**Abstracts from the 2007 Workshop**

**Beatriz de Alba-Koch, Ph.D. - Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies**

**Title: "The Latin American Baroque: Technologies of Culture in a Transatlantic Context"**

Technologies of culture are methods, modes and institutions by which culture is reproduced. This presentation discusses a project to be undertaken by an interdisciplinary team of researchers, a recently funded Major Collaborative Research Initiative supported by the SSHRCC focusing on the Hispanic Baroque.

**Bruno Dupeyron, Ph.D. - School of Public Administration**

**Title: "Mercosur's Recent Widening: New Chances for Deepening or Headlong Rush?"**

Over the last decade, Mercosur, created in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, has widened progressively with associate members - Chile since 1996, Bolivia since 1997 (in process of being a member), Peru since 2003, Colombia and Ecuador since 2004 -, one new member - Venezuela (associate member between 2004 and 2006) since 2006 -, and one observer country - Mexico, since 2004. However, this widening is not necessarily synonymous of success for the Southern Cone integration initiative: in contrast, Mercosur is facing a series of challenges regarding its economic heterogeneity, its lack of common political goals, its political party discrepancies and the existing regional integration competition in South America (with past and new integration schemes - can, alba, South American Community of Nations, etc.). Nevertheless, several clues show us that Mercosur may take advantage of this widening for increasing its deepening process, in order to support its original purposes: democracy - with the recent creation of a Parliament - and economic growth and independence. In other words, South American nations are still struggling for decolonization in the 21st century.

**Mtro. Gustavo Félix - Instituto de Investigaciones Psicológicas, Universidad Veracruzana**

**Title: "México/USA Borders ... el otro lado"**

This is a documentary work which is largely motivated by aspects of my own life. It deals with the many problems that are facing the people on both sides of the México and United States borders, but also deals with the great strength the border people have shown in overcoming difficulties and creating a multicultural world, full of vibrant colors, new sounds, poetry, and powerful economic processes, political and ecological challenges.

The México/USA Borders presentation concludes that there are no borders in terms of disease, crime, illegal immigration and pollution. We need to think about constructing new ways of perceiving the expanded world by incorporating the new men and women who are emerging in the border cities and beyond the border cities in our daily lives.

There are many people participating in the hybrid border culture. For example, graphic artists, fashion designers and filmmakers have been inspired to shrug off the border's reputation as a cultural void and address the contrary realities of a place that's neither First World nor Third World; a culture that is neither Mexican nor American. There is an economy propelled by the dual engines of drug traffic and high-tech maquiladoras, and a large, stable middle class sandwiched between grotesque poverty and excessive narco wealth. One of the goals of the hybrid border culture is, simply, to transform the strangeness of the México-USA borders into art. The other goals include regeneration on a cultural level, as well as political, and environmental levels.

**Barbara Fraser, M.A. - Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies**

**Title: "What Goes Around Comes Around: History and 'Moral Time' in Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits"**

In order to fully understand the moral vision of historical events which Isabel Allende gives us in her political family saga, and I use the term "moral" in this case based on Hume's concept of affectivity, it is important to examine the novel's use of time. Both in terms of its narrative structure and content, The House of the Spirits utilizes the convention of cyclical temporality claimed by its progenitors Magic Realism and Feminism. This particular mode of temporality in Allende's novel takes on a trait yet unseen in Magic Realism though somewhat evident in Feminism: it becomes a vehicle for adding ethical gravity to events in the narrative and, by proxy, the historical traces which the text appropriates. The novel, by opening and closing with the same first line and by presenting events in a kind of cyclical evolution, creates out of time a kind of cosmic present which shrinks linear distances between actions and their effects. Events separated by decades, such as the rape of Pancha Garcia and the rape of Alba Trueba, are given a more direct causal relationship by this temporal structure. In this way every moral action in the novel takes on immense significance, as Anne Michaels' suggests "not for this time, nor for this life only." This presentation will describe the nature of the novel's temporal structure and how it relates to Allende's overall attempt to create a vision of Chilean historical events based on affective or moral principles.

**Jutta Gutberlet, Ph. D. - Department of Geography and Gabriela McBee, M.A. - Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies**

**Title: "Small is Beautiful: the Cuban Experience in Urban Agriculture"**

Cuban's urban agriculture experience is well known among academics and the organic food and permaculture movement as an example for small-scaled appropriate sustainable development, as defined by Fritz Schumacher. As a consequence particularly of the embargo, economic isolation, and resources scarcity in the 1990s, the Government and individuals started proactive and creative projects to tackle poverty and food security. Bountiful gardens are growing in former empty lots and garbage dumps, making a difference in the wellbeing of the population. Around 18,000ha are now being used for local food production in Cuba (organopónicos, intensive huertos, family owned parcelas and patios), with more than 200,000 people participating, and over 100,000 being employed. Resources are extremely scarce, little is wasted and materials are reused or transformed. Organic waste is composted into fertile soil and used in agriculture. It is a widespread perception that generating solid waste is a waste of resources (desperdicio) and that recycling means resource recovery (for materia prima). The present paper discusses recent findings and impressions from a visit to small-scale food production sites in La Habana and Sancti Spíritus, during December 2006. The cases visited are excellent examples for appropriate local development and are lived experiences of social economy, where collaboration and solidarity are key ingredients to successful urban agriculture.

**Thomas Heyd, Ph.D - Department of Philosophy**

**Title: "Transculturation and Cross-Cultural Contact"**

Transculturation is a notion brought into circulation by the Cuban Fernando Ortíz. The paper begins with a clarification of the notions of transculturation, cultural appropriation, ethics, and etiquette, and is followed by the discussion of two problems that may arise in cross-cultural contact.

**Patrick MacLeod, M.D - Center for Biomedical Research and Luis Velázquez Pérez (Center for Research and Rehabilitation of Hereditary Ataxias, Universidad de Holguín)**

**Title: "Holguin Ataxia: A Hereditary Neurodegenerative Disorder Prevalent in a Genetic Isolate in Cuba"**

Populations can become isolated for reasons of language, religion, politics, and geography. A genetic mutation arising in such a population eventually gives rise to a genetic isolate. A hereditary neurodegenerative disorder, Spinocerebellar Ataxia Type 2, has been identified in Cuba. To date, approximately 168 kindred's comprised of 7,000 members have been ascertained. Seventy percent of these families reside in Holguin Province. It is estimated that 1:200 inhabitants in this region is clinically affected or at risk for developing this disorder. In the province of Holguin there are 434 affected individuals and the prevalence reaches values up to 43 cases per 100 000 inhabitants. However in Baguanos, a municipality of Holguin province, there are142 cases per 100 000 inhabitants. The age group that was most affected was that of 30-39 years, with a prevalence of 63.97 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. The risk of members of affected families showing the disorder was 159.33 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in this province. The highest incidence was 18.08 cases per 100,000 inhabitants.

In response to this public health crisis, the Ministry of Public Health has established a Center for Research and Rehabilitation of the Hereditary Ataxias in Holguin. In this presentation, we will review the natural history of this disorder and describe a unique opportunity for the University of Victoria community to collaborate with the Center in undertaking basic science and clinical research aimed at novel interventions to modify the natural progression of this disorder, and to facilitate the provision of appropriate genetic counseling, including presymptomatic testing and opportunities for secondary prevention.

**Carmen Rodríguez de France, Ph.D. - School of Child and Youth Care**

**Title: "Indigenous Education in México: Between dreams and hopes"**

In 2000, The Mexican Government established educational initiatives for the education of its Indigenous people: curricula in general and language revitalization specifically for some southern regions in the country. This presentation will introduce some of the main ideas of these initiatives and some of the goals to be achieved according to the National Education Strategic Plan.

**Dan Russek, Ph. D. - Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies**

**Title: "Walking the Line: The Poetics of Everyday Life"**

The presentation investigates the possibility of a "poetics of everyday life" in the context of higher education. It is centered on the idea of walking, understood both literally and metaphorically. The paper reflects on walking as both a practice of aesthetic awareness, and a figure codified in the concept of pedagogy as that which "leads to" an intended instructional aim. By exploring some of the conventions, scope and limitations of (scholarly) exploration, my goal is to propose ways in which walking can be seen to bridge the gap between academic research and aesthetic experience. Valéry, Aragon, Breton, Cortázar, Borges and Paz are some of the writers I quote. My theoretical framework relies upon the work of cultural critics such as García Canclini, Rebecca Solnit, Michel de Certeau, and Michael Gardiner, among others.