

Comparative Literature Newsletter

Notes from the Chair



Charles Ross, Chair

Survival of the fittest is only half the story of evolution, whether in the wild or in academia. In the wild, we now know, it is not the sudden desire for the highest hanging fruit that gives rise to long necks. Rather, nature creates a gene pool over the millennia, and when the need to reach higher arises, there is probably a gene already present. Comparative Literature works with similar flexibility. We try to nurture different areas of world literature using common theoretical approaches but encompassing wide diversity. One never knows what areas of interest will suddenly be deemed necessary.

We welcome developments in the Arabic and Chinese section of FLL and the maintenance of strength in the Classics. Latino studies have a promising future from both a cultural standpoint and as a key component of world literature. I recently started reading *Don Quixote* in Spanish. As famous as that work is, as important as it is in bridging medieval and Renaissance romances to the modern novel, nothing compares to the sheer quality and joy of Cervantes' prose, which for me matched my first experience reading Boccaccio's *Decameron* in Italian.

A student in my world literature class, hearing my raptures, asked me if anything in English ever produced the same effect. As someone who finds it almost impossible to think on his feet—every comment I make is usually scripted well in advance—I was at a loss. Shakespeare occurred to me, but where to begin? I finally suggested Edgar Allen Poe: "Nervous, nervous? Yes, I'm very nervous, but why WILL you say that I'm mad," which is not quite how the narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart" begins. On reflection, at home, I thought of the opening lines of *Lolita*. Russian, English, American, a bit of Cervantes himself and some Poe too, are all in those lines, which I will let readers look up for themselves. A perfect comparative pastiche.

Last week, Delayne Graham assumed secretarial responsibility for the Comparative Literature program. This is therefore the place to thank with all of my heart Jill Quirk



Jill Quirk during a review of the Comparative Literature Program by the then Dean of the Graduate School John Contreni.

for taking on the task of guiding dozens of CL students and this often hapless chair through the bureaucratic mazes of administering a graduate program for six years. Normally the graduate secretary for the Department of English, Jill took on the additional burden of Comparative Literature in 2001, to the benefit of us all. Once again, thank you, Jill.

Martina Jauch has volunteered to schedule a series of get-together events next year for Comparative Literature students. We hope that everyone will feel a sense of belonging to two homes, the language area and department in which they teach and also the Comparative Literature Program.

Finally, by the time this appears I will have joined a group from Purdue seeking collaborators in Taiwan. I will stay for an extra week to deliver five talks, mainly on Shakespeare or Shakespeare on Film, but also on Boiardo and Italian romance and epic. The invitations are a result of the affiliation between our program on the on-line journal *Comparative Literature and Culture*, published by the Purdue University Press.

Sincerely,

Charles Ross
Program Chair
Boiardo.com
May 11, 2007



Boiardo's Castle, Scandiano, Italy

Comparative Literature Organizes Walking Tour Welcome

In response to a request for more informal activities to build a sense of belonging to the program, Comparative Literature organized a walking tour welcoming party for new and returning graduate students the Saturday before classes started in August, 2006. We followed one of the three tree tours of campus available on the Purdue website, pausing at each specimen to learn the names of different trees in various languages! I'm not sure anyone remembers anything, but we were surprised both at the variety of Indiana trees and some of the similarities in names, making the excursion an exercise and lesson in diversity. A concluding reception was held in Heavilon Hall 304, organized by Jin Lei and Mou Xianfeng.



L-R: Simone Caroti and special friend, Gioia Massa, Tatyana Lyaskovetz, Jose Newton, Su Peirui, Anna Fluegge, Maura Bergonzone and Lu Liang.



L-R: Professors Weijie Song and Angelica Duran; Su Peirui, Tatyana Lyaskovetz, Lu Liang and Jose Newton.



L-R: Su Peirui, Lu Liang, and Liang Ying at the reception..

Spotlight on Angelica Duran



Angelica Duran has served for five years on the steering committee of the Comparative Literature Program. Recently tenured in the field of English Renaissance literature, Professor Duran is more and more turning her attention to Spanish literature and culture. After publishing two books in 2007 — *The Age of Milton and the Scientific Revolution* (Duchesne UP) and *A Concise Companion to Milton* (Blackwell) — Professor Angelica has been conducting research and presenting preliminary findings for her two books-in-progress: *Milton among Spaniards* and *Milton in Hispanoamerica*.

Professor Duran received a sabbatical research leave for the spring of 2007 and was awarded an appointment to the Purdue Humanistic Studies Center Fellowship for the fall of 2007. This summer, through a Purdue Library Scholars Fellowship and a College of Liberal Arts Research Incentive Grant, she will conduct research on Miltonic influence in California writers at the largest Steinbeck collection, housed at her alma mater, Stanford. She has accepted invitations to speak at the Liberty Fund Colloquium in Pasadena, California (June); the Institute for the International Education of Students Seminar in Buenos Aires, Argentina (July); and the Newberry Library's Milton Seminar (October). Additionally, her proposals for two talks were accepted at for the MLA Conference 2007 and two more for the Renaissance Society of America Conference 2008, both to be held in Chicago. One of the MLA talks will focus on a burgeoning area of her research, the complementary use of material and digital archives. She gave a preliminary version of that talk, "Technology and English Studies: The Medium is the Message," at the Purdue Teaching and Learning with Technology Conference in April 2007. She has just completed her first venture into non-fiction essay writing with an piece entitled "Single, Brown, First-generation-U.S. Mother of Two Seeks (and Gets) a Ph.D. and Tenure-track Job" for a book intended for popular audiences, *Mama, Ph.D.* (Ed. Caroline Grant, Rutgers UP, forthcoming 2008).

Professor Duran is also actively engaged in the community. She has spoken on "Shakespeare and Multiculturalism" for a 6th-grade class at Happy Hollow Elementary School; on the "Day of the Dead" for a 10th-grade class at West Lafayette High School — tamale-making was involved (!)—and "Readings from Hispanic, Anglo, Jewish, and Native American Children's Literature" for the Greater Lafayette's Dickens of a Christmas celebration.

Comparative Literature Spring 2007 Lecture Series

This spring Comparative Literature scheduled four events, involving a Classics translator from Notre Dame, a World War II veteran and Germanist from Wayne State, a visiting scholar from China, and a joint venture with the Rhetoric and Composition Program.



Henry Weinfield

On February 8, Professor Henry Weinfield read from his translation of Hesiod's *Theogony* and his *Works and Days* before an audience of almost a hundred graduate and undergraduate students. Professor Weinfield is the chair of the Program in Liberal Studies at Notre Dame University and the well-known translator of Stéphane Mallarmé as well as the original poetry and a study of the poet Thomas Gray. He encouraged questions from undergraduates, including one that asked why we in English talk about Pandora's box when in Greek the trouble's of the world are kept sealed in Pandora's jar!

The next event was a visit from Guy Stern, whom we met for the first time at the Modern Language Association meeting in Philadelphia. Over dinner we learned that he had met Marlene Dietrich, the famous German film actress and star of *The Blue Angel*, written by Thomas Mann's brother, Heinrich. We invited him to Purdue on the spot. During his visit on March 8, which included a reception arranged by Professor Beate Allert, he spoke on "My Marlene." In addition to his talk, he showed a rare, 90-minute footage of Marlene Dietrich, as filmed by her grandson David Riva, in which Professor Stern appeared! Professor Stern is a Distinguished Professor of German and Slavic Studies at Wayne State University. Guy Stern is widely known as one of the originators of the field of exile studies and as founder of the International Lessing Society and the Lessing Yearbook. As author of numerous books and articles on 18th- and 19th- century German literature, language, and culture, he has received many awards, both from the U.S. and Germany, the country he fled in 1937 during the Hitler period. Among his American honors is the designation as Germanist of the Year and an honorary doctorate from Hofstra University. The Federal Republic of Germany bestowed on him the Grand Order of Merit and the Goethe Medal. He was born in Hildesheim, Germany but joined the U.S. Army and became a member of Camp Richie, next to such other famous "Ritchie Boys" as Ernst Cramer, Stefan Heym, and Klaus Mann.



Guy Stern



Nie Zhenzhao

The third event of the spring series was a lecture scheduled for April 5 by Professor Nie Zhenzhao of Beijing University, who was touring American universities during the spring of 2007 and visited us from the University of Chicago. His topic was "Ethical Taboos Against His Revenge--A New Interpretation of Hamlet's *Tragedy*," held in the English Department lounge. Professor Nie's lecture complemented recent work done by a number of graduate students in Comparative Literature on the theme of Shakespeare in issue, which was the topic of a special issue of *Comparative Literature and Culture*. Many of the essays will be featured in the hardcover book version to be edited by Charles Ross and Alex Huang, forthcoming (we hope) from Purdue University Press. Nie Zhenzhao is Professor of English and Comparative literature from 1992 at Central China Normal University, visiting professor respectively at University of Cambridge (1994-95) and University of Warwick (1996-97), Director of the Institute of British-American Literature and Comparative Studies at CCNU.

Finally, Comparative Literature, in conjunction with the Rhetoric and Composition program in the Department of English, helped sponsor a lecture by Temple University Professor Bryant Simon entitled "Consumed by Starbucks: The Costs of Our Everyday Desires." In his talk, Professor Simon discussed the costs of desire for Starbucks. What does our attachment to half-caf grande vanilla lattes take from us? He explored Starbucks' impact on space and landscape, the environment, labor, language, and ideas about politics and globalization. Gabriela Giorno arranged the well-attended lecture on April 26.



Bryant Simon

Four New Students

The Program in Comparative Literature will welcome four new students in August, 2007. Welcome!



Li Jinhua obtained her Master's degree on English Literature in Beijing Foreign Studies University. Before coming to the US, she was a faculty member of the English Department of Beijing Foreign Studies University. She is interested in studies of transnational film adaptations, postmodern critical theories, and Shakespeare.

Lin Milkert grew up in Troy, IL, which is right next to St. Louis. She went to the US Air Force Academy for her undergraduate degree (which is why she is wearing a uniform in the picture). Her family's ethnicity is Russian, so she decided to minor in that language as a sort of tribute to her heritage. She tells us that, "In true English major fashion, I love to read, and, ironically enough, my favorite genre is war poetry, especially from America's Vietnam and the Soviet Union's Afghanistan. I'm also a huge movie freak, and I'm looking forward to meeting all the other Comparative Literature majors and buying you all a beer. See you in the fall!"



Brady Spangenberg received his Master's in Comparative Literature (2006) from Purdue and his Bachelor's in English and Religion (2004) from Simpson College (Indianola, IA). He is currently finishing an exchange year at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität in Freiburg, Germany. There he has been responsible for developing, organizing, and maintaining an English language writing lab. He has also taught courses in essay writing. At Purdue he plans to work in the areas of ancient Latin and Renaissance poetry as well as classical and romantic German literature. He also plans to teach English Composition and to work in the Writing Lab. Brady writes that "Though I have not specifically decided on a dissertation topic, my literary interests include ancient Latin poetry, Renaissance literature, and classical and romantic German literature. I am most interested in the borrowing and adaptation of cultural ideas and literary forms that occurred during these periods. To this end, I recently spent two weeks at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel researching first German translations of Italian epic poetry. I tend to favor stories, which portray something about the sheer difficulty of existing in the world. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* or Vergil's *Aeneid* are personal favorites, with characters who wander through woods and over water only to encounter the next catastrophe and who achieve their ends usually at the expense of their principles."



Steven Gooch, an incoming M.A. student, writes that he is "most recently from Los Angeles, but have lived in Hawai'i, Oklahoma and Scotland." He received his B.A. in Philosophy and Master of Professional Writing degrees from the University of Southern California. He has worked on archaeological digs in Greece and Israel, worked for Apple Computers, tended bar, and run a record label. His interests include South American literature, Italian literature, the city in literature, Oulipo, late 20th century British literature, polyglots, Classics, perceptions of reality, comics, theater, film and digital culture.



Student Accomplishments



Maura Bergonzone

Maura Bergonzone passed the MA exam and received her degree in May. She went to the North Carolina Romance Literature Conference at University of North Carolina in March and spoke on a 1914 Italian silent movie, *Cabiria* by Pastrone. Her paper was titled "Cabiria amphibolico, Pastrone dissenziente." She also attended the American Association of Teachers of Italian conference in Colorado Springs (May 3-6) to deliver a paper "L'intellettuale di Virzi."

Jose Newton Pereira Filho has been teaching Portuguese. He also successfully defended his dissertation prospectus. The working title of his project is "The Cultural Significance of Street Orphans in Anglo-American and Luso-Brazilian novels."



Jose Newton at an NBA game in Indy.

Mahmoud Gewaily completed his Ph.D. degree and graduated in May. Mahmoud is an Egyptian and obtained his undergraduate degree in English from Tanta University, Egypt. He has taught at College of Arts, University of Minia, Egypt, in 1994-2001. He did postgraduate work in American literature at Ain Shams University, and was awarded a Master of Arts. He came to Purdue University on a Doctoral Educational Scholarship funded by the Egyptian Government for four years (2001-2005). He obtained his Master of Arts in English Language and Linguistics in 2005 and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature in 2007. He earned a number of research grants funded by College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University. He worked as a Research Assistant in the Department of English in 2005 and the Department of Comparative Literature in 2002-2003, and then won the Bilsland Dissertation Fellowship in 2005-2006. He presented academic papers at MMLA in 2003 and the SSA in 2006. His first article titled "Cross-cultural Persuasion in Literary Translation: A Case Study" submitted to the *Journal of Semiotic Society of America* will be published in 2007.



Martina Jauch

Martina Jauch presented a paper at the (dis)junctions Graduate Conference at University of California, Riverside, on April 6-7, 2007, titled "'Living (Un)Happily Ever After': Desire, Perversion, and Pleasure in E. M. Forster's *Maurice*." She also spoke at this Spring's American Studies Symposium at Purdue on April 20th. Her paper was titled "Sublime Spectacles of Survival in Depression-Era Fiction." Martina has volunteered to establish a series of events for Comparative Literature students during the school year 2007-2008 to increase the feeling of togetherness in the program.

Ying Liang gave birth to Brandon Yu at Home Hospital on January 11, 2007. She also won a PRF grant for 2007-2008 for a project titled "An Imaginary Land of Women: A Comparative Study of Modern Chinese and American Feminist Utopian Fictions." Liang delivered a paper titled "Making the Familiar Strange and the Strange Familiar—*Farewell, My Concubine* and its Crossing National Borders" at the 8th annual graduate interdisciplinary symposium at Purdue University, on March 2, 2007. She also gave a talk titled "What is a Feminist Utopia? --- A Comparative Study of *Herland* and *Journey to the West* (Chapter 54)" in the Women's Studies Noon Lecture Series, at Purdue University, on September 27, 2006. Finally she presented a talk titled "Around China in Twenty-Five Minutes" at "Discover Diversity 2007," hosted by the housing and food services at Purdue, on March 15, 2007. This is an annual event that highlights different countries each year. This year the event featured China and Venezuela. Ying Liang was invited to give a presentation about Chinese culture to around 400 Purdue staff members who attended the event.



Liang Ying lecturing on Chinese culture.

Teresa Nunes received her Ph.D. in December 2006 and is currently an Assistant Professor of Foreign Languages and Literatures and Women's Studies at Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Su Peirui defended her dissertation prospectus on November 16, 2006. The title of her dissertation will be "Ephiphany in Fei Ming, Joyce and Nabokov."

Mou Xianfeng spent the year as a recipient of a PRF grant for her project "Searching for a Space for a Voice to Bloom—Strategies of Articulation by Modern American and Chinese Women Writers (1899-1996)." She was mentored in Chinese teaching, which she will begin this fall after several years teaching English composition.

Trip to Taipei, Taiwan

A trip to Taiwan organized by Purdue University Calumet gave Charles Ross the opportunity to visit some of the universities whose students apply to Comparative Literature. The official purpose of the trip was to form research partnerships. Professor Ross's proposal raised the possibility of developing projects on multi-cultural approaches to Shakespeare, Shakespeare on Film, and the future of Shakespeare in cyberspace. Purdue's main contacts were faculty and students at Tatung University, an engineering school in Taipei, and also Chinese Culture University, a school devoted more to the arts, athletics, and teaching English.

After the group from Purdue returned to America, Professor Ross remained behind for a week to give a series of talks. He spoke to the Shakespeare Forum at National Taiwan University, an advanced scholarly gathering, and then returned for a more general talk on the use of horses in Shakespeare on Film. Fu Jen Catholic University has the only Italian program in Taiwan. There Professor Ross spoke in English and Italian to give a two-hour introduction to the Italian romantic epic to the class of Professor Brian Reynolds. He spoke on "Understanding Juliet" to an enthusiastic class at National Taiwan Normal on May 31, then returned to Chinese Culture University for a keynote address for their day-long conference on the theory and practice of teaching English.

According to Professor Ross, it was his first trip to Asia, and he tried to make the most of it by finally digging in to practice writing Chinese characters and reciting some of the poems from his FirstLines video project on diversity and world literature. English classes he observed were often large affairs conducted by teaching with a microphone, a computer full of teaching aids, and the international fraternity of sleeping students in the back rows. Learning English has been a national goal for Taiwan for decades (the island was formerly a colony of Japan), and, in the future. Professor Ross and his partners, including Professor Alex Huang at Pennsylvania State University, will be looking for ways to use Shakespeare not just to bring English to Asia, but to introduce Chinese and Asian culture to America. Here, for example, is what Juliet looks like in Mandarin: 朱丽叶.



The Shakespeare class of Kun-Liang Chuang (left), chairman of the Department of English and Director of the English Language Training Center, at National Taiwan Normal University.



Alice Pai, the representative from Chinese Culture University, who accompanied the Purdue contingent for most of their stay, greets the Purdue contingent at the airport in Taiwan on May 20, 2007, with Professor Yong Chen from Purdue Calumet.



A group from Purdue discusses cell phone cyberspace research with Professor Yong Ping Huang (right), Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Tatung University, Taipei.

Spotlight on Beate Allert

Professor Beate Allert has been a key member of the Comparative Literature program for five years. At the same time, she was Chair of German in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. A specialist in visual culture, she has given several seminars for Comparative Literature, been a driving force in helping to arrange visiting speakers, and a member of the admissions committee. She has recently published two articles and two book reviews: "Goethe, Runge, Friedrich: On Painting" appeared in *The Enlightened Eye: Goethe and Visual Culture*, ed. Eve Moore and Patricia Simpson (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007): 73-91 and "Goethe, Zur Farbenlehre" (Treatise on Colour, Colour Theory), in *Literary Encyclopedia*: London: www.LitEncyc.com, 2006. Her review of *Lessings Skandale*, edited by Jürgen Stanzel and Roman Lach, eds., Tübingen appeared in *Monatshefte* Vol 99.1. (2007):106-108. (March 19, 2007), and her review of Tino Markworth's *Unsterblichkeit und Identität beim frühen Herder* appeared in the *Lessing Yearbook* 36 (2004/2005): 234-36., which was actually published in September of 2006.



Beate Allert with Chihuly's
Glas Figure.

Professor Allert is currently on three Comparative Literature dissertation committees. She also received a PRF grant on the project "Fin de siècle Balkans: The Cultural Politics of Orientalist Imagination at Europe's Margin," for doctoral student in German Literature, Ana Foteva. This summer she is teaching a cross-listed course on international film: "International Cinema 1946-1966" (FLL 593D / ENGL 596C / FR 594D / GER 594D / SPAN 594D).

During the last year Professor Allert received an International Travel Grant from the College of Liberal Arts for the presentation of her paper "Understatement and Minimalism in Diderot and Lessing" at the Fourth Landau-Paris Symposium on the Eighteenth Century (LAPASEC) in Paris, November 17-18, 2006. She also received a Purdue University College of Liberal Arts Teaching Development Incentive Grant Fall 2005 for the development of a new cross-listed graduate course offered Spring 2006 FLL 639D/ENGL 659D "European 20th Century Drama, Film, and Visual Theory," which she taught during the spring semester of 2006.

Professor Allert has an international reputation as a scholar working in visual theory. In addition to her Paris talk and to being a panel moderator at various conferences, she presented papers on "Lessing's Contribution to 18th Century Discourses on Color" in Tucson, March 28-30, 2007, and on "The Ister: The Reception of a Hölderlin Poem in Film Today in Pittsburgh, September 28-30, 2006.



Her engagement work includes organizing the visit and reading in German by fiction writer and radio producer Susanna Piontek on March 7, 2007 in the West Lafayette Public Library, as well as an outreach event to local high schools. The photo to the left shows Professor Allert next to Susanna Piontek after the reading of her short stories in the Library. To the left is Jen William, the new chair of German now that Beate's five year term in that function is complete.

Purdue-gift Online giving to Purdue

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Below is a list of current students and their degree tracks. They are grouped by their entry year.

1997

Carla Nelson (Ph.D.)

2000

Yoshiko Matsuura (Ph.D.)

2001

Yuwen Hsiung (Ph.D.)

Lei Jin (Ph.D.)

2002

Simone Caroti (M.A., 2004; Ph.D.)

Ying Liang (Ph.D.)

Xianfeng Mou (Ph.D.)

Peirui Su (Ph.D.)

2003

Tatjana Babic (Ph.D.)

Catalina Florina-Florescu (Ph.D.)

Yilin Liao (Ph.D.)

Chao-Mei Tu (Ph.D.)

Shaojing (Rita) Wu (Ph.D.)

Dongmei Xu (Ph.D.)z

2004

Tetyana Lyaskovets (Ph.D.)

Jose Newton Pereira Filho (Ph.D.)

2005

Roberto Ferreira, Jr. (Ph.D.)

Martina Jauch (Ph.D.)

Cong Yin (Ph.D.)

2006

Carolina Andrade (M.A.)

Carmen Lleinin Figueroa (Ph.D.)

Anna Fluegge (Freiburg exchange student)

Lu Liang (Ph.D.)

Jason Lotz (M.A.)

Buffy Turner (Ph.D.)

2007

Steven Gooch (M.A.)

Li Jinhua (Ph.D.)

Lindsey Milkert (M.A.)

Brady Spangenberg (Ph.D.)



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COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS