

ARIELLE READ, LONGTIME ADMINISTRATOR OF CL GRAD STUDIES, INTERVIEWED AS SHE MOVES TO ANOTHER POSITION

December 11, 2008

Arielle Read was Program Administrator in Comparative Literature and Creative Writing at UCI for 14 years. She left in November 2008 to become Manager of the prestigious Humanities Research Institute, a campus-wide research facility in the humanities. Travis Tanner and Robert Wood, the graduate Comparative Literature representatives for the 2008-2009 academic year, sat down with Arielle Read to ask her about her time spent in Comparative Literature and Creative Writing, and to get her thoughts on her new position at HRI.



Robert Wood: How did you get the job [as Administrator of the PhD Program in Comp Lit and MFA in Creative Writing]?

continued on pg. 7

Also in this issue:

Announcements (pg. 3)

Notes from Paris X (pg. 3)

Graduate Student Publications and Prizes (pg. 4)

Undergraduate Reflects on the Program (pg. 5)

Rahimieh Attends Iranian and American Studies Conference (pg. 6)



Ackbar Abbas: The Interview

Professor Abbas joined Comp Lit in January 2007 and has been chair of the department since July, 2008.

How do you compare the Comp Lit. programs at the University of Hong Kong, where you taught previously, to the one here at UCI?

It's like comparing Starbucks in Hong Kong and California. In both cases, you get your cup of coffee, but the content and setting are different. In colonial Hong Kong, CL offered an alternative to the competing hegemonies of English and Chinese Studies. It constituted itself by taking up the vacant space of literary theory and cultural studies, which more established disciplines did not, initially, feel the need to do; and in

continued on pg. 2

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Grad Conference on "Crisis": A Timely Intervention

For the past four years, graduate students in the Comparative Literature department have organized a conference each Spring to present their research-in-progress and receive feedback both from their peers and from professors in the field. Graduate student conferences are an occasion for students to focus and develop their own work with the support of peers and faculty, without some of the pressure that accompanies more traditional and established conference settings. But while the focused exchange among faculty and graduate students in the field is crucial, one of the primary goals of such a forum has always also been to extend the conversation beyond Comparative Literature alone. In a field as diffuse as Comparative Literature, comparatists – perhaps especially those in graduate school who might still be acquainting themselves with the contours of the discipline – keenly feel the need to bring together representatives from diverse areas of study not only to gain the benefit of multiple perspectives, but also to further the collaboration between fields, and indeed, students and faculty, that would otherwise remain closed off to one another.

In keeping with these aims, we try each

continued on pg. 2

(Interviewing Ackbar Abbas) *continued from pg. 1*
 response to Hong Kong's impending return to China in 1997, it developed a virtually new field of study: Hong Kong Culture. What it lacked, though, compared to UCI, were resources at the graduate level. Doctoral students worked with a supervisor, but they were not required to do any coursework, nor were there provisions for it. Nevertheless, some dissertations managed to be pretty good, as good as dissertations in the U.S.

How would you compare the status of Comp. Lit. as a discipline in Asia and the U.S.?

CL has had a longer history in the U.S. than in Asia, but in some respects their "status" is not that different. CL is not taught in high school, and compared to the national literatures it is a relatively unknown quantity. Those who choose to take it tend to be more adventurous types. There is also the fact that as a discipline, CL has changed a great deal. This is one of its strengths, but it is also what makes the subject hard to explain to the layman, or even to ourselves! The standard question (in my case, from immigration officers), "What literatures do you compare?" is sounding more and more anachronous, if not entirely irrelevant.



Who would you identify as your own most influential teachers? And then, who are the thinkers who have most influenced you?

I have not had the good fortune of being influenced in any formal sense by teachers, which is why my work shows all the spottiness of the autodidact. But of course even autodidacts have mentors, and I have been fortunate in mine, though their names and influence can only be tacitly acknowledged. The second question is easier to answer. When I was young, the "thinker" who influenced me most was the American writer Henry Miller, and I'm pleased to learn that a philosopher like Gilles Deleuze thinks so well of him. Later, it was the English poet William Blake who provided an even higher, more intoxicating, level of intellectual excitement. Today, I seem to come back again and again to the texts of Walter Benjamin; perhaps not so much to his texts, but to a fragmentary sentence here and there, or an enigmatic image.

What are the important decisions that a grad student in the field needs to make? Right at the beginning? In the third or fourth year?

I suppose the very fact that you are attending grad school signifies that you intend to pursue some kind of professional career – so in fact, the important decision

has already been made. The career is not necessarily an academic one, so the next decision is whether you want a university career. There are other careers where the results of your labor are more direct and immediate, the rewards more tangible. So it takes a certain perversity to want to be an academic – let's be very clear about that! As for decisions in the 3rd and 4th years, an important one is how you propose to give shape to your dissertation, by which I mean: how are you going to balance your "aesthetic" and "archival" concerns both of which are important in any piece of scholarly writing.

What are your priorities in directing Comp. Lit. at UCI? What do you see as the likelihood of realizing them?

One priority is exactly to figure out what "Comp. Lit." can be, not elsewhere but in UCI; i.e., to make the best use of the resources at hand. We have a pool of brilliant grad and undergrad students, and a talented and distinguished faculty, including three directors of research centers and interdisciplinary/multicultural institutes. The trick is to develop the synergies. The first task, it seems to me, is for the Department to work out what we think we are really doing – which is very different from coming up with yet another apologetics for CL. I hope this thinking will be in the form of provocative and challenging course proposals, both old and new, proposals that will help in defining the direction that CL will take. We might even attract more students in the process, which is never a bad thing. And the likelihood of realizing these objectives? As Gramsci said, "optimism of the will, pessimism of the intellect"!

Questions by Alexander Gelley



(Politics of Crisis Conference) *continued from pg. 1*
 year to develop a conference topic that can serve as a point of engagement across the humanities and social sciences. Past conference topics – which have included Global States, Cultures of Violence, and Play: Towards a Critical Concept – brought together disciplines by offering conceptual frameworks that could serve as foundations upon which various fields could build. This year, "Politics of Crisis" was voted on by the CL graduate students as a theme that would similarly allow for rigorous theoretical and critical approaches while also encouraging diverse points of entry. In addition, motivation for a conference centered on crisis clearly stems from current events. Right now seems an especially productive time for all disciplines to listen to and consider what others fields have to say regarding how a theoretical model of crisis might take shape, what it might look like, and if something like "recovery" is possible.

Vicky Hsieh



NOTES FROM PARIS X: FINDING FLOOR 1.5 AND OTHER NAVIGATIONS OF THE FRENCH PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

I left Irvine in May, 2006 for what I thought was going to be a one year teaching exchange at Paris X, Nanterre. With some scholarly justification, I ended up extending my stay for another year. Since I spent at least my first six months there compiling all the necessary documentation to become an official university employee (including a radiograph of my lungs), I decided I needed at least another year to recover. Most of my time in Paris was not spent at the University of Nanterre. As you will see, that is probably just as well for me, and the students that I taught -- some well, some accidentally, and some not at all.

When I received my teaching schedule for the fall semester I was notified that some classrooms were under construction and one of my courses would be relocated to "Building N" for the first few class meetings. Students were notified of this change in schedule by a small index card posted in the elevator, which is probably why no one appeared on the first day of class. When no one appeared the second week I went searching around building N for a group of students with no teacher. And I found them! Or at least, I thought I did. They certainly told me that I was their teacher. Since the department didn't give out any course enrollment lists to teachers, I had no reason to doubt them. So I taught them, for 8 weeks, until the classrooms were finally finished and we all moved back into building E. On that day I entered the new classroom to find two classes, the group that I had been teaching and another new or perhaps original group of students accusing me of professional negligence. Had they been swallowed by building N for 8 weeks? Where was the missing teacher who should have taught my accidental students? Who were the students I had been teaching? I leave those mysteries to the Bermuda Triangle of Nanterre under construction.

During my second year at Nanterre I was conscripted into teaching in the faculty of economics, and instructed to report to the department secretary on floor 1.5 (?) to choose the amphitheatre for my sixty-student course. I was told to purchase the course textbook and handed a syllabus with topics in economic theory. Feeling somewhat panicked, I discovered the name of the director of the course and emailed him with my concerns. His response was brief;

"We can't tell the students not to come, but it would be better for them if they didn't."

I am not sure what I taught for the first few weeks of class, it could be described as babble. And then, France saved me. Five weeks of public insurrection in the fall of 2008; transport strikes, student blockades, and a lockdown of the university (initiated by the President of Paris X to prevent a hostile student occupation of the buildings) ensured that my days of deeply suspect brilliance lecturing on microeconomics and the global credit crunch were few.

I spent the rest of the semester far from the scene of revolution, in my favorite café near the Luxembourg gardens, sipping an exceptionally frothy café crème every day. In spite of the madness of Nanterre, two years was far from enough time for me to inhabit all the worlds of the city. I became deeply attached to my toblerone shaped mansard roof studio, my favorite seat at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the round pinkly glowing room of Monet's nymphaeas at the Musée Marmottan. Mostly I will miss being in a place where worlds are constantly colliding and disappearing in a kaleidoscope of energy.

Anna Cavness



ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMP LIT NEWSLETTER, I, 1 (WINTER, 2009)

This inaugurates a new undertaking in UCI Comp. Lit. We look forward to publishing at least two issues a year, and welcome contributions, suggestions, etc. Get in touch with one of the editors if you want to participate.

Editorial Committee:
Eyal Amiran
Alexander Gelley (editor for I,1)
Nasser Mufti
Annette Schlichter



CL GRADS' PRIZES AND PUBLICATIONS

Comparative Literature granted an unusually large number of Ph.D.s between summer 2007 and Spring 2008–12, to Matt Ancell, Craig Carson, Brook Haley, Elizabeth Kiszelay, Marina Ludwigs, Katherine Mack, Erin Obodiac, Glenn Odom, Kurt Ozment, Rodney Rodriguez, Margaret Smith, and Catherine Winiarski. Three graduate students or alumni won tenure-track jobs in 07-08: Juan Buriel, at College of the Canyons; Kir Kuiken, at The University at Albany (SUNY-Albany); and Katherine Mack, at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Three more Comp Lit Ph.D.s (Glenn Odom, Kurt Ozment, and Catherine Winiarski) were hired into Visiting Assistant Professorships. In addition, from the list above, Matt Ancell and Craig Carson are (and were already) Assistant Professor of English at Brigham Young University and a Harper Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Chicago, respectively.

12 Comp Lit graduate students won 13 competitive fellowships or prizes at the School, University, or national level in 2007-08:

Tamara Beauchamp	Brython Davis Fellowship
Sharareh Bennett	Horst Frenz Prize for the best graduate student presentation at ACLA; also Graduate Fellow at the Center in Law, Society and Culture 2007-2008
Jane Griffin	Summer Research Initiative Grant (with Adriana Johnson)
Olivia Gunn	Summer Research Initiative Grant (with Carrie Noland)
Annie Moore	School of Humanities Fellowship to the School of Criticism and Theory, Cornell University (Summer 2008); Joseph McGann Memorial Award for the best graduate paper presented at the Canadian Association of Irish Studies
Lindsay Puente	The Howard Babb Memorial Fellowship and Summer Dissertation Fellowship
Alexandra Sartor	Summer Research Initiative Grant (with Susan Jarratt)
Jonathan Tanner	Summer Research Initiative Grant (with Hugh Roberts)
Travis Tanner	Summer Dissertation Fellowship
Erin Trapp	Summer Research Initiative Grant (with Rei Terada)
Jason Willwerscheid	The Koehn Fellowship/Research Assistantship

Six more students furthered their research with grants from the Humanities Center, Internatioanal Center for Research and Writing, or School of Humanities travel awards and/or language study grants: Tamara Beauchamp, Jane Griffin, Annette Rubado-Mejia, Engel Szwaja-Franken, Matthew Schilleman. And Edward Piñuelas won the Outstanding Teaching Assistant award given by the Composition program.

Finally, Comp Lit graduate students and recent graduates produced 14 publications and 38 conference papers. The conference venues include many national and international meetings of associations (as well as graduate conferences) in diverse fields: American, East Asian, Iranian, Irish, Latin American and Caribbean, and Scandinavian studies, digital gaming; modernism; and rhetoric, among others. Our graduate publications are listed below:

Jennifer Bajorek	<i>Counterfeit Capital: Poetic Labor and Revolutionary Irony</i> . Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009
	Jean Paulhan, <i>On Poetry and Politics</i> . Ed. and with an intro. by Jennifer Bajorek and Eric Trudel. Trans. Jennifer Bajorek, Charlotte Mandell, and Eric Trudel. Urbana and Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008.
Sharareh Bennett	“The Politics of Appropriation: Writing, Responsibility, and the Specter of the Native Informant.” <i>Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature</i> 54 (2008).
	Review of “Caspian Rain” by Gina Barkhordar Nahai. <i>MELUS</i> (Summer 2008).
Juan Buriel	Review of <i>El sol de Texas / Under the Texas Sun</i> by Conrado Espinoza. <i>Southwestern Historical Quarterly</i> 112.2 (2008).

Review of *The People of Paper* by Salvador Plascencia. *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 32.1 (Spring 2007).

“Resistance in Writing: Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera.” *Céfitro: Enlace Hispano Cultural y Literario* 6.1 & 6.2 (Spring & Fall 2006; published in 2007).

- Maryam El-Shall “The ‘Terror’ of Terrorism: The Discourse of Terrorism.” *Rutgers Journal of Comparative Literature* (March 2008).
- Brook Haley Introduction. *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* by Edgar Allan Poe (London: Arcturus Press, 2008).
- Duy Lap Nguyen “The Kiêm Tháo and The Uses of Disposable Time in the National Liberation Front.” *Public Culture* 20.2 (2008).
- Robert John Williams “Le Capital Amoureux/Amorous Capital: Imaginary Wealth and Revolution and Jean Genet’s Prisoner of Love.” *Journal of Historical Materialism* (forthcoming).
- “Global English Ideography and the Dissolve Translation in Hollywood Film.” *Cultural Critique* (forthcoming).
- “Modernist Scandals: Ezra Pound’s Translations of ‘The’ Chinese Poem.” *Orient and Orientalisms in American Poetry and Poetics*. Ed. by Sabine Sielke and Christian Kloeckner (forthcoming).
- “I Like Machines’: Boris Artzybasheff’s Machine Aesthetic and the Ends of Cyborg Culture.” *Technoculture: Special Issue of Interdisciplinary Humanities* 23.1 (2007).
- “Decolonizing Cathay: Teaching the Scandals of Translation through Angel Island Poetry.” *Transformations: Special Issue on Teaching in Translation* 17.2 (2007).

The substantive point here is that Irvine students have had historically, and continue to have, an impact in creating Comparative Literature nationally, especially through the interaction of critical theory with other disciplines.

Rei Terada, Chair, Graduate Committee



AN UNDERGRAD CL MAJOR REFLECTS ON HIS YEARS IN THE PROGRAM

The day I announced that I was going to college to study literature was also the day that my family (both nuclear and extended) decided to express their opinion against it. As I walked through our living room door a week before graduation fully aware of the whispers on the other side, a collective voice demanded I be seated. “Be practical!” the voice exclaimed, “You’d make a wonderful pharmacist!” The notion of committing to a non-scientific course of study elicited nothing more from me than a migraine. “Too Bohemian!” the voice added.

After what seemed an eternity, I left the house steaming. However, deep down, I had started silently to concede to myself that four years dedicated to the study of literature was perhaps impractical. “Immigrants can’t afford literary ideals,” I had told myself hiding from my own hypocrisy. With the family’s consent, I came to UC Irvine as a student of science on track to pharmacy school. Without their consent, I continued my study of literature. In the first quarter of my first year, I enrolled in Jane Newman’s Medium and Genre: Intertextuality in the Western Literary Canon. Staying true to my nature as a timid introvert, I spoke as little as I could in class while still clinging to Jane’s every word. The class invigorated in me a passion for literary thought and gave me a newfound appreciation of culture and cultural differences. To study literature, I’ve learned, is to appreciate culture. The Comp Lit major overall has inspired in me a sense of

what literature represents: voice. While I remain timid and socially inept as always, the study of literature has given me a voice and the flexibility of reason needed to strengthen that voice.

My fascination with both the sciences and humanities continued to develop over the years. It became more and more difficult to decide between the two, so I majored in both Comparative Literature and Neurobiology, enraging my parents in the process. For the first three years of my undergraduate career, I was either in the library or the laboratory. I interned for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the International Center for Writing and Translation. I then spent two years in the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology during which I co-authored a paper in the *Journal of Neurophysiology* on calcium interactions in the brains of fruitflies.

But after a while, I felt a need to move beyond the academic sphere. Driven by an inexplicable compulsion towards spontaneity, a friend and I hitchhiked our way across Vietnam's countryside. After 6 weeks of endless seas of rice patties and screeching motorbikes, we came upon an orphanage for abandoned, neurological impaired youths. The last few weeks of that summer at the orphanage were my life's most cherished.

A year after that trip, I decided to start, with the encouragement of Professor Newman, a non-profit organization that helps disabled and disadvantaged children of Vietnam. Life Beyond Circumstances International was founded by students and individuals united by the conviction that every child deserves a life beyond circumstances: a life beyond poverty, disability, and malnutrition. The organization works to improve the health, education, and quality of life of the disabled and disadvantaged children of Vietnam through sustainable development initiatives. Within five years, we hope to expand our programs beyond the borders of Vietnam and to spark a world-wide, cross-cultural dialogue regarding the circumstances of disability in our developing world.

Upon graduation, I will pursue an MD/PhD dual degree in Anthropology. Medicine epitomizes a confluence of science and humanity. Gandhi had argued that "science without humanity" is one of the chief failings of humanity society. It will be my life's passion to live up to that ideal. My honors thesis in Humanities examines, through the study of folklore, the cultural-political conflicts and consequences of western medicine in the context of a minority culture like Vietnam's. Comparative Literature has given me so much to be thankful for.

Andy Hoang



RAHIMIEH ATTENDS IRANIAN AND AMERICAN STUDIES CONFERENCE

In the first week of December 2008, a delegation of academics from Iran and the US met at University of Birmingham for the first time since the 1979 revolution to discuss the possibility of building bridges across the domains of Iranian and American Studies. While individual scholars have continued to work together despite the political divide separating the two countries, the absence of formal diplomatic ties has made it difficult for more comprehensive discussions to take place. The decision to hold this first meeting in Great Britain itself reflects the barriers that frequently bar scholars from obtaining visas to attend conferences and/or to visit archives and libraries in Iran or the US.



Present at the Birmingham conference were scholars of American and Iranian Studies from across the nation and scholars of American and Communication Studies from Iran. The Center for Persian Studies at University of Maryland, the Dr. Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture at UCI, and the International Society for Iranian Studies were also represented at the meeting.

The three-day discussions were very productive and shed light on the institutional resources, programs, and research opportunities that might open up avenues for collaborative work. The Iranian universities and research institutes are increasingly turning to new media to access international experts. For instance, they use videoconferencing to have guest lecturers from across the globe as part of some of their courses. In addition to further exploring such contacts between American and Iranian academics, the group discussed the possibility of collaborative translation projects which could involve graduate students in Iran and the US.

It was encouraging for all participants to imagine future engagements and to begin to work against a climate that has impeded closer interactions between colleagues working in similar fields.

Nasrin Rahimieh
Maseeh Chair and Director

Dr. Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture & Professor of Comparative Literature



Arielle Read: I am basically a UCI product, if I can say that. I was a student here as an undergraduate, and a bit of graduate studies as well. First, I temped at an engineering corporation in the law department and basically helped them organize files and files and files in this one room. It was supposed to be a couple of weeks and it ended up being six months. The legal secretary I worked with took me aside, and this was when I was trying to figure out what to do now that I was out of school, and I was asking myself, “Where do I go now?” The legal secretary basically said, “Arielle, you need to go back to the university. You belong in an academic environment.” [Laughter] She said it very sweetly, but I guess she didn’t think I was an engineering or maybe legal type, whatever that means. So I applied to UCI and they had an opening in the School of the Arts. That’s where I started my staff career at UCI. I was an academic counselor in the School of the Arts, and I worked with undergraduates and graduates for three years. Then Robert Folkenflik called me because he knew me from when I was a student, I think. They had this opening. At the time it was Graduate Program Assistant, and that position assisted the Graduate Program Administrator. The assistant’s purview was specifically Comp Lit and MFA programs. Also, the job was at a departmental level not a school level. I also liked that. Basically what Barbara Van Leeuwen, who was the department manager at the time, wanted to do was make that position a little more independent so that it wasn’t the assistant to the Graduate Program Administrator, but a Graduate Program Administrator in its own right. That was so I could serve Comp Lit, which was a program at that time, and the MFA program, so that they would have an administrator who was totally dedicated to them. That’s how I started. That’s how I came to the position. And, yeah, 14 years, starting in November 1994.

Travis: I think you might have begun to answer this question already, but what attracted you to the job?

Arielle: Graduate students. That was particularly appealing to me because in the School of the Arts they have MFA programs in Drama, Studio Arts, Music and Dance. I really enjoyed working with the graduate students, and I think that might have been because I had done some graduate work myself and my age at the time. Also because graduate students are more focused in what they are doing. It’s not general education requirements and figuring out majors. Graduate students already have more of a set purpose, and so I think it’s the maturity of the students that appealed to me. I liked

the diversity of the job, and the fact that it was a PhD program in Comp Lit. Comp Lit at the time was, of course, perhaps defined by languages and national literatures in the more traditional sense. Although, that was also the period of time when critical theory was so strong. Derrida was here. Lyotard was here. And having studied French literature at the graduate level, I was very drawn to Comp Lit for all those reasons. I thought working with students pursuing that would be very interesting. And then the MFA students in Creative Writing, the arts, the writing, the artistic process—sort of a continuation of what I was doing with the students in Fine Arts. All of that I thought was very appealing and really, really interesting.

Travis: It sounds like it had a strong intellectual component.

Arielle: It had a strong intellectual component. Just being with people who were doing that kind of work. I would understand to a certain degree what they were doing, and then it makes the work more interesting because it is an administrative job; you are looking at timelines, forms and things like that, but you are also working with faculty, students and their projects.

Robert: There is also a certain sense that this wasn’t a ready-made position but one that you invented as you went along.

Arielle: Well, yes and no. The position was dedicated to those two programs and I don’t know that I brought any innovation to it, but the one thing I did keep, for good or for bad, was that when the departments split, there was a discussion of changing my position by either making me completely Comp Lit or making me completely English, or maybe me taking on a different role altogether. But I was adamant that I wanted to continue working with the graduate students. You know, the split was a very emotional time and I just did not want to leave the graduate students at that point, because I think for the graduate students in both departments, it was a change of identity. It was a huge change, and I felt very strongly about staying with the graduate students that I had been working with, and I did not see myself changing by belonging to one department as opposed to another at that point in time. But both departments listened to my request, took it very seriously, and did everything they could to make it work. And they did. My position was not changed, and I was very grateful for that.

Travis: What did you learn from the job?

Arielle: [Laughter] A lot. Let’s see. What angle to take that from? It deepened my appreciation of the kind of work and commitment it takes to be in academia. I mean, when you are a student, you already kind of sense that, and in particular, in my case, I did try grad school for a while and decided that it wasn’t for

me. You know, realizing the commitment that it takes and the resolve because it's a long commitment of time. There's no guarantee of immediate success. There's a lot of competition, and it's not an easy path because it can be a lonely journey because you are working in your head. You're reading, you're writing and it's not to say that you can't share with your fellow students, but ultimately the work that you are doing is one on one with your computer or your notepad or your books or whatever it is. But it can become a solitary life. It's also not an eight to five job; it's ongoing. And even though you might say, well, I'm going to allow myself some time off, you think perhaps I should be reading more or I should be writing more or I should be doing this and it's always with you. I thought, I don't know if I have that kind of energy. I think being with academics and graduate students and seeing that deepened my understanding and my sympathy and admiration because it's not everyone's calling.

Travis: It sounds like you never left grad school.

Arielle: Well, maybe in a way I didn't. There was always a part of me that regretted a little bit that I didn't make it, you know, and I think that was one thing too that I was happy I could bring to the job: empathy for those students who weren't able to continue or decided not to continue. I always tried to reassure them that it was okay because there is that sense of lack of completion—not seeing something to the end—that dissatisfaction or disappointment, the feeling that you might be letting people down who believed in you or thought that you had what it took. It's not a question of that. It's more a question of, "Is this really what you want to do"? It is a choice. It's not like, you know, I think everyone hopes that someone will do a BA, but once you get beyond a BA, grad school is really a career choice in a way. It is a vocation, and it isn't for everyone. That doesn't mean that you are not smart. It doesn't mean that you don't have any intellectual ability. It doesn't mean that you don't have an appreciation for it. It's just not the way of life that you want or that suits you for whatever reason. And so, I was sad that I didn't see it through. I felt a disappointment. There for years when I was still on campus and I don't think that David Carroll or Ellen Burt or any of the faculty that I worked with would...I don't mind saying it now, but I always wondered, gosh, if I run into them, what are they going to think? Maybe I'll jump into a bush [laughter]. But I got over that, and especially when scheduling exam committees and being in contact with committees for MA's and list meetings, and things like that. I've been in touch with David Carroll and Ellen Burt, and you know it's been fine [laughter]. But going back, it was one thing I always wanted to stress to the

graduate students: that if it wasn't working out or if they were having doubts, that was okay. They should not feel that there is something wrong ...if that's what they really feel, that they can't do it, you know, if they feel that they have tried and it really is still not for them, then let yourself free. Don't do it if you don't feel that momentum still. But it's hard. There's no question.

Travis: You really did bring a human face to the department. I think we all collectively acknowledge that, and really appreciate the empathetic quality and aura that you have.

Robert: What will you miss and what won't you miss?

Arielle: I'll miss the graduate students. That definitely I will miss. I mean there are a lot of things I will miss. I have a long history going back to when English and Comp Lit were one department, and I will miss the two departments. But what I will miss the most are the grad students and the interaction with the grad students on a day to day and one on one basis. That is what I will definitely miss the most. What I won't miss...I can't say that I will miss the tubs and tubs of mail [laughter]. That sometime was like, oh my god [laughter]. I can't say that I will miss the tubs and tubs of mail and opening all those envelopes and date stamping them and putting them in the sorters, although I had a lot of assistance with that. I brought mail home and opened it at home [laughter]. You know, I had a tub that I would bring home with a date stamp, paper opener, stapler, paper clips and things like that so I wouldn't fall too far behind just to try to keep up with the mail. And it would come in on the weekends. Yes, to be honest, I won't miss that [laughter]. I won't miss the mail.

Travis: What are you looking forward to in your new position in HRI and elsewhere?

Arielle: Elsewhere, I don't know. You know I was in Fine Arts for five years, and I was in English and Comp Lit for fourteen. I imagine that I will be here for a while because I set roots. I'm a person who likes to stay in a place. I'm not a great mover. What I'm looking forward to here is the challenge of dealing with different aspects of university life. There are some aspects of what I'm doing now for HRI that I did a little bit of in English and Comp Lit with faculty searches and when I was the coordinator for the critical theory emphasis working with faculty and scholars that were coming to visit. There are definitely many carry-overs from my English and Comp Lit position to here like organizing big visits with lots and lots of people. So there is definitely some carry-over. But it will be more with faculty and that's very interesting. I'll be doing more with academic personnel. It's learning different things, I think, and that I'm looking forward to. But I'm still in the humanities and that's what I like. And I'm hopping with budgetary times hopefully improving maybe I can be

creative and find a way of getting graduate students even more of a presence in the Humanities Research Institute. That would be something nice. Everybody hopes that they leave a little bit of a stamp, and maybe that would be my little stamp—getting graduate students even more involved in the Humanities Research Institute. But we'll see. I don't know how I could do that or if I would be able to do that, but that is certainly something I would like to do.

