

VERSO

An Undergraduate Journal
of Literary Criticism

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“Pooh began to feel a little more comfortable, because when you are a Bear of Very Little Brain, and you Think of Things, you find sometimes that a Thing which seemed very Thingish inside you is quite different when it gets out into the open and has other people looking at it.”

A. A. Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner*

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I hope I have surprised readers with this year's cover. A little. The stack of books is expected – we've all created those precarious piles before, on desks and on floors, defying logic as we balance them higher and higher, for the sake of some project or thesis – but why the grainy texture? Why the bright, overflowing colours? Why the careful, crooked letters of a child's scrawl? *Verso* is, after all, an *undergraduate* journal of literary criticism, not a grade-school homework assignment.

Its imperfections, the deliberate mistakes, are a passing nod to its first issue in 2009. As undergraduates, we're not going to get it completely "right," not yet. Its first editor, Zani Showler, envisioned *Verso* as a space where we can get "serious about the playfulness" that not quite getting it right affords.

The cover reflects this playfulness, as does the epigraph from A. A. Milne's *The House at Pooh Corner* – not only because it comes from a children's story, but also because it expresses the mutability of ideas and their dependency on the surrounding academic discourse, however we position ourselves in it. How many theses remain

unchanged from the first spark of recognition in reading a text to an essay's final draft? Flitting or forgotten, thoughts can be slippery. Write them down, but they still won't stay still, not completely. In writing essays, we are required to build our ideas, Things we Think in the privacy of our own minds, on Things experts have Thought. And we change our own Thoughts accordingly.

Always reaching for a newer interpretation, a better understanding of texts, our ideas teeter precariously on the thoughts of others - like a stack of books.

Kristan Newell
Editor-in-Chief

THE CONTRIBUTORS

ADAM CAMERON is in his third year at Dalhousie University, where he is an English major in the Bachelor of Arts program. Before enrolling at Dalhousie, he was in the Navy for four years, and he continues to work for the Naval Reserves during the summer. He has been married for four years, and he and his wife hope to have children in the near future (twins, a boy and a girl, if his wife has her way). In his spare time, he volunteers as vice president of the board of directors for the Halifax Student Housing Society.

TESSA CERNIK will be graduating in May 2013 with combined honours in English and History, and she plans to further develop her love of everything medieval through a master's program in the fall. Besides being a medievalist-in-training, Tessa also works in theatre as an administrator and producer. During her summers, you can find her in Toronto working at the SummerWorks Performance Festival. Tessa would like to thank the *Verso* editing team for considering her paper, as well as Dr. Kathy Cawsey for all her help with this essay and her support over the last three years.

REED CLEMENTS is in his final year of a combined honours degree in Contemporary Studies and English. He loves to read Irish literature and drink scotch, often at the same time. He plans to do graduate work on James Joyce, but not before he has some adventures.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

KELLY LARKIN CONWAY, originally from PEI, is in the process of completing a combined honours degree in English and Creative Writing at Dalhousie. Although *Heart of Darkness* is not her favourite read, she very much enjoyed arguing that the two-penny-half-penny steam boat is the strongest feminine character in the novella.

ZOE DOUCETTE is an art school drop-out and second-year English major (BA '14) at Dalhousie University. She contributes to the Dalhousie Gazette as a film columnist, and she dreams of learning to write the way that Kenny Shopsin cooks.

BEN HICKS grew up in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, until he came to King's College in 2008. He is currently preparing an undergraduate thesis for the Contemporary Studies Programme. He is the last ghost in the library.

BRITTANY KRAUS is currently completing her final semester of an English honours degree from the University of King's College. She has previously published essays in *Verso*, and has won awards for her submissions to Varma, Dalhousie's gothic prose and poetry competition, and the Dalhousie Valentine's Day sonnet competition. She earned a diploma in Music Theory and Performance from Grant MacEwan University in 2007. Upon graduating from King's, BA in tow, Brittany plans to embark on a series of epic adventures. She will keep you posted as to how it all unfolds.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

KATIE MACDONALD is a fourth-year English major from Niagara Falls, Ontario. In her spare time, she likes to travel back in time – thanks in part to a slew of American authors. Her other interests include water sports, baseball, and puzzles. To fuel her writing, Katie relies heavily on tea and grilled cheese sandwiches. After graduation, she hopes to write children’s books, but she will not mind if adults enjoy them too.

JULIA MANOUKIAN studies English and Creative Writing at Dalhousie. She enjoys wine, pizza, and antimetabolic turns in speech. Also, Jack Kerouac is her idol, because life is about spontaneity and what gets in the way (isn’t it?). In twenty years, Julia envisions herself as a connoisseur of wine, homemade pizza, and rhetoric (with life’s interference pending).

JACOB SANDLER is a third-year English and Canadian Studies honours student. He is currently working on his honours thesis, which will explore Canadian cannabis culture and the implications of the perpetuating illegality of marijuana. Jacob is interested in Canadian literature, poetry and poetics, philosophical and literary theory, and Canadian and American culture and politics. After completing his undergraduate degree, he intends to enter a PhD program in Cultural Studies or English (although this changes almost every week; other options include taking time off school, going to law school, becoming a paramedic, joining the coast guard, etc.).

THE CONTRIBUTORS

EMMA SKAGEN, born in Vancouver and raised in Calgary, moved to Halifax in September of 2011 to pursue a degree at Dalhousie University, majoring in English Literature and minoring in Classics. After dropping out of high school in 2009, Emma took her time working, travelling, and upgrading until she was unexpectedly accepted to Dal in 2011. She now enjoys the perks of studentdom - being perpetually behind on readings and eating far too many perogies - and looks forward to what the future may hold for a person with an English degree.

MOLLIE WINTER is a fourth-year student from Tiny, Ontario, a place that constantly inspires her. She loves cross-country skiing; her family's pet sheep, Dora; Afie Jurvanen('s music); and broccoli, among other things. Mollie believes that everyone should realize how amazing midwives are for delivering happy babies and helping families feel empowered. She is finishing up a combined honours degree in English and Creative Writing and, upon graduating, hopes to further explore her country, her planet, and her writing.

ERIKA WOOLGAR is an enthusiastic combined honours student studying English and Environment, Sustainability, and Society at Dalhousie. She looks forward to graduating in May and attending law school at the University of British Columbia in September. In addition to consuming copious amounts of tea and coffee, her interests include reading, writing, yoga, and gardening. She is also passionate about environmental and social justice issues, both in Canada and abroad.