

CHRISTOPHER GROBE

*Associate Professor & Chair of English
Amherst College*

EDUCATION

Yale University, PhD in English Literature, 2011.

Performing Confession: Poetry, Performance, and New Media since 1959 (awarded Yale's prize for best dissertation in English)

Yale University, MA, MPhil in English Literature, 2008.

Yale University, BA in English & Theater Studies, 2005.

Magna cum laude, with distinction in each major

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Chair of English, Amherst College

July 2020 - present

Associate Professor of English, Amherst College

July 2018 - present

Assistant Professor of English, Amherst College

July 2011 - June 2018

Instructor, Yale University, English Department

2009-2010 (Teaching Fellow, 2008-2009)

BOOK PROJECTS

The Art of Confession: The Performance of Self from Robert Lowell to Reality TV (NYU Press, 2017)

shortlisted for the ASAP Book Prize (2018)

reviewed in: *Publisher's Weekly*, *Library Journal* (starred review), *Choice* (marked "essential" for scholars, students, and general readers), *TDR: The Drama Review*, *Theatre Survey*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *American Literature*, *Biography*, *ASAP/Journal*, *ALH: American Literary History*, *PopMatters*

covered by: *Tourniquet Pod*, *New Books in Literary Studies*

featured in: "self-recording" (art installation by the Almare collective @ ArtVerona, October 2019)

Imitation Games: Artists and Arts-Knowledge in the Tech Industries (monograph in progress)

supported by: ACLS-Burkhardt Fellowship (2019-2020)

Performance Literacy for Politics (monograph in progress)

PUBLICATIONS

ARTICLES & CHAPTERS

“The Programming Era: The Art of Conversation Design, from ELIZA to Alexa” (forthcoming in *Post45*)

“A Terrible Art of Sharpshooting at the Audience?: Teaching the Shock of Modern Drama” (forthcoming in *Modern Drama*)

“The Deep, Dark Play of the US Capitol Riots,” *Performance Research* 27.1, Special issue “On Protest” (forthcoming, February 2023).

“The Artist is President: ‘Performance Art’ and Other Keywords in the Age of Donald Trump,” *Critical Inquiry* 46.4 (2020): 764-805.

“Sound,” *Further Reading*, ed. Leah Price & Matthew Rubery (Oxford University Press, 2020).

“Playing with Technodollies: The TV Actress and Other Technologies,” *Orphan Black: Performance, Gender, Biopolitics*, ed. Andrea Goulet and Robert Rushing (Intellect Books, 2018).

“Advertisements for Themselves: Confessional Poetry and the Arts of Publicity,” *American Literature in Transition, 1950-1960*, ed. Steven Belletto & Daniel Grausam (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

“On Book: The Performance of Reading,” *New Literary History* 47.4 (Autumn 2016): 567-589.

“From the Podium to the Second Row: The Vanishing Feel of an Anne Sexton Reading” (critical essay) & “The Anne Sexton ‘Reading Poems’” (edited collection of fan poetry) in *The Business of Words: Reassessing Anne Sexton*, ed. Amanda Golden (University Press of Florida, 2016): 127-154

[with Daniel Sack, et al.] “A Constellation of Imagined Theatres: Technology and Performance,” *Theatre Journal* 68.3 (September 2016): 379-403.

reprinted in *Imagined Theatres: Writing for a theoretical stage*, ed. Daniel Sack (Routledge, 2017): 140, 192-3, 233.

“Why It’s ‘Easier to Act with a Telephone than a Man,’” *Theatre Survey* 57.2 (May 2016): 175-199.

“Every Nerve Keyed Up: ‘Telegraph Plays’ and Networked Performance, 1850-1900,” *Theater* 46.2 (June 2016): 7-33.

“The Breath of the Poem: Confessional Print/Performance circa 1959,” *PMLA* 127.2 (March 2012): 215-30.

“Love and Loneliness: Secular Morality in the Plays of Conor McPherson,” excerpted in *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama* (2008).
Orig. in *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, October 2006.

ESSAYS & REVIEWS

Review of Simone Natale’s *Deceitful Media: Artificial Intelligence and Social Life After the Turing Test* and Liz Faber’s *The Computer’s Voice: From Star Trek to Siri* (forthcoming in *American Literature*)

“Why I’m Not Scared of ChatGPT,” essay for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 17 January 2023.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/why-im-not-scared-of-chatgpt>

PUBLICATIONS

- ESSAYS & REVIEWS (CONT'D)
- Review of *Interchangeable Parts: Acting, Industry, and Technology in US Theater*. *Theatre Journal* 73.2 (Summer 2021): 257-8.
- Review of *The Play in the System: The Art of Parasitical Resistance*. *Performance Research* 25.7 (Spring 2021).
- "The Democratic convention was super awkward," essay for the *Washington Post*, 21 August 2020.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/08/21/dnc-awkward-liveness-authenticity/>
- "Offending the Audience," essay for the *Lights Camera Action Committee*, 18 December 2019.
<https://lightscamera.org/home/offending-the-audience>
- Review of *It's All Allowed: The Performances of Adrian Howells*. *TDR: The Drama Review* 62.1 (Spring 2018): 207-208.
- Review of *Bodies on the Line: Performance and the Sixties Poetry Reading*. *New England Quarterly* 88.1 (March 2016): 201-203.
- "The Case of the Missing Detective: William Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes* Rediscovered and Restored," essay for *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 4 Jan. 2016.
<http://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/the-case-of-the-missing-detective-william-gillettes-sherlock-holmes-rediscovered-and-restored>
- "Hollywood Calling: Luise Rainer, Sally Hawkins, and the First Law of Telephone Scenes," essay for *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 14 Jan. 2015.
<http://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/hollywood-calling-luise-rainer-sally-hawkins-first-law-telephone-scenes>
- "Lending an Ear," review essay for *Public Books*, 1 May 2014.
<http://www.publicbooks.org/artmedia/lending-an-ear>
- "Memoir 2.0; or, Confession Gone *Wild*," review essay for *Public Books*, 18 March 2013.
<http://www.publicbooks.org/fiction/memoir-20-or-confession-gone-wild>
- Review of *American Poetry in Performance*. *Modern Drama* 55.4 (January 2013): 579-581.
- "Refined Mechanicals, or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Share the Stage" (review essay), *Theater* 42.2 (June 2012): 139-46.
- "Canonical Improvisations: The Case of *Them*," *Theater* 41.2 (2011): 5-7.
- "Twice Real: Marina Abramovic and the Performance Archive," *Theater* 41.1 (2011): 104-13.

INVITED TALKS

- "The Theater of Electoral Politics: Seven Keywords" (roundtable organizer & participant), Theater & Performance Studies Workshop, University of Chicago, October 2020.
- "Actors/Robots: from R.U.R. to *Blade Runner 2049*," English and Computer Science Program, UC-Berkeley, April 2020. **(cancelled: COVID-19)**
- "Scrutinizing 'Robot' Performance," Critical Visualities (conference), University of Michigan, April 2020. **(postponed: COVID-19)**

Roundtable on “intelligence, thought, sentience, and agency,” Stanford Humanities Center, March 2020. **(cancelled: COVID-19)**

“Talking Like a Robot” (with Marit MacArthur & Lee Miller), LitLab, Stanford University English Department, February 2020.

“Scripting Siri: The Performing Arts and Silicon Valley’s Creative Revolution” Department of Theatre & Performance Studies, Stanford University, February 2020.

“Believable Agents and Realist Actors: a histrionic history of artificial intelligence,” Performance Studies Graduate Group, UC-Davis, October 2019.

“The Art of the Ordeal: ‘Performance Art’ and Other Keywords for American Politics Today” Department of English, University of Chicago, May 2018.

“On *The Art of Confession*,” Department of Theater & Performance Studies, Stanford University, May 2018.

“Of TV Actors and Technodollies,” symposium on “Acting as Technology,” Department of Theatre & Dance, SUNY-Buffalo, October 2015.

“Why It’s ‘Easier to Act with a Telephone than a Man,’” Institute for Performance Studies at Yale, Yale University, October 2015.

“Performance and Media,” Rutgers University, *Performance And...* (symposium), October 2015.

“On Book,” Modernism Seminar, Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University, February 2015.

“Why It’s ‘Easier to Act with a Telephone than a Man,’” American Literature Colloquium, English Department, Harvard University, October 2015.

“The Art of the Breakthrough: Poetry, Comedy, Confession,” *Post45* (conference), Stanford University, November 2012.

AMHERST/
FIVE COLLEGE “Making Technology Talk: Conversation and/as Artificial Intelligence,” talk for AI and the Liberal Arts, Amherst College, upcoming, March 2023.

Roundtable on ChatGPT and Writing Instruction, Center for Teaching and Learning, Amherst College, upcoming, February 2023.

“Confession in the Age of Aggregation: Art, Politics, and the Self of Social Media,” The Annual Max and Etta Lazerowitz Lecture, Amherst College, April 2017.

“On Book: The Performance of Reading,” University of Massachusetts-Amherst, *Rhythm & Intonation on the Page* (Symposium for the Study of Teaching & Writing), July 2014.

“Self-Consciousness Raising: Feminist Meta-Confession” Faculty Research Colloquium, Amherst College, December 2012.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“The Scenarios of White Supremacy: Queering Left and Right in Fake Friends’ *Circle Jerk*,” Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, Los Angeles, CA, September 2022.

“Meisner 2.0: Impulsive Actors, Responsive Robots, and the Crisis of Repetition,” American Society for Theatre Research, New Orleans, LA, November 2020. **(plenary) (postponed: COVID-19; delivered at ASTR San Diego in October 2021)**

Working Session, “Performance Literacy’ and Public Writing,” American Society for Theatre Research, New Orleans, LA, November 2020. **(co-organizer/convener) (postponed: COVID-19; ran at ASTR San Diego in October 2021)**

“Bot Design as Dramatic Writing,” panel on “Popular Culture and Technology,” Modern Language Association, Seattle, WA, January 2020.

Roundtable on “Teaching Modern Drama,” Modern Language Association, Seattle, WA, January 2020.

Panel on “Indigenous Performance Theory,” American Studies Association, Honolulu, HI, November 2019 **(organizer)**

Panel on “Costuming Resistance,” American Studies Association, Honolulu, HI, November 2019 **(chair & respondent)**

Roundtable on “Alternatives to Criticism,” Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, College Park, MD, October 2019.

“Voice,” panel on “Keywords,” *More Soon: A Symposium Honoring Joe Roach*, Evanston/Chicago, April 2019.

“Inventing Humanity: The Realist in ‘Botface,”” panel on “Entanglements with the Nonhuman in Contemporary Performance,” Modern Language Association, Chicago, IL, January 2019.

Roundtable on “Peggy Phelan’s *Unmarked* at 25,” American Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, November 2018. **(organizer & chair)**

Working session on “Impotent Performance,” American Society for Theatre Research, San Diego, CA, November 2018. **(co-organizer)**

“Motion Capture, Face Replacement, and Realist Acting,” panel on “Data Bodies and/as Performance,” Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, New Orleans, LA, October 2018. **(panelist & organizer)**

“The Artist Is President: Edgelords and the Liminal-Norm, from Abramovic to Trump,” seminar on “Off-Script: Populism and Performance,” American Comparative Literature Association, Los Angeles, CA, March 2018.

“The Art of the Ordeal, or, What Does (and Should) ‘Performance Art’ Mean Today,” panel on “Performing Resistance,” Modern Language Association, New York, NY, January 2018.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“The Art of the Ordeal, or, What Does (and Should) ‘Performance Art’ Mean Today,” workshop on “Feeling Extra Ordinary: Populist Activism and Performance,” American Society for Theatre Research, Atlanta, GA, November 2017.

“Mechanical or Electric?: A Robotist’s Guide to Acting,” seminar on “The Life and Liveness of Machines,” American Comparative Literature Association, Utrecht, Netherlands, July 2017. **(seminar organizer)**

“The Realist Actor Is Transmedial,” working session on “Theater and Transmedia,” American Society for Theatre Research, Minneapolis, MN, November 2016. **(session organizer)**

“Playing with TechnoDollies in *Orphan Black*, or, The TV Actress and Other Technologies,” seminar on *Orphan Black*, American Comparative Literature Association, Cambridge, MA, March 2016.

“Being Onstage, ‘Subconsciously’: The Telephone and Realist Acting,” panel on “Media and the Unconscious,” Modern Language Association, Austin, TX, January 2016.

“*India & After*: How to Publish an Improvisation,” roundtable on “Spalding Gray’s Posthumous Publics,” Modern Language Association, Austin, TX, January 2016.

“Forms of Feminist Talk: Performance Art and CR,” seminar on “Forms of Talk,” American Comparative Literature Association, Seattle, WA, April 2015.

“Irony-Machines and Telephone Scenes,” working session “Technology Performs,” American Society for Theatre Research, Baltimore, MD, November 2014.

“Earl Warren, Performance Theorist: Autobiography after *Miranda*,” panel on “The Pain and Pleasure of Autobiographical Expression,” American Studies Association, Los Angeles, CA, November 2014.

“Centering the Margins: The Poetry Performances of Anne Sexton and Her Fans,” seminar on “Performances on the Periphery,” American Comparative Literature Association, New York University, April 2014.

“Every Nerve Keyed Up: ‘Telegraph Plays’ and the Networked Theater of the 19th Century,” working session on “Theater in the Global Nineteenth Century,” American Society for Theatre Research, Dallas, TX, November 2013.

“A Stage History of Consciousness,” Panel on “Playing with Ideas,” Association for Theater in Higher Education, Orlando, FL, August 2013. **(panel organizer)**

“Introduction: Intimate Mediations,” seminar on “Intimate Mediations,” American Comparative Literature Association, U. Toronto, April 2013. **(seminar organizer)**

“Breakthrough: Poetry, Comedy, Confession,” *Poetry/Performance* symposium, Amherst College, November 2012. **(symposium organizer)**

“Poetry, Comedy, Confession,” panel on “Poetry/Performance,” Modernist Studies Association, Las Vegas, NV, October 2012. **(panel organizer)**

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Looking at Readings, or, The Stage Presence of Paper,” seminar on “Reading Aloud,” Modernist Studies Association, Las Vegas, NV, October 2012.

“On Book: Scriptive Texts in Performance,” panel on “Inscription and Performance,” Modern Language Association, Seattle, WA, January 2012.

Roundtable, “Voice in Theory / Voice in Practice,” Association for Theater in Higher Education, Chicago, IL, August 2011.

“Hacking the Dictionary: The Media of Autobiography in Spalding Gray’s *India & After*,” panel on “Lexicography Literature,” Modern Language Association, Los Angeles, CA, January 2011.

“The Multimedia Performance of Confessional Poetry,” panel on “Naked Print, or How to Read a Print-Performance and Why,” Association for Theater in Higher Education, Los Angeles, CA, August 2010. **(panel organizer)**

“Print-Public/Performance-Public: Spalding Gray’s *Interviewing the Audience*, on Tour,” panel on “Private Stories for Public Performance,” Performance Studies International, Toronto, ON, June 2010.

“From ‘Autoperformance’ to *YouTube*: Theorizing the Confessional Performance,” Panel on “Biographical Spectacle,” Northeast Modern Language Association, Boston, MA, February 2009.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

COLLEGE COMMITTEES Chair, Editorial Board, Amherst College Press, 2022 - present.

Member, Editorial Board, Amherst College Press, 2021 - 2022.

Member, ADC Task Force (redesigning management and support for academic department coordinators), Amherst College, 2021 - 2022.

Chair, Amherst College Alpha Delta Phi Committee, 2020 - present.

Chair, Amherst College English Department Finance Committee, 2020 - 2022.

Founding member, Advisory Board, Amherst College Center for Humanistic Inquiry, 2014-2018.

Member, Sexual Respect Task Force, Amherst College, 2015-2018.

Member, Amherst College Alpha Delta Phi Committee, 2013-2014.

LEADERSHIP Participant, Building Academic Leaders in the Humanities (year-long workshop series), Five Colleges, 2022 - present

Co-founder and -director, Theater & Performance Seminar, Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University, 2022 - present

Chair, Department of English, Amherst College, 2020 - present.

Editor, *Lights Camera Action Committee* (www.lightscamera.org), 2019-2020.

Co-founder and -director, Performance Studies Caucus of the American Studies Association, 2018-2020.

Director, Five College Faculty Seminar on Performance Studies (aka 5Perform), 2013-2014.

Director, Mellon-Funded Five College Student-Faculty Research Seminar, *Poetry/Performance*, June-July 2012.

GRANTS with Amy Holzapfel (Williams College): Association for the Advancement of Liberal Arts Colleges, Faculty Workshop Grant (\$20,000 to fund a workshop and conference at Amherst College on the theme “The Illiberal Art of Performance”)

with Mike Kelly, Director of Archives and Special Collections: Council on Library and Information Resources, Hidden Collections Grant (\$144,300) (two-year project to catalogue and preserve Amherst College’s Samuel French Theater Archives)

EVENTS Planning Committee, “More Soon: A Symposium Honoring Joe Roach,” Northwestern/U. Chicago (April 2019)

Lead conference organizer (with Kate Bredeson, Amy Holzapfel & Shayoni Mitra) of “The Illiberal Art of Performance,” Amherst College (April 2018).

Organizer, lecture/performance by madison moore (King’s College London), “On Queer Nightlife” (March 2017)

Organizer, lecture/discussion by Brian Herrera (Princeton), “A Conversation on the History of Casting” (January 2017)

Organizer, screening of *Ex Machina* (dir. Alex Garland, 2015) followed by discussion with Stephanie Dick (U. Penn.), historian and theorist of computing; classroom visit by Prof. Dick (October 2016).

Organizer & participant, roundtable on “Law & Performance” with Martha Umphrey (Amherst) and John Brigham (UMass-Amherst). (Followup to faculty trip to Williams College to see Elevator Repair Service’s law-based performance *Arguendo*.) (February 2014)

Organizer, lecture/discussion series on American theater history, in association with Mellon Research Colloquium 339.

Discussion of theatrical scrapbooking with Sharon Marcus (Columbia) (January 2013)

Discussion of realism and stage objects with Marc Robinson (Yale) (February 2013)

Discussion of performance copyright law with Derek Miller (Harvard) (February 2013)

Public lecture (“An American *Hamlet* in the European Court”), discussion of Chautauqua performance history, and classroom visit by Charlotte Canning (UT-Austin) (April 2013).

Organizer, *Poetry/Performance*, conference with keynotes by visiting scholars, two performances by visiting artists, and talks by Five College and other regional faculty, November 2012.

Organizer, *This Verse Business*, performance in honor of the 50th anniversary of Robert Frost’s death and of Amherst College’s Frost Library, November 2012.

Organizer, classroom visits (in English and Theater & Dance) and public performance of Gertrude Stein’s “Plays” by playwright/actor David Greenspan (April 2012).

ACADEMIC SERVICE

PEER REVIEW Articles: PMLA, NLH, ALH, *Theatre Journal*, *a/b*, DHQ, *Theatre/Practice*, *Performance Matters*, *Journal of Dramatic Theory & Criticism*, *Post45*
Books: NYU Press, University of Michigan Press, Bloomsbury Academic, Edinburgh University Press
Grants/Fellowships: ACLS

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

ASAP Book Prize (short list) for *The Art of Confession*

ACLS Frederick Burkhardt Fellowship, 2019-2020. (for research residency at Stanford University, Theater & Performance Studies Department)

Sabbatical Fellowship, Amherst College, 2018-2019.

Sabbatical Fellowship, Amherst College, 2014-2015.

Research Grant, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, Spring 2014.
(for work with the Eleanor Antin Collection)

Research Fellowship, Harry Ransom Center, U. Texas-Austin, Summer 2013.
(for work with the Anne Sexton and Spalding Gray Collections)

Departmental Prize for Best Dissertation, English Department, Yale University, 2012.

Whiting Dissertation Fellowship in the Humanities, 2010-2011.

Whitney Humanities Center Fellowship, Yale University, 2010-2011.

TEACHING

FALL 2011 ENGL 115 - Novels, Plays, & Poems

ENGL 329 - The Poetics of Performance

SPRING 2012 ENGL 435 - The Play of Ideas

ENGL 231 - 3, 2, 1: Reading Small Drama

FALL 2012 ENGL 232 - Reading Drama

ENGL 329 - The Poetics of Performance

SPRING 2013 COLQ 339 - American Performance Culture circa 1900 (archival methods)

ENGL 338 - Shakespeare

FALL 2013 ENGL 115 - Novels, Plays, & Poems

ENGL 435 - The Play of Ideas

SPRING 2014 ENGL 338 - Shakespeare

ENGL 231 - 3, 2, 1: Reading Small Drama

FALL 2015 ENGL 338 - Shakespeare

FYSE 121 - The World, Performed

TEACHING

- SPRING 2016* COLQ 245 - Archival Research in Drama: The Samuel French Collection
ENGL 435 - The Play of Ideas
- FALL 2016* ENGL 434 - Technology & Performance
ENGL 231 - 3, 2, 1: Reading Small Drama
- SPRING 2017* ENGL 104 - Engaging the Arts
ENGL 230 - Introduction to Performance Theory
- FALL 2017* ENGL 338 - Shakespeare
ENGL 435 - The Play of Ideas
- SPRING 2018* ENGL 104 - Engaging the Arts
ENGL 230 - Introduction to Performance Theory
ENGL 390 - Art in Pain (special topic)
- FALL 2020* ENGL 497 - Critical Thesis-Writing Workshop
- JANUARY 2021* ENGL 392 - The Performance of Politics
- SPRING 2021* ENGL 495 - The Play of Ideas
- FALL 2021* ENGL 497 - Critical Thesis-Writing Workshop
- JANUARY 2022* ENGL 392 - The Performance of Politics
- SPRING 2022* ENGL 392 - 3, 2, 1: Reading Small Drama
- FALL 2022* ENGL 260 - Listening to Podcasts
- SPRING 2023* ENGL 109 - Theater at the End of the World
ENGL 231 - 3, 2, 1: Reading Small Drama

THESES ADVISED

- 2012-2013* Sarah Daly, *Two Inches of Ivory: The Narrowness of Jane Austen* (critical thesis, *cum laude*)
- 2013-2014* Elizabeth Alexander, *My Weak Frame* (hybrid critical/creative thesis: interactive web essay, *summa cum laude*)
Danica Richards, *Interference* (creative thesis: drama, *cum laude*)
- 2016-2017* Sophie Murguia, *Reading Experimentally: How Short Stories Cultivate Ethical Thinking* (critical thesis, *summa cum laude*)
Kendall Simms, *Boundless Resonance* (critical thesis, *summa cum laude*)
- 2017-2018* Mary Grace Cronin, *Martha!* (creative thesis: drama, *magna cum laude*)
Madeline Ruoff, *Awaiting a Foreshortened Future: Stories* (creative thesis: fiction, *magna cum laude*)

THESES ADVISED

Philip Yan, *Moments of Vulnerability* (creative thesis: non-fiction)

2020-2021 Sienna McCulley, *To Publish and to Perish: Literary Celebrity and the Writing of Posthumous Legacies* (critical thesis, *cum laude*)

Carolyn McCusker, *Healing Stories* (hybrid critical/creative thesis: podcast, *summa cum laude*)

2021-2022 Jade Duval, *The Everyday Black Girl* (hybrid critical/creative thesis, *cum laude*)

2022-2023 Jonathan Feygina (creative thesis: drama)

2023 Clarence Zachery (critical thesis on theatrical representations of sports)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/AFFILIATIONS

American Society for Theatre Research

Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present

Modern Language Association