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Bradley Deane to be Honored for Research on "Imperial Boyhood"

Summary: Bradley Deane, associate professor of English, will be honored for his scholarship at the annual conference of the North American Victorian Studies Association. His recent article "Imperial Boyhood: Piracy and the Play Ethic" was awarded Honorable Mention for the Donald Gray Prize, which is awarded to the best essay published in the field of Victorian studies in 2011.

(September 21, 2012)-Bradley Deane, associate professor of English, will be honored for his scholarship at the annual conference of the North American Victorian Studies Association (NAVSA). His recent article “Imperial Boyhood: Piracy and the Play Ethic” was awarded Honorable Mention for the Donald Gray Prize, which is awarded to the best essay published in the field of Victorian studies in 2011. “For this prize, there is only one award and one honorable mention,” explains Professor Meegan Kennedy, executive secretary of NAVSA, “so this standing represents a significant accomplishment.” The Gray Prize is open to any scholarly article discussing Victorian Britain that was published in the previous year, including essays from a wide range of academic disciplines.

Deane’s essay was unanimously selected by an interdisciplinary, international panel of judges, whose statement notes that they "were impressed by how Deane engaged the current conversation on gender and childhood studies, especially the need to look specifically at how 'boyhood(s)' are produced and disseminated in a range of discourses." They went on to note, “we particularly commend his careful attention to the specific historical and literary contexts of the late century, both as they drew on earlier imperial discourses and about legitimate and illegitimate violence, and as they look forward to early twentieth century developments, including the coming of WWI. His explication of how piracy and play forwarded ideological justifications of both formal and informal empire are provocative, and his attention to specific texts is distinguished by his refusal to organize texts into easy categories of resistant and hegemonic productions. The clarity and concision of his writing make this essay valuable and usable for scholars across a range of subfields."

According to Deane, "from Treasure Island to Peter Pan, late Victorian literature was fascinated by pirates and by the relationship of pirates and boys, who began to seem surprisingly similar." "Imperial Boyhood" investigates this turn in popular fiction and discovers signs of new cultural attitudes about the laws and moral strictures that had once been used to justify the growth of the British Empire.

"I'm delighted to be honored by my colleagues in NAVSA," Deane says, adding, "I hope this recognition will contribute yet another piece of evidence that our campus is a place where nationally recognized research happens right alongside outstanding teaching. It's that combination that makes Morris so extraordinary."

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