

department of
romance
languages and
literatures



Inside

- 3** Midday with the Masters: Research and Fellowship at Villa I Tatti in Florence
- 4** Department News
- 6** Focus: The 15th Annual Charles Fraker Conference
- 8** Graduate Program
- 10** In Depth: A closer look at two new books from faculty
- 11** Alumni News



It has been a busy year around the Department. We are especially delighted to welcome two new assistant professors of Spanish: Dr. Jaime Rodríguez-Matos, a specialist in Caribbean literature and culture, and Dr. Ryan Szpiech, who works on the Jewish and Islamic traditions of medieval Spain. Both represent the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural thrust of the Department's interests, and we are excited about the contribution they will make to our intellectual and pedagogical programs.

We are proud to announce the awards and accomplishments of our faculty. Enrique García Santo-Tomás, associate professor of Spanish, won a prestigious John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship for this academic year; Katherine Ibbett, assistant professor of French, was selected to be a fellow at the University of Michigan Institute for the Humanities; Ivonne Del Valle, assistant professor of Spanish, was awarded a semester fellowship at the John Carter Brown Library; and Giorgio Bertellini, assistant professor of Italian, won a year-long fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard. Frieda Ekotto, associate professor of French, was a recipient of the Harold R. Johnson Diversity Service Award for outstanding leadership in the area of cultural diversity. Lecturer Andy Noverr was chosen for an LSA Excellence in Education Award. Many of our faculty published books and articles during the year (see pages 4-5).

Six of our graduate students successfully defended their Ph.D. dissertations: Honorine Abessolo, Dominica Chang, Olivier Delers, Patrick Dodd, Constanza Svidler, and Wilfredo Valentin-Marquez. We are proud of their achievements and we wish them all the best in their careers. We must say good-bye to Dominica, who has begun a tenure-track job at Lawrence University; to Olivier who has taken up a tenure-track position at the University of Richmond; and to Megan Saltzman who has secured a position at Grinnell College. Two more graduate students – Daniel Arroyo (Spanish) and Silvia Marchetti (Italian) — were selected to receive Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor awards. And Dominica Chang was awarded the Naomi Schor prize by the Nineteenth-Century French Studies Association for the best paper given by a graduate student at the 2006 conference in October. To learn more about our graduate students you can visit our website: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/rll/gradprogram/students.html>.

Undergraduate education is one of the most important aspects of the Department's mission and the number of concentrators and minors in the different languages continues to be strong. We have been working hard to strengthen our undergraduate programs and to enhance the experience of our concentrators. A committee convened by Associate Chair Jarrod Hayes has finalized a proposal for a new concentration in Romance Languages and Literatures: this will allow students to concentrate in two Romance languages and to explore the connections between their literatures and cultures. We have forwarded the proposal to the College and hope that, if it is approved, we will be able to implement it soon. We have instituted a renewed and reinvigorated minor in Spanish, and we have encouraged students to participate in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, as well as in the Honors Program. One of our graduating concentrators, Hollis Richardson (French), won the Robert Hayden Humanities Award for best honors thesis, and sophomore Katherine Okonowski won a prize in the poster competition for the UROP program.

We sponsored many lectures, conferences, and symposia over the past year, and many more are planned for the year to come. We had a number of lectures organized around the LSA Citizenship theme year, as well as a series entitled "What's Left in Latin America?" You can read about our full program of events for the coming year on our website: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/rll/eventsnews/events.html>.

I am on leave in London for the academic year 2007-2008, and Cristina Moreiras-Menor, associate professor of Spanish, has kindly agreed to serve as Acting Chair during this period. I am grateful to Cristina for taking on this responsibility. I will return next summer for the remaining two years of my tenure as Chair. To those of you who have so generously contributed to our strategic fund or made special donations, please accept my thanks on behalf of the entire department. We are extremely grateful for your support, which is crucial to our continued success. We would be happy to hear from you; do send your news (see page 11) or come by to see us if you visit Ann Arbor.

Michèle Hannoosh

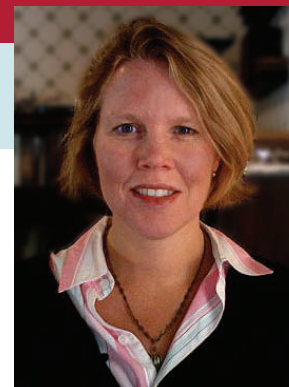
Michèle Hannoosh
Chair

Acting Chair: Cristina Moreiras-Menor **Graduate Chair:** Catherine Brown
Associate Chair: Jarrod Hayes **Editor/Designer:** April Caldwell

Check us out on the web: www.lsa.umich.edu/rll

Midday with the Masters:

Research and Fellowship at Villa I Tatti in Florence



Professor Alison Cornish

During the academic year 2005-2006, I had the extraordinary opportunity to be a research fellow at Harvard University's Villa I Tatti Center for Italian Renaissance Studies. My project was to write about the literary phenomenon of translations into the Italian vernacular during the time of Dante. The explosion of these translations, or volgarizzamenti, was directly related to the social and economic changes going on in central and northern Italy between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In urban centers such as Florence there was a new class of bankers and merchants, who were not educated in Latin but whose livelihood depended on written records as well as on the professional bilinguals, the notaries. It has been said that this was the first time that readers and writers were the same people, since before that time a writer, or scribe, was a skilled worker whose task was to copy out from dictation or from other exemplars a text for somebody else to read. Vernacular translation makes available all kinds of literature, history, science, and eloquence to a class of people formerly cut off from it. It was an ongoing task where every copyist, who was usually also a reader, would modify or improve upon the translation, which no longer had the static sacrality of an ancient or erudite work. The many versions of these translations preserved in Florentine libraries give a window onto readers of that time, and also onto the way the apparently passive tasks of reading and copying, as well as the inherently treacherous activity of translation, lead to a demand for more precise understanding and interrogation of ancient texts, that ultimately will push Florentines to learn Latin and go back to the originals – in the movement known as humanism.

Villa I Tatti, once the home of renowned art critic and connoisseur, Bernard Berenson, now the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, is in the hills above Florence between Fiesole and Settignano, almost adjacent to the practice fields of the world cup winning Italian national soccer team. Every year it offers fifteen fellowships to younger scholars in several fields among which literature, art, history, and music are always represented. In addition to the opportunity to read and study, both up at the splendid villa in the hills above Florence, and downtown in its rich libraries, this fellowship is particularly precious for the way it puts together scholars working in distinct disciplines (History, Art History, Musicology, Literary Criticism, Philology) but in the same time and place: the Italian Renaissance. As one fellow borsista, a curator of early modern Italian painting at the National Gallery in London, put it, I Tatti has always been emphatically multi-disciplinary, rather than interdisciplinary. My fellow fellows had daunting skills. They did the patient work of sifting through musty archives, examining works of art, identifying and deciphering manuscripts, in addition to the usual tasks of reading the primary and secondary published sources.



Illustration of one of the manuscripts:
Ric. 1538

From the members of my cohort, I learned about Egyptian obelisks in Rome, about the drawings of the much-maligned sculptor Baccio Bandinelli, about the first classical archeologist Flavio Biondo, about courses Galileo took as a student, about astrologers, entrepreneurial musicians, and other culture-brokers in the Renaissance courts, about Marie de Medici's input on the architecture of her Parisian abodes, about reformists, counter-reformists and party politics in the sixteenth century.

The only real requirement of the fellowship was to show up for the Tuscan mid-day meal, around a single long table, surrounded by paintings of the Italian masters, as in the days when Bernard Berenson was host. Because of the disciplinary differences among our own group and the constant stream of distinguished and erudite visitors from the outside, we were always obliged to make sense of our detailed work to all sorts of different kinds of people – both the extremely knowledgeable and the simply interested. I had lunch with an expert in Chinese art coming to look at some of the pieces in Berenson's collection, a Mexican expert on the so-called Florentine codex which is the major source for our knowledge of Aztec culture before the Spanish conquest, a metal-worker, diverse and sundry curators, professors, artists and musicians, automobile magnates, dignitaries of all kinds and all nations. Renowned art historian Julian Gardner had us spend two days looking at the Giotto frescoes in the basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. Others took us around Florence, to look at Duke Cosimo's cabinet of antiquities and the massive beam and pulley system sustaining the false ceiling of the Salone del Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio. There were concerts of early music, both voice and harpsichord, as well as lectures on the "culture wars" in seventeenth-century Venice, on the earliest operas, and on Belgian humanists in Rome.

One lunch-time conversation led to my participation in a single-day conference at the villa in May, entitled, "The Art of Memory: Between Archive and Invention from the Middle Ages to the Late Renaissance: Literature, Visual Arts, and Music." This invitation made me think about transcription and translation as a way of both remembering and forgetting – as works of literature are taken farther from their source and closer to the target of their always changing readers. Bernard Berenson could hardly have imagined the diversity and sheer number of scholars who come to I Tatti now. Like the translated texts I study, it is constantly being updated by the people who use it.

Ryan Szpiech and Jaime Rodríguez-Matos

Jaime Rodríguez-Matos

Jaime Rodríguez-Matos received his Ph.D. in Latin American Literature and Culture from Columbia University in 2005. From 2005 to 2007, he taught at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. His research interests include Caribbean literature, Latin American poetry, Latino/a culture, political theory, and philosophy.

He is currently working on two research projects. One is a revision of his dissertation, which deals with poetry and the concept of universality in a comparative context. Some of the poets he studies are José Lezama Lima, César Vallejo, and Charles Olson. This manuscript joins current debates on the rehabilitation of universality as a central concept of radical thought. The second project centers on the idea of tragedy in the Caribbean and it engages both the intellectual history and the literary traditions of the area as a whole.

He has taught classes on the Caribbean; Latin American and Latino literature and culture; the relationship between literature and politics in Cuban literature; the relationship between poetry and philosophy; and Caribbean re-writings of Greek tragedies. He has published on Latino literature and on the development of Hispanic narrative (polyphony in "sentimental romance" literature).

Theoretically, he is interested in the conflicted relationship between literature and philosophy, as well as the tensions between literary criticism and philosophy.

"This conflict," as he explains, "is not simply a dichotomy in which one is either within the philosophical or within the literary, or in violation of one of the two terms if they become entangled. The relation between the literary and the philosophical, as I see it, passes through the terrain of politics."

Ryan Szpiech

Ryan Szpiech began his graduate work in comparative literature at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and received his Ph.D. in Spanish from Yale University in 2006, specializing in Medieval Iberian literature. In 2006-2007, he was assistant professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at Beloit College, where he taught courses in Medieval and Golden Age literature.

His research focuses on cooperation and conflict between Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Iberian Peninsula, specifically exploring the representation of identity and difference in polemical writing between the three faiths. His dissertation received the mark of unanimous distinction. It explored the sources and composition of the most important work Abner of Burgos, a fourteenth-century Castilian convert from Judaism. This work, titled the "Moreh Zedek" ("The Teacher of Righteousness"), survives in a medieval Castilian translation as "Mostrador de justicia."

Szpiech joins the department as a specialist in Medieval Iberian cultures and is currently at work on a book, tentatively titled "Authorizing Apostasy." In it he explores the role of conversion narratives in the construction of textual authority in polemical writing between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Szpiech not only considers the evolution of Christian self-representation in such narratives, but explores the cultural and religious implications of the representation of religious conversion by comparing such texts with images of conversion and apostasy found in Hebrew and Arabic texts from the same period. From a theoretical perspective, he also considers linguistic translation as a metaphor for the transformation of identity and traces the effect of autobiographical confession on questions of narrative voice and the representation of time.

Szpiech is also at work on a number of smaller projects, including a study of the use of polemic in the historiographical poem, "Siete edades del mundo," by the fifteenth-century convert Pablo de Santa María, and another on the changing representation of Islam within medieval anti-Jewish polemic.



Jaime Rodríguez-Matos
Assistant Professor of Spanish



Ryan Szpiech
Assistant Professor of Spanish

Focus on Faculty

Professor Katherine Ibbett is currently a fellow with the Institute for the Humanities working on a project entitled "Compassion and Commonality: Forms of Fellow-Feeling in Early Modern France."

Professor Enrique Garcia received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Professor Ivonne Del Valle was awarded a semester fellowship at the John Carter Brown Library.

Professor Kate Jenckes's new book, *Reading Borges After Benjamin: Allegory, Afterlife, and the Writing of History*, part of the SUNY series on Latin American and Iberian Thought and Cure, was published in 2007 (State University of New York Press).

Professor Giorgio Bertellini received a one-year fellowship from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard.

Professor Frieda Ekotto received a 2007 Harold R. Johnson Diversity Service Award for outstanding leadership in the area of cultural diversity.

Professor Peggy McCracken's latest book, *Dead Lovers: Erotic Bonds and the Study of Premodern Europe* (co-written with Professor Basil Dufallo), was published in 2007 (University of Michigan Press).

Italian Elementary Program Director Romana Habekovic organized and chaired a session at the annual conference of the American Association for Italian Studies (AAIS) held in Colorado Springs in May 2007. In addition, she worked with **Italian Coordinator Sandra Palaich** to present a paper entitled "Classroom Testing of Cultural Proficiency: Why and How?"

Professor Teresa Satterfield's recent articles, "Back to Nature and Nurture: Using Computer Models in Creole Genesis Research" and "Unique Applications in Multi-Agent Models in Uncovering Language Learning Processes," have been published in the respective volumes of *Handbook of Intelligent Complex Adaptive Systems and Evolution: Cognitive and Cultural Factors*. She was also an award recipient at the Third Annual Celebration of Professional Women of Color for her contributions and service in education.

Professor Cristina Moreiras-Menor's articles "Historia a contrapelo: Estado de excepción y temporalidad en la transición española" and "De lo natural a lo histórico. De lo ético a lo político: Temporalidades violentas en Delibes y Camus" were published in *Quimera, Revista de Literatura*, 279 (2007), and *Dissidences: Hispanic Journal of Theory and Criticism* (online journal), respectively. She was invited to Harvard University to participate in "Madrid y la Modernidad," a symposium, and to UC San Diego, to be part of "Whither A Way?: The Culture of the Left in Contemporary Spain," a roundtable.

Technology in the Classroom

French 101 and 232

For many years French Lecturer Sabine Gabaron has been integrating technology with traditional language learning techniques in the classroom and has found students to be extremely responsive. She has created technology and language acquisition projects for different language levels, ranging from 101 to 232, and has been overwhelmed with both the effectiveness of these projects and students' willingness to participate in these language-related activities. One such project involved students of French 101 using iChat to improve their reading and writing skills.

The students worked in a Mac computer lab in the Language Resource Center. Each student was given an individual task and assigned a group. Students had to chat with one another using iChat in order to find the information needed to complete their particular task. Often, students didn't know who they were talking to, making the activity more interesting to them. This activity also helped students improve their writing ability, more specifically vocabulary use and sentence structure, as well as their reading comprehension skills. Throughout the activity, the class instructor was able to monitor discussions and enter a group chat-room at any time.

French 232 classes were also able to integrate technology in their classes. Students of French 232 used PowerPoint to create presentations for their classes, discussing interesting aspects of French culture. One of the goals of this activity was to peak students' curiosity about French culture while also provoking reactions and questions. The students were very motivated and creative in their presentations.

Through projects like these, Gabaron found that students not only improve their communication skills, but they also begin to take more risks, stretching their abilities in their language of study with increased enthusiasm.

The RLL Graduate Program

The 15th Annual Charles Fraker Conference

by Patty Keller, graduate student of Spanish



Elizabeth Shooltz, graduate student of Spanish (L) and Silvia Marchetti, graduate student of Italian (R)

The graduate students of the Department of Romance Languages & Literatures hosted the 15th Annual Charles Fraker Conference on March 16-17th 2007. The Charles Fraker Conference began as a symposium organized to honor Professor of Spanish Charles Fraker, who had recently retired. Professor Fraker was well-respected and worked with many graduate students. In the early days of the conference many of the speakers were former students. Since that time the conference has grown, welcoming keynote speakers and presenters from various disciplines from around the country. This year's conference was a great success overall, featuring eight different panels and over 30 participants from a wide range of national and international institutions, including Columbia, University of Washington, University of Chicago, University of Massachusetts, SUNY Stony Brook, Johns Hopkins, UC Berkeley, Rutgers, Ohio State, and Hebrew University. This year's theme of "Ethics & Expression" undoubtedly attracted broad interdisciplinary interest from graduate students

in various departments, such as French, Spanish and Italian Literary and Cultural Studies, Comparative Literature, History, History of Art, Women's Studies, Film Studies, Philosophy, and Law. Notably, our own department was represented with papers on topics as diverse as psychoanalysis, violence, trauma, historical memory, and nation formation as related to ethics and expression.



Professor Gareth Williams (L) and Professor David Caron (R)

Presentations from RLL graduate students also offered an impressive range of texts in time period, geography, and genre, dating from the medieval period to the 20th century, covering the globe from Europe to Latin America, and considering the novel, testimony, frame narrative, and the short story.

A highlight of the conference was the double keynote address. As in recent years, this year's Fraker invited two keynote speakers: Ross Chambers, professor emeritus of French and comparative literature at the University of Michigan, and Jill Robbins, associate professor of Spanish at the University of California, Irvine. Professor Chambers spoke on "Honest Fraudulence: Transfiguration and Pseudo-Transcendence in 19th Century Poetry," and Professor Robbins discussed the "Technologies of Ethical Engagement in Contemporary Spanish Poetry." While vastly different in content, each speech contributed thought-provoking ideas and theories on the topic of poetry and the ethics of reading.

Those of us who have presented at past Fraker conferences have found it to be a very positive and enriching learning experience. Given the supportive peer context that the



Students, faculty, and guests gather before the conference presentations begin.

Fraker affords students, participation is invaluable. In this way, the Fraker (both organizing the event and the conference itself) creates a space in which colleagues can familiarize themselves with and engage each other's work, and offers a forum that encourages the formation of an open and intellectual community.



Fernando Velasquez, graduate student of Spanish (R)

Without a doubt the entire conference would not have been possible without the support from faculty, staff, and graduate students of RLL, and a number of on-campus sponsors, as well as the tremendous hard work and effort put into planning and organizing the event. Special thanks are given to the entire 2007 Fraker Organizing Committee: David Barreto, Juliet Guzzetta, Patty Keller, Andreea Marinescu, Anne McGee, Alejandro Quin, Federico

Pous, Liz Shooltz, Jenn Solheim, Jon Snyder, Fernando Velasquez, and Marcelino Viera.

And an additional thanks is given to our publicity designer, Laura Kicey, to all those who attended the conference, and to those who helped with housing incoming participants.



Megan Saltzman, graduate student of Spanish (L), with Joaquin Florido Berrocal, graduate student of Peninsular Studies at Johns Hopkins University (R).

Finally, the Fraker Organizing Committee thanks everyone in RLL for helping make this year's Fraker fun, intellectually stimulating, and successful.



Sharon Marquart, graduate student of French

The RLL Graduate Program

The RLL graduate program begins the 2007-2008 year with the usual excitement: new faces of this year's group of graduate students (more about them in a moment), new stories told by continuing students of their summer research in places all around the Romance language-speaking world, and stories from last year: of the 15th Annual Charles Fraker Conference held in March 2007, which our students, as always, organized with great success.

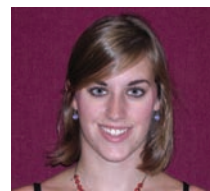
I've been here long enough to remember the first Fraker Conference, and every year I'm proud all over again. I'm proud of the students for having the initial idea; proud of them for being committed to sharing their work with each other, their faculty, this university, and others as well; and proud perhaps more than anything of the way they teach each other the ropes of organization and presentation from year to year. Planning for next year's Fraker, tentatively scheduled for Fall 2008, is already underway. Stay tuned.

An enthusiastic welcome to this year's new graduate students: Aaron Boalick, Nathalie Iñiguez, John Linsky, Tom Maranda, Manuel Modesto, Mara Pastor, Ashley Rainey, and Rachel TenHaaf. They're already doing us proud: Mara, an accomplished poet, has been selected as the Puerto Rican poet to represent her country in the "XV Encuentro Internacional: Mujeres poetas en el Pais de las Nubes--Mexico, November 2007." Congratulations, Mara!

We're also happy that even in these times of tightened budgets the University of Michigan maintains its commitment to the best in graduate education. This year the donation-matching "President's Challenge" enters its second phase, offering 1 for 2 matches of donations directed toward the support of graduate and professional students. For more information see the article in on the back of this edition of the Newsletter.

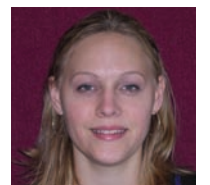
An exciting and productive year to all, with more stories to be told next year!

Catherine Brown
Graduate Chair



Ashley Rainey (French)
B.A., U. of Kentucky

Interests: Seventeenth-Century French literature with special interest in Racine



Rachel TenHaaf (Spanish)
B.A., Calvin College;
M.A., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Interests: Transatlantic Studies (questions of violence and memory in Spain and Latin America)

Meet the *New* Graduate Students



Aaron Boalick
(French)
B.A., U. of Pittsburgh

Interests: Gender and identity in French literary and cultural studies



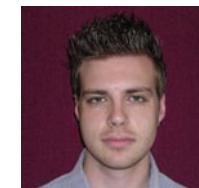
Nathalie Iñiguez
(Spanish)
B.A., College of Charleston

Interests: Contemporary French & Spanish immigration studies



John Linsky (Spanish)
B.A., Middlebury; M.A., Middlebury College in Spain.

Interests: Spanish Golden Age and Medieval literature



Thomas Maranda
(French)
B.A. and M.A., U. of Kansas

Interests: Medieval French literature



Manuel Modesto
(Spanish)
B.A., U. of Huelva; M. A., U. of Memphis

Interests: Peninsular Studies



Mara Pastor (Spanish)
B.A. and M.A., U. of Puerto Rico

Interests: Twentieth-Century Caribbean and Brazilian poetry and its relation with Visual Arts

The RLL Honor Thesis Program

Students in each of the concentrations offered by the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, who have demonstrated a commitment to excellence, may apply to one of our honors programs, preferably at the end of their junior year, but at the latest by the beginning of their senior year. Once accepted, they work with a faculty advisor on an independent research project, which culminates in the completion and defense of an honors thesis. Upon successfully completing these requirements and satisfying the standards expected of the thesis, the student may graduate with honors, high honors, or highest honors. Not only is such a distinction looked upon favorably by graduate and professional schools, but writing an honors thesis offers excellent preparation for the wide variety of endeavors that may follow a bachelor's degree. During the 2006-2007 academic year the Department was pleased to recognize two outstanding students for their honor thesis work: Rachel Freedberg, a concentrator in Spanish, and Hollis Richardson, a concentrator in French.



Hollis Richardson graduated in spring 2007

In Her Own Words: Hollis Richardson talks about the experience of writing an honor thesis

When I first told my family and friends of my plan to write a senior honors thesis in French under Professor Katherine Ibbett's direction, the usual response was, "Wow, that's great. But wait, does that mean you write the whole thing *in French*?"

Writing a thesis is a major undertaking in itself. The fact that my thesis was to be written entirely in a foreign language was both impressive and unfathomable to most of my friends. Indeed, I often experienced moments when the difficulty of researching and writing a substantial piece of scholarly work in French made the project feel as untenable as my friends thought it impossible. However, as the final draft of my thesis emerged out of endless notes and a profusion of outlines, the question of what language the text was in became increasingly secondary to the question of how to translate my argument from my head onto the page.

Ultimately, my thesis was less a test of my command of French than of my ability to rethink and to question my initial conclusions, to change frustration into inspiration, and to change direction regardless of whether I had to scrap numerous pages of completed work or not. An honors thesis certainly showcases skills developed over four years of undergraduate study, but more than that, it taught me what kind of student I am and what fuels my interest in and excitement for knowledge. I feel extremely proud when I look at the stack of extra copies of my thesis stashed under my desk because it reminds me how much I enjoyed being a French concentrator at the University of Michigan and how grateful I am to be so well prepared and eager to keep learning.



The Style of Satire

Professor Katherine Ibbett describes the importance of a little-known allegory

Hollis Richardson graduated in 2007 with highest honors in French, having completed a senior thesis entitled "The Style of Difference: Literature and History in Furetière's *Nouvelle allégorique*." Holly's thesis addresses a little-known seventeenth-century allegory and asks how the text's formal features, such as its welter of comic footnotes, craft a new notion of literary history fit for the nascent absolutist regime of Louis XIV. Furetière was a satirist and dictionary maker most well known as a droll figure who appears in collections of citations. Richardson's thesis looks at a text he wrote as a young man that brokered his entry onto the literary scene, and argues that it creates both a career for its author and a notion of the "literary field" that was to prove central to later discussions in France. Furetière's text has long languished in the footnotes of history, but Richardson shows how its conceptualization of literature as a particular form of cultural production challenges our own understanding of what it is we do when we read a literary text. Richardson's thesis won a university prize, the Robert Hayden Humanities Award endowed by Joseph and Ellen Goldstein, and she was also invited to speak about her work at the Kentucky Foreign Languages Conference in April. We look forward to seeing what she does next, and hope to see her in professional circles again soon!

In his new book, Professor Herrero investigates censorship and its effect on the Boom



Professor Alex Herrero

In my book *The Censorship Files: Latin American Writers and Franco's Spain* (SUNY Press, 2007), I investigate the ambiguous role played by censorship in the Spanish-language publishing industry that in the 1960s and 1970s brought on the successful internationalization of Latin American literature known as the "Boom." I argue that because the Franco dictatorship had an interest in reconciling its desire to expand the book trade in Latin America with its concern to censor the "Boom" writers' literary works for internal consumption, censorship and economic policies were inseparably intertwined in the marketing of Latin American literature of the 1960s. Many "Boom" writers successfully published their works in Spain despite their opposition to Franco and their left-wing ideology (including open allegiance to Castro's Cuba). Meanwhile, the profits generated by the massive distribution of their literary works helped support the Spanish regime's economic and cultural expansion. Coinciding with the Franco's government renewed vows in the 1960s to reshape Spain's "historical responsibility in the New World" and its new economic plans (*desarrollismo*), Latin American writers such as Mario Vargas Llosa, José Donoso, Manuel Puig, Gabriel García Márquez, and Guillermo Cabrera Infante appeared to colonize, as it were, Spain's literary scene. Yet their desire to benefit from the prestige of Spanish publishing houses such as Seix Barral ultimately reinforced their dependency on the former colonial power.

This argument, which rests on my in-depth examination of more than 4,000 now declassified government reports available in Spain's National Archive, is developed through careful case studies of a number of authors who published (or tried to) under Franco. My work also reveals the importance of the archive as a crucial component in the study of the "Boom," since it yields evidence of personal correspondence among writers, scholars, censors, publishers and literary agents that significantly shaped the "Boom" novels. Surprising light is shed on the inner workings of the Franco regime, and on the writing conventions enforced by the censors in what became in many cases a collaborative project. Readers will have access to heretofore unknown confidential censor's reports and will learn about the behind-the-scenes negotiations that took place between government officials, writers, and editors and that made possible the "Boom" of Latin American literature in the 1960s and 1970s. (For more details please visit: <http://www.sunypress.edu/>.)

A Clever Turning Point

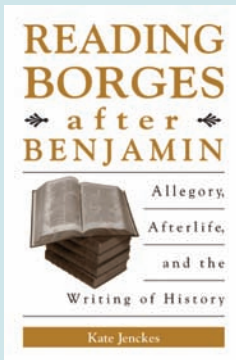
Professor Kate Jenckes explains why her book brings new insight into the work of Jorge Luis Borges.



Professor Kate Jenckes

My book, *Reading Borges After Benjamin: Allegory, Afterlife, and the Writing of History*, explores the relationship between time, life, and history in the work of Jorge Luis Borges, examining it in relation to his contemporary, Walter Benjamin. By focusing on texts from the margins of the Borges canon—including the early poems on Buenos Aires, his biography of Argentina's minstrel poet Evaristo Carriego, the stories and translations from *A Universal History of Infamy*, as well as some of his renowned stories and essays—I argue that Borges's writing performs an allegorical representation of history. Interspersed among the readings of Borges are careful and original readings of some of Benjamin's finest essays on the relationship between life, language, and history. Reading Borges in relationship to Benjamin draws out ethical and political implications from Borges's works that have been largely overlooked by his critics.

"This book is a clever turning point in our contextual readings of Borges; it suggests the need to come back to the texts in order to move forward. Departing from an early poem on a family gravestone, Kate Jenckes unfolds Borges's notion of a natural allegory, ironically illustrated by lives of eternal infamy. From there, Jenckes manages to engage Borges and Benjamin in lively conversation. The reader will be part of it, thanks to this discreet, persuasive argument."
-- Julio Ortega, Brown University



Marilyn H. Hass Behrendt (B.A. Spanish 1948) studied at Universidad Mexicana escaela de verano in 1947. She worked at the Argentine consulate for two years while it was located in Detroit. She worked as executive secretary in the export department of Wyandotte Chemicals (now BASF) until her marriage.

Lynne Foster Rost (AB French 1966) "1964-65 in Aix-en-Provence changed my life. I spent 1968-70 in Dijon and Paris studying and working as a jeune fille au pair. Besides teaching, I've made many friends as an interpreter for Honeywell in Phoenix, Arizona." Lynne still enjoys traveling.
Email: lynnr5@juno.com

Jackie Sand (B.A. French 1967) After 39 years of teaching (36 teaching French and three teaching ESL in Paris), Jackie retired from 26 years at the Walnut Hill School in Natick, MA., where she was department head, teacher, and for one year interim academic dean.
Email: jacquelynsand@yahoo.com

Jan Kozma (B.A. Spanish 1968, M.A. Italian 1970, Ph.D. Italian 1973) has dedicated part of her career to translating the works of the Nobel prize winning Italian author, Grazia Deledda (1871-1936). Kozma recently published her second translation of a Deledda novel, *Marianna Sirca* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006). She is a professor of Italian at the University of Kansas and is currently working on her third translation of Deledda's work. Kozma also translated Deledda's novel *Ashes* (FDUP, 2004) and she is the single author of Grazia Deledda's *Eternal Adolescents: The Pathology of Arrested Maturation* (FDUO, 2002). Kozma would love to hear from former grad students who were at UM during the 1960s and 1970s.
Email: jkozma@ku.edu.

Patricia (Hays) Compos (M.A. Spanish 1991) completed her Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Illinois-Chicago, where her Spanish was useful in her research of gang-related teens. Since then, Compos has married, and is currently living and working in Detroit, along with chasing after her three young children. Occasionally, she's lucky enough to go visit the Frakers and Dr. Lopez-Grigera.
Email: ncompos@comcast.com

We want to hear from YOU!!

Send an e-mail to rll.editor@umich.edu or mail in this reply.

Name: _____ Graduation year: _____

Degree/Language: _____ E-mail address: _____

(Your e-mail will be included in your Alumni Note, unless you note otherwise)

Your news for Alumni Notes (please limit to 2-3 sentences):

Contact us:

Attn: Editor
Romance Languages and Literatures
The University of Michigan
4108 Modern Languages Building
812 East Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275

The President's Challenge

The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor has over 17,000 graduate and professional students, but fewer than 1,500 endowed accounts to support these students. A full graduate or professional fellowship can cost upwards of \$50,000 a year. With the success of the Michigan Difference Campaign, the President's Challenge: Phase II was created to address one of the most pressing ongoing needs for every school and college across the University campus. It will allow donors the opportunity to use their gifts to directly support graduate and professional students, realizing that financial support is an important part of UM's ability to continually attract top students from around the world to the University. These students often go on to become professors, leading researchers, doctors, lawyers, outstanding teachers, and other professionals. Having top graduate and professional students also helps UM attract and retain talented faculty that want to teach them. The scholarships that donors create through the Phase II Challenge will directly help UM maintain its prestige and international leadership, by helping the University attract the best graduate and professional students.

The Phase II Challenge is a 1 for 2 match for endowment and expendable gifts, up to \$1 million per donor (ex. A \$200,000 contribution would generate a \$100,000 match). The Phase II Challenge began on September 1, 2007 and will continue until \$40 million is committed in gifts to graduate and professional student support, triggering \$20 million in Presidential matching money, or until the Michigan Difference Campaign ends on December 31, 2008, whichever comes first. The challenge allows donors to direct their graduate support gift to the department of their choice and welcomes expendable gifts of any amount, while an individual endowment can be opened for \$50,000. For more information on how you can help support the graduate and professional students of UM visit www.giving.umich.edu/where/presidents_challenge.htm. You can also contact the LSA Development office directly at (734) 615-6333.

The Regents of the University of Michigan: David A. Brandon, Laurence B. Deitch, Olivia O. Maynard, Rebecca McGowan, Andrea Fischer Newman, Andrew C. Richner, S. Martin Taylor, Katherine E. White, Mary Sue Coleman (ex-officio)

department of

romance
languages and
literatures

University of Michigan

4108 Modern Languages Building
812 East Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Ann Arbor, MI
Permit #144