

UC DAVIS

Comparative Literature

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the Chair

I am happy to report that the Department of Comparative Literature continues to thrive. We are very proud of our many graduates, both B.A. and Ph.D. recipients, who have gone on to successful careers in law, medicine, veterinary science and education. Our undergraduate classes continue to attract avid readers and budding intellectuals. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome back all returning students, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels. This year, we also welcome six new graduate students who have joined us: Amanda Batarseh, (English, Italian and Arabic); Patrick Cabell (English, Spanish and French); Amy Riddle, (English, French, Arabic and Wolof); Deborah Young (classical languages, Latin and Greek); Michelle Westbrook, (English, French and Spanish); Zhen Zhang, (Russian, Chinese and Bosnian-Croatian-Serb). As is clear from our new graduate students, we continue to

bring a very interdisciplinary set of language skills, a hallmark of what it means to work in Comparative Literature. Comparative Literature prides itself in its global reach and the many languages and cultures with which our students work. As we begin this year, I look forward to seeing all of you at our events and hope this year proves to be an outstanding year for all of you.



Juliana Schiesari

Congratulations! Comparative Literature Ph.D.s take their research to the classroom in new jobs

- Brian Davisson**, Assistant Professor of Spanish, Mississippi State University
Masha Boston, Assistant Professor of Russian, Lawrence University
Haomin Gong, Assistant Professor, Case Western Reserve University
Shannon Hays, Lecturer, University of California, Santa Cruz
Daphne Potts, Lecturer in Comparative Literature, University of California, Davis
Elizabeth Skwiot, Assistant Professor of Spanish, Mount Mary College



Left to right: Boston, Gong, Hays, Potts, Skwiot.

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Congratulations to 2012 Graduates in Comparative Literature!

Lisette Betsinger
Paulo De Morais
Regina Dettmer
Charles Ellis
Johnny Kuang
Gabrielle Lampert
Grace Llewellyn
Liliya Oliferuk
Susan Ortega
Gilda Posada

Sabrina Rohatgi
Jeffrey Velasco
Samuel Waters
Jessica Wathen
Kristin Harvey
Kylie Negin
Jannette Ramirez
Daniela G Mariam
Leanna Gallegos

This list includes students who have been awarded a degree this past June, September, and who have filed for graduation this December.

Announcing New Books by Students and Faculty!

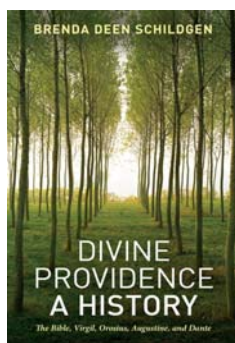
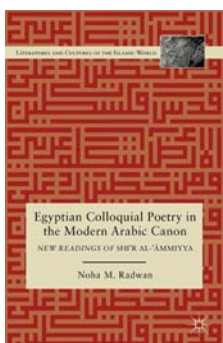


Navid Saberi-Najafi, *The Cross-Cultural Composition Class for ESL Writing Students: A Comfortable and Fruitful Learning Environment for ESL Students* (Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012).

Juliana Schiesari, *Polymorphous Domesticities: Pets, Bodies and Desire in Four Modern Writers* (University of California, Press, 2012).

Noha Radwan, *Egyptian Colloquial Poetry and the Modern Arabic Canon* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Brenda Schildgen, *Divine Providence, A History: The Bible, Virgil, Orosius, Augustine, and Dante* (Continuum, 2012).



Spring 2012 Graduate Student Colloquium Features New Research on Revolution, Race, Gender, Memory, the Imagination of Space and the Non-human

Graduate students, new Ph.D.s, and faculty from Comp Lit and other departments gathered to learn about exciting new research at the 2012 Graduate Research Colloquium, featuring presentations on a range of topics by students in Comp Lit, Spanish and Portuguese, and German, and closing with a presentation by Dr. Brian Davisson. The presentations generated lively discussions and plenty of food for thought about the connections between our diverse areas of research.

Cloe-Mai Le Gall-Scoville, Comp Lit, *The Wisdom of Perfect Beings: Métissage as a Critique of Whiteness in Conrad's Almayer's Folly*

Monica Keane, Comp Lit, *Frate Cipolla's mappa mundi: Boccaccio's Geographic Imagination in Decameron 6.10*

Verena Hutter, German, *For Victims and Perpetrators Only? Tattooing as Holocaust Remembrance*

Ted Geier, Comp Lit, *Romancing the Stone: Nonhumanhuman Communities in British Romantic Literature*

Valerie Hecht, Spanish and Portuguese, "Lola volvió a tomar su revólver": *The Representation of Violent Women in Woman-authored Texts of Mexico's Porfiriato*

Dr. Brian Davisson, Comp Lit, *The Narrative Is (Not) the Territory: Luis Cardoza y Aragón's Guatemala, las líneas de su mano and the Guatemalan Revolution*



From left, clockwise: Cloe-Mai Le Gall-Scoville, Verena Hutter, and Ted Geier. (Photo credit: Senovia Han)

Schildgen and Venkatesan Win Grant for Collaborative Interdisciplinary Research on Reception Studies

Brenda Deen Schildgen and Archana Venkatesan, both professors of comparative literature, are aiming to change the way people think about the humanities. "Reception is really important to how we understand the world today. We talk constantly of the global communications we're forming through social media, and these are forms of reception. This is a way of thinking of how the humanities are imagined in the future," asserted Venkatesan, who holds a dual appointment in religious studies. Reception studies allow an examination of how social media is changing public reception of global communities. Ideas, including texts and art, are easily spread through today's global communication infrastructure. Venkatesan argues that the humanities have a role to play in understanding these new types of movements and communications: "We have to think about humanities as not just service-oriented but as critical in formulating the reception of that knowledge of how we think of ourselves." Concerning the role of the humanities in higher education, Schildgen explained that "the humanities are under stress, so in order for us to be able to express ourselves, we need to work together."



More collaboration occurring among humanities scholars as well as scientific researchers will demonstrate the ways the humanities and sciences enrich each other, allowing for more nuanced research results. Meetings in Fall 2012 included a discussion of a book about cultural exchange and trade between South Asia and the Middle East and presentations by Provost Ralph Hexter and Dean Jessie Ann Owens about the reception of Latin texts in Western culture.

Geier and Schiesari Organize Interdisciplinary Animal Studies Research Group

Ted Geier, Ph.D. candidate, and Juliana Schiesari, Professor of Comparative Literature, received funding for the Interdisciplinary Animal Studies Research Cluster from the Davis Humanities Institute. The group includes other doctoral graduate students such as Tori White and Cloe-Mai Le Gall-Scoville. The UC Davis Interdisciplinary Animal Studies Research Cluster gathers participants from the Humanities and Social Sciences, the School of Veterinary Science, the School of Law, the Center for Mind and Brain, and other fields from across the campus community in order to investigate contemporary and historical manifestations of animal issues, such as the roles and uses of animals in society and cultural production, Animal Law, medical practice, ethics and animal rights, and broader theoretical questions of nonhuman life and animal status. Beginning in its inaugural academic year, 2012-13, the group will host public speaker events and build the framework for expanded faculty, graduate, and undergraduate opportunities in Interdisciplinary Animal Studies at UC Davis.

For more information on these and other grants, visit the Davis Humanities Institute website (http://dhi.ucdavis.edu/?page_id=1026)

New Issue of *Brújula*, Graduate Student-run Journal at UC Davis



Graduate Students at UC Davis working with The Hemispheric Institute of the Americas, including new Ph.D. Brian Davisson and Ph.D. candidate Ted Geier from Comp Lit, published Volume 9 of *Brújula: revista interdisciplinaria sobre estudios latinoamericano: The Origins of Central American Narrative* in its Spring 2012 issue.

There is little question of the increased presence of Central American literary and cultural studies within the past few decades, through the criticism of scholars throughout both the region and the world. The growth of conferences and the publication of books and articles dedicated to Central America provide evidence of the newfound dedication to studying its cultural production. At the same time, the study of Central American literature and culture in many ways has the feel of a recently-formed discipline, even despite being the home of the recognized father of the *modernista* movement, and of Latin America's second Nobel Prize laureate, the first to win the award for narrative production. This issue of *Brújula* should make clear the need to restructure the canon of both Central American and Latin American literatures in particular as taught in the United States.

Check the journal site, brujula.ucdavis.edu, for information on Volume 10, which will focus on Brazil.

Comparative Literature Undergraduates Study Abroad in 2012



From Naguib Mahfouz to the Pyramids in Egypt

In Noha Radwan's summer abroad course in Egypt, "Something Old, Something New," students read the novels of Cairo's raconteur and Nobel Laureate author, Naguib Mahfouz, while touring the setting of his novels. Students also read the works of younger authors, watched the films of Egyptian filmmakers and met these authors and artists for a discussion of the multiple representations of Cairo in literature and film. Students visited the Pyramids of Giza, the city of Alexandria and had the opportunity to visit Luxor, home of the tomb of King Tut and many other Ancient Egyptian monuments.



Texts and Temples in South India

Sixteen students from a range of disciplines participated in Archana Venkatesan's summer program in India, "Palaces of the Gods: Texts and Temples in South India." Students engaged the relationships between text and visual culture. The course was based at the French Institute of Pondicherry, Pondicherry, but students also visited a number of monuments, temples and sites in Tamil Nadu, focusing on the cities of Mamallapuram, Kancipuram and Tanjavur. As part of the course, the students also learned about Indian inscriptions, participated in making estampages, and visited a bronze casting workshop.

Florence and the Birth of Modern Europe

Students in Brenda Schildgen's summer abroad course "Florence and the Birth of Modern Europe" learned about the explosion in economics, arts, science, poetry, and politics that occurred in Florence in what we have come to call the Italian Renaissance. This course, taught in Florence and its environs, focused on four major Florentine figures, who emerged from the economic growth and political turmoil that accompanied this cultural transformation: Dante, a poet; Machiavelli, a political theorist; Michelangelo, artist and poet; and Galileo, scientist and writer.



East Meets West in Berlin

In Gail Finney's summer abroad course, "East Meets West in Germany: Berlin Culture Before and After the Wall," sixteen students explored the political conditions which led to the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the twofold circumstances it created, and the events that brought about its fall in 1989. The course investigated the divided Berlin, as a microcosm of the divided Germany, through literary, cinematic, artistic, and musical works as well as through numerous visits to museums and monuments in the city itself, such as the Checkpoint Charlie Museum, the GDR (East Germany) Museum, the German Historical Museum, the Topography of Terror exhibit, the Jewish Museum, and the New National Gallery.



To learn more about the programs, please visit summer-abroad.ucdavis.edu.

Winona Wagner's Letter from Italy

Ciao tutti! My name is Winona Wagner, I am the UCD Comparative Literature peer adviser and I have spent this past fall quarter studying abroad in Florence, Italy. Thanks to the wonderful people who have made this fall quarter program possible, especially coordinator Margherita Heyer-Caput from the UC Davis Italian and Film Studies departments, I was able to live, learn and experience the culture of Florence first hand in the very center of the city.

At first it was difficult to adjust to the new customs, strange language, and obscure street signs, but now that it's almost coming to an end, I find myself enjoying every last awkward piece of being a foreign student abroad, while I still can. Probably the most challenging aspect of the whole quarter has been communication with people that I meet outside of a school environment. I found it much easier to listen to, speak and understand Italian in class than anywhere else, but even when struggling to communicate, I was aware that my perspective and language skills have been growing immensely here since day one.

For anyone declared or thinking of becoming a Comparative Literature major, I cannot stress enough the importance of going abroad. I had only taken two years of Italian language through UC Davis when I got to Italy and my reading and writing skills, along with my whole grasp of the language has improved so much. My only regret is that I didn't stay here longer because I am beginning to notice a very significant difference in my speaking abilities and the



rate at which I am learning this language, and it's almost time to go. However you choose to go abroad (through UCD, quarter abroad, EAP, or even independently) the experience will enrich your life, expand your perception, and (perhaps most importantly) help you immensely with the language requirements for the Comparative Literature major.

Feel free to email me at wewagner@ucdavis.edu any questions about studying abroad, resources for traveling in Europe or just to swap stories. Good luck on everything in Davis and I hope to see some of you readers in January!

Ci vediamo presto! Ciao!

Congratulations to Shannon Marie Hoopes, winner of the Amy Lee Essay Prize!



Undergraduate junior Shannon Marie Hoopes from Anna Einarsdottir's section of COM 3: "Major Books of Western Culture: The Modern Crisis," is the winner of the 2012 Amy Lee Essay Prize for her essay "The Prostitute and the Vamp: Subordination of the Modern Woman". The Amy Lee Essay Prize is awarded in memory of Amy Lee, graduate student in Comparative Literature, for an essay selected by a committee consisting of the graduate adviser, the TA supervisor, and graduate student instructors who have taught COM 1-4.

The Prostitute and the Vamp: Subordination of the Modern Woman

The shift from the traditional to the modern involves changing roles and identities for women. The use of archetypal figures, such as "prostitute" and "vamp," in literature gives insight into the portrayal of the modern woman and her role as a potential threat to men. At first glance, these terms may appear drastically different: the prostitute sells her sexuality for survival, while the manipulative vamp preys on and exploits men for both power and pleasure. Despite the notable differences between the "prostitute" and the seemingly powerful "vamp" figure, the portrayal of these female

character types in *Voyage in the Dark* and *Tomorrow's Eve* reveals that the modern woman, while she may appear threatening, remains completely reliant upon men and her own sexuality. Thus, both roles are ultimately representations of subordination brought on by men who see the modern woman as a threat.

Jean Rhys' *Voyage in the Dark* consistently portrays the prostitute, exemplified by Anna, as weak, emotional, and entirely dependent upon men. Anna's thoughts after Walter puts money in her purse, for example, express the way in which the prostitute is meant to serve, rather than control, men: "I meant to say, 'What are you doing?' But when I went up to him, instead of saying, 'Don't do that,' I said. 'All right, if you like – anything you like, any way you like.' And I kissed his hand" (*Voyage in the Dark*, p. 38). The statement, "anything you like, any way you like" clearly demonstrates Anna's willingness to serve and be completely subordinate to Walter. Moreover, her subordination is further exemplified through her inability to say what she "meant to say"—Walter's influence is so strong that she cannot even control her own speech. In addition, the fact that Anna "kissed his hand" reinforces the portrayal of the prostitute as one who serves. At the same time, however, this act also hints at Anna's desire for an emotional connection with Walter.

Throughout the novel, the emotions Anna experiences in her relationship with Walter appear to make her weak and ultimately

Seth Schein Reflects on a Career in Comparative Literature and Classics and the Development of Comparative Literature at UC Davis



What was it like to move from Classics to Comp Lit? What did you find that you missed from Classics, and what made the move to Comp Lit worthwhile?

I was hired by the Comp Lit Program (we were not a department until a couple of years ago) in a search chaired by Gail Finney during the 1990-91 academic year. I deferred coming to Davis until the fall of 1992 so that my wife could complete psychoanalytical training at the William Alanson White Institute in New York City. During 1991-92 I was asked to serve as Director of the Program as soon as I arrived, which I did for three years, and I also was graduate advisor in my first year. Later I served as

graduate advisor for seven years in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and I was a member of the graduate committee for another six or seven years, so I think it is fair to say that my main departmental contribution has been to the graduate program. I also would single out two lasting contributions as Director: I recruited several colleagues in other departments to transfer .5 of their FTE to Comp Lit, and I made it easier for faculty from other departments and programs to teach for Comp Lit, and for Comp Lit faculty to give courses in other departments and programs.

I moved from Classics to Comp Lit long before coming to Davis, though I have always continued to teach some Greek and Latin. As an Assistant Professor of Classics at Columbia University, half my teaching was in general literature and humanities courses. When SUNY, College at Purchase, was founded in 1972-73, the Literature program was looking for an early modernist who could teach some Classics, and I convinced them to hire me as a classicist who could teach early modern literature and thought, which had been my area of specialization as an undergraduate English major. Eventually I joined a similar Literature program at UC Santa Cruz, and in both places I got to teach a fairly wide range of courses. This led to my being hired in Comp Lit at Queens College, where I served as department chair and taught Comp Lit at the CUNY Graduate School. That in turn gave me the credentials to apply for a Comp Lit job at Davis.

Mostly it was liberating to move from Classics to Literature and then Comparative Literature. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Classics was still a rather conservative, positivist discipline; I felt more at home in programs that offered scope for my interdisciplinary, interpretive, and theoretical interests, and where there seemed to be less of a gap between my professional work as a teacher and scholar and my personal and political activities. The downside was that I could no longer teach beginning Greek, about which I felt a kind of missionary zeal, or give as many intermediate and advanced Greek and Latin courses, which I've always enjoyed because the students read quite slowly and I have time to reread and rethink texts that mean a great deal to me.

How has Comp Lit at Davis changed since you first joined the department?

I think the most important changes in Comp Lit over the twenty years I have been at UCD are (1) the increase in the number of ladder faculty (from 3.7 to 8.5 FTE), decrease in the number of Lecturers (from 6 to 1 FTE), rise in the number of undergraduate majors (from c. 25 to c. 45), and increase in the number of graduate students (from 16 or 17 to c. 25), who are now admitted from a much larger and more competitive pool of applicants; (2) the presence of outstanding colleagues and students with scholarly interest(s) in non-Western literatures; (3) better funding for grad. students, especially in the number of TAs we can offer; (4) the far greater number and variety of undergraduate courses and the broader (though not broad enough) range of graduate courses; (5) the remarkable success, since the mid-1990s, of a high percentage of our Ph.D.s in obtaining tenure track jobs. I'm proud to have worked with colleagues to help bring about most of these changes, though I regret that we have lost so many Lecturer positions because of budgetary constriction and the divisional policy of not replacing those who retired or left the program for other reasons.

What has been your best experience at Davis?

I have happy memories of working with outstanding undergraduates in both Greek and Comp Lit, and it's been especially gratifying to teach (and learn from) several generations of wonderful graduate students. My "best experience" has been to team-teach with Kari Lokke, who has turned me on to so many books, authors, and ideas over the years and been such a *simpatica* friend and colleague.

What advice would you give to students of comparative literature?

I would urge students to keep working *really hard* on their languages, to force themselves to read as many primary texts as possible in the original, even if this comes slowly in their second and third literatures, and also to read criticism and scholarship in as many languages as they know. I think that Comp Lit shares various interests in theory, history, film, politics, and culture with the national literatures and other academic fields, but the kinds of interpretation, research, and teaching that our work in a range of languages and literary traditions makes possible are what make us distinctive. I also would urge students, especially graduate students, to engage with literature and interpretive approaches outside their own areas of specialization and comfort, which means taking a wide range of departmental and other courses with a wide range of faculty. I think it is a counter to the spirit of Comp Lit and a lost opportunity for graduate students, who always come into a program with quite specific interests and ambitions, not to stretch themselves and be open to new texts, ideas, cultures, and historical periods. It also is not strategic because, in the current budgetary constriction, outside of a relatively small number of research universities, everyone is looking to hire new faculty with multiple interests and the ability to teach in many areas.

What are your plans for retirement?

I plan to travel and write. I'm working on a book of essays on Homeric epic and its reception and a translation of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, and I have other projects in mind, including a personal memoir of a career in and between Classics and Comp Lit.

Interview conducted by Tori White. Tori is a second-year graduate student in Comparative Literature who works on Early Modern texts in English and Romance Languages. She loves teaching, baseball, and growing heirloom tomatoes.

Welcome Remarks from Sheldon Lu, Graduate Adviser

The Graduate Program in Comparative Literature at UC Davis continues its tradition of academic excellence. In fall 2012, six new students joined the Graduate Program. Each one of these new students is proficient in several languages, and they together bring diverse literary legacies to the Department: Arabic, Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian, Chinese, French, Greek, Italian, Latin, Russian, Spanish, and Wolof.

Our continuing students flourish and make good academic progress. They are TAs and Readers for a wide range of courses, programs, and departments on the UC Davis campus. Many of them have presented papers at national and international academic

conferences. In summertime, some of them travel to other places or foreign countries to enroll in language schools or conduct archival, ethnographic research. Some of them are recipients of competitive fellowships of various kinds.

Our recent Ph.D.s have done very well and have become assistant professors and lecturers at various universities. We also hear good news from many of our alumni: they have published new books, received academic promotions, or relocated to better institutions. The extended family of Comparative Literature grows and flourishes.

Congratulations to 2012 Ph.D.s Elizabeth Skwiot and Daphne Potts and to Christina Schiesari for her 2012 M.A.!

Welcome New Graduate Students!



Amanda Batarseh is from Sacramento, and completed her B.A. in Art History and Italian Studies at Scripps College. She earned her M.A. in Italy where she lived for five years. She has studied Arabic at UC Davis and Middlebury, and is now focusing her research in Arabic and Italian literature. Her research will range from the medieval to the early modern period, specifically from Arabic and Italian sources during and following the crusades. This year, she is teaching the first-year series of Arabic language.



Zhen Zhang, who is originally from China finished his B.A. in Russian Language and Literature in Beijing Foreign Studies University. For the past three years, he has spent most of his time in the beautiful American Northwest, in Seattle and Eugene, where he completed his M.A. degree in Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of Washington and worked as an adjunct instructor at the University of Oregon. His current research focus is twentieth century Chinese and Russian modernity and post-modernism in literature and film.



Deborah Young completed her B.A. in English and Classics (Greek Emphasis) at Kent State University where she completed an undergraduate honors thesis, "The Machinic Assemblage: Dismantling Authorship" which is published on the OhioLINK Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Center. She conducts research in English, Greek, and French literature, especially through texts of Post-structuralism, Attic Tragedy, and Presocratic philosophy. Her work will focus on critical and queer theories.



Patrick Cabell holds a bachelor's degree in Literature from UC Santa Cruz. His topics of interest include the Political Novel, Utopia, and the 21st Century. Patrick's research looks at conceptions of the future in various literatures, with a focus on experiences of post-modernity in the Americas. His article "Mexico en Verano" examining the social and political context of Mexico's 2012 presidential elections recently appeared in *Viewpoint Magazine*.



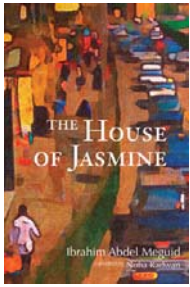
Amy Riddle majored in English at Boise State University. Before coming to UC Davis she was a Peace Corps volunteer in Benin, West Africa and a junior high teacher in Eagle, Idaho. She studied at the Arabic Language Institute of Fez under a CLEA Fulbright grant and researched high school literary education as a Fulbright Scholar in Dakar, Senegal. She is interested in African literature, human rights (and responsibilities), the Arab Spring, Islam, international high school literature curriculum, and critical theory. She studies Arabic and French and would like to learn Wolof and Yoruba. She loves living in Davis with her husband and daughters.



Michelle Westbrook completed her B.A. in French and Anthropology at UC Berkeley. Before coming to Davis, she worked as a conversational English teacher at a high school in Langon, France. She is interested in exploring theories of identity and gender roles construed from the comparison of ideas of romanticism and the romantic hero with those of feminist and postcolonial literatures. Michelle focuses on 19th and 20th century French, English, and Spanish literatures. She is considering a D.E. in Feminist Theory and Research.

New Research in Comparative Literature

Articles, Essays, and Translations



Noha Radwan, tr., *The House of Jasmine* by Ibrahim Abdel Meguid, Interlink Publishers, 2012

Elisabeth Lore. "Tangled Voices: multilingualism at work in Patrick Chamoiseau's *Chronique des sept misères*." *Antillanité, créolité, littérature-monde*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming. "Defiance Through Language" in *Defying the Global*

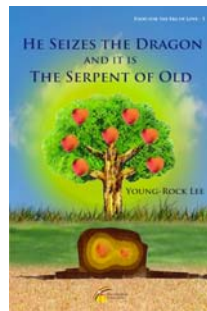
Language: Studies in Literature and Culture, ed. Cheryl Toman, forthcoming. Elizabeth Lore, tr., "'We are the mirror of your fears': Haitian Identity and Zombification" by Franck Degoul, in *Better Off Dead: The Evolution of the Zombie as Post-Human*, ed. Deborah Christie and Sarah Juliet Lauro, Fordham University Press, 2011.

Navid Saberi-Najafi. "Edward W. Said's Humanism: A Road to Enlightenment and Coexistence" in *The International Journal of Critical Cultural Studies: A section of The International Journal of the Humanities*, Navid Saberi-Najafi and Steve Chandler, "A Shift from the Mainstream Class to the Cross-Cultural Option for ESL Writing Students" in *Proceedings of the 2012 Hawaii University International Conferences on Arts & Humanities*.

Kari Lokke. "Gender and Sexuality" in *Handbook of Romanticism Studies* ed. Julia Wright and Joel Faflak, Blackwell, 2012. "British Legacies of Corinne and the Commercialization of Enthusiasm" *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society, and the Sister Arts*, ed. Tili Boon Cuillé and Karyna Szmurlo, Bucknell University Press, forthcoming.

Sheldon Lu. *From Historicity to Fictionality: The Chinese Poetics of Narrative* (Stanford University Press, 1994), translated into Chinese, Beijing University Press, forthcoming. "Notes on Four Major Paradigms in Chinese-Language Film Studies." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 6.1 (2012): 15-25. "Spatial Reconfigurations of Beijing: Transnational Architecture, Avant-Garde Art, and Local Documentary Practice." *Asian Cinema* 22.2 (Fall/Winter 2011): 352-363. Review of *Parallels, Interactions, and Illuminations: Traversing Chinese and Western Theories of the Sign* by Ersu Ding

(University of Toronto Press, 2010), *Comparative Literature* 64.2, Spring 2012, 230-232.



Senovia Han. Three new translations of work by Young-Rock Lee from Korean to English in 2012: *He Seizes the Dragon*, and it is the *Serpent of Old* (Korean published July 2012), a portrayal of the figures of the dragon and the serpent in the Bible; *The Surrender of the Other* (Korean published April 2012) depicts a spiritual world that cannot be seen "with the eyes of the flesh." With references to core beliefs in Buddhism, the author discusses "human attachments" and the symbolism of the table where the family gathers to eat together. *Meet the King of Light* (Korean published July 2011) depicts God as a living person who moves about in the spiritual world and discusses the difficulty of attaining contentment.

Award Recipients to Pursue Research



Monica Powers Keane (left) received the Dissertation-Year Fellowship for 2012-2013 to complete her dissertation, "Mapping the *Decameron*: Boccaccio and Geography," which examines how Giovanni Boccaccio uses geography in the *Decameron* to engage with the political systems of mid-14th century Italy.

Chris Tong conducted archival research on environmental ethics and aesthetics at the National Library of China and the Beijing University Library in summer 2012 with a Margrit Mondavi Fellowship from the UC Davis Humanities Institute and departmental summer research funding.

Ted Geier studied bison conservation and Native American ecological management in relation to comparative Romantic literature and North American environmental rhetoric at the National Bison Range, Yellowstone National Park, Custer State Park, and Badlands National Park in Summer 2012 with research funding.

Giovanna Montenegro received a CLS Alumni Development Award to continue Russian coursework during her year as a Fulbright grantee in Berlin, Germany. Giovanna was selected as a Mellon Fellow in Early Modern Studies for 2012-2013. Led by Visiting Assistant Professor Ari Friedlander, the Mellon Fellows meet as a group throughout the year to share their work in progress as they prepare articles for publication and complete dissertation chapters.

Teaching Presentation by Senior Instructors for Graduate Students

Noha Radwan, TA Supervisor, organized two presentations for COM instructors by senior faculty members in Fall 2012. Seth Schein discussed approaches to teaching Homer and Scott McLean presented ways to teach Goethe. The presentations complemented Noha's regular meetings to support graduate students as they develop their teaching experience in courses in world literature and major books of Western literature.

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Continuation from page 8.



Megan Ammirati (left) received funding to study advanced Mandarin at the Beijing Language and Culture University during the summer of 2012.

Navid Saberi-Najafi received a travel award from the Graduate Student Association to present a paper at the 2012 Hawaii University International Conferences on Arts & Humanities. He also received a travel award from the Southern Comparative Literature

Association to present a paper at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Archana Venkatesan received the Shivdasani Fellowship from the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Oxford University. She will be in residence in Oxford during the Winter 2013 term where she will complete work on her current book project on the 9th century Tamil poet, Nammalvar, and offer three seminar lectures on her recent research. Archana also received a National Endowment of the Arts fellowship to complete her translation of the Tiruvaymoli (Sacred Speech), a ninth century poem by the Tamil poet, Nammalvar, in collaboration with Francis X. Clooney. The translation is under contract with Penguin Classics.

Faculty and Students Share New Research Around the World

Anna Björk Einarsdóttir presented "Willing the Event: On Prescriptive Politics," at the 2012 MLG Institute on Culture and Society at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada and "Surfaces of Capital in the Cinema of Martin Rejtman" at the 14th Lusophone and Hispanic Graduate Student Conference at University of California, Santa Barbara.



Neil Larsen traveled to the Universidade Estadual de São Paulo, Campinas (UNICAMP) in Campinas, Brazil, where he gave a week-long mini-seminar (in Portuguese) on the subject of "immanent critique" to graduate students from the Department of Literary Theory. He was accompanied in the seminars by a colleague at UNICAMP, Prof. Fábio Durão.

Giovanna Montenegro presented "Sixteenth-Century Travel Narratives and Maps: Textual and Visual Representations of Germans and Huguenots in South America" at the VI Alexander von Humboldt & Ibn Batouta Conference in Casablanca, Morocco in November and "Hübsch oder hässlich? Légendes dans l'Indianische Historia (1557) de Nikolaus Federmann" at the Université de Toulouse Le Mirail Journée d'Etudes du 16

décembre 2011. She also presented "Aufklärung, visions et spectres, entre traditions et nouveaux défis" and "The Sublime in Sixteenth-Century Travel Narratives and Images: Textual and Visual Representations of Encounters in South America." at the Jahrestagung 2012 der Gesellschaft für Überseegeschichte, Vienna, Austria.



Navid Saberi-Najafi presented "Edward W. Said's Humanism: A Road to Enlightenment and Coexistence" at the Tenth International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities, Centre Mont-Royal, Montreal, in June and "The Affinity between Attar's Manteq ut-Tair and Chaucer's The Parliament of Fowls" at the Southern Comparative Literature Association, held at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in October. With Steve Chandler, Navid presented "A Shift from the Mainstream Class to the Cross-

Cultural Option for ESL Writing Students" at the Hawaii University International Conferences on Arts & Humanities in January.

Megan Ammirati gave a presentation entitled "Sai Jinhua on the Stage: Acknowledging the Contributions of Female Performers of Male-Author'd Texts" at the Association of Asian Performance in Washington DC in August and at the Rocky Mountain MLA in Boulder, Colorado in October. She also served as a respondent for the poster sessions at the Association of Asian Performance.

Monica Powers Keane presented the first chapter of her dissertation, "Ideal Governance and Dystopian Florence: Communal Politics in the Frame of Boccaccio's *Decameron*" at the University of California Medieval History Seminar in November and presented her essay "Frate Cipolla's *mappa mundi*: Boccaccio's Geographic Imagination in *Decameron* 6.10" at the Medieval Association of the Pacific's annual conference in the spring.

Kari Lokke participated in a symposium organized by the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research at the University of Florida honoring the 200th anniversary of the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in February. At the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference sponsored by the University of Colorado in March, she delivered a paper entitled "Grasping at Immortality": Landmarks of Freedom in Mary Wollstonecraft's Letters Written

During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark." Kari presented a paper on a poem by the late eighteenth-century British dissenter Anna Barbauld that re-writes Milton's *Paradise Lost*: "Prospects wide and various" in Anna Barbauld's "A Summer Evening's Meditation" at the North American Society for

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Continuation: Hoopes, The Prostitute and the Vamp

lead to her downfall. Her reaction after she kisses Walter's hand illustrates the emotional impact that he has on her: "I felt miserable suddenly and utterly lost. 'Why did I do that?' I thought" (*Voyage in the Dark*, p. 39). The way in which Anna changes emotions so "suddenly" reveals her susceptibility to her emotions and feelings—she even second-guesses her own actions because Walter's reaction makes her feel "utterly lost." These feelings of misery and confusion illuminate Walter's power over Anna's emotions and her susceptibility to these feelings—both of which lead to her downfall in the end. Moreover, Anna is constantly warned about the dangers of a prostitute feeling emotion. Maudie urges her to remain practical: "'Only, don't get soppy about him,' she said. 'That's fatal. The thing with men is to get everything you can out of them and not care a damn'" (*Voyage in the Dark*, p. 44). The use of the word "fatal" in these lines emphasizes the destructive effects that feeling emotion can have on women in Anna's position. Interestingly, Maudie argues that a woman should "get everything you can out of them," an idea which seems to allude to the vamp figure, sucking everything out of men. In this light, the existence of the vamp can be seen as a response to the situation Walter creates by using Anna and not providing for her emotionally. Perhaps, then, the vamp figure represents an attempt to escape Anna's emotionally weak position and her ultimately tragic fate.

In contrast to the prostitute, the vamp figure portrayed in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's *Tomorrow's Eve* initially appears to have complete power over men. Edison's account of Evelyn Habal paints her as an evil seductress whom men like Mr. Anderson cannot possibly resist. Edison notes, for example, how "The very respectable air of Miss Evelyn decided him" (*Tomorrow's Eve*, p. 104). This statement implies that Mr. Anderson no longer possesses the ability to make his own decisions—instead, the vamp "decided him." This portrayal places all blame on the vamp and suggests that men like Mr. Anderson are merely innocent and powerless victims. Further, the idea that the vamp has power over men can be seen in the way Evelyn appears to trap Mr. Anderson in her home: "Then Miss Evelyn, still sullen, seized the key to the door, turned the lock with it, and flung it out the window" (*Tomorrow's Eve*, p. 105). In this case, it seems that Evelyn literally gives Mr. Anderson no escape—the description portrays her as a villain holding a man captive. Moreover, the level of detail described above—such as the unnecessary addition that Evelyn is "still sullen"—seems odd given the fact that Edison himself did not witness this scene. One might indeed question whether Edison's account is purely factual or an embellished and dramatized story. Thus, the detailed way in which Edison tells this story could suggest that he exaggerates the evil nature of the vamp figure to justify her subordination.

Moreover, Edison's portrayal of the vamp suggests that she, unlike the prostitute, has no emotional capacity. Edison asserts that women like Evelyn Habal "obey blindly the obscure urgings of their malignant existence" (*Tomorrow's Eve*, p. 111). The use of phrases like "obscure urgings" suggests that the vamp relies more on an animalistic instinct than on human emotions. The comparison of the vamp to an animal dehumanizes her and demonstrates the way in which, despite her apparent power, she is consistently viewed as inferior to men. Moreover, Edison's description of the vamp's

"malignant existence" further exemplifies his tendency towards embellishment and hints at the danger the vamp figure poses for men.

Both the vamp and the prostitute are portrayed as dangerous to men, and thus their ultimate subordination is not surprising. The vamp figure clearly represents a danger to men, as her goal is to bring them to complete ruin. Edison explains Evelyn's devastating effect on Mr. Anderson: "before he encountered this deadly female, Anderson was of a nature as straightforward and finely tempered as the very best" (*Tomorrow's Eve*, p. 108). The notion of Evelyn being a "deadly female" undoubtedly portrays her as threatening to men. Moreover, her danger is further illustrated through her contrast with Anderson—a "straightforward" and "finely tempered" man. These descriptions of Mr. Anderson prior to his encounter with Evelyn also serve to emphasize the degree to which he is ruined—Evelyn preys on, and therefore poses a threat to, even the best of men. Further, while the vamp may be more directly threatening, the prostitute poses a threat to men as well. Despite her lack of power, Anna is still a source of potential danger for Walter. For example, Vincent insists that Anna "ought to send [Walter's letters] back" (*Voyage in the Dark*, p. 94). The fact that Walter does not want Anna to keep the letters suggests that someone finding out about their relationship could be detrimental to Walter and possibly bring about his social downfall. Thus, both the prostitute and the vamp represent threats to men and therefore must be controlled and subordinated by them.

Ultimately, both the prostitute and the vamp are completely dependent upon men and female sexuality, and both experience a kind of downfall. The very terms "prostitute" and "vamp," for example, rely on the notion of men and sexuality in their definitions—a prostitute sells her sexuality to men for money, while the vamp uses her sexuality to exploit men. Thus, both are defined solely in terms of their relationship to men and therefore have no identity of their own.

Anna's reliance on men is clearly articulated throughout *Voyage in the Dark*, and the downfall she experiences after Walter leaves her emphasizes this dependence. Anna's thoughts when she meets with Walter after receiving the letter ending their relationship illustrate the beginning of her downward spiral: "I thought, 'I'll hang on to your knees and make you understand and then you won't be able to, you won't be able to'" (*Voyage in the Dark*, p. 98). These thoughts clearly express Anna's complete dependence on Walter. The repetition at the end of her thoughts, for example, emphasizes a feeling of desperation—Anna feels that she will not be able to go on without Walter. In addition, the words "hang on to your knees" provide an image of begging and desperation, which evokes a sense of complete subordination on Anna's part. Moreover, the fact that Anna's thoughts are again incongruous with her actions enhances this idea of subordination even further—Anna cannot bring herself to do what she imagines, perhaps because she knows she has no hope. Further, this sense of hopelessness is evident throughout the latter half of the novel and expressed when Anna says, "I fell...I fell for a hell of a long time then" (*Voyage in the Dark*, p. 187). Though

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she is ostensibly speaking about a literal “fall,” it seems that these lines can be taken more metaphorically to express her downfall which occurs over “a hell of a long time.” Anna’s tragic fate in the end highlights her reliance upon Walter and reveals the prostitute’s position of complete subordination to men.

Despite her seemingly powerful and threatening nature, the vamp, too, undergoes a downfall in *Tomorrow’s Eve* and ultimately experiences the same kind of subordination as the prostitute. Edison’s description of the vamp suggests that she relies on men for pleasure and purpose in her life: “These creatures understand nothing but this trick of theirs, they can do nothing else, they understand nothing else” (*Tomorrow’s Eve*, p. 111). This statement demonstrates that the vamp has only one purpose and is therefore nothing without her sexuality and this game of preying on men. The repetition of “nothing” in this passage emphasizes the emptiness of these “creatures.” Further, the use of the word “creatures” here again degrades the vamp to the level of an animal. This idea about her lack of humanity is further articulated when Edison says, “though we list them among humanity” (*Tomorrow’s Eve*, p. 111)—a statement which implies that these women are not even human. Thus, the vamp is clearly portrayed as subordinate to men, and the

very identity of this “creature” remains inseparable from her sexuality and relationship to men. Moreover, the fact that this seemingly powerful and manipulative woman dies of consumption enhances the portrayal of her subordinate position—like Anna, Evelyn also experiences a kind of downfall. Further, in addition to this more literal downfall, the creation of the cyborg in response to women like Evelyn can be seen as the metaphorical downfall and subordination of the vamp figure. The cyborg attests to the vamp’s apparent inhumanity and reveals an attempt to control the potentially threatening modern woman.

Overall, both the prostitute and the vamp are subordinated by men in similar ways—their very existence can only be defined in terms of men, and, ultimately, men attempt to control them. It seems that the modern woman produces a kind of fear in men and becomes a seemingly threatening figure. Despite her continued reliance upon men, the modern woman appears to know how to use men for economic gain and pure manipulation. Her subordination, then, can be seen as men’s reaction to the fear of her potential power. Interestingly, modern attempts to control women, such as the invention of the cyborg, reveal a desire to restore traditional gender roles by recreating them in a new context.

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the Study of Romanticism conference at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland in August, organized by UC Davis Comparative Literature Ph.D. Patrick Vincent who is now Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Sciences at the University of Neuchâtel. Kari gave an invited presentation at a symposium on the Legacies of Mary Wollstonecraft held at the University of Florida Center for Women’s Studies and Gender Research in February. She also delivered a paper entitled “Landmarks of Freedom in Mary Wollstonecraft’s Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark” at the 20th anniversary celebration of the British Women Writers Conference held at the University of Colorado in June.

Kristen Bergman Waha attended the “Dickens Universe 2012: Bleak House” Conference in Santa Cruz in August and participated in a graduate student writing workshop and other professional development seminars throughout the week.

Sheldon Lu delivered an invited presentation entitled “Self-Reflexivity and Critical Paradigms in Chinese Film Studies” at the Annual Conference of Chinese Film Studies at Beijing University in October and a paper entitled “Femininity in Display and Contestation: The Artworks of Qin Yufen” at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Toronto in March. Sheldon will also give an invited plenary presentation at the conference on “Global



Modernities,” California State University, Los Angeles on May 3-4, 2013 (Conference website: <http://eastwestconferenceatcalstatela.blogspot.com/>)

Ted Geier gave an invited presentation at a conference on The Animal and The Academy at UC Berkeley in collaboration with the Institute of Critical Animal Studies in August and a presentation entitled “Communicable Dis-ease(s): Poetic Elisions of Species Categorization in British Romantic Literature” at Nonhuman: The 26th Annual Meeting of the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts in Milwaukee in September. He also gave a guest lecture entitled “Story vs. Plot & Narrative Analysis of Hitchcock’s Rear Window and Zhang Yimou’s Hero” in the Introduction to Film Studies sections at UC Davis in February.

Archana Venkatesan gave an invited presentation on her recent research on Nayaki Svamikal, the 19th century Saurashtra poet and Composer, at the South Asia Faculty Colloquium Series at Yale University in November. She participated in the Kampan Translation Workshop at Yale University in February and also delivered a paper, “The Other Trinity: Saurashtra Histories of Karnatak Music” at the Annual UW Madison South Asia Conference.

Jocelyn Sharlet gave an invited lecture at Istanbul City University entitled “Patronage and Poetry in the Islamic World: Arabic and Persian Poets Taking Risks to Get Ahead” in March and an invited presentation entitled “Driven to Distraction: Lovers, Rulers, and Writers in the Medieval Arabic Love Story” at the Courts and Performance in the Pre-Modern Middle East Conference at New York University Abu Dhabi in February. She also gave an invited presentation entitled “Patrons and Other Commitments in the Arabic Qasida” at the conference In Praise of the Qasida at Istanbul City University in April and a presentation at the School of Abbasid Studies at the University of Exeter, UK in July.

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