

November 2010

BYWORDS

Department of English Newsletter



The white sun
like a moth
on a string
circles the southpole.



-A.R. Ammons, *Late November*



“On ‘Reading Comparatively’”

On November 4 and 5, 2010, faculty, staff, and students from the departments of Art History and Archaeology, Classics, Comparative Literature, English, and the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, gathered together to share recent research at the conference “Reading Comparatively: Theories, Practices, Communities.”

Zita Nunes and Eric Zakim together provided a pair of keynote addresses that framed the event beautifully. They divided their topic, “Reading Comparatively.” Zakim theorized the process and scholarship surrounding reading. Nunes observed that “comparative reading is bound to disappoint. It makes many promises: more complete, more complex, understandings of texts, that it cannot fulfill. It disappoints, unsettles, forces engagement with more risks and more questions.” A lively, energetic, and wide-ranging discussion followed these provocative talks.

One highlight of the event was “The Future of Disciplinarity: The Case of Literature,” Louis Menand’s talk on Thursday, November 4. Sponsored in part by the College of Arts and Humanities as one of the lectures in the Dean’s Lecture Series, “Be Worldwide,” he based his presentation on material from his recent book, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University*.

Participants repeatedly commented that the most energizing feature of the two-day event were the panel presentations. They were delighted to learn about current projects, to see their colleagues in action and to discuss with one another the issues, questions, and challenges that emerge in the course of research and teaching. One person commented that the range of the presentations was indicative of the vitality of the intellectual community here at the University of Maryland. The program remains on line at <http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/clcs/conferences/readingcomparatively> and serves as a resource for those embarking upon new projects.

Watch for follow-up events! Many of those who participated are dreaming up informal events for the spring.

-Karen Nelson

“Borderlines”

The Graduate English Organization of the University of Maryland’s Department of English invites graduate students to submit abstracts for our fourth annual interdisciplinary graduate conference “Borderlines” on March 11 and 12, 2011.

The conference committee invites proposals for fifteen-minute papers from a broad range of disciplines and theoretical backgrounds. Presentations of creative work are also welcome. *Panel submissions (3-4 participants) are highly encouraged.* Please limit individual abstracts to 300 words for individual abstracts and panel abstracts to 500 words. Full papers may accompany abstracts. Please include three keywords at the end of the abstract to assist panel formation.

For more information, please visit their webpage:
<http://geoconference.blogspot.com/>

www.english.umd.edu/bywords

Order Your Winter and Spring Semester Books!

It’s time to order your Spring 2011 textbooks. Deadlines for The University Book Center and Maryland Book Exchange have passed, so please do this as soon as possible to ensure availability!

We strongly recommend ordering your textbooks electronically, this will allow UBC to post them on Testudo as soon as the order is received and verified. Please note that each bookstore requires separate electronic forms. If a course does not require textbooks, both stores and the department need to know. If you’re placing orders “exclusively” with UBC, please note this, in their new form “comment screen,” and if MBE becomes your “exclusive” bookstore, e-mail Marge Robling at mrobling@md.bookex.com to let her know.

When ordering books electronically from University Book Center, please forward to Isabella’s attention, a copy of your confirmation, for the Main English Office file, either by hard copy or by e-mail attachment. We don’t need a copy from MBE, unless they’re exclusive.

When you’ve ordered books, please be in contact with Isabella Mouton in 2119 TWS or at imoulton@umd.edu.

The University Book Center:

<http://www.umcp.bkstore.com>

click on “Faculty,” than on “Register”
(if it’s your first time)

Maryland Book Exchange:

<http://www.marylandbook.com>

click on “Faculty Information,” then on
“Faculty Adoptions Form”

FYI, Faculty **must** submit **acknowledgement** with the state’s Textbook Affordability Law.

(NEWS)

FACULTY NEWS

Deborah Bailin just published an article entitled “Evolution as Apocalypse in God’s Grace” in the Fall 2010 issue of the journal, *Extrapolation*.

Adele Berlin, Professor Emerita, is spending the fall semester at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She was recently an invited speaker at a conference on the book of Psalms at Oxford University and an invited participant in the Esther Workshop at the University of Zurich.

Vin Carretta’s latest publications include: “Equiano’s Paradise Lost: The Limits of Allusion in Chapter Five of *The Interesting Narrative*,” in *Imagining Transatlantic Slavery*, eds. Cora Kaplan and J.R. Oldfield (Palgrave, 2010); “Phillis Wheatley’s First Effort,” in *PMLA* 125:3 (May 2010); “Transatlantic Literatures of the Early Black Atlantic,” in *The Blackwell Companion to African American Literature*, ed. Gene Jarrett (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); “Revisiting the Identity of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African,” in *Repercussions of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, eds. Carolyn A. Brown and Paul Lovejoy (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2010); “Teaching Transatlantic Literatures of the Early Black Atlantic,” in *Teaching the Transatlantic Eighteenth Century*, eds. Jennifer Frangos and Cristobal Silva (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010); “Venture Smith, One of a Kind,” in *Venture Smith and the Business of Slavery and Freedom*, ed. James Brewer Stewart (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010); “‘I began to feel the happiness of liberty, of which I knew nothing before’: Eighteenth-Century Black Tales of the Lowcountry,” in *African Americans in the Georgia Lowcountry*, ed. Philip D. Morgan (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Exchange with James H. Sweet on Sweet, “Mistaken Identities? Olaudah Equiano, Domingos Alvares, and the Methodological Challenges of Studying the African Diaspora,” *American Historical Review* 114 (2009); and Philip Quaque, *The Life and Letters of Philip Quaque, the First African Anglican Missionary*, co-edited with Ty Reese (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010). Vin has also recently been honored by being elected a Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Richie Crider’s first book, “The 21st Century Student Writer,” was published in June by LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing and is available online at www.lap-publishing.com and www.amazon.com. The book offers a critical look at the Stage Process Model and proposes a more comprehensive pedagogical model (the Total Writing Process Model).

Verlyn Flieger has a volume of her collected essays on J.R.R. Tolkien, *Green Suns and Faerie*, scheduled for publication by Kent State University Press in the Fall of 2011. Her novel *CORBIES’ CAWW* has been accepted for publication in 2011 by Kitsune Books, and her short story “Igrayne at Tintage” will be included in Rick Peabody’s next collection of stories by area women writers, scheduled for publication in 2012.

EVENTS:

The Center for Literary and Comparative Studies Announces its First Annual Alumni Luncheon

For more information, contact **Bob Levine** or **Karen Nelson** at clcs@umd.edu.

The department is hosting its First Annual Alumni Luncheon on Saturday, December 4, 2010, at noon in 2115 Tawes Hall. Howard Norman, a best-selling novelist and National Book Award finalist, will comment on the writer’s life, and Martha Nell Smith, an internationally renowned Emily Dickinson scholar, will discuss the remarkable upsurge of interest in Dickinson’s poetry in recent years. Information and registration materials are available at: <http://www.english.umd.edu/events/1928>

Kathy-Ann Tan, visiting professor from Tübingen University, will present work her in progress on Wednesday, December 08, 2010, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm in Tawes Hall 3250. Her paper will seek to examine how diaspora, mobility, and globalization complicate models of citizenship and national identity formation.

There seems to be a steady stream of works in progress--sessions, lectures, and film series--something for everyone! Those are listed at the Center’s website:

www.english.umd.edu/clcs

More articles on recent department activities are available on our [web site](#)! If you have an idea for an article, please e-mail englweb@umd.edu

(NEWS cont.)

FACULTY NEWS cont.

Three of **Mark Forrester's** 391H students (Kim Cullen, Jack O'Sullivan, and Natasha Savranskaya) are working on a project to educate people about the need for more environmentally friendly lawns. After meeting with their clients—the mayor and other city officials of Edmonston, MD—the students were invited to submit an editorial for the town's newsletter and to provide information to community residents at the opening festivities for the town's Nov. 9 Decatur Street celebration. The street was recently overhauled with a "green" focus on ecologically sound design, including better storm drainage and pedestrian walkways. Edmonston is a few miles from the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River.

Howard Norman recently gave a lecture on Edo period ornithological scrolls at the British Museum. His novel "Devotion" has just been published in German, Dutch, and Italian editions. He will be a Hopwood Award judge in literature, spring 2011 for the University of Michigan, and will be one of four international writers to read at the Montreal Jazz Festival in June 2011. The paperback of "What Is Left The Daughter" will be published in January.

Michael Olmert spoke on "Outbuildings in the 18th Century Backyard," at a Historic Preservation Conference at the Eastern Shore of Virginia Historical Society, Ker House, Onancock, VA, October 25, 2010. He also spoke on "Writing for Film" & "Writing Across Genres" at the James River Literary Festival, Richmond, VA, October 8-9, 2010.

On October 27, as part of the English Department's long-running series of Rehearsed Table-Reads, featuring undergraduate English majors, Olmert directed Brian Friel's "Translations," a tragic play about English colonialism in 1830s Ireland.

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has posted a video-cast in which Olmert talks about the demotic 18th century backyard in Early America. It's available here: <http://www.history.org/media/videoplayer/?cat=vodcast&file=HiddenWilliamsburg>

Colonial Williamsburg has also posted a podcast, enhanced with a slide show, of Olmert talking about "Smokehouses and Other Outbuildings," at <http://history.org/media/podcasts.cfm>

Laura Rosenthal gave a talk on November 5 at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, as part of the Hudson Strode Program lecture series. Her paper was called "All Roads Lead to Rhodes: Theater and Cosmopolitanism in the Restoration." On November 18th Rosenthal is speaking on Restoration drama at Villanova University in conjunction with their production of *The Beaux Stratagem*, and on November 22nd she will be an invited participant in the Council of Graduate Schools' conference on Preparing Future Faculty to Assess Student Learning.

Over the summer, **Brian Richardson** gave a talk on Literary Characters and Unnatural Narrative Theory at the conference on "New Developments in Narratology: Cognitive, Communicative, and Philosophical Approaches" in Tartu, Estonia. He delivered a lecture on The Use and Abuse of Reading



in the Twentieth Century at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies and gave an Oberseminar on Reading and Readers in the Work of Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf at the University of Freiburg. In September he spoke on "Conrad and the Book in the Jungle: Modernist and Postcolonial Intertexts" at the Joseph Conrad Conference in Paris. He gave a lecture on Unnatural Narrative Theory: Story and Plot, at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris as part of a day-long conference on Unnatural Narrative Theory. This month Richardson will speak on "What is Unnatural Narrative Theory" at the University of Oslo, teach a Masterclass on unnatural narrative theory at the University of Trier, and read a paper on resistance to closure in contemporary fiction and drama at the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present conference in Trier.

Thomas Zaniello published "Film Images of Leadership," in Richard A. Couto's *Political and Civic Leadership: A Reference Handbook*.

(NEWS cont.)

STUDENT NEWS

Jesse Freeman made a film about the novelist Raymond Andrews, an often overlooked voice from the region. His film had already aired on public television, but Freeman was very happy to have it screened by the GA Review as part of the festivities. He also participated in a panel discussion (Oct 13) with members of Andrews' family and the novelist Philip Lee Williams. The following night (Oct 14) he gave a talk about Andrews' writing habits on a panel that also included the novelist Gary Gildner and the poet Natasha Trethewey. There is more information about the event here: <http://flagpole.com/Weekly/Features/RaymondAndrews-6Oct10>

Seth Horton presented "Utopia and the Curing of Embodied Infections in the Borderlands, 1918-1937" at the Western Literature Association's 45th Annual Conference, Prescott, Arizona, October 20-23, 2010. He also chaired a panel entitled, "Borders and Bodies." Partial funding for this conference was made possible by an Arts and Humanities travel grant.

Horton also presented "Sacred Religious Ceremonies or Public Entertainment: Modernism, Travel Writing, and the Representation of Native Americans in the Southwest" at the Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association, Arlington, Virginia, October 28-30, 2010.

Most recently, he presented "'Everywhere Peace, [the] Impenetrable Timelessness of Peace': Mary Austin, Ansel Adams, and the Text/Images of Taos Pueblo" at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association's Annual Conference, Atlanta, Arizona, November 5-7, 2010. He chaired a panel at this conference entitled, "Utopian Spaces: Images of the American West." Partial funding for this conference was made possible by the South Atlantic Modern Language Association's Harper Award.

Sara Schotland presented a talk at the UMD Honors College, "A Lawyer Looks at the BP Oil Spill: Legal Remedies or Legal Morass," on Nov. 10, 2010. Sara moderates a debate between representatives of Public Citizen and the Cato Institute on whether Offshore Drilling is worth the risk, at the School of Journalism Nov. 18.

Thanks for "getting it," David Simon.

Around the department, everyone has been talking about "The Wire." Wait? Oh, everyone has been talking about how much work they have to do. And that it's 2010.

Well then, somebody around here has been preoccupied with "The Wire." Season Two, to be exact. So, sitting in front of the computer today searching for "Famous Terps," you can imagine my delight to find that David Simon was, at one point, one of us. A 2010 recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship (kindly nicknamed "the Genius Grant"), Simon was once a general studies major, getting his big rap as a columnist for the Diamondback. So, he wasn't exactly "one of us," but even in 1983 he seemed to know a thing or two about writing, and taking the craft of writing to the limits. Even when you're at the end of your proverbial rope. Simon knew the feeling when he wrote "you'd rather watch 50 reruns of the 'Bugs Bunny-Road Runner Hour' than face a typewriter." Replace typewriter with laptop, and "Bugs Bunny" with, ahem, "The Wire" and nail-hit-on-head.

But, just because the work is hard and this point in the semester can be rather grueling, that doesn't mean we aren't all secretly exhilarated as we sit at home tapping out our creations. In his column, "Paper Fantasies," (January 25, 1983), Simon wrote, "The writer's only reason for living is that precious moment when the last word has been carefully dispatched, when every phrase has been rephrased, when the best paragraphs almost sing with clarity, and when the writer can get up and walk away." That was followed up with something I'll likely repress about the relief only lasting until morning—but, for sanity's sake, forget that.

Happy November, and good luck over these busy few weeks!

Thanks for reading, and for your contributions.

Until next time,

Catherine

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*The next edition of Bywords will be released in December. Please send us any and all updates on new publications and accomplishments by **December 10**.*

*Please include dates, locations, and titles of papers/lectures/etc. in your news submissions.
Bywords e-mail: englweb@umd.edu*

Stay tuned to www.english.umd.edu for more news!