

UC DAVIS

Comparative Literature

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the Chair!

This has been a difficult year for California, for the University, and for Comparative Literature in particular. Budget shortfalls have hit our state like a natural disaster, and it will take a long time to recover. For the University this has meant furloughs for staff and faculty (the same amount of work — but less pay), and for students massive increases in tuition. The school year began with student and faculty walkouts that continued in some form throughout the year. It was not an easy atmosphere in which to stay focused on schoolwork or to maintain a cheery attitude. Worse still, our beloved colleague and friend, Professor Marc Blanchard succumbed to a long battle against cancer during Fall Quarter.

Yet, although we continue to suffer from these difficult times, we have endured these losses. Our students, both graduate and undergraduate, fill our classes eager to learn more about literature beyond national boundaries. They continue to win fellowships, prizes, and awards, and go on to graduate schools in humanities, sciences, and social sciences or to promising futures in law, medicine, academia, and public service. The number of majors has

tripled over the last three years and our undergraduate students continue to inspire us with their talent, discipline, intelligence, and hard work.

Many students graduating this year have been double majors in addition to mastering advanced study in a foreign language. We, in the department of Comparative Literature, are proud of all of you. I especially want to thank Lilit Minasyan, who will graduate this year. She has been a superb peer adviser for two years and her tireless dedication has been essential in rebuilding the major and minor in Comparative Literature.



Prof. Brenda Deen Schildgen
Chair

Kay Green retires after 22 years of service

After serving as the Graduate Program Coordinator, Kay Green is finally closing her chapter with UCD on June 30th. Story written by Matt Russell, doctoral student in the Department of Spanish and Classics.

(More on Page 3)

Amy Lee Memorial Essay Prize winners have been selected

Two essays were selected in this annual memorial essay prize. Stephannie Tornow (BA '08) won the first prize, while Andrew Tubbs, a Junior Biological Sciences major, received honorable mention.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2010

5-6

Conference: *Space and Time in Chinese-Language Cinema*
(Contact: Prof. Sheldon Lu, shlu@ucdavis.edu)

DECEMBER 2010

■

Pondicherry Conference: *South India as Cultural Crossroad*
(Contact: Prof. Archana Venkatesan, avenkatesan@ucdavis.edu)

SAVE THE DATE: The big reception for the 40th-Year Celebration of the Department will be held during 2010-2011. Stay tuned for more details.

We are Moving!

Big changes are coming for faculty, graduate students, and staff of several academic departments residing in Sproul Hall. Starting next month, their offices will change within the building to designated department floors to improve services for everyone.

The most significant change is the relocation of the Main Offices of the Undergraduate Program (currently on the 5th floor) and the Graduate Program (6th floor), effective June 21st, to the 2nd floor, where all administrative staff will have their offices. However, phone and fax numbers will remain the same.

Another exciting development due to these changes is that the 8th floor will be designated the "Comparative Literature Floor," where the department will have its own conference room and a new location for its thriving library collections. Moreover, faculty and graduate students whose offices currently reside on other floors (e.g. 5th and 9th) will relocate to this floor.

The whole process will occur during the summer to avoid any interruption of administrative services. For more information about the move, please contact the Undergraduate Main Office at (530) 752-1219.

Undergraduate Departmental Citations

On behalf of the department, we would like to congratulate the recipients of this year's departmental citations:

- Diana Arkans
- Franny Brogan
- Amy Harris
- Sherry Y. Hsieh
- Kris Ide
- Matthew Kronzer
- Dora Lopez
- Cody Messick
- Lilit Minasyan
- Avani Mody
- Anreeka Patel
- Arianna Reismann
- Giorgio Selvaggio
- Roxanna Topete



Kay Green, Graduate Program Coordinator, retires after 22 years of service



Spring Quarter 2010 marks our bitter-sweet farewell to one of the most important and most beloved members of our department. Of the nearly 22 years Kay Green has spent at UC Davis, she has worked in graduate programs for about 19 years and Kay states, "it has been the most rewarding job. I get to meet all these wonderful young people who are full of energy and creative ideas. That is what I will miss the most when I leave."

When Kay applied to UCD, she had been working at Clark Pest Control which had no health benefits or retirement plan. With two small children and a need for good health insurance, she applied to the University which, at the time, had the best benefits in the area. However, Kay says she ended up staying not because of the benefits, but "because I love working with students and the environment on campus – at least where I was lucky enough to work – was so incredibly supportive of staff."

Kay began working at UCD for the Cooperative Extension Specialists in Vegetable Crops. After ten years at Vegetable Crops, she applied for and was hired as a Graduate Program Liaison in the Graduate Dean's office. She enjoyed the work but the students she saw were either at the end stage of their time - filing theses or dissertations - or having some major conflict.

Then after two years in the Graduate Dean's Office, the job in the Spanish and German Departments became available. She states, "I was very lucky to get hired for that position. After a couple of years as the graduate assistant for Spanish and German, my counterpart in French and Comparative Literature left for another job. Katherine Perrone (former department manager) was already supervising all the units at that time and decided it would be a good idea to combine all four grad programs. I accepted the challenge of assisting these programs and have never looked back. It has been a wonderful way to finish my last years at UCD." Her experience working with the four graduate programs, she says, has been wonderful.

Farewell Kay, we love and will miss you. We wish you the very best for your much-deserved retirement!

Religion, Arts, and Literature: Conference Recap (March 5, 2010)

Winter Quarter ended this year with an interdisciplinary conference featuring keynote speaker, Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta (Sterling Professor of Humanities for Italian Language and Literature and Comparative Literature at Yale University) and graduate student and faculty speakers from UC Davis. The event ended with a St. Martin's Camerata performance of sacred music. Ranging across the world's religions and across time, the conference was funded by a cross-section of UC Davis departments and programs including the Davis Humanities Institute, Jewish Studies, Middle East/South Asian Studies, English, Music, the Early Modern Cluster, Comparative Literature, and funds from the Paul Castelfranco Chair of Christian Studies, Allison Coudert.

The conference topic was intended to open a discussion of the interrelationship of literature, art, and religion, and to dispel the assumed dichotomies among them. The talks, whether on literature, performance, or theology argued that while the secular university relegates religion to the periphery, in actual fact the modern *authority* of literature and the arts was built over and alongside religion. Together the talks demonstrated that embedded in the work of many artists (literary, musical, artistic, etc.), we actually find a religious consciousness, perhaps something that art and artistic expression seeks to redefine.

The keynote speaker, Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta, delivered a lecture that explored the differences between Dante's medieval Christianity and Tasso's baroque Counter-Reformation Christianity and the role that the new interest in perspective played in creating those differences.

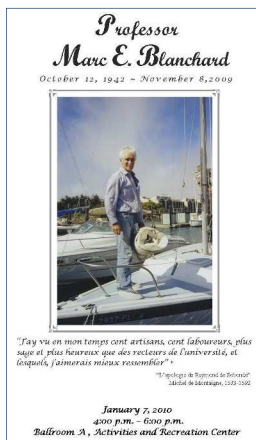
UC Davis faculty giving papers included Professors Catherine Chin (Religious Studies), Henry Spiller (Music), Olga Stuchebukhov (Russian), Archana Venkatesan (Comparative Literature and Religious Studies), Moulie Vidas (Religious Studies), Heghnar Watenpaugh (Art History), and Alan Williamson (English), speaking on topics as diverse as "Ritual Residue in Modern Dance



Clockwise, left to right: Keynote Speaker Giuseppe Mazzotta; Prof. Brenda Schildgen welcomed the audience; Prof. Olga Stuchebukhov; Prof. Claire Waters; Prof. Allison Coudert & Prof. Seth Schein.

in West Java, Indonesia," "Dance and Religion in South India," or "Islam as Religion and Islam as Culture." In addition to the graduate student speakers, Brody Smith (French), Heather Jennings (English), Emelie Coleman (Comparative Literature), Amy Champ (Performance Studies), and Gabriel Hourcade (French), Professors Allison Coudert (Religious Studies), Claire Waters (English), and Emily Albu (Classics) chaired the three sessions.

Marc Blanchard Memorial Service (January 7, 2010)



As with many moments of grief, memories come in fragments; images or words are etched in the mind with the sharpness of the sorrow behind them. The first thing you see is Lauren, standing at the door, and she offers you a smile welcoming and warm despite the circumstances. You recognize this smile. You have seen it wandering the halls of Sproul on her father's face and it makes you smile to see it once again. Behind her, old photographs of Marc are projected on the wall and his youth mesmerizes you as you find your seat. The only thing that draws your eyes

away from the pictures is the strength and composure of Brenda, who begins to introduce the speakers.

It was characteristic of Marc that you never really understood the significance of his achievements until you discovered it on your own or you heard of their greatness from someone close to Marc — never from Marc himself. This is absolutely the case with the groundbreaking relationship Marc established with the Casa de las Américas in Havana, Cuba. Listening to Gerardo Hernández Bencomo speak through tears on behalf of his colleagues, you begin to comprehend the depth of that exchange from a perspective few of us were able to witness, and you are suddenly able to trace Marc's influence from France to the United States to Cuba and beyond. The poet Reina María Rodríguez sends along a letter that contains this sentiment and reads, in a line that makes you weep, "You were a planet, and we, who gravitated around you, also spun in another, larger orbit, around a star that we barely knew, your world."

Afterward, Brenda opens the microphone to those that would like to say something about Marc. A wave of friends sweeps to the podium. People speak of Marc's dedication to his

students, who love him in a way that transcends the university. Others reveal things that Marc would never have disclosed himself, such as the fact that he consistently kept an excessive teaching load in unity with over-worked lecturers. Lastly, in one of the more light-hearted moments, Marc's doctor describes an idea Marc had for inventing a new exercising device that involved spinning cords with weights attached to the end. It was perhaps the only unsuccessful idea Marc ever thought.

Most heartbreaking of all, you listen as Manfred Kusch talks movingly about his and Marc's continuous debate concerning which of them plays the role of Don Quixote and which plays the squire, Sancho Panza. "You are as much Don Quixote as I am," Marc often told him, but Manfred realizes toward the end, as he sits beside his old friend's bed and reminisces about the past, that he is Sancho after all and he is now without his knight.

As you look around the room, you discover a series of connections to Marc that help to abate the pain somewhat. You see graceful Raquel and lovely Lauren, and his colleagues, who remind you of the profound writings that he left behind. All of this makes you remember what it is that has been lost. But it also reminds you of the brilliance, the generosity, the kindness, and the happiness that make the loss so painful, and you suddenly feel strangely resigned to that grief because it means that you were fortunate enough to be one of those connections, no matter how slight, and you know that you always will be. And, most importantly, so will Marc.



If you would like to make a donation to The Marc Blanchard Comparative Literature Undergraduate Travel Award, **please see the back cover of this newsletter for more information.**

Professor Harriet Murav visited UCD

On February 23, 2010, Harriet Murav, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and formerly Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature and Director of Comparative Literature at UC Davis, returned for a visit to our campus and department. Dr. Murav led a discussion in COM 210 of "Jews as Translators," a chapter of her book-in-progress on twentieth-century Russian and Soviet Yiddish literature in which she discusses the state-sponsored translation of minority literatures into Russian in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s. She also gave a public lecture, sponsored by Comparative Literature, seven other departments and programs, and the UCD Humanities Institute, on "Dovid Bergelson and Walter Benjamin in Berlin: Justice Deferred."

In this lecture, Dr. Murav interpreted Bergelson's *Berlin Stories* and Benjamin's *Berlin Diary* as writings haunted by the unprecedented, unmourned, and unreconciled violence of World War I and the Russian Civil War — especially in the former Pale of Settlement — which imposed itself traumatically and created an unfulfilled and unfulfillable demand for justice. She illustrated her lecture with images of Berlin art and architecture of the 1920s, which helped to contextualize Bergelson's and Benjamin's writings historically and aesthetically. The lecture was followed by a wide-ranging discussion, in which COM faculty and graduate students participated actively.

Reflection by the Outgoing Peer Adviser



Being a Comparative Literature undergraduate student and peer adviser has made my time at UC Davis a wonderful four years. I knew I wanted to study Comparative Literature before I even started my freshmen year, because I could not think of anything better than learning about the world and its history through great literature. It is hard to think of Comparative Literature as one major;

it feels like a fusion of several different majors combined to make the best program on campus. The fact that the major requires learning another language only made me appreciate it even further; it is both challenging and enriching. Each quarter I would look through the course catalog and feel as though it would be impossible not to register for each one, with such a variety of topics and themes covered by amazing professors.

It was only natural for me to be inclined to apply for the peer adviser position. I love talking to other students about the major and what it entails. 314 Sproul became my little haven; it is where I clarified for students what the major required, what sort of student abroad opportunities they could pursue, and in some cases I helped students make the big decision to switch their major and become a Comparative Literature student. It is truly rewarding helping others find the major that is right for them and in a way helping them with their future. Not only did I get the chance to speak to current students, but also future students. Each fall I was able to participate in Preview Day and speak to high school seniors about the major and minor. (I would like to point out that it became an art distinguishing between those who were destined for the humanities and those determined to locate the sciences.)

Being the peer adviser was also a wonderful opportunity because I helped organize events which brought students together to get to know one another as well as the program. I really enjoyed events like the Fall Welcome, the study breaks and our recent Round Table with Graduate Students. It is an understatement to say that I could not have done anything without the help of Maria and Joey. I loved stopping by the fifth floor anytime I was in Sproul Hall, even though I did not have a reason half of the time.

I am preparing to take the LSAT this June and apply to law school in the autumn. I plan to study immigration law. During my year off I am considering traveling. It would be incredible to actually see and experience so many of the things I read about in class. I feel confident that I chose the perfect major as an undergraduate and that it has prepared me well for the future. I want to thank Professor Schildgen and Professor Venkatesan for giving me the opportunity to be so involved in the major I have loved so much.

Lilit Minasyan (BA '10)

Busy Senior Year for Kris Ide (BA '10)

Graduating senior Kristopher Ide has been hard at work this past year performing and producing a variety of theatrical shows in addition to doing his school work. Since Winter 2009, he has completely immersed himself in the world of the theatre, performing as Egeus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and as Banquo in *Macbeth* in Fall 2009. Last winter, he both performed in *Empty All The Boxes* and was the playwright of *Fools Afloat*, both one-act plays produced as part of the ThirdEye Theatre Festival. This spring, he has been the Assistant Director and Dramaturg for Studio 301's production of *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical* performed in the arboretum. He has also just finished crafting his honor's thesis on the Greek myth of Daedalus and the Labyrinth as an organizing principle for literature through the ages. Ide hopes to continue his education in an MFA program either in directing, playwrighting, or screenwriting, and pursue a career in writing and the theatrical arts. In May, the Cal Aggie Alumni Association (CAAA) named him an Outstanding Senior.



Glenn Hoban (BA '11) at 2010 URC



Junior Glenn Hoban was one of the participants at the 2010 Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities Conference (URC), which took place on May 1, 2010 at Wellman Hall. Sponsored by the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, URC is the largest conference for undergraduate students on campus.

Hoban, who is wrapping up her junior year, was a presenter in one of the cluster groups in the second session of the conference moderated by our own Prof.

Brenda Deen Schildgen. Hoban presented a paper on a study of the film adaptations of Dante's *Inferno*. She focused on how the fourteenth century poem is expressed through modern digital media and on the thematic effects of the de-contextualization and modernization of the poem. "Working with Prof. Schildgen," she says, "was wonderful." She continues, "Her passion for Dante and for the poem inspired me to question the poem's place in modern culture. Her insight on both the text and the history of the poet allowed me to examine the text in ways I wouldn't have thought possible."

Hoban, who also intends to minor in English, looks forward to finishing her undergraduate career next year.

Round Table with Graduate Students

On April 27th, a round table event was held with two Comparative Literature graduate students, Christopher Tong and Giovanna Montenegro. They discussed their undergraduate studies and their inspiration for pursuing Comparative Literature as a graduate study. They offered advice about the application process, choosing the right graduate school and what to expect once in school. They also spent a great deal of time clarifying questions and concerns that attendees had. It was a wonderful opportunity for undergraduate students to gain a perspective about future possibilities.

The Amy Lee Memorial Essay Prize

The 2009-2010 Committee, consisting of a faculty and two graduate students, has selected Senior Stephannie Tornow and Junior Andrew Tubbs as the recipients for this year's memorial essay prize.

The Amy Lee Memorial Essay Prize was initiated after Amy Lee, a graduate student in the Comparative Literature Program from 2005-2007, passed away in September 2007. This award is meant to reward well-written and well-argued student essays and is limited to essays submitted in the COM I through 4 series.

Winning Essay:

"Mothers and Whores" by Stephannie Tornow (BA '10)

Honorable Mention:

"Song of Roland" by Andrew Tubbs

Student's Comment

"Mothers and Whores" was an essay I wrote for Comparative Literature 3. The paper strives to be a Freudian psychoanalysis of the Madonna-whore complex in Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina*. I was very fond of this paper because it was exceedingly fun to write. At first, I had chosen to take the writing prompt on the function of marriage in the novel, yet in my reading of the male characters' views on marriage I kept coming back to their notions about sex, which then seemed like a much more enjoyable topic (to read and to write). I sought to portray in the paper that it is not just the characters in the novel that act in accordance to the Madonna/whore complex, but rather that the plot of the novel itself also favors this popular 19th-century view of female sexuality.

"Mothers and Whores"

BY STEPHANNIE TORNOW

The relationship between marriage and sex differs throughout time and among cultures. For some marriage and sex are mutually exclusive, for others, they are unrelated, and sometimes they intersect in ways one would not expect. At first, it may seem odd for a work like Tolstoy's nineteenth-century novel *Anna Karenina* to explore the topic of both marriage and sex. Written in a time that had already been questioning the role of family and women, Tolstoy's work fits in to the discussion and follows a traditional religious and conservative stance on the subject.

While the narrative shows it is perfectly acceptable for both genders to indulge in extra-marital affairs, this blatant display of sexuality has different meanings within the marriage depending on whether the adulterer is a man or a woman. Marriage for men stands in the way of their universally accepted sexual needs and, thus, their individuality as males. Still, they expect faithfulness and a lack of sexuality in their wives. Freud first described the Madonna/whore complex in "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love" (1912)¹, stating that the ideal wife for a man is his mother, giving him an unnatural view of his sexual attraction to her. In general use, this theory maintains that a woman can only be the mother figure or the whore, the whore being the object of sexual desire and distanced from the purity of a mother figure. Men wish to have sex with figures they view as whores, love those they see as mothers, and the intersection of these can lead to discomfort.

Although Tolstoy's depiction of female characters as sexual beings in *Anna Karenina* is bold in suggesting that female sexuality is at its core unnatural and depraved because it separates women from their natural roles in marriage as wives and mothers, he promotes the Madonna/whore complex.

In *Anna Karenina*, marriage is presented as a state that contradicts masculine needs and wants in life. Save Levin, none of the men in this story express any interest in family life, other than being necessary because of social constraints. In the beginning pages, Tolstoy makes it clear that marriage is not natural for men for, "The liberal party said that marriage was an obsolete institution and was in need of reform, and indeed family life gave Stepan Arkadyich little pleasure and forced him to lie and pretend, which was contrary to his nature" (pg 7). This notion is repeated in Vronsky's views as, "Marriage had never presented itself as a possibility to him. He not only did not like family life, but pictured the family, and especially a husband, according the general view of a bachelor world in which he lived, as something alien, hostile, and above all, ridiculous" (pg 57). Marriage threatens the individuality they have as single men. Marriage forces them into roles and behaviors that are not agreeable to them. In finding sexual pleasure outside marriage, they gain some of this individuality and their sexual freedom without putting constraints on their marriage. It marks a main difference between the views of sexuality in men and women. Men have the ability to view sex as something separate and not abrasive to their marriage.

When Anna says, "These people may be unfaithful, but their hearth and wife are sacred to them. Somehow for them these women remain despised and don't interfere with the family. Between them and the family they draw some sort of line that can not be crossed" (pg 70), she synthesizes this masculine view of the place of women in the family in contrast to sexual partners outside marriage. Anna tries to explain to Dolly that Stiva's affair meant nothing more than sexual release, but Dolly can not quell the thought that Stiva was physically with another woman. It is the age-old notion of women, unlike men, being unable to separate love and sex. This concept is reinforced in the relationships between the other couples. Despite her jealousy, Anna states that she needs to allow Vronsky to have his manly freedom. On the other hand, Levin's jealousy stems not from the fact that Kitty would have sex with Veslovsky, but that she would fall in love with him, assuming once again men are driven by sex and women love. Since this is the case, they do not view adultery as having a negative impact on their marriage because it allows them to express a sexual attraction they no longer feel towards their wives, as in the case of Stiva and Dolly. This presumption means their wives should look the other way in order to uphold the marriage. This is not to say that this is the wrong way to look at marriage and sex, for it is an extremely valid way to look at it; rather while both men and women cheat, it is only the men who are presented as being able to do so in support, instead of defiance, of the marriage. Female characters like Princess Betsey, who can also separate love and sex, and keep it away from their marriage, are ridiculed as frivolous characters in ways that the men are not. To Tolstoy it would be only natural that Stiva cheat, considering his wife is constantly described as plain and aged. However, there is an extreme focus on Dolly's loss of beauty, so something more is at play here. What does this beauty really symbolize?

Beauty is an outward appearance that draws men to women, in an act of desire. However, in *Anna Karenina*, a woman is supposed to lose her beauty when she becomes a mother. Stiva's opinion of his wife's value and role can be summed up in that, "He had never thought the question over clearly, but vaguely imagined that his wife had long suspected him of being unfaithful to her and was looking the other way. It even seemed to him that she, a worn-out, aged, no

longer beautiful woman, not remarkable for anything, simple, merely a kind mother of a family, ought in all fairness to be indulgent" (pg 3). It is interesting to look at the meaning of beauty, not just as appearance, but also as sexuality and sexual appeal. Dolly leaves her role as a sexual being to instead take up the role of mother, a natural progression for women. Tolstoy thus implies that sexuality in women should be a perceived state rather than an actual one. Kitty and Anna are both beautiful women, but much more than just age distinguishes their beauty. As a single woman, Kitty puts her beauty on show. For example her appearance in the ball scene is described, "Though Kitty's toilette, coiffure and all the preparation for the ball had cost her a good deal of trouble and planning, she was now entering the ballroom, in her intricate tulle gown [...]" (pg 77). Kitty tries to make herself more beautiful, or sexually appealing, in order to attract Vronsky. In contrast to this, Anna's beauty is not an effort in order to draw attention, but "simple, natural, and graceful" (pg 79). This suggests that her sexuality is a force within her, not just a show for men. Still being young, Kitty admires Anna for keeping her beauty into motherhood as, "Anna did not look like a society woman or the mother of an eight-year-old son, but in the liveness of her movements, the freshness and settled ambition of her face, which broke through now as a smile, now as a glance, would have looked more like a twenty year old girl [...]" (pg 71). Staying beautiful means Anna has not properly taken to her role as a mother. Instead, she is both sexual and maternal, though the latter is overshadowed by the former. Dolly fears that Anna's use of birth control will make Vronsky less attracted to her, as, even Anna has expressed, it is a sense of duty to family that makes men stay. They can not have both a strong sexual connection and the normalcy of family. Thus motherhood and sexuality are opposed in this work, invoking the Madonna/whore theme, and questioning the validity of Anna's role as both sexual being and mother.

Anna claims the women men sleep with are a despised class, the whores that they keep separate from their wives, the mother figures, who are not sexual beings. That is why Tolstoy's proper mothers lose their 'beauty', to represent this separation between a mother and sex. Stiva states in that previous quote that Dolly is a great mother, but he does not view her as 'beautiful' anymore. The woman praised as a wife is one who encompasses the purity that motherhood represents. Tolstoy starts to paint this contrast between two types of women in an early scene when he writes, "Levin did not drink vodka, if only because this Frenchwoman, who seemed to consist entirely of other people's hair, poudre de riz and vinaigre de toilette, was offensive to him. He made haste to move away from her, as from a dirty place. His whole soul was overflowing with the remembrance of Kitty, and in his eyes shone a smile of triumph and happiness" (pg 33). This Frenchwoman, who represents a whore, is compared to a dirty place from which to escape. Kitty, on the other hand, stands in his mind as a pure, almost religious figure. By putting Kitty on a pedestal during the years prior to their marriage, he builds her into his ideal wife and mother figure, instead of just a woman for whom he has a sexual attraction. Modern day readers would consider a honeymoon to be a time of intense sexual connection for a couple, yet Kitty and Levin describe an event that, "[...] remained in both their memories as the most difficult and humiliating time of their life. They both tried equally in later life to cross out of their recollections all the ugly, shameful circumstances of that unhappy time when they were rarely in a normal state, were rarely themselves" (pg 483). The Madonna/whore complex is a possible reason for sex being awkward for the couple. He can not view her as both a sexual being and his previous notion of her as a wife and future mother. Though the sexual relationship is not fulfilling for the couple, his joys come in other ways for, "He had already forgotten the momentary, unpleasant impression, and alone with her now, when the thought of her pregnancy never left him for a moment,

he experienced what was for him a new and joyful delight, completely free of sensuality, in the closeness of a loved woman. [...]

In her voice, as in her look, there was a softness and seriousness such as occurs in people who are constantly focused on one beloved task" (pg 558). Like her sister, Kitty's looks alter after marriage, and her beauty is now found in her motherhood. This unpleasant impression is probably Levin's recollection of their honeymoon and her sexuality. Levin's ultimate attraction to Kitty stems from a non-sexual love, drawing heavily on her pregnancy / motherhood.

Tolstoy idealizes Kitty and Levin's relationship, while he shows that Anna and Vronsky's relationship, which began in attraction, ends in tragedy. While affairs are fine for both whores and married men, Anna lies somewhere in between the two. In her opinion, her relation to Vronsky is not entirely based on sex; she also wants a sense of permanency with him. Yet, could Anna and Vronsky ever have a normal marriage since she would be both his wife and mistress? When Anna and Vronsky lie together after consummating the affair, he thinks, "Yes, and this one hand, which will always be mine, is the hand of my accomplice" (pg 150). The connection between the couple is different to Kitty and Levin's. Vronsky views Anna as a partner in the crime of sex and desire, unlike Levin who wants to protect innocent Kitty from his impurity. Over time Vronsky, like Stiva and other men before him, feels that he has lost his individuality and wishes for freedom. The fact that Vronsky's feelings towards Anna have changed is seen by how he describes her for, "She was not at all as he had seen her in the beginning. Both morally and physically she had changed for the worse. She broadened out, and her face, when she spoke of the actress, was distorted by a spiteful expression. He looked at her as a man looks at a faded flower he has plucked, in which he can barely recognize the beauty that made him pluck it and destroy it in the first place" (pg 358). Vronsky can no longer find Anna an attractive sexual being because her jealousy represents a shift in role towards wife, away from 'beauty'. While most men define wives as family and mistresses as sex, he can see her neither as a mother or whore. Since he lacks a real relationship to their daughter Annie, Vronsky stays with Anna, not because of the noble value and joy of family, but out of guilt that he has wrecked her.

Both men and women express certain needs for sex and companionship in *Anna Karenina*, but only the women who follow the proper roles as wives and mothers are valued, while women who do not understand these roles are seen as frivolous or tragic. The Madonna/whore complex continues in the twenty-first century, particularly in marriage counseling, where it is seen, not only as an explanation for adultery, but as a major obstacle in the deemed important sexual connection between husband and wife. However, in this nineteenth-century Russian work, this dichotomy defines the difference between marriage and sex. By glorifying the relationship between Levin and Kitty, Tolstoy implies that the ideal relation between the two is the religious notion of a husband and wife clinging to each other as life partners with sex for the purpose of reproduction. Yet, in exploring marriage and sexuality, Tolstoy presents a range of possible views, whether Princess Betsey's separation of love and marriage, Levin's idealized marriage that relegates sex to reproduction only, or finally Anna's and Stiva's that questions the traditional Madonna/whore dichotomy.

¹ Stachey, James. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume 11* (London: Hogarth Press, 1962).

Work Cited

Tolstoy, Leo. *Anna Karenina*. Trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Penguin Classics, 2004).

Fei Shi accepted a faculty position in Canada

Fei Shi, PhD candidate, has accepted a faculty position at an experimental college, Quest University, outside the city of Vancouver, British Columbia in Canada. In Fall 2010, he will be teaching world literature, theatre, film, and Chinese.

Shi, who earned his BA and MA in Chinese and Comparative Literature at Fudan University in Shanghai, China, entered the graduate program in 2004. He is also expecting two publications this coming Fall: "Chinese Revenge Drama," *Comparative Studies* (November 2010) and "Body Acts: Contemporary Chinese Body Performance, Critical Narratives, and Somatic Writing," *Body, Language, Health* (December 2010).

He is extremely grateful for the generous support from his mentors, students, and fellow graduate students in the UCD Comparative Literature family.



Erin Grimm received Fulbright-Hays Award



Erin Grimm, first-year doctoral student, has been accepted to the 2010 Summer Russian Language Teachers Program and awarded a Fulbright-Hays scholarship from the US Department of Education, which covers the cost of the program. The program provides advanced instruction in Russian conversation, grammar, and phonetics, as well as a wide range of seminars and electives on Russian

literature, linguistics, and culture at Moscow State University, where she will be living on campus for six weeks. This current academic year, she teaches the Elementary Russian course series on campus.

Kristen Bergman received FLAS Fellowship

Kristen Bergman, second-year doctoral student, received the FLAS (Foreign Language and Area Studies) Fellowship to study first-year Tamil at the University of Wisconsin, Madison as a part of the South Asian Summer Language Institute. This program "provides allocations of academic year and summer fellowships to institutions of higher education to assist meritorious undergraduate students and graduate students undergoing training in modern foreign languages and related area or international studies."¹

From Southern California, Bergman earned her BA in English from Westmont College. She is currently interested in studying nineteenth century/early twentieth century British, French and Italian literature and colonial/postcolonial studies in South Asia.

As she studies Tamil, she hopes to work on a comparative project that would look at the influence and interactions of French and Tamil literature, as well as Tamil and English literature during the nineteenth/early twentieth century.



¹<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpsflas/index.html>

Achievements / Conference Presentations

Mariya (Masha) Boston presented a paper titled "Living or Dying: A Study of *The Fall of the House of Usher* by James S. Watson Jr. and Melville Webber and *After Death* by Eugenii Bauer" at the Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities on January 13-16. She has also contributed to the volume, *Directory of World Cinema: Russia*, edited by Birgit Beumers. Her article, "Speaking in Tongues: Poetic Language in Nikita Mikhalkov's *Burnt by the Sun*" and a film review on *Laskovy Mai* (2009) were published in *Kinokultura* (Issue 28, April 2010), an online academic journal dedicated to Russian.

Brian Davisson advanced to candidacy in December 2009. His article "Nonsynchronism and Resistance as Praxis in Miguel Ángel Asturias" was published in the winter issue of the journal, *A Contracorriente*.

Shawn Doubiago completed her PhD degree in March 2010.

Shannon Hays completes her PhD degree this coming June.

Linda Matheson presented her paper "Reading the Aeneid through Material Culture" at the 4th Annual Comparative Literature Graduate Conference (Theme: "Coordinates of Comparison 2010. Contemporary Canon: Cultural and Intellectual Dialogues") held on March 12-13, 2010 at the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Giovanna Montenegro's article, "Venezuelan Avant-Garde: María Calcaño's Erotic Poetry," appeared in *The Popular Avant-Garde* (edited by Renee Silverman) which is forthcoming through Editions Rodopi, Amsterdam. She also serves as a Managing Editor for *Brújula*.

Zoya Stanchits Popova's book review of *The Chinese Translation of Russian Literature: Three Studies*, by Mark Gamsa, appears in *The Journal of Asian Studies* (Volume 69, 2010). Her paper, "Postsocialist Nostalgia in Literature and Cinema in Russia and China," has been accepted for the conference in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on June 29 through July 2, 2010.

Joshua Waggoner received a scholarship to attend a screenwriting workshop at the Norman Mailer Writers Colony at Provincetown, MA in September 2010.

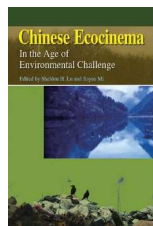
ACLA 2010 Annual Conference (April 1-4, 2010, New Orleans, Louisiana)

- Kristen Bergman, "'That Realism is the Goal of Fiction': Shaw, Zola, and the Socialist Novel"
- Mariya (Masha) Boston, "A Broken Word: Malfunctions of Language in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Bely's *Petersburg*"
- Joshua Waggoner, "Ah, Thus to See and Know His Love!: the Trauma of Irony in *Jerusalem Liberata*"
- Fei Shi, "Tracing the Ink Painting: A Geography of the Mother-Daughter Relationship in the Autobiographical Novels of Chen Ran, Anjana Appachana, and Jamaica Kincaid"

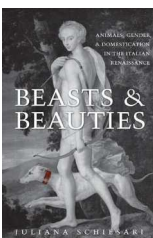
A Busy Year for the CompLit Faculty!

The faculty has been active inside and outside the classroom pursuing new opportunities and earning accolades.

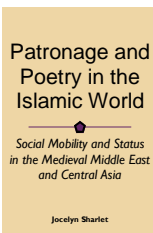
Books



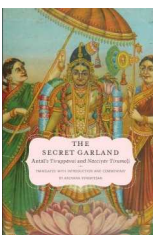
Sheldon Lu (co-edited with Jiayan Mi, PhD '02), *Chinese Ecocinema in the Age of Environmental Challenge* (Hong Kong University Press, 2009). The anthology includes essays by three UC Davis graduate students as well as chapters written by distinguished senior scholars elsewhere.



Juliana Schiesari, *Beasts and Beauties: Animals, Gender, and Domestication in the Italian Renaissance* (University of Toronto Press, 2010).



Jocelyn Sharlet, *Patronage and Poetry in the Islamic World: Social Mobility and Status in the Medieval Middle East and Central Asia* (Forthcoming, I. B. Tauris, November 2010).



Archana Venkatesan, *The Secret Garland: Translations of Antal's Tiruppavai and Nacchiyar Tirumoli* (Forthcoming, Oxford University Press, August 2010).

Invited Talks

Sheldon Lu was invited in November 2009 to give a series of lectures at several universities in Taiwan and China, such as National Chung-hsing University in Taiwan, University of Shenzhen, Jinan University in Canton, and Beijing Normal University. He also presented a paper at the conference "Reconstructing Modernities" at Tsinghua University, Beijing.

In March 2010, he was invited to give a presentation at the conference "Chinese Literature, Culture, and Media" at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. In June 2010, he will deliver the keynote address at the international conference "China and the West: Cosmopolitics, Memory and Visual Media in the 21st Century" at the University of Hong Kong.

He will also give a talk at a conference on Chinese-language cinema jointly organized by Jinan University in Canton and Shenzhen University. He has been appointed as an External Examiner of the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong for a three-year term. He has also been appointed as a Research Fellow at the Center for Overseas Chinese-Language Literature and Media at Jinan University in Canton.

Awards & Honors

Marc Blanchard and **Ines Hernandez-Avila (Affiliated Faculty, Graduate Group)** were recipients of 2009 UC Davis Distinguished Awards for Graduate/Professional Teaching. The reception took place on May 11, 2010.

Also, **Marc Blanchard** was selected as the winner in the Division of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies in the College of Letters and Science at the 8th Annual Excellence in Education, hosted by ASUCD & Academic Affairs Commission. The award ceremony was held on May 19, 2010.

Jocelyn Sharlet received a grant from the Davis Humanities Institute for a faculty research seminar on patronage for "The Best of Friends: Intimacy and Politics in Medieval Arabic Stories, Poetry and Letters," Winter 2011.

Published Articles

By Jocelyn Sharlet

"Inside and Outside the Pleasure Scene: Poetry about Locations by al-Sari al-Raffa' al-Mawsili," *Journal of Arabic Literature* (2009).

"Public Displays of Affection: Male Homoerotic Desire and Sociability in Medieval Arabic Literature," *Islam and Homosexuality*, ed. Samar Habib (Praeger, 2010).

By Brenda Deen Schildgen

"Philosophers, Theologians, and the Islamic Legacy in Dante: *Inferno* 4 versus *Paradiso* 4," for Special Issue of *Dante Studies* dedicated to Dante and Islam, ed. Jan Ziolkowski (2010).

"Cardinal Paleotti and the *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*," in *Sacred Possessions? Italy and Collecting Religious Art 1500-1900* (Getty Research Institute, Summer 2010).

"Augustine and Hermeneutics to the fifteenth century," in *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford: OUP, 2010).

Reprint of "The East in the Latin World," from *Dante and the Orient*, in *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism*, Volume 115 (CMLC-115), ed. Jelena Krstovic. Reprint of Ch. 2, *Dante and the Orient*.

Arabic Translation of *Dante and the Orient*, The National Center for Translation, the Ministry of Culture, Egypt (2010).

"Animals, Poetry and Philosophy, and Dante's *Commedia*," *Modern Philology* (September, 2010).

"Dante and the Bengali Renaissance," in *Dante in the "Long" 19th Century (1789-1914)*, ed. Aida Audeh and Nick Havely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

"Religion and Literature," *Religion and Literature* (2010).

Class Notes!

Belen Bistue (PhD '09) has won the 2009-2010 Aldridge Prize from the ACLA for her essay "The Task(s) of the Translator(s): Multiplicity as Problem in European Thought."

David Carl (PhD '00) is serving as Assistant Dean at St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he became a tenured faculty member in 2007. He published *Fragments* (Green Lantern Press, 2008), a revision of his dissertation on the use of fragmentation in modernist literature. He feels that it is always good to hear news of long-lost colleagues from his UC Davis days (now ten years ago).

Kelly Comfort (PhD '05) has been an Assistant Professor of Spanish in the School of Modern Languages at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. She continues to research the fields of transatlantic modernism and aestheticism. She edited and introduced the volume *Art and Life in Aestheticism: De-Humanizing and Re-Humanizing Art, the Artist, and the Artistic Receptor* (Palgrave, 2008) and is completing her monograph on *European Aestheticism and Spanish American Modernismo: Artist Protagonists and the Philosophy of Art for Art's Sake* (forthcoming with Palgrave in 2011). She has published articles in *Latin American Literary Review*, *Hipertexto*, *Women in German Yearbook*, *The Wildean*, and *Mester*. She regularly teaches courses on Spanish Conversation, Latin American short stories, and Spanish Service-Learning in the Hispanic Community. Dr. Comfort was recently awarded the CETL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award from Georgia Tech. She is also Faculty Director of the Institute's International House. She lives in Newnan, GA with her husband, Diego, and two-year-old son, Adrian.



(Left to right) Prof. Gail Finney, Kelly Comfort, and her son, Adrian, at the 2009 ACLA Conference in Cambridge, MA.

Haomin Gong (PhD '08) is an Assistant Professor of Chinese and Asian Studies at St. Mary's College of Maryland. He teaches Chinese language, literature, and cinema, as well as, Asian cultures. He is working on his book, tentatively entitled *Uneven Modernity: Literature, Film, and Intellectual Discourse in Postsocialist China*, based on his dissertation. He has very fond memories of the campus and Sproul Hall.

Erica Johnson (PhD '00) was recently promoted and received tenure at Wagner College in New York. She is also serving as the Director for the Honors Program. She published her second book, *Caribbean Ghostwriting* a few months ago (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009).

Julia Klimek (PhD '01) is an Associate Professor at Coker College in South Carolina, where she teaches a variety of courses in American Literature, modern fiction and poetry, composition, and postcolonial literature. She recently presented a paper at the ACLA in New Orleans, Louisiana. She shares an old house with her six-year old son, Phineas, and spends summers on an island in Washington State. When she is not grading papers or putting stickers on Lego sets, she gardens, quilts, and throws parties.

Jiayan Mi (PhD '02) has been promoted to Associate Professor at the College of New Jersey. His co-edited anthology (with Prof. Sheldon Lu), *Chinese Ecocinema in the Age of Environmental Challenge*, was published by Hong Kong University Press in 2009.

Vanessa Perez (PhD '07), Assistant Professor in the Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies at the City University of New York, Brooklyn College, was awarded the Short Term/Summer Publications Grant from the American Association of University Women and the Library Fellowship from the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University in summer 2009. She used the funding to complete the collection of essays she edited entitled *Hispanic Caribbean Literature of Migration: Narratives of Displacement* (Palgrave Macmillan, June 2010). She is also the recipient of the Career Enhancement Fellowship for 2010-2011 Junior Faculty, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon National Fellowship Foundation and administered by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. During the fellowship year, she will be in residence at New York University consulting with Dr. Juan Flores as she prepares her manuscript *Becoming Julia de Burgos: Feminism, Transnationalism, Diaspora* for publication. This book is a revision of her dissertation which she wrote with guidance from Professors Neil Larsen and Ines Hernandez-Avila, co-chairs of her dissertation committee.

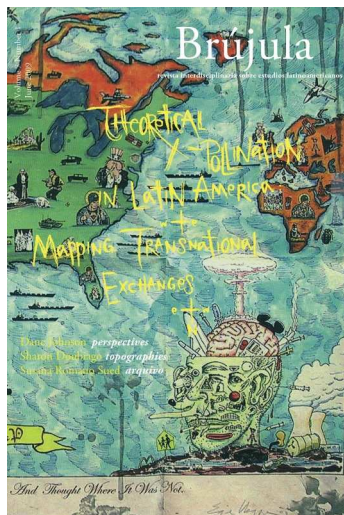
Gretchen Skivington (PhD '00), Professor of Foreign Language and Speech Communications at Great Basin College in Elko, Nevada, is finishing a book of short stories, *Silver Voices*, and currently writing a novel titled *Echevarria*.

Victoria Shinbrot (PhD '00) is currently an Associate Professor in the Humanities and Religious Studies Department and the Liberal Arts Graduate Program at California State University, Sacramento.

Gang Zhou (PhD '03), Assistant Professor of Chinese and Comparative Literature, Louisiana State University, has signed a book contract with Palgrave/Macmillan. The book is based on the dissertation she wrote with Michelle Yeh, Margie Ferguson, and Juliana Schiesari.

We would like to hear from you! Please keep in touch with the Department of Comparative Literature by sending your news and updates. For more information, please see the back cover of this newsletter.

Update: *Brújula*, Volume 7 and 8



Brújula: Revista interdisciplinaria sobre estudios latinoamericanos recently published Volume 7: *Theoretical Pollination in Latin America: Mapping Transnational Exchanges*. The volume was beautifully designed by Comparative Literature Graduate Student Daphne Potts and was edited by Graduate Students Belén Bistué, Daphne Potts, Mela Jones Heestand, and Shawn Doubiago. It includes an article by Professor Dane Johnson from San Francisco State University "Monstrous Mapping: A/Typical American Journey through the Re-

mapping of the Americas." There are additional articles by Claudia Francom, Timothy Gerhard, Maryam Monalisa Gharavi, Moisés Park, and Kristin L. Squint. The en route section focuses on collaboration in the academy and includes articles by Belén Bistué and Anne Salo, and Professor Gail Finney and Diana Lysinger. The volume includes images from Bay Area Artist Enrique Chagoya

that conceptualize multiple world views while re-inventing the pictorial language of images associated with the exploration of the New World, among them the cannibal and the naked indigenous subject.

Brújula will also publish Volume 8: *Manifestations of Popular Culture in Latin America: Identity and Cultural Transformation*, this summer. Editors Valentina Velázquez-Zvierkova and Consuelo Cervantes will feature an essay by Professor Debra Castillo (Cornell) on Chilean writer Lina Meruane's work entitled "Meruane and the Borg." Using the example of Meruane's "Tijeretazos," a short story set in New York city and relying on a series of references from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, this article ponders the challenges of teaching Latin American texts that access international popular culture as their fundamental metaphorical structures. The volume will also include essays such as "Writing Back to the Island: Revisionist Histiographies in Dominican-American Fiction" by Kiley Jeanelle Guyton Acosta; "What is Popular About Mass Culture?: Santiago en 100 Palabras and Chilean National Literature" by Jane Griffin; "Diásporas de Libertos e Afro-Descendentes no Pos-Abolição no Brasil" by Lucia Helena Oliveira Silva; and "Del panamericanismo al nacionalismo: relaciones cinematográficas entre México y Cuba" by María De La Cruz Castro Ricalde.

Editors Karina Zelaya, Brian Davisson, and Managing Editor Ted Geier are already working on the peer-review process for Volume 9: *The Beginnings of Central American Narrative: A Disregarded Tradition*, to be published in 2011.

Plum Blossoms & Snows

By W. Scott McLean

The waters of inland, back-country chaparral sulfur pools
Winter rain-swollen southern California creeks merging

With mineral waters in the Sespe mountains off the
southern
Pacific coast — these were the hot tubs I knew

Before we found a way to this late-century rural life
A small orchard, big pines, a hot tub of cedar & fiberglass.

The moon on a spring landscape of snow
You float & drift, your hair tied in a knot falls in wisps.

Where the light glows from the ground up
We are cloud-borne in mists. At the millennium's end

A late winter storm blew in out of Alaska
Wet snows fell on the flower-heavy orchard trees.

I went out with a broom to knock the branches clean,
in the seasons'
Sudden spells & fits, sweet chill blossom breezes, we ride

Our emotions like the winds & clouds. Where I lie next to you
In bed, what wants & needs

like buds & flowers under a blanket of snow
Look back at me in the night sky?

We'd all ask that our love match
The fiercest passions, the snow-lit

Sky at the window — that in giving ourselves we be
Soul-met — & that the brutality of this century's bloody wars

End in one night like this, in love ancient
As the blood lusts & hatreds set in the record of this century,

That one act of surrender & acceptance be
part of the record, a single last page entry in the annals of the
years.

W. Scott McLean is a lecturer in the department. This poem along with others will appear in his forthcoming book entitled The Harvest Love.



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We would like to hear from you! Please keep in touch with the Department of Comparative Literature by sending your news and updates to one of the following:

- E-mail Prof. Archana Venkatesan at avenkatesan@ucdavis.edu
- Mail to this address: Department of Comparative Literature, 522 Sproul Hall, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616

Items may be edited for clarity and space purposes.

SUPPORT THE DEPARTMENT

Your charitable, tax-deductible gift to the Department of Comparative Literature is greatly needed and appreciated. Your support will be used for the highest priority projects in the department to support both undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, programs, and facilities.

The department currently offers the following awards: *The Amy Lee Memorial Essay Prize* and the new *Marc Blanchard Undergraduate Travel Award*.

For more information, contact Prof. Brenda Deen Schildgen at bdschildgen@ucdavis.edu.

This Newsletter is published twice a year by the Department of Comparative Literature of the University of California, Davis.

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We now have a Facebook group that you can join! It is a great way to meet fellow comparatists and stay updated on upcoming events!

You can follow the link to join:

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/group.php?gid=141304226988&ref=ts>