**Roll over New York Review - Make way for Danny Yee**

Bob NothingElse and Danny Yee are making inroads into "high" culture by not waiting for the New York Times Book Review to publish their words. Instead, they are posting book reviews — thousands of them — on the World Wide Web where many thousands of fellow citizens and readers make a regular habit of reading them. The phenomenon, said Lisa Ede, is challenging usual cultural authority.

“When on January 3, 2004, I typed the words ‘book reviews’ into Google, the first five sites that Google presented led to The New York Times Book Review, The New York Review of Books, the American Library Association’s Booklist, Bookwire – and Danny Yee’s site,” said Ede, a Research Fellow, professor of English, and director of the Center for Writing and Learning at OSU. Danny Yee is an IT — Internet Technology — expert at the University of Sydney, in Australia, who has published reviews for more than 700 books on his personal Website. In 2002 alone, the site registered at least 900,000 hits from readers.

Ede’s research project, “Citizen Reviewers: Popular Culture, Technology, and the Circulation of Cultural Power,” will investigate the citizen reviews, which she characterizes as “thought-provoking sites of rhetorical performance. They also represent potential challenges to hegemonic cultural forces that currently authorize, disseminate, and evaluate cultural production.”

While many of the reviews are on personal Websites, some are published on sites such Amazon.com, where more than a thousand readers have posted reviews of Barbara Kingsolver’s The Poisonwood Bible. Amazon also has encouraged customer reviewers to link multiple texts to the site. Ede’s study will include discussion of one writer, Bob NothingElse, who not only posts numerous reviews but offers text links such as one to Bob NothingElse’s So You’d Like to Inadvertently Become Known as a Wry Intellectual Guide.

**Call for 2005-06 research proposals**

The Center is now accepting applications from scholars interested in 2005-06 fellowships for the resident research program. Each year the Center brings together a new group of faculty fellows from OSU and other universities, as well as independent scholars, to pursue research and writing in an environment designed to be stimulating as well as protected from the usual daily demands of academic life.

Applications from both OSU and visiting scholars may be for any humanities related research, which should be understood to include not (continued on page 9)
Tea growers provide insights into Zimbabwe social justice issues

The excuse offered by white Rhodesian officials for not allowing Africans to have their own tea farms was that they would produce inferior, even “dirty” tea leaves. “But as one grower told me, the Africans were the ones who planted the tea, cared for it, pruned it, and harvested it,” said Joseph Mtisi. “The Africans did all the labor.”

Mtisi is a Center Research Fellow and lecturer in economic history at the University of Zimbabwe, in what was formerly Rhodesia. An authority on smallholder tea growers, he is writing a book that uses the history of tea farming as a case study for exploring social and economic justice issues rooted in agrarian policies. “The tea industry is unique in Zimbabwe, both for its history and for the insights it offers into the web of relationships involved in export crop production and marketing,” said Mtisi.

“In the global economy of the 21st century, it is clear that smallholder producers remain vital to the economies of developing nations. They support large-scale corporations and state agencies by providing labor, food and crops for export. In turn, these smallholders rely on the state and large-scale companies to market their goods. Consequently, the relationship between smallholders as producers and the companies and the state is far more than a simple economic dependence. It is also political.”

Historically, land is at the heart of the search for social justice in Zimbabwe, said Mtisi. The notorious Land Apportionment Act of 1930 divided land according to race, with white farmers receiving most of the arable ground. The white government in Zimbabwe did not allow Africans to grow cash crops such as tea, coffee and tobacco except as workers employed by whites. Following World War II, however, the rules eased and by the 1960s Africans had begun to grow tea for sale to companies owned by whites.

Because the African farmers are forced to sell to white dealers, now at fixed prices, later land reforms aimed at undoing the inequities have not fully succeeded. This is, in part, because the contracts favor the whites and, what’s more said Mtisi, they are often unintelligible to the farmers. This “contract farming is riddled with tensions between the outgrowers and the buyers. . . The key to reform is not so much the redistribution of land holdings as providing inputs and markets, and democratizing the contract.”

Mtisi argues that the contract farming model could provide an effective alternative to disruptive land redistribution if the arrangement were to emphasize cooperation among neighboring smallholder farmers, and “transparent” contracts that are understood by and are fair to all parties rather than favoring the white corporations. This approach, he said, “moves the debate over land beyond the blinding racial heritage of Zimbabwe.”

Online reviews continued . . .

Ede is particularly interested in the extent to which such forms of popular culture may represent resistance to cultural hegemony, and what might be learned by scholars regarding capitalism’s ability to “co-opt and commodify such potential resistance by studying diverse forms of popular culture, from films, television, and music to online fanzines.”

With this historically unprecedented direct access to a huge audience, no one need wait for fame and influence. “Individuals with a desire to ‘make their mark’ on the world can do so via the World Wide Web. Online technologies are enabling ordinary individuals to claim new forms of cultural power and are challenging ideologically grounded assumptions about who can -- and cannot -- produce knowledge.”

Ede’s most recent book is Work in Progress: Writing and Revising, 6th edition.

The Carnal Prayer Mat, by Li Yu

One of the great classics of Chinese erotica, The Carnal Prayer Mat certainly gets pretty raunchy in places. It stands out not for this, however, but for its brilliant comedy and satire; it could be read as a sparklingly witty light novel even by those without an interest in erotica. Li Yu begins with a chapter explaining that he’s actually arguing puritan values, “making use of lechery in putting a stop to lechery”... He then introduces the Zen priest Lone Peak, who doesn’t ask for alms, explicate the scriptures, or live on a mountain — and who fails to deter our hero, the Scholar Vesperus, from a life of lechery.

A book review by Danny Yee - © 2004

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Colonial culture a ‘cause’ of illness

Doctors in Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) viewed illness among the whites as having biological causes that could be treated scientifically. Disease among Africans, however, was assumed to be caused by the way they lived – “the fetid atmosphere of the dirty, dingy huts in which they shut themselves up tightly from sunset to sunrise,” in the words of a Methodist missionary at the time. This dual standard, said Steven Rubert, is an aspect of the political ecology of health care.

“In opposition to a traditional epidemiological perspective which focuses on the discovery of a specific bacteria or virus as the causative agent of disease, this political ecology study views disease as resulting from the changing social, economic and political systems which developed as part of the formation of colonial society in Zimbabwe,” said Rubert, a Research Fellow and associate professor of history at OSU.

Rubert is working on a book aimed at defining the dual perspectives on disease, grounding those views in early socioeconomic conditions in Zimbabwe, and analyzing how the differing perspectives were reflected in the two distinct health care systems that developed during the colonial period.

“A formal health care system, funded by the white settler government, supported programs that were primarily beneficial to the European community and only marginally directed toward African health. A second, more informal system developed by Africans to deal with their changing patterns of health associated with the altered socioeconomic conditions brought on by white colonial rule.

“The African voice on this issue, for the most part, has not been heard. However, some recent scholarship indicates that many Africans during the colonial period associated disease with the occupation of their lands and their increasing employment by European-owned mines and farms.”

At the same time, said Rubert, “Settlers most often thought they should be protected from diseased Africans through the application of laws restricting African residence and movement in the colony.”

In Rubert’s view, non-medical concerns, such as a need for cheap labor and the desire to create a white settler colony, are mainly what drove the codification of relations with native Africans in Rhodesia, with results that fed directly into a social system that must itself be considered as “causal” when assessing disease.

Salisbury (Harare) hospital staff, Zimbabwe, 1896
When Hua-yu Li interviewed elderly former officials of China’s ruling Communist Party in Beijing recently, she was surprised by their candor given that the apartments were known to be bugged with government listening devices. This wasn’t a problem, said her sources, as long as “they weren’t plotting revolution.” Rather than plotting, they were giving Li an insider’s view of a long-ago revolution, the ideological transformation of China based on Stalinism beginning in 1938.

That’s when Stalin’s book *Short Course of the History of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)* was published. Between 1938 and 1953, over 42 million copies of the book were issued, in 301 printings and 67 languages. Most often referred to simply as the *Short Course*, the book was viewed as the encyclopedia of Marxism until de-Stalinization occurred in the Soviet Union in 1956, when its importance diminished everywhere apart from China. There, said Li, it remained central to elite economic decision-making into the 1970s.


“In the new book I examine how Stalin’s *Short Course* shaped Maoism, a national ideology for China, and how it was used as part of the political and ideological Stalinization of China’s party elites and rank and file,” said Li. She has interviewed dozens of party elites under Mao, including former ministers, and those with senior positions in the fields of art and culture, agriculture, economics, education, and propaganda. A major focus of the interviews concerned the officials’ recollections and reflections on how they were influenced personally by the *Short Course*.

The *Short Course* was written under the supervision of Stalin and then heavily edited by him. Although Stalin’s actual contribution was limited to only one section of Chapter 4, where he wrote about dialectical and historical materialism, following World War II he claimed sole authorship of the work. “In contrast to influential books in the West, which usually enjoy a wide appeal due to the originality and power of their ideas, Stalin imposed the *Short Course* on the communist world and used it as an instrument in its Stalinization.”

The book covered the early history of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union and the historical stages of the revolution and socialist transformation of the Soviet Union during the period from 1883 to 1937.

“The history was written in a way to suggest that every significant development was the result of political struggles between the correct line, represented by Lenin and Stalin, and
Football literatures deserves better

Violence on and off the field, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual excesses and rowdy male bonding are not a sufficient take on football literature. Although scholarly writing about the literature of football from the past thirty years has focused on these “selective and negative” aspects of the professional game, other serious themes are there to be mined, says Julian Meldon D’Arcy, an Icelandic literary scholar, particularly of Scottish and Nordic literature.

An associate professor of English with British origins, now at the University of Iceland, D’Arcy who came to his current subject through a “shocking” conversion from soccer and rugby fan to football and baseball fan during an earlier stay in the United States. With the support of a Fulbright award, he is in residence at the Center for fall term while working on a book, ‘Suicidally Beautiful’: A Study of College Football in Twentieth Century Fiction, a title taken in part from the James Wright poem “Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio.”

Within the critical tradition of football fiction and sport literature in general, college football fiction has been consistently underrated or ignored,” said D’Arcy. “My preliminary research suggests that college football fiction has not only reflected changing social attitudes in America more realistically and critically than in, for example, baseball literature, but also that it has more intellectual and aesthetic potential than has hitherto been appreciated.”

Among the serious themes in football literature are “stoicism and grace under pressure, modern angst and fear of failure, gender roles and identity, race, ethnicity, and desegregation. Yet very few of these issues have been dealt with in criticism of the football fiction of the last thirty years.”

D’Arcy sees three main reasons why scholars have taken a pessimistic and narrow view of American football fiction: most scholars focus on the period 1968-1981 and on novels about National Football League players, with very little attention paid to pre-Super Bowl era professional football; the focus on lurid aspects of football fiction has distracted attention from more literary features; very little attention has been paid to more recent football fiction depicting the game at high school and college levels.

The last is the most important point for D’Arcy, “for not only is high school and college football deeply rooted in local cultures and identities, it is also rooted in the very history and mythology of the game itself. Moreover, college football is deeply embedded in the academic institutions and history of the country – indeed, the game’s very shape and form was developed on the playing fields of America’s finest universities.”

Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio
James Wright

In the Shreve High football stadium, I think of Polacks nursing long beers in Tiltonsville, And gray faces of Negroes in the blast furnace at Benwood, And the ruptured night watchman of Wheeling Steel, Dreaming of heroes.

All the proud fathers are ashamed to go home. Their women cluck like starved pullets, Dying for love.

Therefore. Their sons grow up suicidally beautiful At the beginning of October And gallop terribly against each other’s bodies.
Recent Books By Center Scholars


Fellows’ books continued...


### Call for proposals continued...

only traditional humanities disciplines but also those projects within the social and natural sciences that are historical or philosophical in approach, and that attempt to cast light on questions of interpretation or criticism traditionally found in the humanities. This also includes interpretations of science and technology.

Applications for visiting fellowships must be postmarked by Monday, December 13, 2004, those for OSU fellowships by Monday, January 14, 2005. Awards to visiting scholars are generally for a full academic year, while those for OSU scholars are most often granted for just one term.

Fellows will receive a stipend or release time, an office in Autzen House, and general support services. For their part, fellows are asked to contribute to intellectual life at OSU by giving presentations on their research projects in the form of lectures and working papers. Visiting fellows, in addition, may teach a course or organize a faculty seminar series.

For application forms and more information, check the Center’s website: [http://osu.orst.edu/dept/humanities/](http://osu.orst.edu/dept/humanities/), or write to: Fellowship Program, Center for the Humanities, Oregon State University, 811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue, Corvallis, OR, 97333-4506, or call 541-737-2450.

### Calendar

#### OCTOBER

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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Art Show through December - Celebration of Women, by Twelve (mostly Asian) Artists</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>“Blackett as Scientific Leader: Science, War, and Politics in the 20th Century.” Lecture by Mary Jo Nye, Horning Professor, History Department, OSU.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>“Taking Football Seriously: Narrative Voice, the Gridiron, and Frank Deford’s Everybody’s All-American.” Lecture by Julian D’Arcy, Research Fellow, Associate Professor of English, University of Iceland.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>“Images of Health in Colonial Zimbabwe.” Lecture by Steven Rubert, Research Fellow, Associate Professor of History, OSU.</td>
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#### NOVEMBER

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<td>1</td>
<td>“Eat the Forbidden Fruit: The Genesis of the Tea Outgrower Schemes in Zimbabwe.” Lecture by Joseph Mitsi, Research Fellow, Lecturer, Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>“Democracy, Dissent, and Revolution: Civil Liberties After the Election of 2004.” Lecture by John Frohmayer, former Chair, National Endowment for the Arts. Affiliate Professor of Liberal Arts, Department of History, OSU.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>“Into the Blogosphere: the Blog as Site for Research, Publication, Communication.” Lecture by Laura Gurak, Chair, Department of Rhetoric, Program in Scientific and Technical Communication, University of Minnesota.</td>
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#### JANUARY

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<td>7</td>
<td>“The Friar and the Sultan: Francis of Assisi’s Mission to al-Malik al Kamil of Egypt.” Lecture by John Tolan, Research Fellow, Professor of Medieval History, University of Nantes.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>“Stalin’s History Text as Mao’s Bible for Ideological Transformation: Some Personal Stories.” Lecture by Hua-yu Li, Research Fellow, Assistant Professor of Political Science, OSU.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>“The Oregon Experiment, A Novel.” Reading by Keith Scribner, Research Fellow, Assistant Professor of English, OSU.</td>
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#### FEBRUARY

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<td>7</td>
<td>“Questioning Chivalry: Jean de Bueil’s Jouvencel.” Lecture by Michelle Szklnik, Research Fellow, Professor of Modern Letters, University of Nantes.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>“The Stanislavsky Tradition in Post-Soviet Russia.” Lecture by Vreneli Farber, Research Fellow, Associate Professor of Russian, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, OSU.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>“The Oregon Experiment, A Novel.” Reading by Keith Scribner, Research Fellow, Assistant Professor of English, OSU.</td>
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During Peter J. Copek’s sixteen years as the founding director of the Center, he regularly made Center money available to support cultural events on campus. In addition to conferences, music festivals, and film series, the Center supported many special and unusual lectures and programs, including visits to OSU by Gore Vidal, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and venerable South African township jazz singer and film star Dolly Rathebe. The level of support for such events has always depended on the state of the Center’s finances from year to year. After Peter died suddenly in June, 2001, there was much discussion of how best to keep his name alive so that his impact on OSU intellectual life would not be forgotten. What resulted is the Peter J. Copek Fund, intended to provide more regular and stable support for the same kinds of cultural events that he supported through the Center. In spring of 2003, the campaign to raise money for this fund began with a letter to former external fellows. The campaign is now expanding to include a general appeal to Center friends and supporters, plus all those who not only value Peter’s work on behalf of the university but who would like to see strong, ongoing support for campus cultural events.

PLEASE JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE PETER J. COPEK FUND
Send this form along with contribution to the Peter J. Copek Fund, Center for the Humanities, 811 S.W. Jefferson Ave., Corvallis, OR, 97333-4506

Donor Information:
Name__________________________
Address________________________
City/State/Zip____________________
Gifts made in response to this solicitation are tax deductible to the amount permitted by law, depending on individual donor tax situations. To have contributions deducted directly from OSU paycheck, please inquire in the Center office

Amount $____________
Payment Method:
___A check payable to OSU Foundation is enclosed
Paying by credit/debit card:
___Discover    ___Mastercard
Acct. #_____________________
Expiration date ______/______

Gifts made in response to this solicitation are tax deductible to the amount permitted by law, depending on individual donor tax situations. To have contributions deducted directly from OSU paycheck, please inquire in the Center office.
Prints, paintings celebrate women

Women are the subject of drawings, prints, pastels, woodcuts, paintings, and photographs by mostly Asian artists in the Center for the Humanities’ fall term show, “Celebration of Women.” Curated by the White Lotus Gallery in Eugene, the exhibit includes work by 12 celebrated painters and printmakers of China and Japan as well as Oregon, plus two traditional Japanese prints, c. 1930, by Takane Koji.

One of the best known of the Chinese artists is Hui-Xin Miao, described by Forbes Magazine as “China’s peasant Picasso.” A farmer by birth, Miao has continued to work with his family on the land despite success that has put his work into the National Gallery and the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. Also well known in the U.S. and China is Li Tie. A Boston Globe article on Li described his work as “alternately celebrated and banned in China.” His first show, in 1984 in a Beijing park, was soon shut down by police, and in 1987, when exhibiting with 31 other Chinese artists at the Beijing Museum, he again was singled out for his unacceptable woodcuts. Certain nudes were particularly objectionable. They were, according to a family member, “too dark emotionally and so are not good influences for the people.”

Photographs by Gary Tepfer, of Eugene, are mainly of Mongolian women in traditional dress, but also include a Navajo weaver. Tepfer’s work is in collections held by the Brooklyn Museum, the Biblioteque Nationale, the Library of Congress, the Blisk Art Museum in Russia and many others. Also from Eugene is artist Helen Liu, who had a one-woman show at the Center in 1999. Other artists are Iwao Akiyama, Maku Maki, Yoshitoshi Mori, Connie Mueller, Willey Seiler, and Jun’ichi Sekino.

The show also includes scrolls by Hong-Wen Sun, a highly celebrated artist whose career was delayed for decades by the Cultural Revolution. She persisted with art despite this discouragement, and managed to maintain a light spirit in her work as well as philosophy, preferring to portray “a simple life and freedom from worries.”

Patrick Blackett, one of the twentieth century’s most brilliant and controversial physicists, was the subject of the Center’s 2004-05 opening lecture on October 11. The talk, by Mary Jo Nye, celebrated the publication of her book, Blackett: Physics, War, and Politics in the Twentieth Century, just out from Harvard University Press. Nye is Horning Professor of the Humanities and a professor of history at OSU. A 1948 Nobel Laureate, a leader of operational research during the Second World War, and a scientific adviser to the British government, Blackett was also denounced as a Stalinist apologist for opposing American British development of atomic weapons.

The Center also hosted John Frohnmayer, first amendment lawyer, former Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, and now affiliate professor of liberal arts in OSU’s Department of History. On Nov. 8, Frohnmayer spoke on “Democracy, Dissent, and Revolution: Civil Liberties After the Election of 2004.” The final guest lecture of fall term was delivered by Laura Gurak, Chair, Department of Rhetoric, Program in Scientific and Technical Communication, University of Minnesota. Her topic was, “Into the Blogosphere: the Blog as Site for Research, Publication, Communication.”
The Center for the Humanities

The Center was established in 1984 as an outgrowth of the Humanities Development Program, which had been creating innovative interdisciplinary courses since 1977. The Center’s focus has broadened to a concern for improving the quality of humanities research as well as teaching at OSU. This is accomplished through the awarding of resident research fellowships to both OSU and visiting scholars, as well as by sponsoring conferences, seminars, lecture series, art exhibits and other events. The Center occupies Autzen House, 811 S.W. Jefferson Avenue.

David Robinson
Director

Wendy Madar
Associate Director

Sara Ash-Majeski
Office Coordinator

Quynh Le
Student Assistant