

Comparative Literature newsletter

January
2015

News from the Director

The academic year 2014-15 is proving to be a challenging and exciting year of adjustment and change. The retirement of long-time member of our department Emma Kafalenos has required some restructuring. As a result, a new team of undergraduate advisors, including Joe Loewenstein as director of undergraduate studies, Tili Boon Cuillé as supervisor of our Comparative Arts track, and Philip Purchase, Ignacio Infante, and me, is currently getting to know the finer points of the undergraduate program and thinking about its future. This past August we welcomed Rebecca O'Laughlin as our new administrative assistant; she is the force behind our newly revived newsletter. Finally,

we have launched the PhD track for international writers with the awarding of the William H. Gass fellowship to Matthias Göritz, who will join our program in January 2015. We look forward to reporting further on this track in the months to come.



Lynne Tatlock, Program Director

Transnational Translation Series

In three events focusing on the art of translation, speakers will address the challenges and experiences of translating different genres of literary works in various languages.

Everyone is welcome to attend these three talks, which will each take place in Cupples I, room 207

Featured speakers include:

Annelise Finegan Wasmoen on Thursday, February 26 at 5:00 pm

Annelise is a Ph.D. candidate in the Comparative Literature program at Washington University and recently published an English translation of Chinese author Can Xue's *The Last Lover*.

Anja Utler and Kurt Beals on Friday, March 20 at 2:00 pm

German poet and translator Anja Utler has published several collections of poetry and poetic explorations. Kurt Beals is an Assistant Professor of German at Washington University. His English translation of Utler's poetry collection, *engulf-enkindle*, was a finalist for the 2012 Best Translated Book Award.

Ignacio Infante on Thursday, March 26 at 5:00 pm

Ignacio Infante is an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Spanish at Washington University and the author of *After Translation: The Transfer and Circulation of Modern Poetics Across the Atlantic*.

Comparative Literature Potluck

The annual Comp. Lit. potluck will take place on **Thursday, January 15 from 6-8 pm** at the McMillan café on campus.



Bon appétit!

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Congratulations! Faculty news

Kurt Beals (Assistant Professor, German Languages and Literatures) is the recipient of a 2014 PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant for his translation of the short story collection *The Country Road* by Swiss author Regina Ullman.

Rob Henke (Professor, Drama and Comparative Literature) has been awarded a Washington University Center for the Humanities Fellowship for the project "Transnational Networks in the Production of Early Modern Theater" (Spring 2015).

Ignacio Infante (Assistant Professor, Comparative Literature and Romance Languages and Literatures) has an article forthcoming in the Winter 2015 issue of *Comparative Literature* (Duke UP) entitled, "Remaking Poetics after Postmodernism: Intertextuality, Intermediality and Cultural Circulation in the Wake of Borges."

Lynne Tatlock (Director, Comparative Literature and Hortense and Tobias Lewin Distinguished Professor in the Humanities) was recently elected an honorary member of the AATG (American Association of Teachers of German) for her extraordinary contributions to the field of German Studies.

Congratulations! Student news

Maya Ganapathy (Ph.D. student) successfully defended her dissertation entitled, "A Liberal State of Mind: Formal Reconstructions of Statehood in the Anglophone African Novel."

Asher Gelzer-Govatos (Ph.D. student) presented a paper entitled, "Non-Prophet Organization: Charlatans, Tricksters, and Other Preachers in American Film" at Baylor University's Symposium on Faith and Culture (October 23).

Julia Leverone (Ph.D. student) participated in the American Literary Translators Association conference (November 12-14, Milwaukee, WI) where she moderated a panel on "Translating Political Reality from Contemporary Poetry" and took place in a bilingual poetry reading.

Melody Li (Ph.D. student) published an article entitled, "Home and Identity En Route in Chinese Diaspora - Reading Ha Jin's *A Free Life*" in *Pacific Coast Philology* (49.2 (2014): 203-220).

Matt Miller (Ph.D. student) has organized a seminar entitled "Permutations of Desire in Persian Literature" for the 2015 American Comparative Literature Association conference (March 26-29, 2015, Seattle, WA).

Victoria Sgarro (Comparative Literature major, '15) is editor-in-chief of *Issues Magazine*. The most recent issues for which Victoria contributed visuals and content focus on activism (issue 5) and mobility (issue 6). **Libby Perold** (Comparative Arts major, '16) is the magazine's design and visual editor.

Congratulations! Alumni/ae news

Daniel Medin (Ph.D. '05) is the editor of the *Music and Literature* journal and teaches Comparative Literature and English at the American University of Paris. The 5th issue is in part devoted to Chinese author Can Xue and includes pieces by Xue translated by current Ph.D. candidate **Annelise Wasmoen** as well as an interview conducted by and translated by Wasmoen.

Megan Ferry (Ph.D. '98) was recently featured on *The Academic Minute* (www.academicminute.org). She examines contemporary methods of language learning. Ferry is an Associate Professor of Chinese and Asian Studies at Union College (Schenectady, New York).

*If you have news you would like to share with the Comparative Literature community, please e-mail rolaughlin@wustl.edu. *



The 2014 Matheson Lecture

The annual Matheson lecture is given in honor of the late William H. Matheson, a venerable member of the Comparative Literature faculty at Washington University for thirty years.

This year's lecturer was Professor Shu-mei Shih (UCLA) who gave a talk on October 9 entitled, "World Literature, World History, and Relational Comparison." During her stay at Wash. U, Professor Shih was generous with her time, visiting Professor Anca Parvulescu's "Introduction to Comparative Literature" course and holding a workshop with current graduate students. She also had dinner with several students.

Current PhD student Melody Li reported, "I find the chance to talk with Professor Shih tremendously rewarding. Conversations with her not only inspire my academic path ahead, but also connect me with my path in Hong Kong and Hong Kong University. She is an exceptional scholar and teacher that simply impresses and inspires us at the dining table."

See website for the complete history of Matheson lecturers.



Professor Shu-mei Shih

Annual Graduate Symposium Set for Friday, April 17

The 24th annual graduate student symposium is scheduled for April 17. This year's theme is "Home 'Sweet' Home? Imagining Place in the 21st Century." Graduate students are encouraged to submit abstracts that critically examine the construct and/or explore a re-definition of home.

The symposium will take place from 12-5 pm in Hurst Lounge (Duncker Hall, room 201).

Contact symposium organizers Olivia Chen (Wenjia@wustl.edu) or Janelle Neczypor (jeneczypor@wustl.edu) with any questions.

Spring 2015 courses

Home-based courses this semester include a wide-range of international and transnational literatures and themes that span across centuries of time.

Among those courses are Andrew Brown's Freshman Seminar entitled "Science Fictions" (L16 115), Harriet Stone's "Paris and New York" (L16 385) and Ignacio Infante's "World Wide Translation" (L16 394).

Michael Sherberg and Stephanie Kirk are co-teaching "Topics in Franco-Italo-Hispanic Book History" (L16 411) and Anupam Baso tackles language and technology in "Humanities by the Numbers" (L16 425A). Finally, Christian Schneider will explore "Storytelling

"Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." - John Howard Payne
("Home Sweet Home" (1822))

Potential papers may include the following topics/approaches:

- National, ideological, racial and ethnic identity
- Memory, collective memory, history

- Gender studies, queer theories and feminist criticism
- Topics in colonial/postcolonial studies
- Diasporas, citizenships and nations
- Migration studies and globalization
- Travel narratives
- Encounter with the "Other" and with the self; myths and identity formation
- Eco-critical theory, issues of environmental justice
- Hybridity and intertextuality

Before 1500: An Introduction to Historical Narrative Theory" (L16 449).

Other classes include:

"Classical to Renaissance Literature" (Philip Purchase, L16 201A)

"Greek Mythology" (Grizelda McClelland, L16 301C)

"Literary Modernities" (Kurt Beals, L16 3050)

"Romantic Revolutions in European Music" (Alexander Stefaniak L16 3132)

"Topics in East Asian Studies: After Shock: Environmental Disasters in Modern East Asian Literature and Media" (Chris Tong, L16 3263)

"Introduction to Post Colonial Literature" (Dillon Brown, L16 3520)

"Iraqi Literature" (Anne Marie McManus, L16 382C)

"Theory and Methods" (Maggie Taft and Matt Amato, L16 405A)

"Africanist Travel Writing" (Sarah Fekadu-Uthoff, L16 4080)

"Beyond Geography: The Meaning of Place in the Middle East" (Nancy Berg, L16 409C)

"Psychoanalysis and its Literary Cultures" (Philip Purchase, L16 444C)

"The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" (Matt Erlin, L16 530)

The Comparative Literature Ph.D. program offers a new track for International writers. The first student enrolled in the program is Matthias Göritz, a German poet, essayist, novelist and translator. His most recent publication, *Träumer und Sünder*, has received much critical acclaim in the German-speaking literary world. Göritz is also the first recipient of the William H. Gass fellowship. Gass is emeritus professor of philosophy and the David May Distinguished University Professor in the Humanities, an accomplished author and the founder of the International Writers Center at Washington University. In a recent issue of *The Ampersand*, Göritz expressed his admiration of Gass, saying, “I admire Gass as an essayist, translator, and storyteller; I admire him as a teacher. My colleagues across the globe and I see him as a legend. After reading his work, people are ‘infected’ and changed. It’s simple: we have to read William Gass; otherwise we’ve missed the best. I’m proud and grateful to be recognized as the first William Gass fellow. And thus not to miss the best.”

For more information regarding the track for international writers, please visit the Comparative Literature website (<http://complit.artsci.wustl.edu>).



Matthias Göritz (left) and William H. Gass (right)

