Second Language Acquisition
Gonzetti Piotto Bonana
Natalia Romanova

University of Maryland
College Park

East Asian Languages and Cultures

Sunday, May 19, 2013
5:00 p.m.
Grand Ballroom, Stamp Student Union
Dear Graduates, Parents, Relatives, and Friends,

On behalf of the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, I welcome you to this milestone event. My colleagues and I look forward every semester to honoring the achievements of our graduates, and to conferring the degrees that their talents and tenacity have earned them. We have been entrusted with the intellectual care and development of these young scholars, and we feel a special bond with them – both intellectual and personal. We salute their commitment to fostering understanding of cultures other than their own and, in some cases, to deepening their understanding of their own heritage.

Graduates, we wish you all success as you move forward into the next phase of your lives. I invite you to stay in touch with your professors and mentors and especially to share with us news of your future achievements. I speak for all the faculty and staff of the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures in offering my congratulations to you and to those who have supported you throughout the years of your study. Do come back and bring us your stories.

With best wishes,

Carol Mossman,
Director
School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
In the works of Marosa di Giorgio (1932-2004), the experience of Uruguayan countryside of her early years leaves an indelible trace that becomes the core of a peculiar literature. María Elena Campero examines how the presence of the city arises in the horizon as the final cause responsible for the disappearance of her beloved childhood space. She also shows how di Giorgio re-signifies shocks and brightness, both related to the city, and places them in her family’s farm in order to transform the rural landscape into a territory that does not bear exclusively the economic value imposed by the city. Then, she analyzes the wild and incredible erotic encounters that take place in nature and she argues that the eroticism proposed by di Giorgio is of peculiar divine nature. Finally, Campero explores how otherness and metamorphoses intertwine as a key force of di Giorgio’s universe and writing style.

Erica Cefalo’s dissertation, Redefining Religion through Literature in Nineteenth-Century France, examines essays, poetry and fiction in order to trace the evolution of spiritual ideas in French literature from before the 1789 Revolution to the first decades of the Third Republic. Her work shows a steady movement in ideology from the traditional clerical definition of religion to a more individualistic notion of conscience-based spirituality. This new spirituality increasingly considered humanity itself as sacred and eternal, replacing Catholic doctrine with republican values such as justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. Each chapter details religious themes in a particular work with a focus on the text’s contribution to the process of redefining the role of religion in society. The range of authors includes Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Mme de Staël, Henri de Saint-Simon, George Sand, Victor Hugo, and Emile Zola, among others.

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Uche Onyedi Okafor’s project is a study of Germany’s colonial discourse from the 18th to the end of the 19th century when Germany acquired colonies, mostly in East and Southwest Africa. The focus and original contribution of the dissertation is the discussion of the discursive relationship between the fantasy of a so-called model or humane colonialism as imagined in literary and non-literary texts around 1800 and the harsh reality of colonial inhabunmality in the late 19th century.

Raluca’s dissertation concentrates on the relationship between law, literature, and slavery in the Hispanic Caribbean of the Early Modern Period. The analysis is based on two letters and a treatise, Resolución sobre la libertad de los negros y sus originarios, en estado de paganos y después ya cristianos (1681), that were written by Capuchin friar Francisco José de Jaca, while he was serving as a missionary in the Caribbean region. His writings set the stage for a discussion of how Spanish hegemonic legal thinking is challenged and redefined from an alternative transatlantic narrative. The concept of nomos colonial that is introduced denotes the symbolic normative space originated by the legal justifications of the Spanish conquest and colonization. Through the exploration of the nomos colonial, the project focuses on how the rhetoric of law served simultaneously as a discursive practice of imperial domination and of cultural resistance. By reclaiming the aesthetic and conceptual originality of Francisco José de Jaca, a neglected author who demonstrated the illegality of Amerindian and African slavery, her dissertation reveals the epistemological shift produced to accommodate the colonized subjects within the nomos colonial. Ultimately, it serves to reconsider some foundational fictions of the Caribbean world Amerindian legal status, slavery, and Black subjectivity by underscoring the relevance of an intellectual whose discourse was constructed from the tension between the Spanish legal tradition and the colonial experience.

The need for critical reflection and dissemination of cross-border Hispanic theatre is the main focus of this research. Through this work Lina Morales Chacana explores the influence of the paradigm shift from modernity to postmodernity in Western and Hispanic drama. She also delves into the impact of the new systems of representation of history and interdisciplinary studies on Hispanic theatre. In addition, Gelen addresses the interconnections between history and literature, which have modified the conceptualization of ‘space’, ‘territory’, ‘oppression’, and ‘conquest’, which defined these 19th century white upper-class women as colonized in their own patriarchal settings. Her dissertation is the first to establish a triangulal relationship between the concepts of social class, gender and authorship in the lives of female aristocratic pioneers with the goal of contributing to the scholarship on women’s literary history, which, thus far, has ignored the/her-istory of female aristocrats.

Rebeca Moreno Orama’s dissertation deals with the theme of exile in the works of Emil Cioran (1911-1995), a Romanian-born French writer and philosopher. The thesis examines his multifaceted experience of exile, from the linguistic estrangement to an acute awareness of the quintessential, metaphysical exile. From between spaces and languages, Cioran develops a writing that illustrates his keen perception of displacement, which he translates into his paradoxical, fragmentary style. Raluca’s analysis of Cioran’s philosophcal, self-reflective essays suggests that his experience of exile determines his personal ethics, which draws its strength from the notion of the irreparable, a concept central to Cioran’s discursive universe. Thus, exile, evolving from the external, contingent experience, takes on the characteristics of a literary topos, the writer exiling himself into writing.