) is a book about what changed, and what did not change, in the decades following those heady days. I attempt, through a reading of the creative literature that has emerged in and about the country since 1994, to track the intertwined histories of transition and of stasis, of freedoms gained and possibilities won, of hope on the one hand and disillusionment on the other. Starting from the assumption that literature has a unique capacity to generate insight and understanding, the book has an unapologetically political and sociological cast. Focussing on the workplace, the university, the boardroom, the farm, the crime scene, and on indigenous knowledge, I study the institutions, locations, and behaviours where change is most likely to be found.

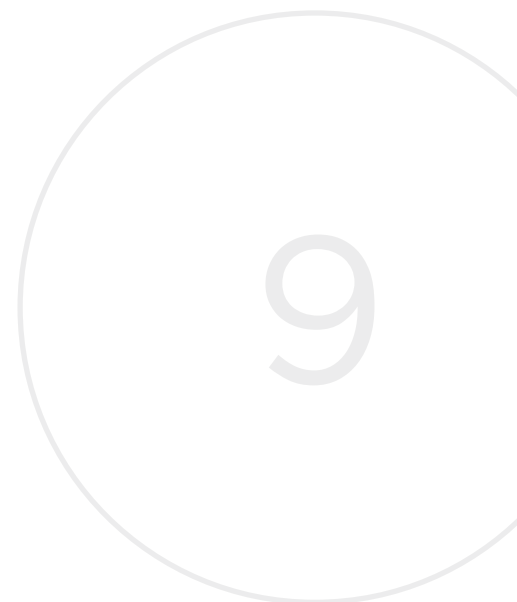
The rainbow romanticism of the Mandela years lasted only until the early 2000s. Under his successor, Thabo Mbeki, South Africa lurched from crisis to crisis. In trying to make sense of the bad political decisions Mbeki and his successor, Jacob Zuma, made, I identify a multi-layered dissonance. On the one hand, the ANC – the political party that has been in power since 1994 – still believes itself to be the torch-bearer for African socialism. On the other hand, the actual political

economy of the country has been defined by an embrace of hyper-capitalism and neoliberal orthodoxy. Interestingly, this dissonance manifests itself in many ways in the cultural production of the period, in highbrow and popular texts alike. Dissonance is often associated with repression, and the effects of both are directly visible in the psycho-pathology of the contemporary political realm.

In thinking about the relations between politics and cultural production, I found Raymond Williams's work extremely helpful. I identify aspiration and frustration as key 'structures of feeling' that underpin many aspects of South African life. Aspirations for a better future were shared in the struggle against apartheid, but in the period since the winning of freedom, aspiration has been drained of its shared meanings, becoming something individual and venal instead. Widespread frustration has been the result, because 'freedom from' has not translated, for many people, into 'freedom to': the constraints of the apartheid-era have proven stubbornly resistant. Understanding aspiration and frustration as structures of feeling opens up, I hope, new and productive ways of reading the literatures and the politics of post-apartheid South Africa.

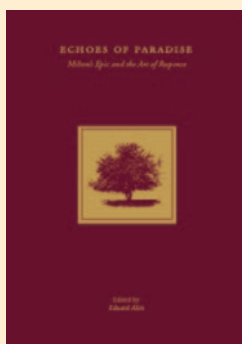
#### **Christopher Warnes**

Associate Professor of Postcolonial and Related Literatures



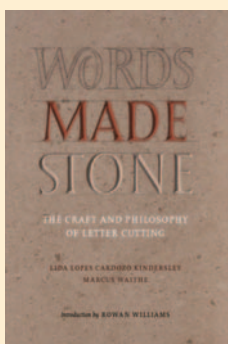
# FACULTY NEWS

Some Faculty highlights from the past year; for more detail and more stories, please visit <https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/news/>

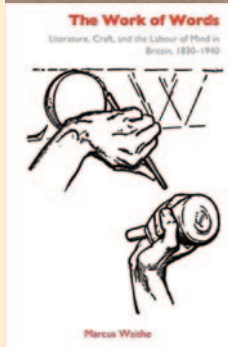


**Dr Ned Allen** has edited *Echoes of Paradise: Milton's Epic and the Art of Response*, a creative-critical book that appears in a limited edition. In a series of essays – on satire, children's fantasy fiction, slave narrative, painting, and radio drama – it tells some of the stories

of *Paradise Lost's* enduring influence. Poems are included by Jack Belloli, Michael Edwards, Sarah Howe, Helen Mort, Ruth Padel, and Rowan Williams. Essays by Ned Allen, Jean-Michaël Maugüé, Sophie Read, Christopher Ricks and Chris Townsend also appear. The music is by Edwin Hillier.



**Professor Marcus Waithe** has published two books. *Words Made Stone: The Craft and Philosophy of Letter Cutting* was written with the Cambridge-based letter cutter and typographer Lida Lopes Cardozo Kindersley, and carries an introduction by Rowan Williams. Published in late 2022 and launched at Magdalene College's New Library in 2023, the book brings their worlds and their words into dialogue. *The Work of Words: Literature, Craft, and the Labour of Mind in Britain, 1830-1940* was published by Edinburgh University Press in January 2023. It offers a sustained study of the connection between writers' desire to prove that they 'work' and parallel forms of craft and artisanal revival.



and parallel forms of craft and artisanal revival.



**Eva Dema** – a PhD student in the Faculty – has published two prize-winning articles. The first, entitled “Wind, Wind, Wind, Always Winding Am I”: Dickens's Metafictional Clockwork’ was published in *The Review of English Studies* in 2022, and

in 2023 was awarded the Dickens Society's David Paroissien Prize for the best peer-reviewed essay on Dickens published in a journal or edited collection. A more recent piece, entitled “Sacred to the Memory”: Thomas Hardy's Tombstones’ (2024), has won *The Review of English Studies* Essay Prize.



**Dr Louise Joy** and **Dr Jessica Lim** have published *Women's Literary Education, 1690-1850* (Edinburgh University Press), an edited volume containing essays by English faculty colleagues including Jennifer Wallace, Rebecca Anne Barr and Jonathan Padley. The book brings together leading critical voices from a range of

disciplines to examine the complex and significant ways in which female literary artists interrogated and advanced educational philosophy and practice. It assesses women's literary contributions to the period's strands of educational thought, enabling us to better understand how authors and readers of the period envisaged that literary texts might fulfil, fail, or refuse to fulfil, educational functions.

**The English Faculty and Downing College hosted the First Story Young Writers Festival on 30 March 2013.** Three hundred school children, aged 11-18, came to Cambridge for a day of writing with YA author Manjeet Mann, and Downing Fellow in English Dr Bonnie Lander Johnson. Students were given a

## FACULTY NEWS CONT.

college tour, an introduction to English at Cambridge, and an opportunity to read their work from the big stage. Quentin Blake provided an original drawing for the students to use as a writing prompt in a post-festival competition. The winning entry will be published in the 2024 edition of Downing's literary magazine, *The Leaves*. In July 2023, Dr Lander Johnson attended a reception hosted by the Queen to mark the 15th birthday of the First Story. She remarked that 'I'm so pleased that the King and Queen are supportive of the arts and literacy. At a time when these skills are less valued in British culture, it is important for us to find champions. The Queen was very interested to hear about our work with young people and writing.'



**Dr Siddharth Soni** has won the £25,000 Ideas Prize for a 'paradigm-shifting' book, to be published by Profile, entitled *Monstrous Archives*. One of the UK's largest and most prestigious prizes for a first book proposal, the prize includes a contract for publication with Profile Books. *Monstrous Archives* charts the

evolution of the archival in the age of information technology. It excavates the colonial and military histories behind technologies of the archive, reflecting on the ways they shape how we record and revisit the past.

*1923*, a new Turkish musical co-written by **Mert Dilek**, premiered to great acclaim at Istanbul's Zorlu Performing Arts Center on 23 April 2023. Dilek, a PhD student at Trinity College, was commissioned to write the work with Yekta Kopan and Mehmet Ergen in commemoration of the centenary of the founding of the Turkish Republic. He also provided



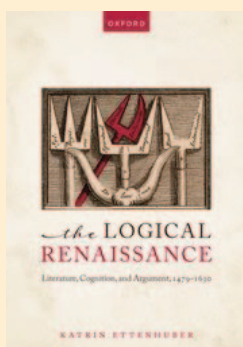
the cast and the creative team with dramaturgical guidance throughout the production process. The production is directed by Mehmet Ergen and Lerzan Pamir, and designed by Robert Innes Hopkins, Malcolm Rippeth, and Douglas O'Connell. With a cast of over 100, *1923* is the largest piece of musical theatre ever produced in Turkey.

The English Faculty was delighted to host 26 students from all over the country for the annual Sutton Trust Summer School in August 2023. Staying for a week at Gonville & Caius College, the students had a packed programme of lectures, classes and other activities designed to give them a taste of the life of an English undergraduate. Students also completed an individual project, choosing topics from Keats to Plath, Virginia Woolf to Taylor Swift. The whole group enjoyed an afternoon performance of *Macbeth* at Shakespeare's Globe, as well as taking part in cross-curricular activities organised by the Cambridge Admissions Office



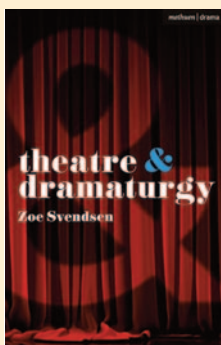
A new book by **Dr Diarmuid Hester** (Emmanuel), entitled *Nothing Ever Just Disappears* (Allen Lane/Penguin, 2023), explores a queer sense of place in twentieth-century literature and art by examining the lives and works of figures such as EM Forster, Josephine Baker, Claude Cahun, James Baldwin, Derek Jarman, and others. More particularly, it is about what happens to a house or a room, or a whole town or city, when it is transformed by a powerful sensibility. Dr Hester examines how the gay imagination deals with place and with displacement, allowing for mystery and a kind of magic.

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**Dr Katrin Ettenhuber** (Pembroke) has published *The Logical Renaissance: Literature, Cognition, and Argument, 1479-1630* (Oxford University Press, 2023). The book represents the first major study of the role of logic in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature. It explores how

major authors of the period, including Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, Spenser, and Sidney, conceived of the arts of thinking and argument, and how they creatively appropriated and transformed logical concepts and ideas in their work.



**Dr Zoë Svendsen** has published *Theatre & Dramaturgy* (Methuen Drama / Bloomsbury, 2023).

Over the last decade, the role of the dramaturg has become more common in the theatrical process, but it is still a new term for many theatre-goers. This book offers a working definition of dramaturgy, and asks how understanding theatre from the perspective of dramaturgy can help us understand the world around us.

**Jade Cuttle**, an AHRC-funded PhD candidate in English at Clare Hall, has won the inaugural non-fiction Morley Prize for her book *Silthood*. Prize judge Marianne Tatepo, Commissioning Editor for Ebury Press and Pop Press (Penguin Random House UK),

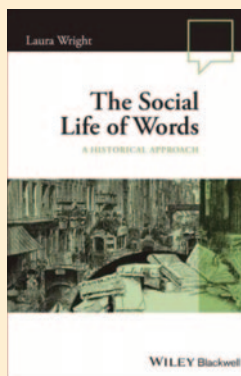


remarked that: 'We stepped into the world of *Silthood*, where nature comes to life in an almost anthropomorphic way. It's a stunning, original, genre-bending entry in the non-fiction category.'



**Dr Ewan Jones** has published *The Turn of Rhythm: How Victorian Poetry Shaped a New Concept* (UVA Press, 2023). Incredibly, until the cusp of the nineteenth century, the word rhythm was not widely used. It likewise had no cultural connotations. *The Turn of Rhythm* traces the complex and overlooked way in which anglophone culture

'got rhythm', concentrating on the pivotal role that poetry played in that narrative.



**Prof. Laura Wright** has published *The Social Life of Words: A Historical Approach*. The book explores the rise and fall of the social properties of words, charting ways in which they take on new social connotations. From familiar words such as *popcorn*, *porridge*, *café*, to less common words like *burgoo*, *califont*, *etna*, and

phrases like *kiss me quick*, *monkey parade*, *slap-bang shop*, Prof. Wright demonstrates some of the many ways a new word or phrase can develop social affiliations.

# LIBRARY NEWS

The English Faculty Library supports taught courses at both undergraduate and graduate level, and we work alongside academic staff and research students. It's a busy library with print stock still in high demand; nearly 26,000 books were borrowed in 2023. We purchased just over 700 new books and that's in addition to the more than one million eBooks available online. Visitors can browse the collections in the English library and alumni of the University of Cambridge can apply for free access to the University Library. Please complete the online form.

## LIBRARY EXHIBITIONS

The library welcomes visitors to our exhibition space the 'Benson Gallery'. Exhibitions normally run for a term and this year we featured research from two PhD and one MPhil student. We welcome proposals for exhibitions from current students, staff and alumni of the Faculty of English and Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic with the aim to share the outputs of academic research with a wider non-specialist audience. The content may relate to language and literary themes, historical, cultural, and interdisciplinary topics and those topics with a relationship to library collections are encouraged.



In Michaelmas term 2023, Jodie Coates (PhD Student, Centre for Research in Children's Literature) curated an exhibition titled 'The Hypermediated Pop-Up Book'. The display explored how creatives use the hybrid form and paradoxical history of the pop-up book to generate new, interactive encounters with 'the book', for both young and old. The display included an amazing range of examples, from theatre sets to comic books, video games to models crafted by paper engineers for blockbuster movies.

The summer exhibition presented research on inclusivity in children's literature about or featuring sports. Recent children's literature explicitly



addresses taboos around race and racism, sex and sexuality, LGBTQIA+ themes, and cultures of abuse and violence in sports. The display featured novels, graphic novels, picture books, films and explored the broader cultural context that illustrate shifts in sports culture and children's literature over the past twenty years. From 'Bend It Like Beckham' to 'Do Goalkeepers Wear Tiaras?' the exhibition demonstrates how children's literature can engage with social issues in a nuanced and age-appropriate way. The exhibition was curated by independent researcher and children's author Sarah Layzell and Faculty of Education PhD candidate Carla Plieth.

In Easter term 2023, Reanna Brookes who was studying for an MPhil in English Studies translated her dissertation research into an exhibition titled 'Reading Art: Tracing the Overlap Between Visual Arts and Literature'. The exhibition traced the history of 'art-writing' (ekphrasis) and how it has changed

## LIBRARY EXHIBITIONS CONT.

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over time by comparing and contrasting traditional ekphrastic writing with 'visual' books, i.e. books that incorporate elements of fine art practices through either their materiality, content, or both. Specifically, the exhibition focused on the British Modernist period (roughly 1910s-1940s) which experienced an expansion of new ideas in both art and literature. Successively, the two fields began to overlap, with the incorporation of visual arts in book design, formatting, and content. The exhibit featured the fine art practices of Modernism (painting, printing, letter pressing) transitioning into the current Contemporary age of literature and art. Examples of graphic design and typography reflect the heavy influence of technology and digitality, hinting at the future of visual books.



Our new blog features more pictures from these exhibitions and other displays over the year, and is available at <https://englishlibrarycam.wordpress.com/>. You can follow the library on Twitter and Instagram @eflcam.



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