

May 2015

Comparative Literature newsletter

News from the Director

As we take stock at the conclusion of the academic year 2014-15, we can pride ourselves on many accomplishments. Eleven undergraduates--three of them with honors--in Comparative Literature or Comparative Arts graduated on May 15, 2015, and headed off in many different directions, including graduate studies in German and Comparative Literature and in painting. On that day, we hooded our new Ph.D.s in Comparative Literature and in our joint programs with German and Chinese. Two weeks earlier, at the final faculty meeting of the year, we announced the Emma Kafalenos Prize to be awarded for the best honors thesis of the year beginning in 2016.

Over the course of the year, we have followed the fortunes of our undergraduate and graduate students with pride—published fiction and translations, academic papers, artwork, and musical performances. Our well-attended translation series and this year's graduate

students symposium, "Home Sweet Home: Imagining Place in the 21st Century," showcased student and faculty scholarship, providing opportunity for lively intellectual exchange.

We are already preparing for 2015-16. We expect four new graduate students in the fall, two of whom were accepted to our PhD track for international writers. Additionally we will welcome five students in our joint programs in Chinese, English, German, and Spanish. We hope to see you at our open house on August 20th.



Lynne Tatlock
Director of Comparative Literature

Congratulations to our graduates!

May '15 graduates include:

Ph.D in Comparative Literature:
Nicholas Tamarkin

Ph.D in German and Comparative Literature:
Melissa Olson Meeks

Ph.D in Chinese and Comparative Literature:
Yinghui Wu (December '14 graduate)

B.A. candidates include:

Comparative Literature Majors: **Nicole Bell, Grace Henes, Gyoonho Kong, Henry Osman, Mary Prothero, Victoria Sgarro, Abby Zhu**

Comparative Arts Majors: **Doug Gleicher, Isaac Howell, Adelaide Lopez, Sarah Plovnick, Anastasia Sorokina** (December '15 graduate)

Comparative Literature Minor: **Reilley Dabbs**

Special recognition is due to the three students who completed honors theses: **Gyoonho Kong, Henry Osman** and **Sarah Plovnick**. In addition, congratulations to Gyoonho who won the William H. Matheson Prize for Excellence in Comparative Literature.

Comparative Literature Open Houses

The Open House for graduate students and faculty will take place on Thursday, August 20 from 4-6 pm in Ridgley Hall. Current graduate students are encouraged to consider entering photos in the annual photography contest and reading a poem (in any language).

The Bear Beginnings Open House for new undergraduate students will take place on Friday, August 21 from 3:00-5:00 pm outside of Umrath 140. Prospective Comp. Lit./ Comp. Arts majors and IPH (Interdisciplinary Project in the Humanities) are welcome and encouraged to stop by!

Washington University at ACLA

The Wash U Comparative Literature community boasted a strong presence at this year's American Comparative Literature Association conference, which took place in Seattle, Washington (March 26-29).

Professor **Anca Parvulescu** presented a paper entitled, "Racism as Denial."

Ph.D. students who presented papers included:

Julia Leverone: "Speak, if you Dare: Challenge and Evasion in Trans-American Poetics"

Matthew Miller: "Queering the Qalandariyyat: The Poetics and Cultural Politics of Desire in the Poetry and Biographical Tradition of the Qalandari Poets" as part of the panel Matthew organized entitled, "Permutations of Desire in Medieval and Early Modern Persian Literature."

Annelise Finegan Wasmoen: "Avant-Garde Sources in the Here and Then: Gao Xingjian's *Wild Men* and Cao Yu's *The Wilderness*"

Congratulations! Faculty news

Professor **Tili Boon Cuillé**'s performance review of Beaumarchais's Figaro plays, translated and directed by Stephen Wadsworth at McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ, appeared in *Theatre Journal* 66.4 (December 2014): 621-624.

Professor **Timothy Moore** curated the Kemper Art Museum's exhibition, "Picturing Narrative: Greek Mythology in the Visual Arts," on which he gave a number of presentations to groups from Washington University, local schools, and the community. His edition of three Greek comedies translated by Douglass Parker, appeared in print this year, as did an article on music and gender in Terence's *Hecyra* (in *Women in the Drama of the Roman Republic* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2015) 68-87.

Congratulations! Student news

Current Ph.D. student **Matthias Göritz** has three new publications: a novella with photos entitled *Shanghai Blues* (Edition Faust, 2015) and two publications that will come out this fall: *Trauer ist das Ding mit Federn* (a translation of the novel *Grief is the Thing with Feathers* by Max Porter) (Hanser Berlin, 2015) and *Elegy/Elegie* (a translation of a collection of poems by Professor **Mary Jo Bang**) (Wiesbaden, 2015).

May graduate and Comparative Arts major **Sarah Plovnick**'s essay entitled, "Sketches in Spain" will be published in the travel section of the UC Berkeley *Comparative Literature Undergraduate Journal*. Her essay originated from an assignment in Professor Tili Boon Cuillé's Introduction to Comparative Arts course last year and will appear on this website: <http://ucb-cluj.org/the-travel-section/>

The Last Lover, the translation of Can Xue's novel by current Ph.D. student **Annelise Wasmoen** was the only book to be longlisted for both the 2015 Best Translated Book Award (US) and the 2015 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize (UK).

Congratulations! Alumni/ae news

Kate Parker (Ph.D. '11), Assistant Professor of English at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, has been named co-editor of *Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture, 1650-1850*, a series of books, essays and monographs published by Bucknell University Press.

DJ Kaiser (Ph.D. '13) has been granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor at Webster University, where he also serves as coordinator of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) in the School of Education. DJ received two research grants to study English Language Teaching in Uruguay: a Faculty Research Grant for 2015 and a Fulbright scholars grant for 2016. Thanks to a report authored by DJ, the TESL program at Webster University has become nationally recognized (and is currently the only nationally recognized program of its kind in the state of Missouri).

*If you have news items to share with the Comparative Literature community, please e-mail them to Rebecca O'Laughlin, Administrative Assistant to Comparative Literature: rolaughlin@wustl.edu

“Home Sweet Home?” Imagining Place in the 21st Century: 2015 Graduate Student Symposium

This year's Graduate Student Symposium featured current graduate students in Comparative Literature, German and Chinese. The symposium ended with a round table discussion where both graduate students and faculty member discussed issues related to globalization.

Thanks to all of the participants and attendees.

Participants included:

Presenters:

Gabriella Martin

Anna Nowicki

Erika Rodriguez

Brooke Shafar

Meijie Shen

Annelise Finegan Wasmoen

Corinne Zeman

Moderators:

Asher Gelzer-Govatos

Heidi Grek

Thomas Sawyer

Ena Selimovic

Round table discussion:

Professor Nancy Berg

Professor Ignacio Infante

Melody Yunzi Li

Ling Kang



Symposium organizers: Ph.D. students Janelle Neczypor and Olivia Chen

Fall 2015 courses

Home-based courses include Ignacio Infante's "World Literature" (L16 211), which will focus on texts written around the world from the early 20th century through the contemporary period and Tili Boon Cuillé's "Introduction to Comparative Arts" (L16 313E) (see next page for more details on this course and the Comparative Arts major).

In "The Empire Strikes Back" (L16 41), J. Dillon Brown will explore the representation of Britain's colonial powers through an examination of canonical texts and responses to those texts. Letty Chen will be teaching "Writing from the Periphery: The Question of Chinese-ness" (L16 449) in which works written by authors of Chinese origin from around the world will be studied. Finally, Vince Sherry's "The Unmaking and Remaking of Europe: The

Literature and History of the European War of 1914-1918" (L16 493) will examine works written in Europe during and after the first World War.

Crosslisted classes include:

"Freshman Seminar: Immigrants and Exiles" (J. Dillon Brown, L16 151C)

"Classical to Renaissance Literature" (two sections: Jaime Ake; Robert Henke, L16 201A)

"Reading' Culture: Photography and Power: Photography, Film, and Social Struggle in American History" (Matt Fox-Amato, L16 206C)

"Scriptures and Cultural Traditions" (Michael Sherberg, L16 209)

"Greek Mythology" (Cathy Keane, L16 301C)

"Literary Modernities: Text and Tradition" (Miriam Bailin, L16 3050)

"The Literature of Obsession" (Miriam Bailin, L16 312C)

"Introduction to Arabic Literature" (Anne-Marie McManus, L16 325A)

"Topics in Chinese Literature and Culture: Poets, Musicians and Revolutionaries" (Chris Tong, L16 3301)

"Topics in Holocaust Studies: Children in the Shadow of the Swastika" (Erin McGlothlin, L16 331A)

"Topics in the Humanities: What is Book History?" (Joe Loewenstein/Steve Zwicker, L16 450A)

"Theories of Literary and Cultural Analysis" (Erin McGlothlin, L16 453A)

"Ocean, Island, Ghetto, Globe: The Routes and Horizons of Asian American Literature" (Long Le-Khac, L16 461A)

Spotlight: Comparative Arts

Professor Tili Boon Cuillé

It was very rewarding to assume the direction this year of the Comparative Arts major and minor created by Emma Kafalenos. As the name implies, Comparative Arts draws upon many of the same methodologies as Comparative Literature but applies them to different art forms rather than different literatures. There can still be a cross-cultural or multi-lingual component, but the notion of translation is usually applied to conversion between media rather than between languages. This area of study reflects my own academic background and current research. My degrees in Comparative Literature involved two focuses: French and German on the one hand, literature and music on the other, which naturally coalesced in opera studies. From there, my interests evolved to include theater, the visual arts, and film. I brought these subjects together in the Introduction to Comparative Arts course required for the major and minor. This course is conceived so that faculty members can adapt it to the era and geographical region in which they specialize. I structured my rendition of the course around the notion of cultural constructs from the Enlightenment through Modernity, bringing together philosophical, theoretical, literary, and critical texts to examine the interrelationship of music, painting, and poetry. We also examined the rise of cultural institutions, including the library, the museum, and the opera house. Students are encouraged to attend exhibits and performances. Last semester featured the Edison Ovarions Series production of *Three Acts, Two Dancers, One Radio Host*, starring Ira Glass, which asked what you get when you combine an art form predicated on sound with an art form that precludes it...the same question that Rousseau and Diderot were asking in eighteenth-century France. Students who focus on Comparative Arts receive credit for coursework in Comp. Lit. and foreign language as well as for the historical, theoretical and applied study of the arts through other schools, departments, and programs. They also have the option of doing a creative project for their senior thesis involving an applied arts component. It thus provides fresh opportunities for collaboration among faculty and students across the university.



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Committee on Comparative Literature
Ridgley Hall, room 116
CB 1107
One Brookings Drive
St. Louis, MO 63130-4899

(314)935-5170
rolaughlin@wustl.edu

<http://complit.artsci.wustl.edu/>



<https://gifts.wustl.edu/giftform.aspx/ArtSci>

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Just as, historically speaking, Comparative Literature arose from the emergence of nationalism (borders can't be crossed if none exist) the field today cannot prosper without strong national literature departments. But for both students and faculty, Comparative Literature appeals to the pervasive desire to transcend the merely national point of view, to engage with great imaginative works of literature from different places and times. Mandating an intense immersion in at least one foreign language and literature, and with courses on literature in translation that seriously engage non-western literature as well as western texts, Comparative Literature provides to its students a serious, sustained understanding of cultures beyond their own, and helps them become better global citizens. Comparative Literature is well situated to study, as no single national literature department can, relationships between literary cultures as they involve influence, encounter, exchange, and translation.

Historically, Comparative Literature's transnational orientation has made it the home for literary theory, which has transformed the study of literature since the 1960s. For the benefit of all literature majors at Washington University, Comparative Literature therefore offers courses on literary theory at both the undergraduate and graduate level. We also uniquely offer an interdisciplinary major in Comparative Arts, founded on an introductory core course, in which students explore relationships among literature and painting, sculpture, architecture, music, drama, and film.

