The Fall 2010 semester is off to a great start! Fittingly for this harvest season, this month holds a rich offering of upcoming events, both informational and creative, beginning with performances of *Twelfth Night* October 7-17 in Parker Theater. For more information, see the full story on page 3.

Next week, come and see John Edgar Wideman, a guest of the SUNY New Paltz Distinguished Speaker Series on Friday, October 15, at 7:30 p.m., in Lecture Center 102. Wideman will read from a work in progress and offer his reflections on the African Diaspora. He will also receive an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at his presentation. A book signing and reception will follow the event. For further information, including free student tickets: www.newpaltz.edu/speakerseries.

On Monday, October 18, at 5 p.m. in the Honors Center, the Creative Writing Program presents *Faculty Poets—Jan Zlotnik Schmidt and Pauline Uchmanowicz.* Join us as they read from past and current works.

As part of the English Department’s ongoing series “Your English Degree at Work,” there will be a panel titled “Straight Talk about Grad School” on October 22, at 3 p.m. in JFT 1010. Panelists, including Professors Cyrus Mulready and Vicki Tromanhauser, will discuss the “ins and outs” of graduate school for those who might wish to know a little more about the process and the questions they should be asking.

On Saturday and Sunday, October 23 and 24 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., you can see a staged reading of Larry Carr’s *The Wakeville Stories.* It will be performed in Parker Theater. Tickets are $5.00. See page three for more details.

If you’re interested in gaining experience before stepping into the job market, come attend another “Your English Degree at Work” event: the English Department, in conjunction with the SUNY New Paltz Career Resource Center (CRC), will present an *Internship Panel* on October 27 at 3:30 p.m. in JFT 1010. The panel will feature English Chair Tom Olsen, the CRC’s Beth King, and current student interns, who will talk about their experiences in their own workplaces.

The Creative Writing Program will host a poetry reading by Lightsey Darst and Anne Gorrick on Thursday, October 28, at 7 p.m. in JFT 1010.

There are also many events hosted by the Career Resource Center throughout the coming month: in particular, join them for “Workshop Wednesdays” in SUB 209 each Wednesday from 12-1 p.m. for discussions on different career-related topics.

As you can see, we have a busy and bountiful month ahead—with more to come! We hope you can come and enjoy these events with us.
This week we welcome another brand-new addition to our faculty, Elizabeth Kuhn. A native of Anderson, Indiana, she began her career as a scholar at the Indiana University in Bloomington. Her ambition and broad interest in the humanities was already prominent as she double-majored in English and Communication & Culture, a program combining film studies and rhetoric. Even before enrolling in her graduate studies, Elizabeth had a deep fascination with British modernism. This enthrallment pre-dates even her days as an undergraduate, as she openly admits to dressing up as Ezra Pound in a literary salon performance project in high school. She soon went on to complete her graduate studies, quickly obtaining her Masters and Doctorate at the Pennsylvania State University.

Elizabeth’s attraction to modernism did not arise purely out of literary interest. Rather, much of her curiosity arises from the philosophical issues she finds at the forefront of modernist ideology. To her, the chief significance of this period lies in the widespread questioning of epistemic certainty. The very foundation of epistemology, our ability to obtain knowledge from our own limited perspectives and validate it as truth, was called into question. According to her, “this shift is interesting in itself, but also especially because it allows us to come at the question of knowing the other and dominating the other (important in the British context at this moment because of empire) from a distinct literary angle.”

She is currently in the midst of the painstaking process of revising her PhD dissertation into a book manuscript. In it, she closely examines the shared roots of modernist literature and anti-humanist philosophy. Her focus was primarily on writers like D.H. Lawrence, W.B. Yeats, Virginia Woolf, and Henry James, placing them in dialogue with philosophers and theorists including Nietzsche, Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari. Seeing the trends of anti-humanism as closely tied to issues of free will and “the belief that humans are not the agents of history,” her research traces this worldview in modernist writers while also “exploring the possibility that vocabularies of human agency could benefit from some retooling—-in the modernist moment and in our own.”

With a commitment to her profession many of us can only wish for, modernism is among her chief interests outside the classroom as well. For her, “it’s not enough to study modernism professionally: it’s also what I love to do in my spare time.”

Vacations and travel are seen as an opportunity to expand upon her already wide base of knowledge, and the The Tate Modern in London, Britain’s national museum of international modern art, is among her favorite travel destinations. Recently, she also visited Frank Lloyd Wright’s modern architecture masterpiece Fallingwater in Pennsylvania’s Laurel Highlands. She also admits to an obsession with the television show Mad Men. Ever the scholar, she enjoys finding ways to “connect it back to issues of anti-humanism, and read it as addressing the cultural aftermath of modernism.”

**Professor Kuhn’s Writing Tip:**

One of the great lessons of the modernists is to write objectively. Translated into more relevant twenty-first century classroom terms: use the “I” voice sparingly. From T.S. Eliot’s theory of poetry—and passed down to us by way of New Criticism—we get the idea that writing is not chiefly the expression of the writer. While much depends on rhetorical situation—the circumstances in which you are writing, including your audience and forum—the emphasis from modernist writing on the objective is instructive. One tendency in writing today—in a moment defined by tweets and status updates, always springing from a first-person perspective—is to give too much value to our own perspectives, rather than remembering that we are accountable for providing evidence for our claims. It is here where Eliot’s image of the poet in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” as a medium rather than an expressive entity can be helpful in paper-writing. Before using first person in a paper on literature, ask yourself why you’re doing it—if the reason is that you aren’t sure of the claim you’re making and saying “I” is a way of making it a smaller claim, then you should try rewriting without the “I” voice.
**Twelfth Night Comes Early This Year**

For those of you who simply cannot wait for the holiday season to arrive, the Theatre Department is bringing in an early taste this year with their performance of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, opening in Parker Theater on October 7 at 8 p.m. and running through October 17. Directed by Professor Frank Trezza, the play will feature students Ally Fazzetta, Rachel Ritacco, Matthew Martino, Ian Whitt, Julia Register, and Patrick Kiernan.

First performed at the turn of the seventeenth century, *Twelfth Night* is set in the fictional land of Illyria as ship-wrecked protagonist Viola is forced to assume the guise of a man and seek employment under the local duke, Orsino. Drawing its name from the celebration marking the end of the Christmas season, this chaotic carnival featured social inversions and abundant revelry as royalty would assume the role of peasants and vice versa. And yet, the light-hearted carousing of the play is offset by darker subplots of imprisonment and psychological torture as the Christian virtues of modesty and sobriety are overpowered by the hedonistic revelers.

The play delights in the abundance of intricate dualities, and according to Dean James Schiffer, “much of the complexity of *Twelfth Night* resides in the play’s intricate structure, particularly its double plot, each with its own set of varied and interesting characters and themes, its own kinds of brilliant language. A play that features male and female twins, *Twelfth Night* is split between two lines of action that reflect one another in various ways, even as they often differ in emotional tones. This doubleness extends even to the level of the pun and raises profound issues regarding the instability of language and identity.”

In addition, the English Department will be hosting a conference on *Twelfth Night* on Saturday, October 9. Call 257-3033 to register. Tickets ($8.00 – $16.00) are available at the Box Office in Parker Theater or online at Tix.com.

**The Wakeville Stories Premieres at New Paltz**

William Manley Bond is a shell-shocked G.I. returning home to the small town of Wakeville, Ohio in the summer of 1945. *The Wakeville Stories* chronicles his re-immersion into society as he is joined by several townspeople, all of whom are struggling to be free from the ghosts of their past. Along the way, New Paltz Professor and playwright Larry Carr raises issues concerning war, sex, love and memory as he seeks to find the common ground where those themes converge.

The play will receive a “staged reading” in Parker Theater on October 23 and 24 at 2 p.m. and again at 8 p.m. Although a “staged reading” emphasizes dialogue over movement in order to provide an opportunity for refinement before a fully-staged production, there will be moments when actors put down their scripts and continue the action in order to illuminate significant passages. Appropriate costumes, lighting and sound will also be incorporated into the reading to give audiences a sense of atmosphere and excitement.

The cast features students Alex Johnson, Nicole Carroll, Clancey Watkins and Gianna Gioffi, along with Adjunct Professor Brendan Burke. Professor Joseph Paparone will serve as a host for the performances, guiding the audience and providing stage directions.

Director Stephen Kitsakos is assisted by stage manager Liz Petley, student-dramaturge (and English major) Anne Petrosino, and by student-designers Kyle Fassett, Patrick Kiernan, Rachel Townsend and Jackie Wolozin. *The Wakeville Stories* is the inaugural presentation in a new-play reading series, and yet another collaboration between the Theatre and English Departments.

Seats for all four performances are just $5.00 and can be purchased at the campus Box Office in Parker Theater or on-line at Tix.com.
The New Paltz Slam Team is holding a general interest meeting on Thursday, October 7 in SUB 409 at 9 p.m. and a try-out slam on October 13 in SUB 100 at 7 p.m. Featured is poet, novelist, and rapper Ainsley Burrows.

Flamingo Publications is now accepting submissions of fiction, memoir, poetry, art, essay, and interview for its newest journal, Henry. Writers and artists must reside, work, or attend school in the Hudson Valley, and submissions must reflect the life, culture, landscape, people, and history of the Hudson Valley. The deadline for submissions is November 30, 2010. For submission guidelines, go to flamingo-publications.com.

Still not following the English Department on Facebook?! Go to facebook.com/npenglish and “like” us in order to start receiving crucial updates for departmental events such as lectures, symposia, panels, readings, and other opportunities.

What I’m Reading

Works Cited presents “What I’m Reading,” a new column dedicated to brief reviews of student and faculty choices for personal reading. Each issue will include a book review and biography of the reader. For our first installment, we asked past student and valedictorian Nicole Hitner what she was reading; here is what she said:

“I am currently reading an English translation of Günther Grass’s The Tin Drum. However, because I’ve been getting up at half-past six every morning and adapting to an entirely new way of life, I haven't gotten too deep into it yet. Nevertheless, what drew me in was the novel's first clause: ‘Granted: I am an inmate of a mental hospital...’ Oskar appears to be an unreliable narrator, but the way he says ‘granted’ indicates that he is used to people dismissing his ideas as the mental aberrations of a madman, and why should the reader be any more understanding? Grass does a masterful job of painting his narrator as a victim long before he is revealed to be a survivor of the ‘Nazi nightmare.’ The anecdotal narrative style makes for fluid reading, and the drum as symbol provides a topic for contemplation. I look forward to reading further.”

Nicole is currently living in Regensburg, Germany, working as an au pair. She maintains a blog of her experiences, accessible at http://regensbogen.blogspot.com.

Briefly Noted

Footnotes

1. October 8 - Last day for students to submit work due for a course graded “I” for Spring or Summer 2010.
2. October 11-12 - Columbus Day and Fall Break. No Classes.
3. October 15 - Midpoint of semester.
4. Are you graduating? Be sure to see your advisor and file to graduate.

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