

Program in

# Comparative Literature

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

## Comparative Literature News Spring 2007

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## Letter from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

This year brought with it a combination of collegial conversations amongst ourselves and exceptional successes and visibility both across the campus and beyond. The Third Annual Graduate Comparative Literature Conference "High Concept: Comparative Studies Out in the World" in October 2006, with its energetic and provocative plenary address by Dr. David Damrosch of Columbia University, invited us to engage each other's work and consider its place in the world we inhabit.

Indeed the achievements of our colleagues and students, which you will read about in these pages, whether in the context of scholarships and awards, publications and presentations, whether local, national or international, remain varied, admired and vital. With faculty on their way to Rome and Cairo, and students regularly winning the most competitive of awards and prizes, we have flourished this year thanks to the generosity of our dean and the wise guidance of our graduate adviser, Dolora Chapelle Wojciehowski.

The program continues to serve as the home of the American Comparative Literature Association, whose membership has tripled to 1,400 in the past four years, and as the major resource in the discipline in North America and beyond, defining and developing the field in transnational and interdisciplinary ways so as fully to reflect and enable the growth of our field in our complex and varied world.

I hope you will enjoy reading about the year's work and joys and will join in congratulating our colleagues, students and alumni on their exemplary contributions.

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

## Incoming Graduate Students

by *Dolora Chapelle Wojciehowski, Graduate Advisor*

It is a great pleasure to announce that eight new students will be joining UT's Program in Comparative Literature this coming fall. Of the sixty-three applicants, the Admissions Committee selected the following class: [Yekaterina Cotey](#) (B.A. University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, with previous study at Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages): 19th-century Russian, Ukrainian, and English literatures; Pushkin studies; [Francisca Folch Couyoumdjian](#) (B.A., Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile): Spanish, English and French literatures; performance studies; translation theory; [Catherine Grazzini](#) (B.A., Pennsylvania State University): 19th- and 20th-century short fiction (English, Italian, French); war and literature; [Somy Kim](#) (M.A., DePaul University; B.A., University of California, Los Angeles): Persian, Arabic, and French literatures; narrative theory, postcolonial theory, and cultural studies; [Anna Marin](#) (M.A., San Diego State University; B.A., DePaul University): neo-colonial, postcolonial, and inter-American literatures (English, Spanish, and Portuguese); political, economic, and literary theory; [Ari Messer](#) (M.A., University of Edinburgh; B.A., Stanford University): French, Spanish, and Hebrew literatures; Jewish and Arab diasporas; postcolonial theory; dialect writing; [Michal Raizen-Colman](#) (M.A., University of Texas; B.A., University of Texas): Hebrew, Arabic, French, and Spanish literatures; 19th- and 20th-century Jewish authors from the Eastern Mediterranean; [Katerina Seligman](#) (B.A., Columbia University): inter-American/Caribbean literature (Spanish, English, French); anti-colonial and postcolonial theory; literary translation.

We welcome this highly accomplished group of incoming students to our program.

The 2007 admissions committee included Jeffrey Barnouw, Moh Ghanoonparvar, Karen Grumberg, Chiu-Mi Lai, Naomi Lindstrom, Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, César Salgado, Alex Wettlaufer, Jennifer Wilks, and Dolora Chapelle Wojciehowski.

## Note from GRACLS

by *Miguel Santos-Neves, President*

As the third officially elected president of the Graduate Association of Comparative Literature Students (GRACLS), I wish to give a brief description of our activities from this past semester and give an indication of our plans for the coming fall. Over the spring we held several coffee hours arranged by one of our social coordinators, Aména Moïnfar, at which more advanced students offered their advice and insight to those at earlier stages of graduate work. Topics ranged from how to prepare for the qualifying and comprehensive exams to what to expect during the job search. We hope to continue these informal get-togethers, which provide all of us with guidance and information as well as a network of support.

Members of GRACLS have been hard at work planning next year's graduate student conference, entitled "Un(bound): the Humanities in Transition" which will be held on October 5-6, 2007. Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza has been gracious enough to invite Dr. Haun Saussy from the Department of Comparative Literature at Yale University as our keynote speaker. Under the leadership of conference coordinator Lanie Millar, the conference committee has jumpstarted the organization of the conference by soliciting funds, drafting and sending out the CFP, and putting together a professionalization panel. In short, all is in order for a brilliant conference that will reflect the strengths of our program and the commitment of our students. We hope to attract a diverse mix of graduate students from UT as well as from beyond Austin.

GRACLS hopes to count on the continued participation and collaboration of students and professors alike, as all of us work towards strengthening our program.

### GRACLS Officers

President: Miguel Santos-Neves

Treasurer: Nandini Dhar

Conference Coordinator: Lanie Millar

Social Coordinators: Aména Moïnfar & Anna Katsnelson

## Undergraduate Courses

### CL 315

Masterworks of World Literature

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

Brian Doherty

### CL 323

Decoding Classical Chinese Poetry

Chiu-Mi Lai

Hans Christian Andersen

Claus Elholm Andersen

Holocaust Aftereffects

Pascale Bos

Introduction to Arabic Literature

Samer Ali

Introduction to Israeli Literature

Karen Grumberg

Iranian Film and Fiction

M.R. Ghanoonparvar

The New Women: Writing Polish Women's Lives in the Late 19th Century

Edward Manouelian

Opera, Film, and Literature

Seth Wolitz

Sex, Lies, and Politics in Chinese Literature

Susan Dolling

The Enlightenment

Jeffrey Barnouw

## Graduate Courses

### CL 180K

Introduction to Comparative Literature:

Proseminar in Methods of Study and Research

Karen Grumberg

### CL 381

Ibsen and Fin de Siècle Theater: Politics, Gender, and Performance

Lynn Wilkinson

### CL 382

Arabic Culture in Sicily, 652-1189

Samer Ali

Kristeva and Zizek Read Lacan: Feminism, Philosophy, and the Politics of the (Post)Freudian Subject

Katherine Arens

Post-Zion Perspectives in Israeli Literature

Karen Grumberg

Read Me! Great Memoirs: Inventing the Written Self

Seth Wolitz

World Literature and Globalism: Theory and Practice

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

Chrétien de Troyes and His Legacy

Susanne Hafner

### CL 390

20th Century Literary Theory: A Survey for Comparatists

Lynn Wilkinson

Please visit [www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/complit/courses/](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/complit/courses/) for more information about these courses

## Degree Recipients

### Master of Arts

Spring 2006

[Naminata Diabate](#)

*Through Missionary Eyes: 19th-Century Boloki Women of the Congo in John H. Weeks' Among Congo Cannibals*

[Elizabeth Erbeznik](#)

*(Ad)Dressing Gender: Cross-Dressing as Code-Breaking in Théophile Gautier's Mademoiselle de Maupin*

[Marilyn Lehman](#)

*Writing Women's Lives: Self-Representation in Amish Women's Diaries*

Fall 2006

[Jason Robert Leubner](#)

*Temporal Distance, Antiquity, and the Beloved in Petrarch's Rime sparse and Du Bellay's Les Antiquitez de Rome*

### Doctor of Philosophy

Fall 2006

[Laura Mareike Sager](#)

*Writing and Filming the Painting: Ekphrasis in Literature and Film*

## Aména Moïnfar

### Fourth Annual Recipient, Elizabeth Warnock Fernea Endowment Fellowship



Ms. Aména Moïnfar joined the Program of Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin in 2003. She previously graduated from Université Paris X-Nanterre and Michigan State University.

This spring she successfully passed her Ph.D. comprehensive exams, which lists articulated the impact of culture and imperialism in literature as well as the complexities of post-colonial literatures.

She currently focuses her research on the issues of filiation and affiliation in post-colonial narratives of education written in the age of globalization and terror by women of North African, Iranian and African heritage.

## Prizes and Fellowships

### Continuing Fellowships

#### University Continuing Fellowships

[Russell Cobb](#) (2006-7)

[Matthew Russell](#) (2006-7)

[Christopher Micklethwait](#) (2007-8)

#### Miller Student Endowment Fund

[Ingrid Lelos](#) (2006-7)

#### William H. Hildebrand Endowed Graduate Fellowship

[Carlos Amador](#) (2007-8)

#### Graduate School Fellowship

[Li Yang](#) (2007-8)

### Pre-Emptive Fellowships

These fellowships are prestigious awards offered by the Graduate School to attract top quality graduate students to the university.

[Pearl Brilmyer](#) (2006-7)

[Somy Kim](#) (2007-8)

### Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Award

[Anna Katsnelson](#) (2007-8)

### George H. Mitchell Award for Excellence in Graduate Research

[Hülya Yildiz](#) (2006-7)

### Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowships

[Elana Thurston-Milgrom](#) (Summer 2007)

[Michal Raizen-Colman](#) (2007-8)

[Johanna Sellman](#) (2007-8)

### Liberal Arts Graduate Research Fellowships

[Nandini Dhar](#) (2006-7)

[Elizabeth Erbeznik](#) (2006-7)

[Alexei Lalo](#) (2006-7)

### Other Fellowships and Awards

#### Nominee, UT Outstanding Master's Thesis/Report Award

[Marilyn Lehman](#) (2006-7)

#### Marshall Fishwick Travel Grant from Popular Culture Association

[Nandini Dhar](#) (2006-7)

#### SSRC DPDF Fellowship

[Nandini Dhar](#) (Summer 2007)

#### Gale Jewish Studies Excellence Award

[Anna Katsnelson](#) (Summer 2007)

#### Center for Arabic Study Abroad Fellowship

[Banafsheh Madaninejad](#) (Summer 2007)

#### POSCO Graduate Research Fellowship

[Hyunjung Lee](#) (2007-8)

#### Village Voice Media Writing Fellowship, Houston Press

[Russell Cobb](#) (2007-8)

### Teaching Awards

#### Teaching Award in Italian, Department of French and Italian

[Simone Sessolo](#) (2006-7)

#### Finalists, Hairston Teaching Excellence Award, Department of Rhetoric and Writing

[Anna Katsnelson](#) (2006-7)

[Aména Moïnfar](#) (2006-7)

## New Student Profiles (2006-7)

[Anthony Arroyo](#) received his B.A. in American Literature and Portuguese from the University of California, Los Angeles. He is currently interested in the work of João Guimarães Rosa, Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, Gilles Deleuze and Severo Sarduy, as well as representations of infinity and conceptions of New World urban space.

[Pearl Brilmyer](#) earned her B.A. from The University of Scranton, Pennsylvania, in English and Philosophy. Her passion for the cross-sections between these two fields persists in her work on 19th and 20th century French and British literatures alongside German Continental philosophy. Her focus is on women's studies, specifically literary representations of monogamy and non-monogamy.

[Banafsheh Madaninejad](#) received her B.S. in Physics from the University of Houston. After graduation, she worked for NASA for five years, designing algorithms and writing code for the International Space Station in Houston and the Deep Space Network in Pasadena. Since then, she has earned an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies and an M.A. in Government, both from the University of Texas at Austin. Her research focuses on religious pluralism in Islam, both medieval and contemporary.

[Johanna Sellman](#) has a B.A. in French Literature from Carleton College and a M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. Her interests include contemporary literature of the Arab world and Africa, as well as testimonial writing, language ideology, and human rights texts.

[Simone Sessolo](#) earned a Laurea in Foreign Languages and Literatures from the University of Padova, Italy, and an M.A. in English and Literary Theory from the University of Kansas. He is interested in postcolonial studies, with particular attention to East Africa. His research also focuses on theory, specifically deconstruction, poststructuralism and psychoanalysis.

[Elana S. Thurston-Milgrom](#) received her B.A. in English and Comparative Literary Studies at Occidental College, with a minor in Religious Studies. After graduation, she spent two years in Prague studying Czech and completed the Bohemia Studies program at Charles University. Her areas of interest include Czech and German Literature, and Jewish Literature as an influence of linguistic and cultural crossover between the two national literatures.

## 2006 GRACLS Conference

by Lanie Millar



Dr. David Damrosch

On October 6th, the Comparative Literature program hosted its Third Annual Graduate Conference to great success. This year's title was "High Concept: Comparative Studies Out in the World," and we had the privilege of hosting Dr. David Damrosch from Columbia Uni-

versity for a fascinating presentation on engaging Comparative Literature studies beyond the limits of academic conversations.

This year's conference took an introspective look at both what constitutes Comparative Literature as a field, and what kinds of projects are taking place in UT's comparative literature program. The day began with a roundtable discussion of current dissertation projects, "The Place of Our Projects," in which eight of our current doctoral candidates presented their dissertation research on topics ranging from the Byzantine Homily to publication of the avant-garde in St. Petersburg and Buenos Aires. The participants were Marina Alexandrova, Kai-Man Chang, Russell Cobb, Hyunjung Lee, Doug Norman, Matthew Russell, Vessela Valiavitcharska and Hülya Yildiz. The lively discussion that resulted was an excellent opportunity for the rest of the Comp Lit community to engage with our advanced students' research.

The following two panels took a look at projects currently under development, with one session of more formal presentations, "Today's Projects," and a final informal discussion, "The Work of the Future," of where our students not yet in Ph.D. candidacy are concentrating their research.

The three sessions in concert provided the all-too-rare opportunity for our students and faculty to converse about the directions current graduate students at all stages of the program are taking, and how they understand "comparative literature."

Dr. Damrosch's keynote presentation, "Otherwise Engaged: Comparative Literature and the Clash of Cultures" provided the excellent final stage to our conference. Dr. Damrosch talked about his own recent work on the epic of Gilgamesh, and how writing for a non-academic public provides opportunities to engage with current issues of political and social relevance. His generosity in responding to questions from the audience sparked many conversations that carried over into the final reception.

We look forward to repeating this year's success in 2007. Special thanks to Dr. Richmond-Garza for her invaluable support and inspiration, as well as to the conference organizing committee. The Program in Comparative Literature also thanks the following sponsors for their generous support:

The College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Judith Langlois  
Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Richard Flores  
Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts

The Stiles Endowed Professorship

The complete conference program is available online. For more information, please see the conference page on the program's web site:

[www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/complit/conferences/](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/complit/conferences/)

## 5+5: The Fifth Summer in Moscow

by Marina Alexandrova



Marina Alexandrova (left) with UT students.

Moscow was not built in one day, states the Russian proverb, and twelve UT students who participated in the study abroad program 5+5 (now called MoscowPlus) last summer would agree that it also takes many days to explore it. Guided by Drs. Thomas J. Garza and Elizabeth M. Richmond-Garza, the students spent five weeks discovering Russian history and culture and studying language at the Moscow International University (MIU). As an assistant resident director, I was responsible for planning their daily excursions, and helping them to understand Russian culture and navigate safely in the one of the most exciting (and expensive) cities in the world.

Every day after five hours of intensive Russian in the classroom, students plunged into Russian life: we visited museums and exhibitions, savored the food of the former Soviet republics, bargained for souvenirs on Arbat street, and went to concerts and clubs. Students' favorites were a midnight tour of Bulgakov's Moscow and weekend trips to Vladimir, Suzdal', and St. Petersburg.

Students had a unique chance to gain insight into Russian youth culture through their tutors—students of MIU who helped them with Russian language, introduced them to their friends and family, and took them to theaters and concerts. From playing cards on overnight trains to striking friendships in bars and clubs, from attending rock concerts to buying groceries, students enjoyed full immersion in Russian culture and everyday life. As they confessed to me by the end of their stay, they wished they had yet another five weeks to spend in Moscow.

For more information, please visit the web site: [www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/slavic/study\\_abroad/russia](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/slavic/study_abroad/russia)

## Summer in Tuscany

by Heather Latiolais

During the summer of 2006, I spent six weeks with an academically quite diverse group of students in the picturesque Tuscan town of Castiglion Fiorentino. At the time, I had just begun to do coursework in Italian, and, with my interests in art and architecture, I thought this program would be an ideal way to spend the summer. Never having traveled with students from such a wide gamut of fields before, I found that this group, whose interests included English, psychology, art history, architecture, and other areas, possessed the dynamics necessary to keep the cultural dialogue alive that exists when studying abroad. The interdisciplinary nature of the program really helped to form a continuation of the work I do here in Austin in Comparative Literature.

The location in Tuscany is phenomenal: Castiglion Fiorentino boasts its own historical treasures, while its proximity to Florence and Arezzo makes exploring other areas of Italy very convenient. We traveled often as a group, making frequent daytrips to Florence. One of my fondest memories from those six weeks is of



Heather Latiolais at a vineyard near Castiglion Fiorentino.

an afternoon stroll with a handful of students, Elizabeth, and Tom, through the Borghese Gardens, during our weekend excursion to Rome. We leisurely visited the Galleria Borghese, where we found temporary succor from the sweltering Tuscan summer and marveled as Bernini's expressive sculptures seemed to escape from their marble trappings before us.

I also found time to travel on my own and with friends before, during, and after the program. The side trips I took to London, Paris, Milan, and Corsica rounded off a rich and fulfilling summer in Europe before my second year in Comparative Literature.

## Semester Teaching in Cairo

by Christopher Micklethwait



From left to right:

Christopher Micklethwait, poet Rana Al-Tonsi, and novelist Montasser El Qaffash on the AUC campus.

Photo by Adam Talib.

Last summer, UT's Dr. Barbara Harlow, visiting chair of the American University in Cairo's

Department of English and Comparative Literature (ECL) for 2006-2007, invited me to teach their fall freshman literature survey. This experience proved to be one of the finest of my graduate studies; I was free to design my own syllabus for a survey of world literature and had the pleasure to teach an international group of multilingual students.

Our department's Emerging Creative Voices series brought me in contact with a number of contemporary Egyptian writers. Dr. Michal Oklot, my colleague in ECL, organized a series of works-in-progress talks for visiting scholars and ECL faculty, at which I was fortunate to present the first stage of my dissertation research. I was also invited to serve on our department's bi-weekly faculty committee meetings.

On my off time, I found much around town to stimulate and inspire. The Cairo Opera House featured the Cuban National Ballet and an Arabic-language political adaptation of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. The literary life in Cairo was never far from reach with open-air book markets on weekends and witching-hour literary salons in Cairo's bohemian cafés, to say nothing of the series of events—including a talk by Nadine Gordimer—commemorating the life of Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz, who passed away in Cairo last year.

Now I look forward to another wonderful experience teaching a course on literature of the third world in Cairo this coming fall.

## Hairston Teaching Excellence Award Finalists

by Aména Moïnfar and Anna Katsnelson

As finalists for the Hairston Teaching Excellence Award from the Division of Rhetoric and Writing, we would like to share some of our thoughts on teaching in the English department.

### Aména Moïnfar



Aména Moïnfar (middle row, second from left) with her students.

The rapport that I develop every single semester with my students consists in showing a sense of firmness but fairness. The first two weeks of the semester are the most determinant. I use strong methodological tools in order to give the students the means to understand and use rhetorical devices. To do so, I select articles, essays and materials with which students are familiar. Because they superficially know these materials, they are more at ease with applying the methods of a rhetorician to analyze them. For instance, when we read Dr. King's "I Have a Dream," students are able to recognize pathos, ethos and logos with more dexterity simply because they know the text or have heard about it. I try to include as much multimedia material as possible. Alongside the reading of "I Have a Dream," I show a clip of this speech so students can have a direct sense of the audience and the setting. Likewise, when we study the controversy on Native American Mascots and the 2005 NCAA ruling on this matter, we watch parts of the documentary *In Whose Honor?* This documentary provides a direct view of the ethos, pathos and logos of the people involved in the mascot controversy.

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## Hairston Teaching Award (continued)

At the end of the semester, I want the students to create their own rhetoric through a proposal. They become rhetoricians themselves and adopt a strong point of view on an issue they feel passionate about. Passion is the key and I always emphasize it in my classroom. Students also have to make a final presentation through the form of a PowerPoint. I always do a mock presentation for them. One successful presentation I have used is to show them a French hip-hop video clip and do a short rhetorical analysis of it. It is a way for me to expose them to youth culture other than their own through the medium of rap. It is usually extremely successful and it inspires students to share their passions with the rest of the class. Topics generated by this assignment include poverty's representation in the media, the illegal immigration debate, the rhetoric of cults. Each presentation corresponded to a field of strong interest in the students and led to intellectually challenging conversations.

### Anna Katsnelson

My goal as a teacher is to produce articulate speakers/writers, who are capable of ethical, interesting, civic minded analysis on a number of involved issues such as social, political and personal problems, and who are able to present their ideas articulately, intelligibly, and ably. To put it in other words, or as the English philosopher Francis Bacon claimed about rhetoric, my goal is to produce students who can "apply reason to imagination for the better moving of the will." Through the proper use of language, whether in writing or speaking the student can influence those around her, engage her colleagues and peers in an attempt to organize social action. Thus, it is important for me to teach students not only to write for their classes, but to help acquaint them with skills of expression and self-definition which will allow them to function not only in the narrow confines of academia but also in the world.

For example, the course I am teaching this semester, Chick Rhetoric, a self-designed course, focuses on both written and visual representations and their rhetorical purposes. The course looks at examples of rhetoric

that appeals to women which appears in such culturally iconic texts as novels written by women and marketed for women, movies under the sub-genre of chick flicks, poetry by writers like Deborah Garrison, fashion magazines oriented towards women, and love songs from jazzy tunes to hip-hop.

In order that they produce an analytical and theoretical discourse, my students are taught to place the texts in the larger cultural and social context. The arguments which are made in the class allow the students to be able to make critically and ethically informed judgments about the world, and produce work which reflects the rhetorical skills they have acquired.

In this class I explain that a well made discourse is connected with the larger viewpoints of the author. We look at the authors' backgrounds and interests, which determine such things as use of syntax, grammar, this helps the students identify the principles and ideals of the authors which help situate the authors in a historical context. The students use a number of these arguments to clarify and hone their own work and ideas.

## My Dissertation Project

by *Hyunjung Lee*



"We are Korea" placard in Seoul subway station. Such signs were found all over the city of Seoul during the World Cup event.

## Cultural Translation through Performance: Contemporary South Korea between Globalization and Nationalism

The over-arching argument of my dissertation claims that a process of globalization does not always result in forming a borderless world with weakened national identities and cultures. To demonstrate this idea, I chose

• [Continued on page 11](#)

## Dissertation (continued)

contemporary South Korean performances produced in response to the demands of globalization. For instance, I focus on *The Last Empress* (1995), the first Korean musical staged on Broadway. Here, I am looking at the ways in which the performance reclaims a “Korean” identity, expressing a sense of nationalism to a domestic audience and at the same time featuring a type of Asian exoticness targeted to international audiences—at the expense of undermining the heroine’s individual agency.

The excitement of this research rests on the fact that it involves a border-crossing between the “literary” aspect of the performance and the reality. Underpinning the socio-political discourse embodied in performances, I situate them amidst the nationalistic discourse of *seggyehwa* (circa 1994). Indicating “globalization in a Korean way,” *seggyehwa* has been a rigorous state policy that clearly shows how South Korean government pursued globalization with a clear nationalistic agenda. Spending my summers in Seoul, I enjoyed rummaging through the government publications archive at The National Assembly Library in Seoul. By attending actual performances, I physically witnessed various audience members respond to the given staging, which let me think beyond the frame of “dramatic texts.”

Delving further into the “live” aspect of performance, I also explore the social scenes from the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup. Given the situation where this sporting event became a “national stage,” having Korean supporters as “performers” and the “World” as its “spectators,” I take this event as a “social performance.” My physical presence during the entire event allowed myself to see through the performative aspects of the Korean supporters’ modes of cheering. Witnessing people strongly identifying one another under the powerful slogan that read “We are One,” “We are Korean,” I began thinking how “performance” could provide a new way of explicating the concept of nationalism. Overall, it is fascinating to realize that my various border-crossing experiences enable me to give a sense of liveliness to my dissertation project.

## Report from the Job Market

by Vessela Valiavitcharska

With a dissertation almost completed, I went on the academic job market last fall, and I consider myself fortunate to be able say that my job search was over by mid-February. I received two tenure-track offers, one from the University of Maryland in College Park, and one from York University in Toronto, and, after some hesitation, accepted University of Maryland’s offer.

My dissertation research focuses on medieval rhetoric. I examine Byzantine Greek homilies and their Old Church Slavonic translations in terms of prose rhythm and rhetorical figures, then use my findings to make a broader argument about the importance of style and rhythm in late antique and medieval oratory. As medieval Greek and Old Church Slavonic are, by no means, a popular field right now, I was surprised at the interest and attention, with which my research was received. In the course of the conversations with interviewing faculty, it became clear to me that my interviewers were most interested in my ability to contextualize my research and put it in dialog with recent publications in the field of classical and medieval rhetoric as well as contemporary rhetorical theory. The outcome of my work on the old texts was regarded important in the light of the academic conversation about the function and goals of rhetoric and the role of rhetorical theory in the teaching of composition.

Looking back on my experiences as a graduate student, I realize that the Comparative Literature program has afforded me with a unique opportunity to acquire a broad perspective on academic intellectual life, which, consequently, helped me to develop a broad context for my research. I took courses and worked with faculty from four departments, observed and learned from their diverse methodologies and intellectual interests, and compared their approaches to teaching. And I found that, as a comparative literature student, I was expected to be not only knowledgeable in my fields but also aware of the intellectual concerns and research directions of the departments most commonly associated with these fields.



## Karen Grumberg

Upon completing my BA in English and History at UT, I departed for California to begin my doctoral studies in Comparative Literature, not dreaming that I would return to Austin as a faculty member

seven years later. I am currently completing my third year in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies and the Program in Comparative Literature as Assistant Professor of Hebrew Literature.

When I decided to pursue a PhD in Comparative Literature, my parents were perplexed: What, exactly, is Comparative Literature? The question I heard again and again, from concerned and intrigued friends and acquaintances, was: "What are you going to do with that – teach?" At a graduate student party at UCLA where students wore nametags stating their departmental affiliations, some physics students asked my friends and me if "Comp. Lit." stands for "Computer Literature."

Despite the fact that Comparative Literature may be cloaked in mystery for some, the discipline is thriving in American universities. Part of the reason for this is its emphasis on theory, which allows comparatists to work not only in different languages but also across different fields. Indeed, in its encouragement of interdisciplinary research, Comparative Literature is at the forefront of a metaphorical movement across borders. In my experience as a student, this characteristic helped to make the university, as a whole, more accessible. It allowed me and my fellow PhD students to integrate into our research disciplines that, generally, are not considered part of literary studies, such as history, philosophy, exact sciences, history of music, art, and dance, and many others. The

concept of Comparative Literature lends itself to these types of interconnections and is therefore capable of producing a new range of perspectives.

Yet Comparative Literature is, first and foremost, about *literature*. It seeks to demonstrate and interpret cultural, social, and political trends through literature. It asks how different societies at different times have represented themselves through poetry, novels, and the theater, and attempts to find commonalities across dividing lines.

All these characteristics make a doctorate in Comparative Literature a fascinating undertaking. In the intensely competitive market for academic employment, it has the great advantage of rendering its holder a viable job candidate in multiple departments. Comparative Literature PhDs can apply for a wide spectrum of positions in departments and programs ranging from English or general literature and language to more particularized area and cultural studies such as Latin American, East Asian, and African Studies, to name only a few. Often, the perspective offered by Comparative Literature PhDs, which is grounded in more than one literature and might encompass other modes of cultural expression, is recognized as a valuable and enriching asset to non-literature departments.

My own experience as a recent hire in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies confirms this. The same is true for my general experience on the job market three years ago, when I applied for positions in departments of Comparative Literature and Jewish Studies. My academic background positions my scholarship beyond the familiar matrix of the nation and language whose literature I research. Comparative Literature, with its leaps across geographical and cultural boundaries and its embrace of interdisciplinary approaches, lies within the very heart of the Humanities.

## Recent and Forthcoming Book Publications by Alumni



**Robert Fulton**  
Ph.D. 1999

*When We Waken the Dead: Readings on Memory and Death in Joyce* (Gedit Edizioni, 2006)

In answering the question, can the living waken the dead, Fulton elegantly and richly argues that they can through memory. Drawing on philosophical and critical insights from Lacan to Plato, Fulton's hermeneutic approach to the writings and life of Joyce traces the concepts of memory and death throughout James Joyce's corpus from *The Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*.

Robert Fulton is Executive Curator for Academic Programs at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center. He has recently been awarded a Fulbright visiting professorship at the University of Antwerp.



**Persis M. Karim**  
Ph.D. 1998

*Let Me Tell You Where I've Been: New Writing by Women of the Iranian Diaspora* (University of Arkansas Press, 2006)

Karim presents a rich anthology of Iranian women writing from abroad, including Sholeh Wolpé, Elham Gheytnchi and Roxanne Varzi. A diversity of voices is represented in this stunning collection of poetry, fiction and nonfiction from the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and beyond. Though many contributions avoid politics, they address identity construction through the universal themes of love and loss, exile and longing, politics and war.

Persis Karim is an associate professor of English and Comparative Literature at San Jose State University.



**Mohammad R. Ghanoonparvar**  
Ph.D. 1979

*Persian Cuisine: Traditional, Regional, and Modern Foods* (Mazda Publishers, 2006)

An accomplished literary critic and poetic translator, Ghanoonparvar offers in this beautiful book an introduction to Persian cooking and culture and a welcoming bridge via this magnificent cuisine to an Anglophone readership. The intelligent essay on wine drinking in Persian culture epitomizes this scholarly and accessible approach to hospitality and gastronomy.

Mohammad Ghanoonparvar is a professor of Persian and Comparative Literature at UT Austin.



**Isaac Rosler**  
Ph.D. 1996

*Eros Revisited: Love for the Indeterminate Other* (forthcoming from Lexington Books, Oct. 2007)

Rosler's humane study inquires where Eros has gone in our modern world. Tracing the ways in which binary logics reduce the individual to a function of dialectic rather than an ecstatic self, Rosler presents an account of "friendship" from Plato to Deleuze. He enlightens readings of texts as varied as Freud and Heidegger, and gracefully interlaces complex responses to Derrida's "politics of friendship" with his own lived experiences.

Isaac Rosler is an associate professor of Foreign Language at Dowling College.

Attention Alumni: We encourage you to share your accomplishments with us. Please send your updates to [complit@ccwf.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:complit@ccwf.cc.utexas.edu) for publication in the next newsletter.

**Marina Alexandrova** organized a dissertation roundtable at the GRACLS conference. She also attended the SCMLA convention in Dallas, where she chaired a Comparative Literature panel and presented "Publishers, Writers, and State: The Serapion Brothers' Case." She wrote an entry on Zoia Fedorova, which will appear in volume eight of the *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian, Soviet, and Eurasian History*. She had a baby, Nicholas Anthony, in February.

**Katie Arens** published a number of articles, including "Stadtwohlen: Benjamin's Arcades Project and the Problem of Method," which was published in the *PMLA*, and "When Comparative Literature Becomes Cultural Studies: Teaching Cultures through Genre," which appeared in *The Comparatist*. She also attended several conferences, where she delivered the following papers: "Comic Revenants, International Stage Beauties: Central Europe on Broadway" at the annual ACLA meeting in Puebla, Mexico; "Sex, Lies, and Habsburgiana: The Political Erotics of Mayerling" at the annual conference of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association; "Polydeuces in Weimar: The Critical Auto-Eroticism of Goethe's Self-Fashioning" at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies; and "Expert Personae in the Humanities: Ideologies of Academic Performance in the Knowledge Economy" at the International Symposium on New Directions in the Humanities. She also gave several invited lectures, including "Herder and Scientific Authority: The Problem of Speaking *Otherwise*" at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and "Teaching Genres, Teaching Literature?: Old Enterprises Redefined for New Curricula" at Michigan State University.

**Marc Bizer** received a Loeb Classical Library Foundation fellowship and a Dean's fellowship to work on a book project through 2008 on the politics of classical scholarship in sixteenth-century France.

**Dolora Chapelle Wojciehowski** received the Raymond Dickson Centennial Endowed Teaching Fellowship from the College of Liberal Arts this past spring. This summer, she will be teaching for the Telluride Association Summer Program at Cornell University. She will be continuing in her role as the program's Graduate Advisor in the fall.

**Nandini Dhar** published two journal articles, including "Memory, Gender, Race and Class: Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*" in *Obsidian III: A Journal in The African Diaspora*, and "Narratives of Everyday Resistance and Politics of Feminist Self-Representation in Fatima Mernissi's 'Dreams of Trespass'" in *Intersections: Women's and Gender Studies in Review Across Disciplines*. She chaired a seminar titled "Re-Imagining Slavery" at the annual ACLA conference in Puebla, Mexico, and presented a paper titled "How to Find Myself in the Sea. How to Rise From It": Re-Writing the History of a Gendered Black Atlantic in Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts*." Other papers presented this year include "Colonial Tropes and Transnational Feminisms: An Examination of Bharati Mukherjee's Short Story 'Jasmine'" at the annual MLA convention in Philadelphia; and "Performing Trauma, Performing Agency in Mohammed Ben-Abdallah's *The Slaves*: Inserting Africa into Black Atlantic Political Consciousness" at the annual American Society of Theater Research in Chicago.

**Naminata Diabate** presented papers at a number of conferences this year. At the annual ACLA conference, she read "Re-Creating the Memories of Margaret Garner: Memory Studies and Theoretical Concerns." At the 2007 Africa Conference at the University of Texas, Austin, she presented "Rene Maran's *Batouala* and Africa: The Limits of the Alliance." At the Spanish and Portuguese Department Colloquium at the University of Texas, Austin, she presented "Poetry, Politics, and Decolonization: A Comparative Studies of Jose Marti and Leopold Sedar Senghor." At the Women's and Gender Studies Graduate Student Annual Conference at the University of Texas, Austin, she presented "Stiwanist, Womanist, and Feminist: A Comparative Studies of Francophone and Anglophone Sub-Saharan West African Feminist Theories."

**John M. González** presented a paper titled "Cheno Cortina and Mexican-American Civil Rights in the Era of Jim Crow" at the 2006 American Studies Association Conference. He chaired the "Spirituality in Chicana/o Literature"

panel at the 2006 MLA conference. At the 2007 ACLA conference, he presented a paper titled "Modeling Resistance: Juan N. Cortina, LULAC, and Civil Rights Strategy;" and at the 2007 Inter-University Program for Latino Research Conference, he read "Renaissance on the Border: Mexican Americans, Literary Modernity, and the Texas Centennial." He also published a book review of Jovita González's *Life Along the Border: A Landmark Tejana Thesis* for the *E3W Review of Books*.

**Susanne Hafner** published an article titled "Monsters and Men: The Power of Female Imagination in Les Quatre Sohais Saint-Martin." She was the recipient of the Texas Chair of German Fellowship and was appointed a Teacher Trainer in Foreign Language Pedagogy by the Goethe Institute Chicago.

**Barbara Harlow** served as a Visiting Professor and Chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the American University in Cairo.

**Tony Hilfer** presented a paper titled "'The Nothing that Is': The Modernist American Representation of Nature in Stevens and Frost" at the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics in San Francisco, and a paper titled "François Villon's 'Ballade des dame du temps jadis' and Jim Carroll's 'People Who Died'" at the American Writers Program in Austin. He also presented "Rhetoric and the Real in Mount Ktaadn's Encounter with Thoreau" at the American Literature Association Conference in Boston. His forthcoming book is called *The Nothing That Is: Representations of Nature in American Writing*, and it is on nature discourse.

**Andrea Hilkovitz** organized and chaired a panel titled "Telling Otherwise: Re-Writing / Re-Visioning in Africa and the African Diaspora" at the annual meeting of the African Literature Association in Morgantown, West Virginia. She also presented a paper entitled "Caribbeanizing the Brontës: Rewriting *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* for/ from the Caribbean" at the annual meeting of the ACLA in Puebla, Mexico.

**Anna Katsnelson** received a 2007-2008 Fulbright grant to write several chapters of her dissertation in Brazil on Brazilian Jewish writers. She was a finalist for the Maxine Hairston Prize in Excellence in Teaching for the Division of Rhetoric and Writing. She presented a paper titled "Poncia Vicencio: Memory and Trauma in Afro-Brazilian Fiction" at the BRASA conference at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, and another paper at the SCMLA conference in Dallas titled "Evgenia Ginzburg: Rejection of Ethnicity."

**Marilyn Lehman** chaired a panel titled, "Writing Amish Women/Amish Women Writing," at the 2006 Mennonite/ Writing: Beyond Borders conference at Bluffton University. She also presented a paper at the conference, "Amish Women Writing: Time, Tradition, and Identity in Amish Women's Diaries." She published an essay, "Nonviolence in a Litigious Society: Lessons from the Amish Shootings," which discussed the Amish shootings in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, and appeared in *Mennonite Life*.

**Naomi Lindstrom** was appointed to the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize Committee of the MLA. She published "Entre los espacios de la memoria: la narrativa de Alicia Steimberg," an essay appearing in *Memoria y representación: configuraciones culturales y literarias en el imaginario judío latinoamericano*, and "Las leyendas literarias argentinas en la narrativa de Ricardo Piglia," an article in *Ricardo Piglia: la escritura y el arte nuevo de la sospecha*.

**Banafsheh Madaninejad** presented various manifestations of her paper titled "Soroush, Religious Pluralism and the Modern Muslim" at four conferences, including GRACLS, WECSOR, SWPSA and ACLA. She also gave a talk entitled "Why It's Time to Shift Paradigms: from Tolerance to Religious Pluralism" at St. Michael's Episcopal Church as part of their "Middle East and Inter-faith Relations" month-long lecture series.

**Christopher Micklethwait** spent the summer in Cairo studying Arabic in CASA and taught literature for the fall as

a lecturer at the American University in Cairo. He will return to Cairo this fall to continue writing his dissertation and teach an upper-division/graduate course on third world literature.

**Lanie Millar** presented papers at the Georgetown University Graduate Symposium in Spanish and Portuguese, the Texas Brazilianists Conference, and the Baylor University Conference on Latin American Studies.

**Aména Moïnfar** was a finalist for the Maxine Hearston Prize that recompensed Excellence in Teaching Rhetoric. She took part in the pre-grad internship, serving as a mentor for an undergraduate in Spring 2007. She presented "Que de sang dans nos mémoires! A Notebook to Remember in Daniel Maximin's *L'isolé Soleil*" at the ACLA conference in Puebla, Mexico. She published a book review on Yasmina Khadra's *The Attack* for the *E3W Review*. She also joined the Arts Collective for Diversity for whom she co-wrote and performed "Breaking Boundaries: Listen to Our Voices" at the Cohen New Works Festival at the University of Texas, Austin's Department of Theatre.

**Tim Moore** published an article titled "Terence as Musical Innovator," which was included in an edited volume on Terence. He also reviewed a volume of essays on music archaeology for *The American Journal of Archaeology*. He spoke on dance in Roman comedy at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association. He also attended the annual MLA conference, where he presented a paper comparing the role of servants in Japanese Kyôgen comedy with slaves and servants in the Western comic tradition. He spoke on ancient song as part of the kick-off for a new Classics major at Texas A&M.

**Elizabeth Richmond-Garza** received a grant from the University of Texas, Austin to continue her research this summer on Chekhov's play *Chaïka* and fin-de-siècle culture. She began work on this project in spring 2007, with the support of a faculty research award. She will be presenting a portion of this work, which focuses on Boris Eifman's balletic adaptation of the play, at the MLA meeting in December in Chicago. She organized and administered the 1,400-person ACLA annual conference in Puebla, Mexico. She chaired her own research seminar "Savoring The Human: Tasting New Worlds," which brought many scholars from Eastern Europe into dialogue with their colleagues from around the world.

**César A. Salgado** gave lectures at the Mexico City Book Fair, University of South Florida, SUNY Buffalo, UC Santa Barbara, and the Graduate Center at CUNY. He delivered two conference papers, including "The Ambassador and the Wall: Afro-Hispanism in Arthur Schomburg's Letters to Langston Hughes, 1932-37" at Cornell's Puerto Rican Studies Conference, and "Haiti and the Question(ing) of the Enlightenment in Caribbean Neobaroque Writing" at the 2007 ACLA conference. Among his forthcoming publications are "La era pospuesta: impresiones sobre la 'industria Lezama,' 1989-2006" and the entry on Lola Rodríguez de Tió in Routledge's *Latin American Women Writers: An Encyclopedia*. He is currently working on two manuscripts, *Counterfeit Islands: Essays in Caribbean Archivology* and *Havana Joyces: Paradigms of High Modernism in Cuban Literary Politics*. He is also editing Lola Rodríguez de Tió's 1895-1898 New York epistolary and a bilingual selection of Martín Espada's poetry.

**Hélène Tissières** wrote an article "Biennale de Dakar 2006: oeuvres exposées et témoignages," which appeared in the review *Ethiopiqes*. Her book entitled *Écritures en transhumance* came out in May 2006. She also began a series of prints on Palestine at Flatbet Press.

**Jeffrey Walker** was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for 2007-2008, to pursue a project tentatively titled "The Genuine Teachers of This Art: Rhetorical Education in Antiquity."

**Alexandra Wettlaufer** was named a National Humanities Center Fellow for 2007-8. She was also appointed to the Editorial Board of the *European Romantic Review* and elected Second Vice-President of the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Association. Her recent and forthcoming publications include articles in *Romance*

*Studies* (2007), *The Romanic Review* (2007) and *Victorian Review* (2008).

**Jennifer Wilks** presented “Nègre bossal, nègre créole, and American Racial Politics” at the Rice University symposium “The Hacienda and the Plantation: Historical, Political, and Cultural Legacies.” She also organized and moderated the panel “Caribbean Anti-Hero(in)es” at the International Conference on Caribbean Studies on South Padre Island.

**Margaret Woodruff-Wieding** published an article titled “Sound and Fury in a Madhouse: Weiss’ Enlightenment Project from the Reign of Terror” in *Notizblätter: Mitteilungen der Internationalen Peter-Weiss-Gesellschaft*. She also wrote a review of Antony Tatlow’s *Shakespeare, Brecht, and the Intercultural Sign*, which appeared in *The Comparatist*.

**Jorie Woods** was awarded a Rome prize by The American Academy in Rome for her research in Renaissance and Early Modern studies. The prize is awarded annually to only 30 recipients, who participate in a residential fellowship at the academy lasting from six months to two years.

**Li Yang** presented a paper entitled “International Film Festivals and the Chinese Experience” at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies annual meeting in Vancouver. She also gave birth to a baby girl, Brooke, in September 2006.

**Hülya Yıldız** presented the following papers: “Nineteenth Century Ottoman Women Writers” at the annual ACLA conference in Puebla, Mexico; “Dangerous Liaisons: Non-Muslim Courtesans and Ottoman Muslim Men or Ethnicity and Gender in the Early Turkish Novels” at the 12th Annual Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities at Columbia University; “Emergence of the Novel Genre in Turkey” at the SCMLA convention in Dallas; and “Between ‘Alafranga’ and ‘Alaturka,’ Femme Fatale and Chaste Woman: Westernization and Gender in Early Turkish Novels” at the 2006 Middle East and Central Asia Politics, Economics, and Society at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah.

## Job Placement News

**Russell Cobb** has been interested in the intersections of journalism and literature since he started research on his dissertation, “Our Man in Paris: *Mundo Nuevo*, the Cuban Revolution, and the Politics of Cultural Freedom,” which he defended in May. Now, he’s going back to journalism. He earned a Village Voice Media Writing Fellowship in May and will work at the Houston Press for six months.

**Laura Sager** defended her dissertation entitled “Writing and Filming the Painting: Ekphrasis in Literature and the Visual Arts” in November 2006. The dissertation has been accepted for publication by Rodopi Editorial. She is currently working at the University of Dallas as Adjunct Instructor of German and Spanish, and will be a Visiting Assistant Professor of German, Spanish, and the newly developed Comparative Literary Traditions program starting this fall. She will have her first baby this summer.

**Vessela Valiavitcharska** has accepted a tenure-track position at the University of Maryland in College Park. She is currently completing her dissertation “Rhetoric and Poetics in Byzantine Homilies: The Case of Rhythm” and will defend it in July of 2007.

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## Fourth Annual GRACLS Conference

Un(bound): the Humanities in Transition

October 5-6, 2007

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Haun Saussy  
Professor of Comparative Literature at Yale University  
and Vice President of the ACLA

In the age of globalism, the humanities have become the place for forming new pathways that connect academic disciplines and refashion curricular boundaries. Rapid change calls upon the scholar to embody a new spirit of trans/inter-disciplinarity, leading to scholarship that detects and crosses geographical and disciplinary divisions.

This conference will seek to explore comparative projects that emerge from diverse geographies, varied languages, and multiple methodologies. The conference begins with the following questions and aims to compare answers:

How do the many fields within the rubric of "the Humanities" engage each other in dialogue? Does theory alone bind us together or do we examine a shared subject matter? With what potential, and what risk, do literary scholars appropriate methodologies from other fields, from history to folklore, from media studies to anthropology? When we cross these borders should we worry about losing sight of the literary, and should we be concerned about such a loss? How do our colleagues, such as sociologists or performance theorists, reply to us as they include literary or cultural texts within their work?

This conference invites papers from scholars in literary and cultural fields but especially welcomes submissions from colleagues in other fields for whom literature and culture have become pressing and important. We encourage projects from non-European/North American fields particularly, as well those which consider the points of contact between Euro-American and global cultures.

Deadline for the submissions of abstracts: July 15, 2007

For more information about the conference, please visit the Program's web site at:

<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/complit/conferences>