



Department of English and Comparative Literature

San José State University

Fall 2007

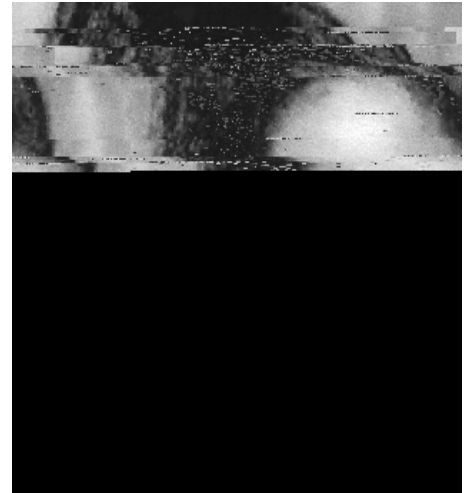
Spring 2008 Welcomes ZZ Packer as Lurie Professor

by Kathy Geary

The spring semester of 2008 will welcome a fresh face to the Department of English and Comparative Literature. ZZ Packer will hold the Lurie Distinguished Professor in Creative Writing position on the SJSU campus. Ms. Packer will be the seventh visiting author to hold this position at SJSU. Her book, *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*, is the SJSU Campus Reading Selection for the 2007-2008 school year.

As Lurie Professor, Ms. Packer will be speaking at a variety of events next semester, as well as teaching both an undergraduate literature course (English 177: TR 1200-1330) and a graduate workshop in writing fiction (English 241: R 1600-1845).

She comes to SJSU with stellar credentials. After graduating from Yale in 1994, Ms. Packer attended The Writing Seminar at Johns Hopkins University and The Writers' Workshop at Iowa University; she received a Stegner Fellowship at Stanford University and recently was a Jones Lecturer at Stanford. In addition to these accomplishments, Ms. Packer has received multiple awards for her published works: a Rona Jaffe Writers Foundation Grant, the Ms. Giles Whiting Award,



the *Bellingham Review* Award, and a Guggenheim Fellowship in fiction. The title story in her short-story collection, *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*, was published in *The New Yorker* in the 2000 debut fiction issue. ZZ Packer will most certainly be a welcome addition to both the Department of English and Comparative Literature and the SJSU campus at large.

Though born in Chicago, Zuwena (Swahili for "good") was raised in Atlanta, Georgia and Louisville, Kentucky, an upbringing that imbues her writing with the

Drinking Coffee Elsewhere capture the growth of the human spirit through life's drama as experienced by her young black characters, and her voice allows her readers to connect with her protagonists.

I had such an experience with her story, "Our Lady of Peace." In that story, a young teacher who is looking to make a difference accepts a position to teach English in an inner-city public school. Having personally assisted in an array of demographically diverse educational programs, I found myself stepping into the classroom along side the character in the story and sharing the frustration and sense of inadequacy that an instructor can feel when trying to reach the unreachable student.

The stories in *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere* guide the reader toward a sense of hope, but nearly always end in a calamity of sentiment that questions the emotional rationality of life. The tone of Packer's storytelling is tense, and resolutions never come easily.

Having demonstrated her mastery of the short story, Packer is currently finishing her first novel, titled *The Thousands*. The post-emancipation novel is about "the forgotten masses of blacks who went West."

In honor of National Black History Month in



Meeting Today's Greatest Authors

by Huy Tran

For more than two decades, the the SJSU Center for Literary Arts' (CLA) Major Authors Series has been the most significant literary series in the region, providing SJSU students and the South Bay community the chance to interact with writers of contemporary literature of the highest caliber. To date, the Major Authors Series has hosted presentations by twenty-eight winners of the Pulitzer Prize, fifteen winners of the National Book Award, and five winners of the Nobel Prize, and continues to bring more award-winning authors every year. From Neil Gaiman to Gore Vidal, the CLA has brought the best of the best to our campus.

In its 21st year of the Major Authors Series, the CLA brings four outstanding writers to the campus during the 2007-2008 academic year: Dorothy Allison, Salman Rushdie, ZZ Packer, and Kimiko Hahn.

Dorothy Allison, winner of the 2007 Robert Penn Award for Fiction and National Book Award finalist, was the first author featured in this year's Major Authors Series. Her major works include *Bastard out of Carolina*, *Cavedweller*, *Trash*, and *Two or Three Things I know for Sure*. Earlier this semester, the CLA hosted an informational session to acquaint the community with her major book, *Bastard out of Carolina*, followed by two on-campus presentations. That book, which became a major motion picture, explores drinking, sexual abuse, and gender issues; its conflict centers on Anney Boatwright and her bastard daughter Ruth Anne, who is sexually abused by Anney's new husband.

Allison's visit made quite an impact and left many

American Book Award and the Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize, a prize given out only once every three years. Her most recent work, *The Narrow Road to the Interior*, is a mix of Japanese prose-poetry called *zuihitsu*, which mixes juxtaposition and contradiction to convey a wide variety of scenes, thoughts, and experiences.

The CLA will host three events with Kimiko Hahn: a conversation and public Q&A, a reading and book signing, and a visit to Mt. Pleasant High School. The conversation and public Q&A session will take place on March 12 at 1:00 p.m. The reading and book signing will follow on March 12 at 7:30 p.m. Locations to be announced. Her last session will be a visit to Mt. Pleasant High School on March 13 at 3 p.m.

These events are huge and many people from across the South Bay travel to our campus to meet and learn from and about our great selection of writers. SJSU students should definitely not miss these opportunities to learn first-hand about the craft of writing from the masters themselves.

However, the Major Authors Series events are not the only events students can attend to interact with today's great writers. Many other literary events are featured throughout the year at SJSU, something every month. The list of writers scheduled for these events include the following: Boadiba, Ellen Bass, Victoria Chang, Wanda Coleman, Sam Hamill, Robert Hass, Jane Hirshfield, Michael Govrin, Neli Moody, Tennessee Reed, Harold Schechter, C. Dale Young, SJSU's very own Nick Taylor, and more.

For more information regarding the Center for Literary Arts and the Major Authors Series, please visit the CLA website, located at <http://www.litart.org/>. For other SJSU literary events, please visit the Department of English and Comparative Literature website, located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/english/Calendar.htm>.

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the undergraduate advisor for the English major and will continue to fill that position until his retirement at the end of the spring 2008 semester.

Comments from Professor Pollock's former and current students testify to his commitment and dedication to educating young minds. Many comment on his "quick wit and contagious sense of humor." A current student in his English 56A (English Literature to Eighteenth Century) class says that, "When Professor Pollock reads *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, he helps me understand literature; he is truly inspiring to students." Another notes that "his passion for literature is heard in his explication of poetry; he reads Spenser's *Faerie Queene* with such admiration that students are utterly mesmerized by the art and beauty of language." Walk into his English 56A class and you may hear *Beowulf* being read in Old English on a record player, or see a projection video of the life and times of Chaucer, giving students an historical perspective to accompany their readings.

Dr. Paul Douglass, a colleague and fellow English professor, characterizes Professor Pollock as "one of the kindest, most caring faculty members I've known in more than thirty years of teaching. He is quick to laugh, a wonderful listener, and someone who embodies the virtues of the teaching profession for me: patience, empathy, firmness of purpose, and assertion of high standards."

Over the course of Professor Pollock's career he has published books, poetry, and scholarly articles; among these is a book titled *The Black Feet of the Peacock: the Color-Concept Black from the Greeks through the Renaissance*, a publication he compiled and edited with great pride after his dissertation advisor, Linda Van Norden, had passed away. The book is a compilation of Van Norden's "study of alchemy and the color black, exploring how image was used artistically and archetypically." Pollock was asked to "salvage and piece together her work from the papers she had left." His admiration and respect for Ms. Van Norden were clear to me as he sighed briefly and cleared his throat to say, "It was tragic. What an incredible work of scholarship she might have completed."

As Professor Pollock approaches the end of his teaching career, he is beginning to think about the next chapter of his life: retirement. He looks forward to

reading *The New Yorker* cover to cover, quenching his thirst for fiction. In addition to reading, he plans to spend more time composing music and playing the piano and keyboard. Professor Pollock has always had a love for music and an appreciation for harmony. As a child, he played the accordion and later developed an affinity for the piano. He says that "the discovery of harmony is a very satisfying social experience; I just seem to lose myself in music." Since music travels to the heart and soul, he explains that "it's very hard to be self-conscious about yourself when playing music; it just takes me outside of myself."

After retirement, he hopes to travel to Salzburg, where he could enjoy listening to Mozart "performed by the great orchestras in Europe" where the artist's music was composed. When I ask about his wife, he smiles and says, "She loves to travel, but I don't. I hate the process behind traveling: packing a suitcase and rushing to the airport only to wait in lines at the Security Checkpoint." When he is not reading *The New Yorker* or listening to classical music, you may find him sailing with his brother along the East Coast or kayaking with his wife.

When I ask Professor Pollock what he will miss upon leaving San José State, he sighs with regret and says, "I will miss teaching, and of course, I will miss my colleagues. I really admire students on campus for what they are able to accomplish. It has been a pleasure to be here all these years."

We say in response that we will miss him too—his sense of humor, his enriching lectures, and his welcoming smile. We say farewell, Professor Pollock. We express our gratitude, and as he begins the next chapter in his life, we wish him well!

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Important Reminder

Students should see an advisor once a semester to

**Nick Taylor: A New Face,
A New Direction**

by Nick Dinicola



San José State University is proud to welcome Nick Taylor as its newest addition to the English and Comparative Literature Department faculty. Professor Taylor is the only novelist currently on staff, having recently sold his first book to publisher Simon and Schuster for a Spring 2008 release. His novel, *The Disagreement*, set during the Civil War, is about a boy thrown into service as a medical doctor at the University of Virginia, which was transformed into a hospital during the conflict. The story came to him while he was researching the University of Virginia as

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Room to Lounge

by Ellen-Tara James



Awareness—willingness, step...

Relief—contemplative space, permission of freedom, shattered shackles.

Odyssey—courageous vulnerability, listen, question, think, step....

Ongoing—strain, wrestle sleep, dream, awaken—live!

* * * * *

As I read Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, a line struck me like a rubber band pulled too hard—and snap!

...But she lives; for great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh.

What affords this opportunity? Space. A room of our own.

Often, our everyday space is filled with the low humming high speed of busy-ness. Rush here. Go there. Jot a note. Send an e-mail. Quick. Quick. Quick! And then....

As writers (and in particular as English majors) a place where the mind is free to explore the dreams within, the social issues without, the memories leaving behind scars on knees and heart, and the ah-ha's of clarity transforming a once narrow perspective into understanding and enlightenment is crucial. We need a room where our fellows congregate, where they bring input and insight gained through experience, where they share compassionate silence, and where they offer expertise like a hand extended to the fallen.

We have such a room. I have seen it. I have experienced it. FO 113 was once an office. It is now the English Student Lounge: two sofas and a loveseat, an overstuffed chair and books packed into matching bookcases, a collage of famous writers' faces hanging on the wall, a large window, and a small white microwave. A room of our very own, the lounge communicates to students that they are part of a community: a group of kindred spirits who adore words—words of yesterday and words of today.

Wednesday, late afternoon.

I hope my classmate sitting across from me shows mercy as she edits my article. The purple pen in her hand flails across the second then third and fourth page. Her grammatical sifter is making something of all my words.

"You're getting the usage of the semicolon and colon confused," my chronologically younger classmate states. "The semicolon is only used when...."

Frustrated with grammar, not with its power when used correctly, but with my ignorance on the subject, I think, *stupid semicolon*, as my body recoils, sinking deeper into the cushions of the sofa.

"...that's the difference," she concludes, lounging in the overstuffed chair as though resting from strenuous pontification.

"Can't I eliminate the semicolons and colons?" I ask. "Can't I just...."

"No!" She shoves her textbook into her backpack. "To be a good writer you must know the rules and master them."

**The Complete History of the Study of
English at San José State University**

(Abridged)

by Lauren Minkel

Will Write For Food

by Andrea Waldron

If there is one thing English majors can all agree on, it's that we don't study literature in anticipation of making a lot of money. "The poor, starving English student" will be the description used for most of us for the duration of our education.

Thankfully, though, the many Awards the English Department makes available to deserving students in the spring semester renders that description not quite as accurate as some people might think.

The English Department website lists two categories of Student Awards: those for which

Real World Experience: Internships

by Rochelle Jackson-Smarr

Are you tired of editing your friend's essays? Ever catch yourself analyzing the page layout of a document? Are you confident in your editorial skills? If you answered yes to two of these three questions, then you are ready for an internship. Yes, an internship. It is time for you to go out into the workforce and exercise your valuable communication skills. You have sat in English courses long enough analyzing literature and diagramming sentences; it is time to put your skills to work. Although most internships are unpaid, the experience is worth more than any dollar amount. Consider internships as a chance for career preparation and development.

Internship opportunities vary from human resources and recruiting, to editorial assistance and technical marketing. These internships are available in fields such as public relations, engineering, and marketing. The choices for internships can be boundless and overwhelming, so you should look into only those internships that interest you. Seize the opportunity of an internship to explore all of your career interests.

As a way of helping students prepare for life after graduation, the English Department has revived the internship course, English 199, effective Fall 2007. English 199 allows students to participate in both on- and off-campus internships and receive university credit. The three-unit course cannot be used to fulfill English major requirements, but does count as a university elective toward graduation. To receive that credit, students enrolled in the course are required to complete a documented minimum of 160 hours on their internship and write a report explaining how their internship was a productive learning experience in relation to the English major. English majors and minors are encouraged to seek internships that involve writing or editing.

If you are an English major or minor looking for an internship before you graduate, you should start by talking to the Internship Coordinator for the English department, Professor Bonnie Cox. Cox receives many of her internship opportunities from local alumni of the English department and occasionally from other campus departments. As the Career and Professional Writing Coordinator, Cox is a valuable resource for

anyone seeking an internship. Be aware, though, that she recommends only "quality" students, so in addition to reviewing a student's resume and writing samples, she may also require a student to take a writing or editing test, just to make absolutely sure that the student is ready to begin the "transition from college to the real world."

Internship opportunities are also available through the SJSU on-campus Career Center, located near the Student Union. Students are encouraged by the Center's staff to schedule individual appointments with one of their Internship Specialists: Angela Wayfer or Joe Bucher. In addition to reviewing students' resumes, and offering one-on-one help in finding an appropriate internship, Wayfer and Bucher also take students through a mock interview.

The Career Center also offers its own *Job and Internship Guide*, which is filled with information on how to find and apply for internships, how to prepare for the interview, and how to succeed in an internship once it has been secured. Their website allows students to search for internships through a database of companies or by creating a search agent. The search agent will email students with opportunities within their disciplines.

The Career Center also hosts Career and Internship Fairs throughout the academic year. These fairs are geared mostly toward Engineering majors, but they are sure to include opportunities for Liberal Arts majors as well. Their internship database is updated daily, so it is a good idea to register with the Career Center and enable a search agent soon.

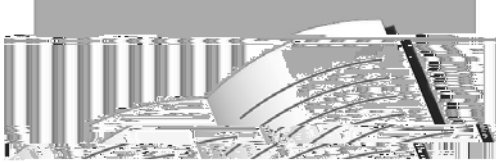
For additional information on internships, contact Contact Professor Cox at Bonnie.Cox@sjsu.edu;

**The Writing Center:
A Nexus of Learning and Opportunity**
by Larry Chu



Once the home of Clark Library, Clark Hall has been renovated into a sleek and high-tech resource committed to the promotion of student growth and success. That is certainly the mission undertaken in

Spring 2008 Course Descriptions



English 10: Great Works of Literature

Emphasis on critical appreciation of fiction, drama, and poetry and various literary forms. *No credit in the English major. G.E. Area C 2.*
TR 1500-1615: Professor Chow; M 1900-2145: Professor Wilson;
MW 1030-1145: Professor TBA

English 22: Fantasy and Science Fiction

Students will examine works of literary fantasy and science fiction to understand them as expressions of human intellect and imagination; to comprehend their historical and cultural contexts; and to recognize their diverse cultural traditions. Both contemporary and historical works will be studied. *No credit in the English major. G.E. Area C 2.*
R 1800-2045: Professor Harris; TR 1200-1315: Professor Strachan;
MW 0900-1015: Professor TBA

English 22: Fantasy and Science Fiction

This course will explore utopian and dystopian worlds as they manifest in Science Fiction from Plato's *Republic*: Fantasy and Science Fi. and imagi03 nd ;m(Etb1rlnd La/16 4n.Tf-0.Republul 0 9.3 43.2 378.6001 Tm5 as exp

English 71: Introduction to Creative Writing

Writing in various literary genres; emphasis on eliciting and developing talent in various kinds of creative writing. *English major elective that also satisfies G.E. Area C 2.*

TR 1200-1315, TR 1330-1445: Professor Maio

TR 1500-1615, R 1800-2045: Professor Miller

MW 1200-1315: Professor Taylor

MW 1330-1445: Professor Harrison

Online: Professor James

foundational twentieth-century theory as well as contemporary approaches to literature (feminism, Queer theory, Marxism, post-colonialism, and more). Though we will apply these critical models to texts across several historical periods and literary genres, Joseph

English 78: Introduction to Shakespeare

What made Shakespeare great in his own time? What makes Shakespeare meaningful today? This course offers an introduction to Shakespeare by giving us a chance to read plays from each of the genres, learning the features of each kind of play and appreciating what made them successful with Elizabethan audiences and continues to make them compelling in our global economy. We'll laugh with Beatrice and Benedick, stand in horror of Macbeth, and weep with Lear. A fun, whirlwind tour through some of Shakespeare's best work. *No credit in the English major. G.E. Area C 2.*

TR 1030-1145: Professor Fleck

English 100W: Writing Workshop

English 100W is an integrated writing and literature course designed to provide English majors with a firm foundation for the professional study of literature. Over the course of the semester, students will engage in all phases of those reading, thinking, researching, and writing processes that produce clear and purposeful critical essays that demonstrate an understanding of and illuminate for others how literature contains and conveys its effects and meanings. Approximately one half of the semester will be spent on the study of poetry.

Prerequisite: Passing score on WST.

TR 1030-1145: Professor Harris

TR 1330-1445: Professor TBA

English 100W: Writing Workshop

We will learn to write eloquently as we analyze poetry, fiction and drama. Extensive study of metrical forms, short fiction, and a drama review of a San Jose State Production: either *The Mummified Deer* or *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*. *Prerequisite: Passing score on WST*
F 0900-1145: Professor Stork

English 101: Introduction to Literary Criticism

Students will be exposed to important critical concepts as well as various historical and contemporary approaches to literature, such as formalism, structuralism, cultural studies, new historicism, post-structuralism, Marxism, post-colonialism, feminism, etc. Students will learn to apply these approaches to works of literature through various assignments, including presentations, short essays, and a research paper. *Prerequisite: English 100W*

TR 1030-1145: Professor Chow

English 101: Introduction to Literary Criticism

Do you see hidden meanings in literary texts? Billboards? Movies? Advertisements? Can you come up with 3 variant meanings for Ezra Pound's poem, "In a Station of the Metro"? There are many possible readings of all literary and visual texts. Even your own identity governs your interpretation of the material. What kind of critic are you? For this course, we will discover and apply critical models to various literary, visual, and digital texts. Critical models will include

English 112A: Children's Literature

Study of literature for elementary and intermediate grades, representing a variety of cultures. Evaluation and selection of texts.

MW 1030-1145: Professor Rice; TR 1500-1615: Professor TBA

English 112A: Children's Literature

Have you ever picked up a book you read as a child and were suddenly transported back in time? This course seeks to uncover the brilliance, literary technique, complexity, social relevance, and merit of readings from elementary to intermediate grades. Most readings will be chapter books, but we will also evaluate other styles such as

English 153A: Eighteenth-Century British Novel

No persons of lively parts and keen penetration would presume to complete a course of English studies without having conducted at least one stage of their intellectual peregrinations in the company of such worthies as Moll Flanders, Pamela Andrews, Tom Jones, Matthew Bramble, and Catherine Morland. Thus, whether it be your intention to try your fortune in the professions, seek ecclesiastical preferment, secure a commission in the service of King George, or contract a favorable match, such a course of studies cannot fail to enlarge your understanding, improve your heart, steel your constitution, and qualify you for all the duties and enjoyments of life.

Reading List: Defoe, *Moll Flanders*; Richardson, *Pamela*; Fielding, *Tom Jones*; Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*; Austen, *Northanger Abbey*.

MW 0900-1015: Professor Rice

English 163: American Literature: 1865-1910

Rise of realism and the seeds of modernism. Writers may include

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Chair's Message

Fall 2007



Dear Faculty, Staff, andA 9 53.9994/TT0 1 Tf190 0 12 124.0ud1 Tf1 DMd2CS0 CS.0 181 DMd2e./P 2CID 4 BDC BT62E