

Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Toronto
C/o: Isabel Bader Theatre, 3rd Floor
93 Charles Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S 1K9
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20th Annual Graduate Colloquium

The Centre for Comparative Literature presents



MARCH 19-21, 2009
THE POETICS & POLITICS OF READING:
Studies in Honour of University Professors Linda Hutcheon & J. Edward Chamberlin
ALUMNI HALL, VICTORIA COLLEGE ROOM 112, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

*"2009 marks a very important year at the Centre for Comparative Literature for a variety of reasons, including the 40th Anniversary of the Founding of the Centre by Northrop Frye, as well as the 20th Annual Graduate Student Conference. The Committee for this year has decided to organize a conference in celebration of the Centre for Comparative Literature and this celebration will also be a celebration marking the retirements of **Professor J. Edward Chamberlin** and **Professor Linda Hutcheon**. In order to honour the work of these two professors, to initiate a dialogue concerning the place of their ideas in the larger context of critical theories of reading, and to establish a firm theoretical base at the Centre for Comparative Literature from which to continue our proud tradition of both asking and addressing the most pressing new questions within the social sciences and humanities, we present the 2009 Conference: The Poetics and Politics of Reading which will include Keynote Addresses by **Professor Sander L. Gilman** (Emory University) and **Professor Emeritus Mario J. Valdés** (University of Toronto)."*

THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

program

University of Toronto, 2009



20th ANNUAL GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM

THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF READING:

Studies in Honour of University Professors Linda Hutcheon & J. Edward Chamberlin

MARCH 19-21, 2009

Alumni Hall, Room 112, Victoria College, University of Toronto

Presented by The Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Toronto

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:

Jonathan A. Allan

Ryan Culpepper

Rachel Freedman

Shaun Kaser

Andrés Pérez-Simón

This conference has truly been a pleasure to organize as the university community has gathered together to help us celebrate **Linda** and **Ted**.

The committee would like to thank **Professor Roland LeHuenen**, director of the Centre for Comparative Literature, and **Professor Barbara Havercroft**, our graduate coordinator for their support and encouragement. Without the help of **Aphrodite Gardner's** advice and assistance and **Bao Nguyen's** excellent design work, this conference would never have gotten off the ground.

Our gratitude goes out to **Professor Jill Ross** for her advice, encouragement, and patience while applying for grants; **Professor Robert Gibbs** for his kind support and encouragement; and **The Collected Works of Northrop Frye Editorial Project**.

We would also like to thank **Victoria College** for its donation in-kind of Alumni Hall, and the Principal and President of the College and University, **Professors David B. Cook** and **Paul Gooch** for their further generous donation. **Łukasz Wodzyński** provided invaluable help in organizing our opening reception.

We would further like to extend our thanks to **Alan Bewell**, **Dean Susan Pfeiffer**, **J.J. Berry Smith**, **Dr. Alvin Lee** and **Dr. Jean O'Grady**, **John Zilcosky**, **Christina Kramer**, **Domenico Pietropaolo**, **Stephen Johnson**, **Scott Rayter**, **Eileen Antone**, **Dominique Scheffel-Dunand**, **John Magee**, **Linda Northrup**, **Elan Dresher**, **Parth Bhatt**, **Sander Gilman** and **Mario Valdés**.

Finally, we would like to thank **Professors Linda Hutcheon** and **Ted Chamberlin** for their longstanding contributions to the students of this University.

Thursday, March 19, 2009

2:00–3:00

Registration

3:00

OPENING REMARKS, Roland LeHuenen, Director, Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Toronto

3:30–4:45

PANEL 1: “WHY DO WE READ? WHAT DOES IT DO FOR US?”

Moderator: **Ronald Ng**, Centre for Comparative Literature

Jill Scott (Queen’s University)

“The Politics of Metaphor: Reading Forgiveness after 9/11”

Margery Fee (University of British Columbia)

“Stories as Darwinist Adaptations: Implications for Comparative Literature”

Len Findlay (University of Saskatchewan)

“Reading Freedom: Echo, Pomo, Eco-Criticism”

5:00–5:20

INTRODUCTION TO THE HONOREES

Russell Kilbourn (Wilfrid Laurier University)

5:20–6:30

HONORARY LECTURES

Linda Hutcheon (University of Toronto)

“Luck: A Reader’s Story”

J. Edward Chamberlin (University of Toronto)

“The Yard and the Tower: A Life in School, Song, and Story”

6:30–8:30

OPENING RECEPTION

The Polo Room (4th Floor), 44 St. Joseph St (at Bay St).

Friday, March 20, 2009

8:30–9:00

Registration and Coffee

9:00–10:15

PANEL 2: “WHAT CAN WE READ? WHAT IS A TEXT?”

Moderator: **Professor Victor Li**, Department of English and Centre for Comparative Literature

Keavy Martin (University of Toronto)

“A Text of a Different Colour: What ‘Horse’ Can Tell Us About Reading”

Jennifer E. Row (Cornell University)

"Commonplace Books and Queer Sexuality: Reading Transgressively in Antebellum America"

Martin Zeilinger (University of Toronto)

"Reading Between the Frames—Found Footage in Martin Arnold's Cinema of Repression"

10:30–11:45

PANEL 3: "HOW DO WE READ? AUTHORITY AND DISCURSIVE INSTRUCTION WITHIN TEXTS"

Moderator: **Martin Zeilinger**, Centre for Comparative Literature

Katherine Ding (University of California, Irvine)

"Parodic Authority: Tiresias's Narration in The Waste Land."

Nathaniel Heisler (University of Toronto)

"Corporeal Transmission: A Study of Process, Narration, Imitation in Hadith"

Jeannine Pitas (University of Toronto)

"The Virgin Mary as Semiotic and Symbolic: On Gonzalo de Berceo's 'Miracles of our Lady' and Julia Kristeva's 'Stabat Mater' "

11:45–1:00

Lunch

1:00–2:30

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Sander L. Gilman (Emory University)

"Reading and Life: Ted and Linda"

Introduced by **Professor Ted Chamberlin**

2:45–4:00

PANEL 4: "WHO READS?/READING & SUBJECT-FORMATION"

Moderator: **Professor Barbara Havercroft**, Department of French and Centre for Comparative Literature

Luis Othoniel Rosa (Princeton University)

"Taking a Risk: Traumatic Circuits and Electrical Readings"

Chris Findeisen (Florida State University)

"The Reader Became the Book: The Pragmatic Challenge to Subjectivity"

Ryan Culpepper (University of Toronto)

"Distorted evolution: Subjectivity, Pragmatism and Political 'Progress' in Jack London's America"

4:00–4:15

Coffee break

4:15–5:30

PANEL 5: “REAL SUBJECTS/FICTIONAL SUBJECTS”

Moderator: **Sarah O’Brien**, Centre for Comparative Literature

Lewis McLeod (Trent University)

“A Documentary-Style Movie: ‘Borat’ and the Truth/Fiction Question”

Emmanuel Bouju (Université de Haute-Bretagne, Rennes II)

“Autobiographic Fiction, or the Illusion of Sosia: Writing History and Politics of Reading”

Meredith Gill (University of Minnesota)

“Reading, Guilt and Absent Causality: Louis Althusser and E.L. Doctorow’s ‘The Book of Daniel’”

7:00

BANQUET

at Avli Restaurant, 401 Danforth Ave. (at Chester subway station).

Saturday, March 21, 2009:

8:45–9:00

Coffee

9:00–9:45

PANEL 6: INAUGURATION OF THE “LINDA HUTCHEON AND J. EDWARD CHAMBERLIN PANEL ON LITERARY THEORY”

Moderator: **Professor Mieke Bal**, University of Amsterdam

Peter Nesselroth (Emeritus, University of Toronto), former Director, Centre for Comparative Literature

“Reading (and) Writing: What a Difference Derrida Made”

10:00–11:30

PANEL 7: “HOW STORIES CHANGE (ADAPTATION)”

Moderator: **Professor Uzoma Esonwanne**, Department of English and Centre for Comparative Literature

Katherine McLeod (University of Toronto)

“Dance the Poem Out Loud: Adapting Avant-Garde Poetics in ‘The Four Horsemen Project’”

Terry Goldie (York University)

“A Theory of Adaptation: How to Write ‘Middlesex’ ”

Yves Saint-Cyr (University of Toronto)

“Desire, Disease, Death, and David Cronenberg: The Operatic Anxieties of ‘The Fly’”

11:30–12:45 *Lunch*

12:45–2:15 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Mario J. Valdés (Emeritus, University of Toronto)

“Poetry at War: Reading the Spanish Civil War”

Introduced by **Professor Linda Hutcheon**

2:30–3:45 **PANEL 8: “A RESPONSIBILITY TO READ? A ‘RIGHT’ WAY TO READ?”**

Moderator: **Joe Culpepper**, Centre for Comparative Literature

Brian Chappel (Catholic University of America)

“Bakhtinian ‘Ethical’ Reading”

Derek Flack (York University)

“Unreadability and Responsibility: The Case of ‘The Sound and the Fury’”

Myra Bloom (University of Toronto)

“A Moment of Poetry: Ortiz, Searle, and the Language of Commemoration”

3:45–4:15 **CLOSING REMARKS**

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Keynote Speakers and Honorees:

J. Edward Chamberlin is a world-renowned literary scholar, critic and teacher. Focusing on Orality and Oral and Written Cultures; Interdisciplinarity; Aboriginal Studies and Rights; and West Indian Poetry, Professor Chamberlin's combination of literary, linguistic, anthropological, and sociological expertise has allowed him to make major contributions to the study of our human need, or hope for, peaceful coexistence. His study of oral traditions in North America, Africa and the Caribbean has led to a body of work that marks a watershed in postcolonial interdisciplinary studies, while his work among aboriginal groups has altered and renewed the direction of postcolonial research and pedagogy. His book *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* (2003) focuses on the telling of stories and fights the current political and social desire to stress differences between cultures.

Not only has Professor Chamberlin made important contributions to the scholarship in the area of native history and art, he has also been an invaluable figure in public policy development for over two decades. Beginning in the 1970s, Professor Chamberlin has served in a series of advisory roles to senior government officials, and has frequently been called upon to testify at land rights and self-government hearings (by provincial and federal governments, as well as aboriginal organizations). Professor Chamberlin's critically and popularly acclaimed book, *Come Back to Me My Language: Poetry and the West Indies* (1993), confirmed his reputation as one of the leading critics and theorists of the emerging literature of the West Indies. His work in this area is not only important in terms of the breadth and depth of its coverage of the field, but especially for the sensitivity of the critical response of the author and his impressively informed understanding of the historical, social and political contexts of the writing studied.

Professor Chamberlin holds a BA in Mathematics from the University of British Columbia (1964), a BA in English Language and Literature from Oxford University (1966), and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Toronto (1969). He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2000. His thesis was entitled "Wallace Stevens and the Aesthetics of Modern Art" and was produced under the supervision of H. Northrop Frye.

Sander L. Gilman is a Distinguished Professor of the Liberal Arts and Sciences as well as Professor of Psychiatry at Emory University, where he is the Director of the Program in Psychoanalysis and the Health Sciences Humanities Initiative. He is also a Professor at the Institute in the Humanities, Birkbeck College (London). A cultural and literary historian, he is the author or editor of eighty books. His Oxford lectures *Multiculturalism and the Jews* appeared in 2006; his most recent edited volume, *Diets and Dieting: A Cultural Encyclopedia* appeared in 2007. He is the author of the basic

study of the visual stereotyping of the mentally ill, *Seeing the Insane*, published by John Wiley and Sons in 1982 (rpt. 1996), as well as the standard study of *Jewish Self-Hatred*, the title of his Johns Hopkins University Press (1986).

For twenty-five years Professor Gilman was a member of the humanities and medical faculties at Cornell University where he held the Goldwin Smith Professorship of Humane Studies. For six years he held the Henry R. Luce Distinguished Service Professorship of the Liberal Arts in Human Biology at the University of Chicago, and for four years was a distinguished professor of the Liberal Arts and Medicine and creator of the Humanities Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has been the Northrop Frye Visiting Professor of Literary Theory at the University of Toronto, the Old Dominion Fellow in the Department of English at Princeton University, the Visiting B. G. Rudolph Professor of Jewish Studies at Syracuse University, the inaugural Drobny Professor in Jewish Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago, the Nichols Visiting Professor of the Humanities and the Public Sphere, University of California, Irvine and the Weidenfeld Visiting Professor of European Comparative Literature at Oxford University. He was president of the Modern Language Association in 1995. He was awarded a Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) at the University of Toronto in 1997, elected an honorary professor of the Free University in Berlin (2000), and an honorary member of the American Psychoanalytic Association (2007).

Linda Hutcheon, one of the best known and most highly renowned Canadian scholars in the humanities today, is a member of the Department of English and of the Centre for Comparative Literature. She has achieved broad international recognition as a literary theorist by helping to define and describe the idea and characteristics of postmodernism as a way of delineating the most recent period in literary history and through extended examination of verbal and cultural constructs such as irony and parody. Indeed, it has been said that she “virtually owns parody and irony. One simply cannot write on those topics without starting from or otherwise deeply engaging her work.” Her studies of postmodernism have begun to shape the way that literary scholars and critics see the evolution of contemporary letters in the Western tradition. Professor Hutcheon is also one of the major critics of contemporary Canadian writing and culture. More recently, she has emerged as an important critic of opera, placing certain of its themes and preoccupations within a revealing cultural and historical framework. In short, she is one of the most distinguished critics of literature and one of the most influential and most interesting minds in modern literary criticism. Her work has been translated into many languages and is admired by scholars in Europe and Asia as well as in North America.

A prolific writer, Professor Hutcheon has more than a dozen books to her credit. Of particular note are: *Narcissistic Narrative* (1980); *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988); *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989);

rpt. 2002); *The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction* (1988); *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions* (1990); *A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (1985); *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (1994). With Mario J. Valdés she co-directed a project designed to study literary history using a new comparative model, leading to *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory* (2002). With her spouse, Dr. Michael Hutcheon, she has published two books, *Opera: Desire, Disease and Death* (1996) and *Bodily Charm: Living Opera* (2000). In these, she brings the conceptual frameworks she has developed from literary theory to the world of music and spectacle, seen through the lenses of medical history.

Professor Hutcheon's scholarly achievements have been recognized through several awards and honours. Among her research grants and fellowships, she has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Killam Research Fellowship. In 1990, she became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. She is regarded as a superb teacher and in 1998 won the Northrop Frye Award, the University's highest award for teaching, which recognizes the integration of teaching and research. She has received honorary degrees from the University of Antwerp, the University of Helsinki, Concordia University, and the University of Western Ontario.

Mario J. Valdés is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature and Spanish at the University of Toronto. With Northrop Frye, Professor Valdés was a founding member of the graduate program in Comparative Literature in 1969. In 1978 the program became a department—since then, named the Centre for Comparative Literature—and Professor Valdés held the chair from that year to 1983. Since he published his first book, *Death in the Literature of Unamuno* (1964), he has authored and edited multiple books and collections in the fields of comparative literature, philosophical hermeneutics, literary history, and film theory. He is the author of *Shadows in the Cave* (1982), *Phenomenological Hermeneutics* (1987), *World-Making* (1992), *La interpretación abierta* (1995) and *Hermeneutics of Poetic Sense: Critical Studies of Literature, Cinema, and Cultural History* (1998). A recognized expert in the works of Miguel de Unamuno and Paul Ricoeur, he was the editor of Unamuno's novels *San Manuel Bueno, mártir* and *Niebla* in Cátedra, one of the most prestigious publishing houses in Spain; he also edited *A Ricoeur Reader* (1991) and wrote numerous articles on the work of the French philosopher. He co-edited *Identity of the Literary Text* (1985, with Owen Miller), *Rethinking Literary History* (2002, with Linda Hutcheon), and *Literary Cultures of Latin America. A Comparative History* (2004, Djelal Kadir).

Professor Valdés was the Founding Editor of *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* (1976-1992), and he is Honorary Member of the Asociación de Hispanistas Canadienses; Vice-President and President of the Modern Language Association (1988-1991); and the President of the Coordinating Committee for

Comparative Literary History of the International Comparative Literature Association (1993-2002). He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (1983) and of the Academia Mexicana de la Lengua.

Presenters:

Myra Bloom is in her first year of a Ph.D. at the Centre for Comparative Literature, U of T, where she also completed her Master's. She received her BA from the University of King's College in Halifax, NS. She is particularly interested in the intersection between critical theory and avant-garde poetry, and intends to write her dissertation on language games.

Emmanuel Bouju is a former student at the École Normale Supérieure, and Professor of Comparative Literature at the Université de Haute-Bretagne, Rennes-II. Director of the "Groupe phi", a research group in historical and comparative poetics, he is also editor, for the Presses Universitaires de Rennes, of the collective works of this group: *Littératures sous contrat* (2002), *L'engagement littéraire* (2005), *Littérature et exemplarité* (2007), *L'autorité en littérature: exercice, partage, contestation* (to be published, 2009). Bouju is in addition the author of *Réinventer la littérature : démocratisation et modèles romanesques dans l'Espagne post-franquiste* (with a preface by Jorge Semprún, Toulouse, PUM, 2002) and *La transcription de l'histoire, Essai sur le roman européen de la fin du vingtième siècle* (Rennes, PUR "Interférences", 2006).

Brian Chappell, a native of Washington, D.C., is currently a Ph.D. student at The Catholic University of America. His presentation "Bakhtinian Ethical Reading" is derived from his Masters thesis at Georgetown University which addressed M.M. Bakhtin's early philosophical works. His current scholarly interests include literary theory and the twentieth century American novel.

Ryan Culpepper is a Ph.D. student at the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Toronto. His research interest include 20th century revisions of Marx and Marxism and Leftism as a political, literary, and clinical discourse in the USA and the USSR.

Katherine Ding is a first year English Ph.D. student at the University of California, Irvine. As a reluctant modernist, she pursues questions of semantics and semiotics in pre-World War Two British poetry and is intrigued by the subversion of logocentricism in postmodern theology. She is interested in poetics as a place where philosophy still plays.

Margery Fee teaches Aboriginal, Canadian, and Post-colonial literatures at the University of British Columbia. She is Editor of the critical journal *Canadian Literature* and an Associate Editor of the second edition of the *Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles*. In 2008, she was a Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies Distinguished Scholar in Residence, working on a project on racialization and genomics.

Chris Findeisen is a Ph.D. student at Florida State University. His research centres primarily on (post)modern American poetry and its intersection with pragmatism. He has presented papers on a number of modern thinkers including Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, James Joyce, William James, and John Dewey.

Len Findlay is Professor of English and Director of the Humanities Research Unit at the University of Saskatchewan. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, he was the Northrop Frye Professor of Literary Theory at the University of Toronto for 2000-2001. His edition of *The Communist Manifesto* appeared in 2004, and his *Oral Culture for Book Historians* will be published by UTP. He is currently at work on a polemic called *Dissent for a Nation*.

Derek Flack is an ABD Ph.D. candidate at York University whose dissertation aims to examine the complex relationship between ethics and nostalgia in Anglo-American modernist literature. During the 2008-09 academic year, he is taking time away from his studies to focus on teaching English at Seneca College and on his non-academic writing and photographic pursuits.

Meredith Gill is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. In her dissertation, "Clearer than Truth': Interrogation Techniques and Post-War Literary Cultures," she examines the relationships between state power, interpretation, and post-war Russian and American Literature. Her other research interests include: theories of value, globalization, contemporary Marxism, and lived socialisms.

Terry Goldie is author of *queersexlife: Autobiographical Notes on Sexuality, Gender and Identity* (Arsenal Pulp, 2008), *Pink Snow: Homotextual Possibilities in Canadian Fiction* (Broadview, 2003) and *Fear and Temptation: the Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Literatures* (McGill-Queen's, 1989) He is editor of *In a Queer Country: Gay and Lesbian Studies in the Canadian Context* (Arsenal Pulp, 2001) and co-editor, with Daniel David Moses, of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (Oxford, 2005). His next project is tentatively titled: *John Money: The Man Who Invented Gender*.

Nathaniel Heisler is a 2nd year Ph.D. student at the Centre for Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto. He has done graduate work at the University of Cambridge and the School of Oriental and African Studies. His current research interests include print history, book production pedagogy, and Islamic education.

Russell Kilbourn (Ph.D., Comparative Literature, Toronto, 1999) is Assistant Professor of Film Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, where he is also a series editor for the Film and Media Studies series at WLU Press. He has published articles in film, comparative literature, and cultural studies, as well as contributions to several book collections on German author W.G. Sebald. Professor Kilbourn has a book chapter coming out on memory, globalization, and transnational cinema, and he is currently working on a book on the representation of memory in the art film.

Keavy Martin is a doctoral candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto. She is currently completing a dissertation entitled "Stories in a New Skin: Approaches to Inuit Literature in Nunavut" under the supervision of J. Edward Chamberlin. She was recently appointed Assistant Professor of Aboriginal Literatures at the University of Alberta.

Lewis MacLeod is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Trent University, Canada. Some of his research focuses on the transition between Modern and Postmodern cultures/literatures and on the function of ritual in secular culture. His work has appeared in a variety of journals, including *Mosaic*, *ARIEL*, *Critique* and *Modern Fiction Studies*.

Katherine McLeod is a fourth year Ph.D. candidate in Canadian Literature at the University of Toronto. She is writing her dissertation on performance and Canadian poetry—a project that focuses on the cultural politics of sound in music, dance and radio adaptations of poetry written by The Four Horsemen, Michael Ondaatje, George Elliott Clarke, and Robert Bringham. Her work on Linda Griffiths's dramatic adaptation of Gwendolyn MacEwen's poetry has been published in *Theatre and AutoBiography: Writing and Performing Lives in Theory and Practice* (Talon, 2006) and her article on George Elliott Clarke's jazz opera *Québécois* is forthcoming in *Mosaic*.

Peter W. Nesselroth is Professor Emeritus of French and Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto and a former Director of the Centre (1983-1997). His research interests include Dada and surrealism, stylistics, and literary semiotics. He has written extensively on Lautréamont, on Surrealist poetics, and Derrida. His recent publications include «L'Enigme d'Isidore Ducasse» (2003); «Le

Dédoublement du sens de Dada à Derrida et vice-versa» (2005) ; «Le Passage : d'Aragon à Ducasse» (2006) and «Playing Doubles : Derrida's Writing» (2007).

Jeannine M. Pitas is an M.A. student at University of Toronto's Centre for Comparative Literature. Her primary interests include twentieth century Polish and Latin American literature and the cultural links between these regions of the world. However, this year she decided to expand her knowledge of the Spanish canon by studying some of the earliest named peninsular poets. Her conference paper was developed from a work for a class entitled: "The Body in Medieval Literature."

Luis Othoniel Rosa, currently a fourth year graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Princeton, works on 20th Century Latin-American literature, focusing on literature of the Southern cone and Puerto Rico, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, fiction writing, and questions of authority and power in literature. His dissertation, "Pretext, Fantasy, Futurity: Towards a Literature in the Fractures of Authority", is a theoretical journey through the vertiginous works of Argentinean writers, Jorge Luis Borges and Macedonio Fernández.

Jennifer E. Row is a Comparative Literature graduate student at Cornell University working on gender and sexuality studies and French literature. After receiving her BA from Yale University, she taught English at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris.

Yves Saint-Cyr is a recent graduate of the doctoral program at the University of Toronto's Centre for Comparative Literature. After completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre at Concordia University in 1999, he worked for two years as an elementary school drama and music teacher. During this time, he directed and co-wrote a number of plays, taught instrumental and vocal music, and directed a children's choir. He recently completed his Ph.D. dissertation, "The Glass Bead Game: From Post-Tonal to Post-Modern," under the supervision of Linda Hutcheon. His corpus texts include works such as Hermann Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel*, Douglas R. Hofstadter's *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, Michel Tournier's *Le roi des aulnes*, and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*.

Jill Scott is Associate Professor in the Department of German at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. She received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Toronto (1998) and held a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Chicago. Scott is the author of *Electra after Freud: Myth and Culture* (Cornell University Press, 2005), in which she argues that the counter-myth of Electra and Agamemnon stages a "narrative revolt" against the dominance of Oedipus as the

universal, masculine archetype. Scott received the SSHRC *Aurora Prize* for her research proposal entitled “A Poetics of Forgiveness,” and the resulting book is forthcoming with Palgrave MacMillan. The book’s central claim is that creative communication can and does play a critical role in resolving conflict, both personal and political. The study includes chapters on canonical literature from Homer to Kafka, post 9/11 fiction, film, photography, and government document. Scott is also the author of articles on German and Austrian Modernism, cultural studies, opera, and dance.

Martin Zeilinger is in the process of completing his dissertation on the art and politics of cultural appropriation at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Comparative Literature. He has a bit of a background in filmmaking, and is looking forward to devoting more time to that once he has defended his thesis.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO: TRADITIONS AND FUTURES

The history of Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto begins with Northrop Frye, who established the Centre in 1969 (the year which also marked the establishment of the Canadian Comparative Literature Association). Even in its early years, the Centre moved quickly to the forefront of the discipline. Mario J. Valdés explains that “from 1970 to 1976 Toronto has been one of the most exciting centres of Comparative Literature in North America. A succession of major voices have given their support to that endeavour: Hans Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Hillis Miller, Robert Wiemann, Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss, Hayden White, Fredric Jameson, and Tzvetan Todorov” (Interpretation of Narrative). This tradition has been maintained through the annual appointment of the Northrop Frye Professor of Literary Theory – a post which has been held by several of the above-mentioned scholars, as well as Mieke Bal, Edward Said, Sander L. Gilman, Michael Holquist, Julia Kristeva, Charles Taylor, and Derek Walcott. Most recently, the professorship was held by Emily Apter of New York University.

Indeed, for the past forty years, the Centre for Comparative Literature has become, quite literally, the Centre for Comparative Literature in Canada. In “Academe’s Stepchild,” a recent article in *University Affairs/Affaires universitaires*, David Hayes writes: “The University of Toronto’s Centre for Comparative Literature, founded by Northrop Frye in 1969, is thriving under director Roland Le Huenen, with such eminent scholars as J. Edward Chamberlin and Linda Hutcheon on faculty.” Moreover, the Centre for Comparative Literature has been home to all three Canadians elected to the Presidency of the Modern Language Association: Northrop Frye (1976), Mario J. Valdés (1991), and Linda Hutcheon (2000).

In 1989, the students of the Centre for Comparative Literature established the annual graduate colloquium, which has since evolved into a multi-day international academic conference that continually transcends and challenges disciplinary rigidity in favour of interdisciplinarity. The conference proceedings of the recent 19th Conference: “From Ignorance to Knowledge: Recognition from Antiquity to the Postmodern & Beyond” will be published in the *Canadian Review for Comparative Literature*.

Following the death of Northrop Frye on January 23, 1991, the Centre for Comparative Literature held an international conference in honour of his life and work.

In 2004, the students once again returned to making ideas public and began to publish the peer-reviewed journal *Transverse* which, as Roland Le Huenen, Director of the Centre for Comparative Literature, explains “provide[s] a forum for the exploration and discussion of significant problems in literary theory and important issues of literary

history not confined to a single literature.” Initially, Annarita Premier acted as editor-in-chief (2004-2006), and was succeeded by, Andrés Pérez-Simón (2006-2008).

In 2008, students who were collectively worried about the state of Comparative Literature formed a reading group (A View from Charles Street) “dedicated to the oft-un-tackled task of describing in specific, positive terms, the work of comparative literature.” As Ryan Culpepper explains, “the group’s name refers to Lubomir Doležel’s well-known essay ‘A View from Charles Bridge’ and to the Centre’s location on Charles Street in Toronto; in a much more incriminating way it also speaks to the members’ desire to converse at a roundtable and refer to themselves as ‘the View.’”

The Centre for Comparative Literature can pride itself on an impressive history of success and triumph persistently led by some of the finest comparatists working in the country, beginning with Northrop Frye, followed by Cyrus Hamlin, Mario J. Valdés, Peter Nesselroth, Eva Kushner, and Roland Le Huenen. Though the Centre does not have as long a history as other programs in the humanities at the University of Toronto, it makes up for its youth with considerable breadth; its faculty come from programs as diverse as Classical Studies through to Drama, East Asian Studies, English, French, German, History, History of Art, Italian Studies, Medieval Studies, Music, Philosophy, Religion, Slavic Studies, and Spanish and Portuguese. The faculty at the Centre for Comparative Literature have consistently been among the best in the field of comparative literary studies; members have been named to the Royal Society of Canada, the American Academy of Arts and Science, Order of Palmes Académiques, la Academia Mexicana de la Lengua, as well as being awarded various honorary doctorates from around the world.

The organizers of the 20th Conference look forward to reflecting and building on this impressive history by honouring two of the Centre for Comparative Literature’s premier scholars: Professor J. Edward Chamberlin and Professor Linda Hutcheon. We look forward to welcoming you to this event in the spring of 2009.



This event is sponsored by:

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