

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

C O L O R A D O C O L L E G E

ISSUE ?

www.ColoradoCollege.edu/Dept/EN/

WINTER 2008

Life As An English Major After Graduation

Kimberley A. Turner, Ph.D.

As I think back some 24 years ago when I walked across the platform at The Colorado College and received my Baccalaureate Degree, several memories flood my mind. I remember thinking all of the knowledge I gained about the use of symbolism, similes, metaphors, analogies, irony, satire, stream of consciousness, verbal dueling, double entendres and oxymoron in literature would stand me in good stead in any profession I pursued. At that time, I thought my profession would be law although in my heart of hearts I wanted to be a bona fide folklorist like Professor Adrienne Seward. I convinced myself these two could go hand in glove. After all, lawyers are good story tellers, and are also quite adept at their use of metaphors, analogies and irony. They are also good ethnographers as they engage in participatory research when recreating what led to the crime committed and establishing motive. They must know the language and the culture of the client or defendant and the jargon whether it be Wall Street or "The Street." However, as fate would have it my grandfather died so I declined the scholarship to attend the law school at the University of Iowa and headed east to Washington, DC to help my mother who was a second year law school student at Antioch University.

In September of 1984 I found myself with my son driving across the country in my Gremlin listening to John Denver belt out the lyrics to "Rocky Mountain High" "with the Colorado Rockies, in my rear view mirror. As the Rockies faded from my view I knew they would always remain in my heart and were forever etched in the fabric of American history aptly described as the "purple mountain's majesty

above the fruited plains," in the poem, "America the Beautiful," written by a visiting English Professor, Katharine Lee Bates in 1893 while teaching at Colorado College. Since I am a native of Colorado Springs, I have enlightened many who were unaware of this fact and been a witness to many an awestruck person as a result. Perhaps the record number of tourists flocking to Colorado Springs can be attributed to the sense of wonderment of this historic place this poem was penned. This may have been the impetus for building a larger airport.

Upon arriving in DC, I immersed myself in its multicultural milieu. I frequented the various Smithsonian Institution as well as the diverse enclaves of ethnic groups where their cuisine satisfied my palate. Since I had recently participated in the Urban Studies program in Chicago, I wanted to work in the community where I could effect change. I was convinced information is power; and the ability to effectively communicate is critical. My folklore classes provided a solid foundation with regard to communication for my first job. Given that I lived and worked in a predominantly African American community, I knew the best way to convey information was by word of mouth and active listening. While it was important to have the information written down, what was equally important was to be able to articulate it orally and sometimes in the vernacular. Oftentimes, I found myself serving as a translator or interpreter. When I had an opportunity to use drama to convey a message of perseverance to young mothers, I was an actress and recited Langston Hughes' "Mother to Son." My favorite verse was, "Don't you set down on the steps

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‘cause you finds it’s kinder hard. Don’t you fall now — For I’se still goin’, honey. I’se still climbin.’ And life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.” Periodically I find myself repeating that to myself for my own edification.

While that was my entrée into the work world in DC, three years later after working in corporate America, I began a twelve year tenure at the Center for Disability and Socioeconomic Policy Studies at Howard University. It was there that my English major was put to use full throttle. I was editor of the newsletter, edited manuscripts, co-authored grants, authored/co-authored articles, produced and edited video tapes, wrote technical and annual reports. I also conducted workshops, served on committees at the local, regional and national levels and gave presentations. It was there that I learned a great lesson about the power of language. Given that we advocated for the empowerment of persons with disabilities, we were engaged in the movement to change the language to place the person before the disability. Therefore, words like “disabled” and “physically challenged” were replaced with “person with a disability” and “person with a physical impairment.” This language would ultimately appear in the landmark civil rights legislation for persons with disabilities passed in 1990, the “Americans with Disabilities Act.”

Currently, I am a public servant for the District of Columbia at the Department of Health. Within the past eight years I have managed various programs designed to ensure that persons with disabilities receive quality health care. As such in 2002, I created the *Disability Friendly Health Care Provider Directory – A Guide to Health Care Providers whose*

Facilities are “Disability Friendly” in the District of Columbia, the first of its kind nationwide. To make it user friendly, I designed 10 of the 14 graphic symbols that depict areas of accessibility, i.e., parking, architectural, durable medical equipment, signage, sign language interpreting, visual fire alarm, and staff assistance. For each provider there are symbols depicting areas of accessibility for that facility. This directory was designed to serve as a resource to empower persons with disabilities with the opportunity to choose health care providers whose facilities are “disability friendly” in the District of Columbia.

Parallel to my work experience, I have obtained a Masters in Education Administration, a Ph.D. in Organizational Communication and I am currently in Seminary. I attribute my ability to work full time and pursue these degrees to my stellar education at The Colorado College; more specifically the tunnel vision I acquired while matriculating at that esteemed institution of higher learning. In addition, I am forever indebted to Professor Adrienne Seward, who served as a role model for me and challenged me to reach my fullest potential. I will never forget how her passion made the class come alive and elicited a desire to learn the subject matter. I took every class she taught. She is the reason I continue to strive to meet her challenge to reach my fullest potential. Every now and then when I get weary, I reflect on these lyrics from John Denver’s famous “Rocky Mountain High:” “Now he walks in quiet solitude the forests and the streams seeking grace in every step he takes. His sight has turned inside himself to try and understand the serenity of a clear blue mountain lake.” Then all is right with the world.

Frank Krutzke Senior Project Award

The Krutzke Award recognizes the year’s best senior essay (in a senior seminar or as a senior project). The prize honors Frank Krutzke, a warmly admired American literature professor in the department who retired in the early 1970’s (John Simons succeeded him).

Last year, Lynne Stahl’s essay, “Instability and Performativity of Identity in *The Silence of the Lambs*” was a worthy winner in its wonderful study of the paradoxes of gender identity in “The Silence of the Lambs,” especially of Buffalo Bill, the serial

killer that Hannibal Lecter assures Clarice is NOT transvestite or homosexual.

Sean Anderson-Branowitz earned second place in the Krutzke Award competition for his senior seminar paper, “The Dream Hero of the Border: John Grady Cole’s Identity of Perpetual Crossing in Cormac McCarthy’s “All the Pretty Horses””. His paper examined the fluidity of boundaries in McCarthy’s first Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, emphasizing the dreamscape of John Grady Coles’ quest for a stable self that always remains elusive.

Black Writers in Paris Trip



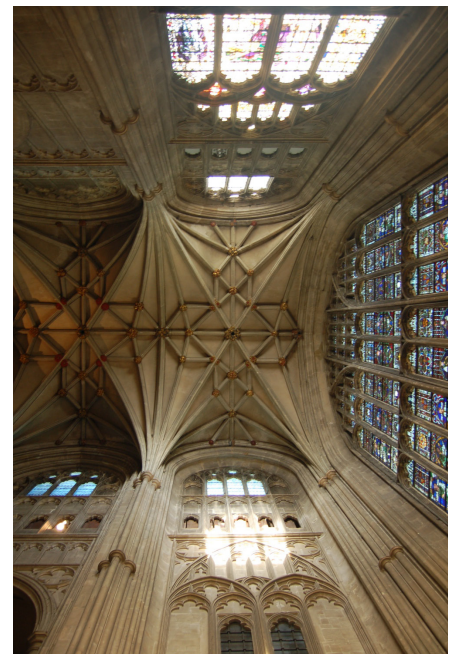
Students in Claire Garcia's Block 2 class, Black Writers in Paris, visit 7 rue Hubert in the village of Clamart, a suburb of Paris, where Paulette and Jane Nardal hosted salons for writers, activists, and artists such as Langston Hughes, Aimé Césaire, Gwendolyn Bennett, Léopold Senghor and Lois Maillou-Jones between the world wars. Paris was a major center of black cultural, literary, and artistic activity in the 20s and 30s, and has long held a fascination for African American writers, artists, and intellectuals. From the first ante-bellum visitors who came to the Francophone metropole to acquire an education forbidden to them in the United States, to the thousands of African American soldiers who, after fighting in the Great War "to keep the world safe for democracy" returned to the United States with renewed determination to fight for their citizen rights at home in the U.S., to the hundreds of expatriated artists and writers who found, as Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Barbara Chase-Riboud did, artistic as well as personal freedom and opportunity

in France, Historically, France has presented itself to African Americans as a realm of social liberty and personal possibility. Black activists from Frederick Douglass to Alain Locke have used France as an example of what American democracy could be. When James Weldon Johnson described the thrill of being able to check into an elegant hotel and be called "Monsieur" or Alain Locke romantically (and, as René Maran pointed out to him, inaccurately) claimed there was no color line in the army of the country whose avowed principles are "liberté, égalité, et fraternité," they were strategically tapping into a connotation, in black popular culture, of French society as the antithesis of the Jim Crow, violently white supremacist United States. Sixteen students studied and discussed several articles, stories, and plays published in black periodicals during the first half of the 20th century which favorably if perhaps idealistically depicted the country W. E. B. Du Bois referred to as "the only real white democracy."

CC students discovered that the dawn of the 21st century finds many black Frenchmen and women are drawing inspiration from Barack Obama's successful campaign for the presidency.



Canterbury Trip



English Department Bios

GEORGE BUTTE

In the two years since the last newsletter I have experimented with a couple of new courses. The most radical departure was a film studies course I co-taught with Barry Sarchett on the American Film Musical. We brought an electronic keyboard into the classroom, and I tried to explain to students why “West Side Story” ends on an unresolved dissonant chord. Barry probably had better luck explaining why Fred Astaire’s dance sequences are edited in certain complex ways. The other course that I love is a class on the myth of Peter Pan in literature and film. I am deeply embroiled now in writing about this material, with its strange, cold, ambiguously joyful main character in J.M. Barrie’s multiple versions and the many, oddly evasive film adaptations.

My own writing continues with what I’m calling my suture project. Suture is a concept about narrative in film—how pieces of film get stitched together to produce stories and characters. I published an essay this year that develops the theoretical issues and then reads a brilliant film from 1964, *Nothing But A Man*, about an African-American couple’s struggles towards marriage and purpose in Jim Crow Alabama.

I just taught my first first-year experience class, and loved it. My new first-years certainly matched the claims of the college, that these new students may be the smartest and most motivated that we’ve ever seen. They certainly are very good. The evidence is the way they loved reading Homer, Shakespeare, and Freud.

Final note: Read Joseph O’Neill’s new novel *Netherland*: stunningly well written, deeply moving characters, and you’ll learn a lot about cricket.

RE MEYER EVITT

2007-08 has been a fine year, all in all. I was excited to see my article on incest in Hrotsvit of Gandersheim’s *Abraham* published in *Comparative Drama*. Those of you who studied medieval drama with me several years ago will remember our lively class debates about the uses of incest in this tenth-century nun’s plays. If you long to revisit things medieval, my reading recommendation is Caroline Bynum’s latest, *Wonderful Blood*. As always, she’s amazing on the unusual in medieval theological practice. I’m happy to report that the tenure process went well with the hoped

for outcome. I am deeply honored to be a permanent fixture in the CC English Department constellation now. (How’s that for mixing metaphors?!) In the last half year, I’ve also had two tremendous opportunities to travel with students abroad: team-teaching with art historian Rebecca Tucker in Italy for the Dante-Michelangelo course and travelling on my own with English majors to England for a course on pilgrimage in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. There were many wonderful moments in each course. Highlights in Italy included private class visits to the Scrovegni Chapel (a must-see if you find yourself in Padua) and the Sistine Chapel. In England, we enjoyed following the footsteps of centuries of pilgrims for two days on the North Downs Trail (with an overnight stay at a Chilham inn and tale-telling from pub to pub throughout our travels) and a class visit to the Canterbury Cathedral Manuscript Archives where we had the pleasure of looking through a bestiary from Chaucer’s time, seals and orders from Richard II, a twelfth-century copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of England*, and bits from an early medieval fragment of Augustine’s *Confessions*. All of it just wonderful! In the coming year, I’ve been asked to participate as one of the roundtable speakers for “Chaucer Outloud” at the International Medieval Congress. I’m also having great fun planning for some extraordinary summer team-teaching in 2009. Rebecca Tucker and I will lead Colorado College’s Arts and Humanities Institute for MAT candidates, “Rediscovering the Renaissance: Art and Literature from 1250-1650.” Rob Kendrick and I will teach a Chaucer/Shakespeare course, “Sex in the City: Troy and London in Chaucer and Shakespeare.”

STEVEN HAYWARD

I’m CC’s new fiction writer. Born and raised in Richmond Hill, Canada, a placid suburb in Southern Ontario where streets are lined with trees and named after trees, I went to the University of Toronto and York University. Before deciding I was a fiction writer, I produced a dissertation on Shakespeare and a series of articles on literary theory and gangster films—I’m still seriously addicted to *The Sopranos*. I’ve published two books, a collection of short fiction called *Buddha Stevens and Other Stories* and a novel, *The Secret*

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Mitzvah of Lucio Burke which, in addition to being a love story, is a fictional account of the most infamous baseball game in Canadian history. My next novel, which I'm currently revising and rewriting, is due in August 2009. Entitled *In a Fallen World*, it's the story of what happens when a mother decides to throw a birthday party for her dead son. My wife Katherine and I have three kids, Frances (6), Eddie (5) and Jimmy (3). You'll probably see the kids around the department, or at least hear them. Doubtless, you'll hear them; I apologize. Before all five of us got into our Honda Civic and drove across the country to Colorado, we lived in Cleveland, Ohio, where I taught in the English Department at John Carroll University and tried not to complain about the weather. In addition to writing fiction I do a good deal of reviewing, and here are two novels I've recommended lately: Marilynne Robinson's *Home*, the sequel to her Pulitzer-prizewinning novel *Gilead*, and *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, by Canadian writer Steven Galloway. As for film, if you haven't seen Nanni Moretti's *La Stanza del Figlio*, you should.

JANE HILBERRY

Jane Hilberry started her sabbatical this year with a two-week rafting trip down the Grand Canyon and is now trying to write about the amazing, nearly indescribable experience. This fall she spent three weeks at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in Florida and travelled to Banff to present at a conference on arts-based leadership practices.

Recommended: *Matter of Fact*, Poems by Eamon Grennan. Rich!

LISA HUGHES

I delivered a paper at an international conference, on the Greek island of Hydra, on *The Role of the Donkey and the Mule in the Mediterranean*; my paper is entitled "Unequally Yoked: The Sex Life of an Accidental Donkey." I also delivered a paper in Salem, MA, "Leaving Naxos: Apollo and Dionysos in Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*." I continue to host the reading/discussion group, CERF (Classics English Reading Fraternity) for English majors. We are meeting twice a block, and recent texts read and discussed include Cherie Moraga's *The Hungry Woman*, a modern Chicana version of *Medea*, and Shakespeare's *Antony*

and Cleopatra, and Margaret Atwood's *Penelopiad*. Finally, with Professor Barry Sarchett, I continue to teach "The World of Odysseus," with sixteen students on sailboats in the Aegean and Ionian Seas in May and June. Last summer, unable to attend the wedding of CC English grad, Luke Falk, we chose instead to join him and his bride for their honeymoon on the Greek island of Naxos.

GENNY LOVE

I'm enjoying a sabbatical year in 2008-09 after an eventful year of teaching (and receiving tenure!) in 2007-09. In addition to the challenge of teaching Intro to Poetry for the first time, this spring I taught a course called "Staging Shakespeare and his Contemporaries" in which we spent 2 weeks at CC reading 5 early modern plays, then traveled to spend a week in residence the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA, where we saw all 5 plays performed. Seeing each play multiple times, getting to know the actors, sitting in on rehearsals, and participating in workshops added up to a fabulous trip and took great advantage of the block plan's travel possibilities. I'm spending my sabbatical in Los Angeles, CA, doing research and writing at the Huntington Library for my book project, *The Limits of Liveness on the Early Modern Stage*.

LAURA PADILLA

This year I spent developing my dossier of courses, feeling my way through things that I hadn't tried before. At long last, I got to teach my course on the literatures and cultures of Southwestern land grants, and took students to the Baca campus where we feasted on native greens and talked about Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me Ultima*. I also developed a course called "Envisioning the West," inspired by the work of Southwest Studies Chair Anne Hyde on illustration and photography in the American West. I hope to do more with this course in the spring to incorporate local tourist attractions like the Flying W Ranch. In the meantime, my office is finally arranged to my liking, so I can settle in to work. Thanks to a Jackson Fellowship that I received through Southwest Studies, I had time off to work on a book chapter on John Nichols and Nash Candelaria. I will be presenting a short paper from that work at the Jackson Fellows conference in November.

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Barry Sarchett with author Salmon Rushdie.

BARRY SARCHETT

Last year was a blur for me. Besides serving on the Faculty Executive Committee and chairing its Governance Subcommittee, I was also in the third year of my NEH Professorship. The latter is actually even more time-consuming than the committee work, but it's obviously much, much more enjoyable. In addition to spreading around funds to such help others in the humanities bring guests and finance events, I brought several speakers to campus: literary theorist Barbara Herrnstein Smith (Duke), philosopher Stanley Cavell (Harvard), philosopher and race theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah (Princeton), classicist extraordinaire Leslie Kurke (Berkeley), literary theorist Geoffrey Galt Harpham (National Humanities Institute), historian of science Steven Shapin (Harvard), film theorist Tania Modleski (USC), and cultural theorist Michael Warner (Princeton). One highlight of the year was the visit of Greil Marcus, the virtual father of rock criticism, who gave a riveting lecture, "'On Bob Dylan's 'Masters of War': Stories of a Bad Song'". Last November, I also sponsored the one-and-only Salman Rushdie for a lecture to a jam-packed Armstrong Hall. Spending a couple of event-filled days with Mr. Rushdie reminded me how lucky I am to be doing what I do and even getting paid for it!

In between hosting speakers and committee work, there is, of course, teaching. In the last couple of years I've team taught two new team-taught

courses: "The Hollywood Musical" with George Butte and "The Pastoral Tradition" with Lisa Hughes. In addition, this summer Lisa and I offered, for the third year, our course "The World of Odysseus", in which we sail the Greek Islands tracing Odysseus's footsteps and teaching *The Odyssey* and the history of Bronze Age Greece.

This year I am once again a regular "civilian," teaching a new course with Lisa, "Myth and Movies", and trying to return to my life as a scholar, which I've neglected for other duties for a few years. I've also been able to catch up on some fiction I've been neglecting. I was mesmerized by Michael Chabon's *The Yiddish Poicemen's Union* and, not coincidentally, with some of Rushdie's work I had never read. Of that I particularly recommend *The Moor's Last Sigh* and *Shalimar the Clown*, more masterpieces from his amazingly protean imagination.

Over the last three years, I've been reading a huge amount of criticism and theory because of NEH duties. I'll just mention a couple of works, however, that have influenced my thinking a lot: Search out Steven Shapin's *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* if you're interested in how traditional intellectual history has been deconstructed by the new Science Studies. And Greil Marcus's *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll* will tell you why rock music matters culturally AND literarily.

DAN TYNAN:

A couple of books I'd recommend: Peter Gomes, *The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart*, David McCullough, *John Adams*. To go with the biography, I'm watching the HBO series "John Adams" starring Paul Giametti. During the year I dug into Netflix for *Wind That Shakes the Barley*, an unsentimental but emotional drama about loyalty and betrayal (what else?) in Ireland of the 1920s. if you can handle the hard stuff, I'd strongly recommend *Away From Her*, a beautiful Canadian movie adapted from an Alice Munro story about a loving husband and wife torn apart, in many ways, by the insidious invasion of Alzheimer's into their lives.

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Emeritus Faculty

TOM MAUCH

I continue to enjoy my retirement. Over the last few years I've visited Sicily, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Japan (a garden tour), and most recently, Portugal. I teach courses on Shakespeare, English poetry, and the history of the English language in a local adult education program. Ever since retiring, I have been reading literature in French, Italian, Spanish, and German; some of my favorite writers: Marguerite Duras, Primo Levi, Juan Jose Arreola, and Heinrich Boll. Gardening in my backyard, viewing old movies, and watching my two grandsons grow up are among my pastimes.

RUTH BARTON

As an old retired lady, I walk my old dog Angel (I would never have named a dog that, but it does fit)

three times a day. Right now she is loving all the smells in the leaves that have fallen. I am trying to write an autobiography for my son Tiff, but I can't say that I am making much progress. I do enjoy going to the events at the college and getting to see old friends. By the way, I really would like visiting with you if you could come by 1210 Custer Av. sometime. I go down to Texas as often as I can to visit my sister and sometimes roam around the University of Texas to recall my undergraduate days. I have been going on the UCCS Theaterworks Trips to London for the last ten years, but may not make it this year. Of course I still enjoy reading, and I do recommend Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows' book *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, although I think it will appeal more to older readers than young ones. My best wishes to all of you.