

JAMES C. STAPLES

306 W 142nd St., Apt 3E
New York, NY 10030
james.staples@trincoll.edu (804) 712-6266

CURRENT POSITION

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of English, Trinity College, 2023-present

PREVIOUS POSITION

Visiting Lecturer, Department of English, SUNY Oneonta, 2021-2023

Postdoctoral Lecturer, Department of English, New York University, 2019-2020

EDUCATION

Ph.D., English literature, New York University, May 2019

B.A., Magna Cum Laude, with Honors in English, and a second major in Medieval & Renaissance Studies, The College of William and Mary in Virginia, May 2010

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Title: *Poynts and Spots: Molecular Revolutions, Mystical Desires, and the Pearl-Poet*

Committee: Carolyn Dinshaw (Director), Christopher Cannon, Sarah Kay

This dissertation argues that the four poems by the fourteenth-century Pearl-Poet express desires for a better present through their elaborate poetics and challenging wordplay, while simultaneously revealing the impossibility of achieving such desires fully. I consider in each poem the poet's enigmatic concept of the "poynt," a unit of geometry that challenges epistemological certainty by existing and yet eluding direct experience in its non-dimensionality. I juxtapose the "poynt" to the "spot," a polysemic word that the Pearl-Poet exploits in each poem, representing the faulty and inadequate reification of the *poynt*. The *poynt*'s promise of something else is comparable to that desire expressed by late medieval mystics, whose texts I consider extensively alongside the Pearl-Poet. Each poem ostensibly ends in failure, but the residual detritus of these *poynts*, including mappings, music, art, and subject identity, retain traces of a desire for something otherwise.

PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

Without a Spot: The Pearl-Poet's Revolutionary Mysticism and its Heresies (in preparation).

Articles

"The Giants' Green Chapel: Biopolitical Dehumanization in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" (in preparation).

"Synguler: Margery Kempe's Irregular Desires for a Queerer Present" *Romanic Review* (Spring 2023).

"Pure Pleasure: *Cleanness* and Fourteenth-Century Sexual Liberation" *Exemplaria* 34.1 (Spring 2022): 40-65.

“Mercy Schal Hyr Craftez Kype: Learning to Perform Re-deeming Readings of Materiality in *Pearl*,” *Glossator* 9 (March 2015): 109-131.

Reviews and Other Writing

“Review of Moina Pam Dick’s *Moirra of Edges, Moirra the Tart*,” *Chicago Review* (July 2020)

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

Medieval and Renaissance Literature and Culture; Queer Theory; Theories of History and Historiography; Gender and Sexuality Studies; Theology; Mysticism and Affective Piety; Poetics; Affect Theory; Social Revolutions; Deleuze and Guattari

TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

Trinity College, Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of English, 2023-Present

Inventing English Literature

Chaucer

Romance and Dream Vision

Distressed Damsels: Gender Stereotypes and Their Subversion in Medieval Literature and Culture

New Troy: Fantasies of Indigeneity and Colonization in Medieval Britain (Graduate course)

SUNY Oneonta, Lecturer in the Department of English, 2021-2023

Chaucer

English Literature: Beginnings to Early Renaissance

Introduction to Literary Study

Distressed Damsels: Gender Stereotypes and Their Subversion in Medieval Literature and Culture (cross-listed with Women’s and Gender Studies)

Shakespeare

Queer Literature (cross-listed with Women’s and Gender Studies)

Medieval Literature: Dream Visions

Writing about Literature

Introductory Composition

Advanced Composition

New York University, Lecturer in the Department of English, 2019-2020

Introduction to Chaucer

Queer Shakespeare

Earthly Delights: Pleasure in Medieval Literature and Culture

Introduction to the Study of Literature

New York University, Instructor of Record, 2018

Friars and Fairies: Medieval Visionary Literature

St. John’s University, Instructor of Record, 2018

Friars and Fairies: Medieval Visionary Literature

New York University, Teaching Assistant, 2016-2017

British Literature 1

Core Curriculum Texts and Ideas: Value

University of Pittsburgh, Instructor of Record, 2013-2014

Seminar in Composition

AWARDS AND HONORS

James Baldwin Award for Professional Excellence, for dedication to LGBTQIA+ students, SUNY Oneonta, *2023*

Millicent Bell Fellowship, NYU, *2018-2019*

Departmental Travel Grant, NYU, *2018*

Donald Howard Travel Scholarship, New Chaucer Society, *2016*

GSAS Predoctoral Summer Fellowship, NYU GSAS, *2016*

Departmental Travel Grant, NYU, *2016*

GSAS Dean's Student Travel Grant, NYU GSAS, *2015*

Departmental Travel Grant, NYU, *2014*

Donald Howard Travel Scholarship, New Chaucer Society, *2014*

Graduate Student Conference Small Grant, European Union Center of Excellence/European Studies Center (declined), *2014*

PBK Virginia Northcott Brinkley Award for Excellence in Writing, The College of William and Mary *2009-2010*

Research Grant Recipient, The College of William and Mary *2008*

INVITED LECTURES / PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures

"Julian, Margery, and the Experience of the Text," *Sexy, Saintly, and Subdued: Women in Global Medieval Literature*, course taught by Dr. Caroline Gruenbaum, Yale University, *October 22, 2019*

"A Fourteenth-Century Sodom: The Risks and Pleasures of Unregulated Mysticism in *Cleanness*," Birkbeck Medieval Seminar on "Sex in the Medieval City," *June 21, 2019*

Conference Presentations

"Giants' Breath: The Racializing Violence of Animalization in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, *May 2023*

“Pseudo-Mulieres and Pearl-Maidens: Unknowing the Gender Binary in *Pearl* and *The Mirror of Simple Souls*,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, *May 2021*

“Unsound Bodies, Insane Loves: The Queerness of ‘Devotional Fol Amour’ in the Later Middle Ages,” NYU Medieval and Renaissance Graduate student Interdisciplinary Network (MARGIN), *May 17, 2018*

“The Sex Life of Pearls: Pygmalion, *Pearl*, and Objectumsexuality,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, *May 11, 2018*

“Gawain’s Mythic Penis: Castration Anxiety and the Problems of Mastery in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, *May 14, 2017*

“Ovidian Sex Objects: Pygmalion and Objectophilia in Late Medieval Poetry,” NYU Medieval and Renaissance Graduate student Interdisciplinary Network (MARGIN), *November 10, 2016*

“I See It, but I’m Not Quite Sure What It Is, or the Discomfort with *Cleanness* as a Naked Text,” New Chaucer Society Biennial International Congress, London, *July 12, 2016*

“Embracing Alterity: Queer Historicism, Individualizing Difference, and the Value of Periodization,” Method and the Middle English Text Graduate Conference, University of Virginia, *April 8, 2016*

“Drowning in a Flood of Meanings: the Intertextual Ambiguities of Language in *Cleanness*,” Inter University Doctoral Consortium, CUNY, *April 1, 2016*

“Puking Out Pearls,” BABEL Working Group, University of Toronto, *October 10, 2015*

“Beautiful Filth: *Cleanness*’s Sensually Appealing Sins and the Dirtiness of the Incarnation,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, *May 15, 2015*

“Seductive Seashores: Saint Æthelthryth and the Transformative Promise of Seduction,” BABEL Working Group, UC Santa Barbara, *October 18, 2014*

“Erotic Edification: Henry Suso’s *Life of the Servant* and its Seduction of Spirit,” New Chaucer Society Biennial International Congress, Reykjavik, *July 16, 2014*

“The Inner Saracen: Honoré Bove’s *L’apparicion maistre Jehan de Meun* and the Great Schism” Newberry Graduate Student Conference, Chicago, *January 23, 2014*

“The Saracens of the West: Honoré Bove and the Decadence of a Schismatic Church,” The Saracens and the West Roundtable, Pittsburgh, *October 8, 2013*

“The Stynking Cod: Gluttony in the *Pardoner’s Tale* and its Sodomitical Shadow,” NeMLA, Boston, *March 23, 2013*

Respondent, “Crusade after the Crusades” Colloquium, University of Pittsburgh, *November 9, 2012*

“Where the East Meets the West: Medieval Mediterranean Art and the Shaping of the Renaissance,” Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, *February 3, 2011*

“Dangerous Sanctity: John Capgrave’s *The Life of St. Norbert* and its Literary and Cultural Significance,” Program for Medieval & Renaissance Studies Symposium, Williamsburg, VA, *March 27, 2010*

“Ars Amatoria: The Art of Courtly Love in the Middle Ages,” The Cloisters Summer Internship Program, New York, NY, *August 7, 2008*

EVENT AND CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

Event co-organizer, Bettina Bildhauer, “Inanimate Biographies: Medieval German Narratives about Material Things,” in conjunction with NYU’s Medieval Forum and the Medieval and Renaissance Center, New York University, *November 16, 2017*

Event co-organizer, Elizabeth Scala, “Shakespeare’s Secret Book,” in conjunction with NYU’s Medieval Forum and MARGIN, New York University, *March 22, 2017*

Event co-organizer, Emily Steiner, “Collecting, Violence, Literature: Richard de Bury’s *Philobiblon*,” in conjunction with NYU’s Medieval Forum, New York University, *November 3, 2016*

Event co-organizer, Robert Davis, “Thinking Without Guarantee in Anselm of Canterbury’s *Proslogion*,” in conjunction with NYU’s Medieval Forum, New York University, *October 12, 2016*

Event co-organizer, Robert Mills, “Derek Jarman’s Medieval Modern: A Life in Ruins,” in conjunction with NYU’s Medieval Forum and the Medieval and Renaissance Center, New York University, *April 27, 2016*

Event co-organizer, Sarah Novacich, “Poetry Machine,” in conjunction with NYU’s Medieval Forum, New York University, *February 10, 2016*

Event co-organizer, Stacy Klein, “Parenting and Childhood in *The Fortunes of Men*,” in conjunction with NYU’s Medieval Forum, New York University, *October 28, 2015*

Event co-organizer, “Three Faiths: The Making of Medieval Holy Books,” Annual Medieval Manuscript Workshop, in conjunction with NYU’s Medieval Forum and the Medieval and Renaissance Center, New York University, *October 9, 2015*

SERVICE

Thesis Committee Member, History Department, SUNY Oneonta, *Spring 2022-Spring 2023*

Honors Thesis Adviser, English Department, New York University, *Fall 2019-Spring 2020*

Freshman Adviser, English Department, New York University, *Fall 2019-Spring 2020*

Research Assistant, Carolyn Dinshaw, New York University, *Spring 2016-2019*

Graduate Assistant, Medieval and Renaissance Center, NYU, *Spring 2016*

Chair of Medieval Forum, English Department, New York University, *2015-2018*

Editorial Assistant, *Postmedieval: The Middle Ages and the Holocaust*, Vol. 5, Issue 3 *2014*

Co-author of Online Labels, Medieval and Renaissance galleries, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts *2011*

SPECIAL TRAINING

Pedagogical Training

Committee for the Evaluation and Advancement of Teaching (CEAT), University of Pittsburgh, *2013-2014*

Archival and Paleographical Training

“Sex in the Archives,” course taught by Marvin Taylor and Zeb Tortorici, NYU, *Fall 2016*

“Marguerite Porete and the Book of Simple Souls,” course taught by Elizabeth A. R. Brown, NYU, *Spring 2016*

“The Troubadours and the Value of Song,” course taught by Sarah Kay and Susan Boynton, NYU & Columbia University, *Fall 2015*

“*Le roman de la rose* and Medieval Discourses of Nature,” course taught by Jonathan Morton, Columbia University, *Fall 2014*

NCS Graduate Student Workshop in Manuscript Studies, New Chaucer Society, Arní Magnússon Institute, Reykjavik, *July 2013*

Cloisters Summer Internship Program, The Cloisters Museum & Gardens, New York City, *Summer 2008*

Introduction to medieval manuscripts in Erzbischöfliches archiv, directed by Letha Böhringer, Cologne, Germany, *March 2008*

“The Medieval Book: Introduction to Paleography and Codicology,” course taught by George Greenia, College of William & Mary, *Spring 2008*

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Copy Editor and Fact Checker, *GLAAD*, New York, NY, *2021*

Copy Editor, *Out Magazine*, New York, NY, *February 2019-February 2020*

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Curatorial Intern for European Art, Richmond, VA, *2010-2012*

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Intern in Museum Education, The Cloisters Summer Internship Program, New York, NY, *2008*

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

Reading and research knowledge of Latin, French, Old French, Anglo-Norman, Old Occitan, Old English, Middle English

REFERENCES

Carolyn Dinshaw, Senior Program Officer for Higher Learning, Mellon Foundation; former Silver Professor of English and Social & Cultural Analysis, New York University (carolyn.dinshaw@nyu.edu)

Christopher Cannon, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of English and Classics and Vice Dean for Humanities and Social Sciences, The Johns Hopkins University (christopher.cannon@jhu.edu)

Bianca Tredennick, Associate Professor of English, SUNY Oneonta (Bianca.Tredennick@oneonta.edu)

Sarah Kay, Emerita Professor of French, New York University (hsk8@nyu.edu)