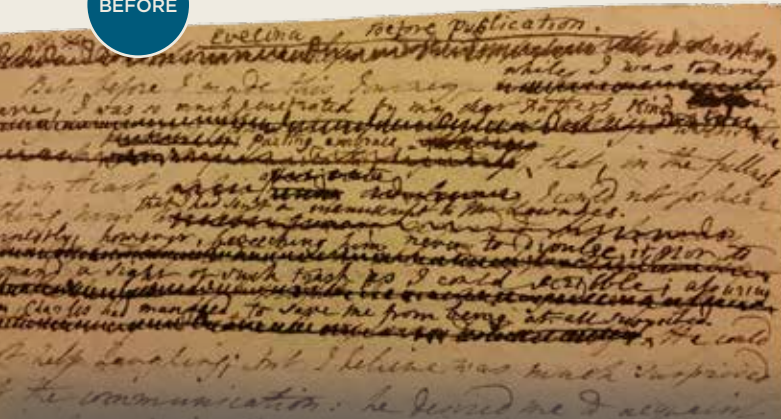


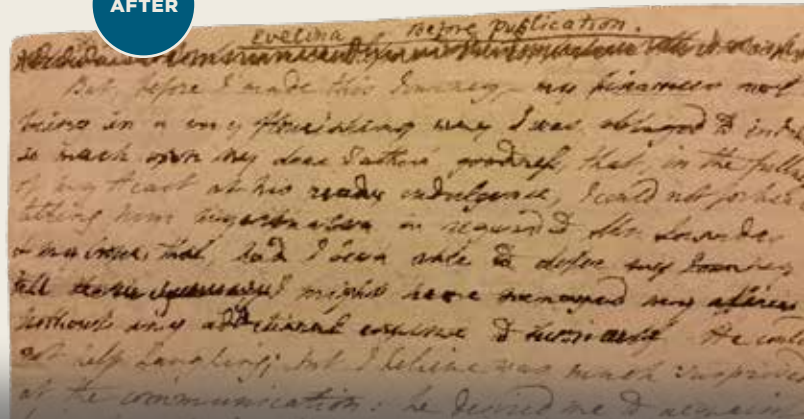
Wordplay

T ENGLISH

BEFORE



AFTER



FACULTY RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT:

Recovering Lost Text at the **Digital Frontier**

Is it possible to recover deleted manuscript text? Thanks to new technologies in the digital humanities, some passages that have been considered lost forever can now be restored and read.

In her recent book, *Revising the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Authorship from Manuscript to Print* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), **Assistant Professor Hilary Havens** applies methodologies she developed in digital paleography to uncover deleted passages from literary texts and correspondence by five well-known eighteenth-century authors. These methodologies use image manipulation software and employ layering techniques, color levels, and filters; they are vastly more advanced than the simple image enlargement techniques used by most researchers. When applied to obliterated textual material, this technology leads to unexpected discoveries.

As an example of her digital detective work, Havens recovered a long episode describing satanic rites at a masquerade ball in Frances Burney's domestic novel *Cecilia* (1782). Burney was one of Jane Austen's favorite authors and, like her better-known contemporary, wrote novels with domestic themes that centered on a marriage plot.

The recovered satanic rites scene asks us to revise our views of Burney as a domestic fiction author and recognize some of her less conventional interests as a novelist, which were likely suppressed before publication due to their inappropriate content. Havens's discovery, in other words, underscores the restrictions that female authors faced as they revised their risky and challenging writings during the long eighteenth century.

These techniques have revealed hitherto unseen passages in the works and correspondence of other long eighteenth-century authors such as Maria Edgeworth, Anne Finch, and Samuel Richardson, though their application is not limited to a certain period. Although there are limiting factors in the use of this technology—the image resolution of the deleted passage needs to be very high, and the obliterating marks must not be too heavy—the method's cost-effectiveness hints at its potentially wide application. Manuscript studies is one of the most traditional forms of literary study, but Havens's work is part of a growing trend that refuses to be limited by conventional methodologies and instead uses digital tools as a way to better understand the past.

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Stronger Together



ALLEN DUNN
Professor and Head
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

As most of you are aware, our English majors work in a variety of fields or subdisciplines. Some focus on creative writing, some on literary criticism, and still others on rhetoric, writing, and linguistics. At some universities, each of these areas is assigned a department of its own, but at the University of Tennessee, we pride ourselves on the way we have incorporated this disciplinary diversity in a single department. We believe that we are stronger together than we would be if each group went its separate way. It seems obvious to us that a creative writing student has much to learn from the study of literary texts, and that a literature student can learn a lot about their subject by actually writing a poem or a novel. We also take it as an article of faith that neither type of student can succeed without mastering the fundamentals of good writing and the rhetoric of human communication.

This disciplinary breadth complements the cultural diversity of the department's curriculum, which includes a variety of world literatures from African and Asian to Chican@ and Native American among others. It also includes courses in sociolinguistics, cultural rhetorics, and gender, race, and sexuality studies. While affirming our commitment to what has endured through time, we've allowed our curriculum to evolve within an increasingly diverse and globalized world.

As this newsletter suggests, the UT Department of English has achieved excellence in each of the three areas mentioned above. Thanks to all of you who have supported our mission by contributing to the department. Your contributions support a variety of undergraduate and graduate scholarships, student research grants and assistantships, and other programs that enrich our students' educational experience. Anyone who wishes to contribute to the English Enrichment Fund can donate at any time. Our website will help us bring you exciting new information on the department and its many activities. We also have a Facebook page ([@UTKDepartmentOfEnglish](#)) which features weekly news about events, readings, pictures of campus life, and faculty and student news. Check it out when you get a chance, and don't hesitate to let us know if there's any way these sites can serve you better.

YOUNG ALUMNAE SPOTLIGHT: MADDIE STEPHENS

Bearing the Torch

The Torchbearer award, which is presented each year to a highly select group of seniors who distinguish themselves in academic achievement and outstanding commitment to others, is the highest student honor conferred by the University of Tennessee. One of the 2019 recipients of this award was **Maddie Stephens**, a Chancellor's Honors student majoring in English and minoring in leadership studies. Maddie also held one of the English department's top undergraduate honors, a Charles and Frances Mangam Merit Scholarship.

Maddie's many activities as a student demonstrated her belief that students are not consumers or passive recipients of learning but active stewards of the core values and traditions that UT upholds. Both in student government and through many other volunteer activities, Maddie made it a priority to welcome new students to our campus—whether as a Welcome Week leader or as the creator of a "Guide to Torchbearer Tuesdays"—to help students link their own experiences on campus to the Volunteer Creed. She also played an important role in sustainability and campus recycling efforts, including Earth Day and Recycle Mania events.

Studying English helped Maddie to explore and develop her passions.

"I'm passionate about social justice, race relations in America, and feminism," said Maddie. "I found classes in my major that touched on those topics through literature. There's always a way to personalize your academic path, and I think English gives you the best opportunity to do that."



"In a world where communication happens constantly and rapidly, strong writing and editing skills are a huge professional asset for any career."

Whether it was studying American literary naturalism with Professor Mary Papke or writing her senior thesis on the tragic mulatto figure with Professor Lisi Schoenbach, she felt nurtured and challenged to realize her goals.

"There's an understood commitment across the faculty to support the creative individuality and intuition of each student."

Maddie accepted a position as a public relations specialist for the UT Office of Communications and Marketing after graduating in May 2019. She is pursuing a career as a student life specialist in higher education. She looks forward to applying the critical skills she learned as an English major to the complex issues of student life and academic institutions. The writing skills she developed will also serve her in good stead.



Joy Harjo Named US Poet Laureate

As the John C. Hodges Chair of Excellence in the UT Department of English, Professor Joy Harjo encouraged her students to pay attention to the details of life in order to speak and write with knowledge, compassion, and fluency. In her new role as poet laureate of the United States, Harjo, who officially retired from the university in July 2019, will help raise the national consciousness to a greater appreciation of the reading and writing of poetry.

“Joy Harjo has championed the art of poetry—soul talk, as she calls it—for more than four decades,” said Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden. “To her, poems are carriers of dreams, knowledge, and wisdom, and through them she tells an American story of tradition and loss, reckoning and myth making. Her work powerfully connects us to the earth and the spiritual world with direct, inventive lyricism that helps us re-imagine who we are.”

Harjo is the first Native American poet to serve in the position. She succeeds Tracy K. Smith, who served two terms as laureate. Harjo currently lives in her hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is the nation’s first poet laureate from Oklahoma.

“What a tremendous honor it is to be named the US poet laureate,” Harjo said. “I share this honor with ancestors and teachers who inspired in me a love of poetry, who taught that words are powerful and can make change when understanding appears impossible, and how time and timelessness can live together within a poem. I count among these ancestors and teachers my Muscogee Creek people, the librarians who opened so many doors for all of us, and the original poets of the indigenous tribal nations of these lands, who

were joined by diverse peoples from nations all over the world to make this country and this country’s poetry.”

In 2016, Harjo brought her distinction as a major figure in contemporary American poetry, her expertise in Native American studies, and her background in creative nonfiction, drama, and music to the UT English department. During her time as a faculty member, Harjo won several awards for her poetry, including one of the most prestigious prizes in poetry—the Poetry Foundation’s Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, which is bestowed on a living American poet for outstanding lifetime accomplishments.

“We are deeply indebted to her for her many contributions to our department,” said English Department Head Allen Dunn. “Joy’s poetry is about healing. As an outspoken advocate for the rights of women and native peoples, she reminds us of the values that should unite us as a community.”



Reclaiming a Narrative

When Hannah Widdifield developed muscular dystrophy as a child, disability became an inevitable part of her experience. With the aid of a wheelchair, she found herself navigating a world that was designed by and for those without disabilities. In college, she turned to scholarship as a source of knowledge and power in relation to her condition. Majoring in English with a minor in medical humanities, she learned the power of stories and the possibility of reclaiming her own experience from society’s narratives about those whose bodies are different. In short, she discovered that she could bring together her love of literature and the other humanities with the curiosities of her disabled, often medicalized body and experience.

As a student in the UT English PhD program, Hannah became interested in the applications of disability studies to literary modernism. Her dissertation, “Crippled Aesthetics of Modernism,” looks at the principles of fragmentation and disfigurement in works such as Virginia Woolf’s essay “On Being Ill,” Olive Moore’s novel *Spleen*, the cubist poetry of Gertrude Stein, and Bernard Pomerance’s play *The Elephant Man* from the perspective of non-normative embodiment. If modernist aesthetics typically trouble the idea of the “norm,” whether it is an artistic norm, a societal norm, a scientific norm, or a moral one, then disabilities studies expresses the same interest in getting us to think anew about what we have taken for granted as “normal.”

“The inclusion of the disabled body in aesthetic forms—or at least the advent of a disabled aesthetic—both complicates and enriches our discussions of what determines a body, an experience, or a piece of art as something valuable,” Hannah said.

In other words, disabled bodies enrich the texts and worlds they appear in rather than simply standing in for lack or disfigurement. The UT College of Arts and Sciences recognized the importance of Hannah’s research with the prestigious Thomas Dissertation Fellowship for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Hannah’s academic work also reflects the intimate connection between scholarship and activism in disability studies. She led a disability round table discussion in one of the Nexus Interdisciplinary Conferences hosted at UT, and she was an invited guest speaker at a graduate seminar on sociology and disability at Coastal Carolina University. She was also instrumental in bringing disability scholar Lennard Davis to the university to speak on his current research on the intersections of disability and poverty. Afterwards, she served with Davis and other disability advocates on campus to discuss ways of improving accessibility and establishing a program in disability studies at the University of Tennessee.



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Thank you for your support!

New Help for Student Writers

“Your paper is due on Friday—get it done.” This may sound easy, but often it’s not. The recently renamed Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center’s newest services are helping more and more students with their writing—and also the faculty who assign it. Under the direction of Kirsten Benson—and with the generous help of Judi and Jim Herbert (‘63)—the center has created a new culture of writing for students and faculty on campus.

One exciting new service in the Herbert Writing Center staff is assistance from undergraduate tutors from a wide variety of fields—linguistics, music, audiology and speech pathology, computer science, philosophy, and more. These tutors receive intensive training and gain lots of practice providing feedback to the writers who visit the center. Their peers from disciplines all over campus love to seek them out and get their advice.

Another new and highly successful service is specialized help for students preparing application materials, such as cover letters for jobs, résumés, and personal statements for law, medical, and other graduate schools. With so much at stake with such documents, students can sometimes feel uncomfortable when others read their drafts. The Herbert Writing Center tutors, however, make writers feel confident and able to create more powerful application materials. This service has been received very positively, with 100 percent reporting they would recommend it to other students.

Students are not the only ones who are getting more support; the Herbert Writing Center is now offering writing-in-the-disciplines workshops for faculty outside the Department of English. Instructors from any department on campus gather to learn about and discuss best practices for designing writing assignments and responding to and assessing writing assignments. Three new faculty workshop series have been offered in the past year, with plans for more.

The Herbert Writing Center, in other words, is becoming a hub for student and faculty support across campus, with more than 18,000 student visits in the past year from every college. A satellite location is now open in Pendergrass Library to support students at the Herbert College of Agriculture plus graduate student writers seeking in-person help for coursework and thesis/dissertation writing. The center has also partnered with the Graduate School, the Center for Career Development, the Office of Undergraduate Research, the Honors and Scholars Programs, and other departments to offer numerous workshops tailored to specific students’ writing needs.

“With the leadership that we have in place in the Writing Center, I feel that we can only do more and more wonderful things. We can now help students all across campus. The most exciting thing that I see is the seminars that are occurring to help faculty help their students become better writers. We never want to see a UT graduate who cannot compose a good paper.”

— Judith Anderson Herbert (‘63)

“Their recognition and desire to better understand what I do in my classes and in my discipline in order to help the students they serve speaks to the value that they provide to the UT community. Across the board, my students who took advantage of their services wrote better papers both relative to their peers and to previous semesters. This was true even for students who were struggling. They help students, and they also help me, and my colleagues, become better teachers and in turn help our students. Most importantly, they get clear results.”

— Alex Feldt, senior lecturer in philosophy



FACULTY NEWS: NEW FACULTY PROFILE

Welcoming Eleni Palis

Eleni Palis joined our department this year as an assistant professor of cinema studies. Before arriving in Knoxville, she received her PhD in English literature, concentrating in cinema and media studies, at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research deals with the intersections of classical (or 1915-1950) Hollywood and post-classical American cinema.

Palis’s current project, “Theorizing Film Quotation: Re-Membering Classical Hollywood in Contemporary American Cinema,” defines film quotation as the practice of contemporary American filmmakers reusing (or quoting) classical Hollywood film fragments in their movies. This practice, she argues, demonstrates the intricate relationship between film authorship and the cinematic archive since the 1950s and 1960s. Film quotation is also an important precursor to meme culture, remixes, and other elements of today’s digital media.

As a member of the English department, Palis will teach introduction to film studies, film history courses spanning early cinema, classical Hollywood, and contemporary film cultures, and upper-level courses on American film genre, theory, adaptation, and the representation of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality onscreen. She will also play an important role in UT’s cinema studies program.



For more news about our faculty, visit tiny.utk.edu/EnglishFacultyNews

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Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center, October 11, 2019

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