

- Institute of English Studies
- Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines
- Espace Louis-Agassiz 1
- CH-2000 Neuchâtel

## Activities Report 2008-2009

Institute Members were particularly busy this year organizing conferences and giving talks. On 8 October, Professor Andrew McIntyre gave his inaugural lecture, "Public perceptions of language and linguistics: Some myths about 'right' and 'wrong' in language", which was extremely well received. On 21 October, a series of lectures on 'Pourquoi la littérature' organised by the Maison de Littératures was inaugurated by Margaret Tudeau-Clayton's guest, Professor George Steiner, renowned polyglot scholar and philosopher. Professor Steiner held a packed hall spellbound as he ranged over the traditions of Western culture to confront the challenges of the case for literature in the twenty-first century in a talk entitled: "A quoi bon la littérature?" From 13-15 November, Patrick Vincent co-organized the biennial conference of the Swiss Association for North American Studies, entitled "Writing American Women: Text, Gender, Performance" at Crêt-Bérard. Keynote speakers included Mary Loeffelholz (Northeastern) and Heidi Macpherson (De Montfort). On 24-25 April 2009, Andrew McIntyre co-organized another conference at Neuchâtel, SWIGG (Swiss Work in Generative Grammar), in which he gave a paper entitled "Synthetic compounds in English." In June, Margaret Tudeau-Clayton was a guest speaker at the University of Lausanne colloquium 'Freedom of the Line.' Her talk was entitled "'The Lady shall say her mind freely': Shakespeare's extravagant poetics". In August, David Wilson and Rahel Orgis gave papers at ESSE-9 in Århus, Denmark (see below). Finally, on 1-4 September 2009, Patrick Vincent organized the first CUSO doctoral course in theory, entitled "Genealogies of Literary Theory," at the Nietzsche Haus in Sils-Maria. Guest lecturers included David Simpson (UC Davis), Peter de Bolla (Cambridge), Simon Swift (Leeds) and David Spurr (Geneva).

### Other talks by Institute members:

August 2008: Patrick Vincent, "Sleep or Death? Wordsworth, Switzerland and Republican Theory", 38th Wordsworth Summer Conference, Grasmere.

September 2008: Patrick Vincent, "Europe's Shifting Topographies: Switzerland and Italy in the Romantic Age, Swiss Association of Comparative Literature Annual Conference, Château de Coppet.

October 2008: Fiona Tolhurst, "Reform and Revolution", Berne Medieval Center; Katrin Rupp, "Rethinking (Generic) Textual Identity in *The Miller's Tale*." SAMEMES Conference on Pretexts and Intertextualities, University of Berne.

April 2009: Fiona Tolhurst, "Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich," SAMEMES Conference, University of Basle.

May 2009: Andrew McIntyre, “*Kategorieverändernde Derivationsmorphologie und Argumentvererbung*“, GGS Leipzig; Fiona Tolhurst, “Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Guenevere and the Near-Reign of Empress Matilda” and “Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich as Feminist Theologians.” fourth International Congress on Medieval Studies; Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, “Language, Verse and Politics in Tudor translations of Virgil’s *Aeneid*”, Annual conference of the Sixteenth Century Society, Geneva.

June 2009: Andrew McIntyre, “Compounding and argument structure”. Invited talk, Syntax Workshop, University of Stuttgart; David Wilson, “Iconicity in conceptual blending: material anchors in William Morris’s *News from Nowhere*”, Seventh International Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature, at Victoria College, University of Toronto.

July 2009: Patrick Vincent, “Revising Republicanism: Metamorphoses of Liberty in Revolutionary-era Swiss Travel Narratives,” Republican Exchanges c. 1550-1850” conference, Newcastle University.

August 2009: David Wilson, “News from Nowhere: Visions of England in Pre-Raphaelite art and writing” ESSE-9, Århus, Denmark; Rahel Orgis, “‘Lascivious tales and amorous toys’: Structure and Meaning in Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania*”, ESSE-9, Århus, Denmark.

For more detailed information on institute research, including publications, please consult staff members’ individual pages.

### Course-Related Activities

Fifty-six new students began the BA in September 2009, a 20% increase from last year. The interdisciplinary MA programs in literature and in linguistics continued to successfully draw students both from our own BA program and from other universities. Nine students studied abroad, including Katy Romy who inaugurated our exchange with the University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia. Three students participated in the Language Assistant Program in Great Britain.

Nine memoirs were successfully defended during the academic year.

From 26th September to 2nd October 2008, Professor Margaret Tudeau-Clayton and her assistants Rahel Orgis and Matthias Heim accompanied a group of 9 students on a study trip to Stratford and London. The group travelled together with a group from the University of Lausanne. On the programme were a series of theatre workshops in Stratford and at The Globe in London (“Playing the Globe”, “Movement and Space”), as well as four plays by William Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice* in Stratford, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Timon of Athens* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Globe Theatre. Moreover, the students attended a guided tour of The Globe, visited the Globe Museum and met several actors and people responsible for the staging of the plays in question and answer sessions.

### Other Institute Activities

Suzana Zink, Matthias Heim, Rachel Orgis and Alastair Wilson did a wonderful job of organizing this year’s Speakeasy events, including the Christmas Party in the Aula and the annual summer bbq bash, as well as a tea party and a pub night. Matthias Heim kept film buffs in the

institute happy. David Wilson led the creative writing workshop with gusto. Suzana Zink was responsible for the Tandem program. Assad Ali and Gabriele Merlo produced the first edition of the E-Letter, the first English Institute newsletter. Tatiana Tissot ran the walk-in Writing Coaching program and the language lab.

### Institute in the Media

The Institute of English Studies made several appearances this year in the Swiss media:

-RSR2 "Les temps qui courent", 29 June 2009: Patrick Vincent, "Chère Suisse?"

-RSR2 "Pavillon Suisse", 23 October 2008: Patrick Vincent, "Byron et la Suisse"

-L'Express: George Steiner, "La littérature doit échapper à l'éphémère"

-Canal Alpha: Patrick Vincent et Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, "Journal 19.00: les élections aux USA"

(Please see the institute website for links to these articles)

Neuchâtel, 8 November 2009

Patrick Vincent for the Director  
Institute of English Studies  
University of Neuchâtel