Graduate Student Conference: “Age of Comparison?”

by Sage Anderson

The annual Comparative Literature graduate student conference, jointly hosted this year with the departments of East Asian Studies and Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies, took place March 27-29. From our department, the organizing committee included Sage Anderson, Linda Bonvini, Ellen Xiang He, Lucy Ives, Daniel Lukes, Tara Mendola, and Pu Wang. After months of behind-the-scenes logistical struggle, the event came off without a hitch.

The conference – entitled “Age of Comparison?” – grew out of a seminar on Comparison & Comparability, taught last spring by Professor Xudong Zhang. Appropriately, Professor Zhang was on hand to give the opening remarks Thursday evening, striking the tone for active discussion to come. Taking off from the position that “there is no innocent comparison,” he established coordinates with passages from Nietzsche and Hegel, whose respective obsessions with self-identity and the absolute persistently invade comparative thought. He concluded by pointing towards Benjamin’s translation theory as a model for actualization of the foreign in more provisional, less totalizing terms.

Friday morning at the Kevorkian Center there were two panels, “Variations on the Other,” and “Opening Eurocentric Concepts to Comparative Critique.” Paper topics ranged widely, from Levinasian ethics to Indonesian modernity, Arabic

Graduate Student Colloquium Series

by Patrick Gallagher

Beginning in the fall 2007 semester, graduate students organized a monthly colloquium series that provided graduate students and faculty with a forum in which to present their new work. The goals of the series were to promote interdisciplinary learning and social interaction for this most unusual of departments—a department the members of which are united by that which they do not have in common. The sessions were well attended and the colloquium will continue next year.

The idea for the series emerged during meetings of the four representatives elected by graduate students of the department at the end of the Spring 2007 semester, Sage Anderson, Magali Armillias-Tiseyra, Michiel Bot, and Patrick Gallagher. After work on the colloquium series began in earnest, Daniel Hoffman-Schwartz soon joined to help get the series moving.

Because one of the goals of the series was to reach a better understanding of how comparative literature can, should, and/or does work as a cohesive discipline, the committee decided to invite Professors Timothy J. Reiss and Daniel Javitch to talk about the history of the department and how it fits into the community of literature departments worldwide. Entitled “What We Were Thinking: Two Decades of Comparative Literature at NYU,” the event attracted a considerable number of audience members as well as Professors Xudong Zhang and Richard Sieburth, who contributed numerous observations of their own to the discussion.
New Faculty Spotlight: John T. Hamilton by Diana Hamilton

This may be John Hamilton’s first year as Professor of Comparative Literature at NYU, but he is in no way new to the school: he completed his BA in German and Classical studies at NYU in 1985, and his PhD in 1999 in this very department. Like so many here, Professor Hamilton attributes his returns to NYU as much to the city as to the school itself: he is also a musician, and for that the city is essential. He is also this year’s Director of Graduate Studies, a position that has enabled him to meet everyone within the department more quickly than he may have otherwise, making his transition here from Harvard (where he had been since 2001) that much smoother.

Though his undergraduate work was completed in German and Classics—in January of 2009, he will be Professor of German Languages and Literature at NYU as well—he developed an interest in foreign languages very early on. Between his broad knowledge of languages and his commitment to interdisciplinary study, Hamilton’s work could represent the scope of the field. As Hamilton says: “If Comp. Lit. always asks, ‘What is literature?’, it’s important to ask what is not.”

Professor Hamilton spent the ten years between earning his BA and entering graduate school playing guitar for the band Tiny Lights, recording seven albums and touring the country (which, he points out, provides a great opportunity to get a lot of reading done). His wife Donna, who is also a visual artist, was in the band too on the electric violin, and his other band members included Jane Searpontoni, a cellist who would go on to play with the likes of Lou Reed, and Dave Dreiwitz, the bassist of Ween.

Experience as a musician helps him in the classroom, he says, because both require a certain ability to maintain an audience’s attention. Professor Hamilton also studies the intersection of music and literature, and says that their relationship is necessarily metaphorical, if only because it is necessary to use language in order to understand or begin to talk about music. His book Music, Madness, and the Unworking of Language (just published by Columbia University Press) deals with this relationship, and the way madness can either signify human debasement or a mystical relationship with the divine. “The academic’s lifestyle,” Hamilton says, “is not so different from a musician’s.”

Professor Hamilton’s future projects include a study of security as a metaphysical subject as much as a political reality, where security can be seen as the negation of concern or fear. He will be teaching a graduate seminar on this topic in the spring, a course that will examine the correlation between political and intellectual understandings of security. Though Hamilton reminds us that to secure a place for oneself always runs the risk of self-confinement, we can only hope this “intellectual claustrophobia” he diagnoses does not get in the way of his sticking around awhile.

Diana Hamilton graduates with a Comp Lit Honors B.A. this May.

A Seminar by Professor Timothy Reiss: Toward Rethinking the Renaissance: Metaphor, Creation and Subversion by Lucy Ives

In spring of 2008 Professor Timothy Reiss (Professor Emeritus and Distinguished Scholar in Residence) continued an on-going seminar, begun in the fall of 2007 and entitled, Toward Rethinking the Renaissance: Metaphor, Creation and Subversion. At the center of this course is a scene, repeated in numerous locations, to which Professor Reiss refers in shorthand as, “The Metaphor of Bird Islands.” These “Bird Islands” are quite close to what their name suggests: they are islands surrounded by ocean on which birds live. Along with their winged denizens, these islands give shelter to a number of associations: they are restorative islands, islands of undivided sustenance, lacking in economies of language and violence. In the account Professor Reiss undertakes in his lecture and seminar, these islands approach islands of fact; for they are also the sites of European ‘contact’ with alterity in the form of, yes, tropical birds, but also human beings. The violence enacted in these locations is couched in literary accounts in softening terms, as a conquest of a metaphorical island populated by birds.

These themes are entered into through 15th century narratives of conversion or trade; for running alongside the explication of this repeated scene, and sometimes entering into it, is an elaboration of literature written in the vernacular in early modern Europe. In a large public lecture in October, “A Metaphor of Bird-Islands: Columbus Counts His Chickens(Colonization & Subversion)”, Professor Reiss described a writing Columbus, a Columbus who “fully controls
New Faculty Spotlight: Jacques Lezra  
by Sarah O'Hare

After teaching in the English Department at the University of Wisconsin for about 14 years, Professor Jacques Lezra has found his way back to the Comparative Literature field. “I missed Comp Lit. It’s my training,” said Lezra, who studied Comparative Literature at Yale University.

Since arriving at NYU this past fall, Lezra has already taught a few different classes, including a recent graduate level course, entitled: “Fetishism and Visuality.” With films such as The Elegant Spanking and The Maltese Fal-...
**Faculty Sound Bites**

**Emily Apter** is working on a new book titled *What is Yours, Ours and Mine: Authorial Ownership and the Creative Commons*, working with an editorial team on the English language edition of the "Dictionnaire des Intraduisibles," and re-organizing her life around her new dog, "Kino," a shiba inu puppy.  

**Ulrich Baer** is gathering several of his essays into a book on the theories of photography, and continues work on the representation of clouds from 1800 to the present. He has also assumed the post of NYU’s Vice Provost for Globalization and Multicultural Affairs where he directs all of NYU’s semester-long international study sites and supports NYU’s multicultural and international centers.

**John Chioles** will be on leave next year finishing his novel and second work for Harvard on Aeschylus.  


**Daniel Javitch**’s co-edited book, *The Way It Wasn’t: From the Files of James Laughlin*, was singled out by *Art Forum* as one of the ten best books of 2007.  

**Avital Ronell** has been invited by the Centre Pompidou, Paris to present work on 7-10 occasions in a series posted as “Selon Avital Ronell.” She also received an Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung grant for work on German philosophy, and has been promoted to the position of University Professor at NYU.  

**Kristin Ross**’s book, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* was reissued this year by Verso and will be published in a French translation.  

**Nancy Ruttenburg** was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to work on her new book on Dostoevsky and the culture of American democracy.  

**Richard Sieburth** has been elected to the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences.  

**Cristina Vatulescu** is spending the year in Cambridge, MA with her newborn daughter Veronica and her manuscript, *Police Aesthetics*.

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**Graduate Student Awards, 2007-2009**

Haytham Bahoora, CAS outstanding teaching award for 2006-2007; Penfield Fellowship for 2007-2008; Arts and Science Prize Teaching Fellowship for 2008-2009  

Jennifer Cayer, GSAS Dean’s Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award in the Humanities for 2006-07; GSAS Summer Predoctoral Fellowship; IFA-GSAS Forum on Visual Culture  

Robyn Creswell, a fellowship from the MacDowell Colony, in Peterborough, NH, a two-month fellowship, summer 2008  

Bregtje Hartendorf-Wallach, 2007-2008 Anais Nin Memorial Fellowship  

Daniel Hoffman-Schwartz, DAAD German Studies Research Grant for the summer of 2008  

Jennifer Kaplan, ARCE Fellowship to Egypt for 07-08; FLAS to Egypt for 07-08 year  

Micaela Kramer, Robert Holmes Travel and Research Awards for African Scholarship, Summer 2007  

John Patrick Leary, Patricia Dunn Lehrman Fellowship, Summer 2007; Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2008-09  

Fernando Perez, GSAS Summer Predoctoral Fellowship, Summer 2007  

Katharina Piechocki, NYU Global Fellowship (for a two-month period (June and July 2008 at NYU-in-Florence)  

Pu Wang, 4th Liu Li-an Poetry Award (Liu Li-an Shige Jiang; 2007)  

Erica Weitzman, Freie Universität exchange/scholarship for 2008-09

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**Job Placement of Recent Grads**

Carrie K. Barker—Doctor of Medicine, Wisconsin  

Maria del Pilar Blanco—full-time Lecturer in Spanish, Department of European Languages, University of Wales, Aberystwyth  

Anna Brigido-Corachan—University of Valencia  

Marc Caplan—tenure track Assistant Professor of German and Romance Languages and Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture, The Johns Hopkins University  

Jennifer Cayer—(Phd expected 9/08)-Visiting Assistant Professor of English, Amherst College  

Margaret (Peggy) Escher—tenure track, Department of English, John Jay College of Criminal Justice/ CUNY  

Hui Jiang—tenure track, Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Hawaii (Manoa)  

Birgit Kaiser—Department of Comparative Literature, University of Utrecht in the Netherlands  

Mary Helen Kolinsky—NYU General Studies program and at Barnard College  

Bronwyn Mills—tenure track, Department of English, Northern Michigan University  

Brian Michael Norton—full-time Lecturer, Department of English, Comparative Literature and Linguistics, California State University, Fullerton  

Maria Alejandra Uslenghi—tenure track Assistant Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Northwestern University
Alumna Spotlight: Jessie Labov—in her own words

Never Throw Anything Away
An Object Lesson in Academic Sustainability

I started grad school at NYU Comp Lit in the fall of 1994. Almost 14 years later, I just received my first tenure-track academic appointment: Assistant Professor of Slavic and Eastern European Languages and Literatures at Ohio State University. I can still remember very well how such long-term cases seemed to us in our early years of grad school: on the one hand, out of politeness, we all tried to look the other way, not ask prying questions about adjunct teaching or the job market; on the other hand, such people were objects of great curiosity. How could they have held on this long? Why didn't they just get out of the profession? What were they doing out there after they (finally) got their PhD but before full-time employment? Well, NYU Comp Lit asked me to report in from post-PhD purgatory, and share my experiences "hanging in there," and I suppose it is now up to you to read the following either as words of advice or as a cautionary tale, or perhaps both.

NYU was a very different place when I started. Only about half of us were on fellowship and the other half were working at least part-time to cover tuition and living costs. This was also an era when there was a healthy debate within the academy about whether a focus on "professionalization" should be part of the grad school initiation rites, or whether such things would be better left to placement officers at the other end of the assembly line. I am still grateful that our Chair and DGS at the time, Jennifer Wicke, was a believer of the former strategy. She sat us down in our first meeting as a cohort (of 15!), and gave us the "look to your left, look to the right, one of these people won't graduate and get a job in academics" speech. We were told all the dirty facts up front about the state of the job market—something which our peers at Columbia, Yale, Rutgers, etc., were left to find out for themselves. Professionalization also took the form of organizing extra-curricular events: lectures series, conferences, and sometimes informal events, which at best brought us together as a Comp Lit community, and at worst, gave us some trial-and-error experience in academic event-planning. At the time, I didn't consider this busy work all that relevant to my future career, more of a pleasant distraction from seminar papers and exams.

Some Strange Choices

To give a better picture of how I ended up in the position I did, I should point out some of the idiosyncratic (read: stubborn) choices I made in grad school. First of all, Polish. My undergrad training had been in romance languages, and it would have been natural to continue in some French/Italian vein, but I had decided in the wake of 1989 and my first trip to Eastern Europe that I wanted to start work in Slavic Studies. And against the most reasonable advice, but very much in the spirit of the mid-1990s, I decided to focus on the minor Slavic languages. At that time, our NYU department had a very strong focus on postcolonial theory and literature—it was in the forefront of our theoretical orientation, so it was natural enough for me to respond to the dominance of Russian language in Slavic studies with this corrective view. I decided that my geographic area of specialty would be everything between the Russian and German spheres of influence, and eventually, the concept of Central Europe itself.

As funding ran out, I began to find more and more teaching gigs to support myself, and as a result the thesis still wasn't getting written (a situation many of you might recognize well). First I was T.A.ing and teaching small seminars in and around the department, then in MAP, and then eventually I got a job as an adjunct at Parsons School of Design, where I was teaching "critical thinking" to students of Design & Management. This last position would be hard to call a "choice." It was more of a series of accidents that brought me there, but I loved it. By the time I left Parsons, I was spending most of my time advising senior theses in a field even more bizarre than Comp Lit: "The History of Product Design at BMW"; "Reading the Future of Fashion"; "Branding the Experience of Oslo." I taught a class called "Designing Work." I began to get interested in the Design Technology department they were calling the Digital Humanities.

But wait—living in New York on adjunct teaching alone? Not easy. Another strange diversion from thesis-writing and degree completion took the form of a consultancy at the Ford Foundation, where I worked for six years in Eastern European grantmaking for what seemed like an obscene daily rate. My thesis advisor, Irena Grudzinska Gross, had left academics to become a Program Officer there in the late 1990s, and I was basically helping her with the vast amounts of email and paperwork that accumulated on a weekly basis. Working so closely with Irena has always been a great collaboration and source of inspiration, but I must admit that these were not weekly thesis check-ins. She had bigger things to worry about, and I certainly wasn't eager to bring up my stalled attempts at thesis-writing.

Meanwhile, I did go out on the market a few times while I was A.B.D., with mixed success. It wasn't until the 2003-2004 academic year, when I had two chapters more or less completed, that I was able to present a really convincing profile. That's when I got my first tenure-track offer (to direct an M.A. Program in Liberal Studies at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock) but I took a Stanford postdoc that lifted me out of my holding pattern with a job closer to my fiancé (who got a job at Pomona College that same year).
The story changes quickly and dramatically: after 4-5 years of not finishing my thesis, I finally did it in a mad dash to make the legal deadline for the postdoc. Relocated in Palo Alto, in a Comparative Literature department of all places, I was now free to design courses in my own area of specialty and devote the great majority of my time to research and job hunting. I admit to being profoundly intimidated upon arrival, after splitting time between a semi-corporate environment in midtown and a high-end vocational school, I was not prepared to find my office (an entire room! with a window!) directly between Richard Rorty's and Hayden White's offices. As soon as I realized that I was functionally invisible as a postdoc, and that nobody was paying the slightest attention to what I did or didn't do, I settled into a very comfortable, if marginal, existence here.

Since then, most of my time and energy has been directed towards the job market in one way or another: writing, organizing events, and networking as if it were a form of life support. Many of my colleagues from grad school were already established as Assistant Professors around the country during this period, one or two even got tenure. I've been within spitting distance of tenure-track jobs myself: I turned the Arkansas one down to come to Stanford, and I came in #2 for jobs in 2006 and 2007. But with each year on the Other Side of a PhD, I felt there was more and more at stake, and treading water became more difficult and demoralizing. This year, search committees saw me differently: I got much better MLA interviews than I ever had before, three fly backs at pretty serious research universities for jobs in Comp Lit, Slavic, and Film Studies, and, finally, the offer from Ohio State to join their Slavic Dept next fall. It doesn't solve all problems, global warming, etc., but it was a giant step for me personally. And, of course, I am deeply thrilled.

The reason for going into my strange choices above is not to make excuses for not finishing the thesis quickly, but rather to point out that living in New York for grad school leads to some rather creative modes of financial survival. And once you have worked out a way to beat the system and remain solvent, it becomes the path of least resistance to continue doing so. I had one really, really lucky break: getting the Stanford gig. (There were also some people strongly supporting me, and I suspect a few phone calls were made.) Once at Stanford, the luxury of teaching a lot less allowed me to take a few steps back and really focus on my research, on shaping my profile in several different interlocking fields (Comp Lit, Slavic, Cultural Studies, Film Studies, New Media), and in finishing one book and starting another. In addition to this standard research-driven agenda, what I've managed to do here is capitalize on all of those extraneous experiences in and around grad school in New York.

Given that I'd made an absurd choice back in 1995 or 1996 to work in a non-existent field (Central European Literature), a lot of my energy has gone towards creating a space for this field—using the same organizational skills that I picked up at NYU putting those conferences and department parties together. Teaching ridiculously far outside of my field at Parsons might have sometimes seemed like a waste of time when I wasn't writing my thesis, but it served me incredibly well on the job market in Comp Lit when I was asked to teach demo classes on subjects I was completely unfamiliar with (including "substitute" classes on Hobbes' Leviathan, Puig's Kiss of the Spider Woman, and Don Quixote, in case you're wondering). And finally, nothing could have prepared me better for the world of grantseeking than 6 years of working for grantmakers at Ford Foundation.

So, I would simply say that no matter how misguided or digressive my path may seem to have been, I was able to make use of those experiences, and I was able to make up for my strange choices by not throwing any of these accumulated experiences away. Luck had a lot to do with it, too. And of course the small social movement that formed first to get me through grad school, then to get me out of grad school, and then through the long years on the market: THANK YOU and a big shout out to Jennifer Wicke, Tim Reiss, Richard Sieburth, Daniel Javitch, Uli Baer, Eliot Borenstein, Lisa Haas, Susan Protheroe, Vangelis Calotychos, Nancy Ruttenburg, and of course, Irena Grudzinska Gross.

Yes, thanks to all of them, to a truckload of seemingly unrelated experiences, and to a sometimes obscure, but never lost, idea of where I was going, I am finally there, living proof that academia is a place of navigable waters—if you keep paddling.
Alumni News!

Dror Abend-David (Ph.D. 2001) has moved back to Israel with his wife Ilana and daughter Gil and is teaching communications at Hadassa College in Jerusalem.

Anya Achtenberg (M.A. 1995) received a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant in 2008 to work on her second novel, History Artist. Also, her novella, The Stories of Devil-girl will be published in Fall 2008 by Loving Healing Press in Michigan. See her writer’s website at www.anyaachtenberg.com.

Gabrielle Civil (Ph.D. 2000) is in her 8th year as an Associate Professor of English, Women's Studies and Critical Studies of Race & Ethnicity at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, MN. She had a “glamorous and productive” sabbatical around the world last year and I was just awarded a 2008-2009 Fulbright Fellowship to Mexico for her project "In and Out of Place: Making Black Feminist Performance Art in Mexico.”

Marylou Gramm (Ph.D. 1998) has a full-time position as a Visiting Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Pittsburgh teaching writing and literature.

Edgar (Ned) Jackson, Jr. (M.A. 1991) Following his 2006-2007 sabbatical devoted to scholarly and creative pursuits, Ned returned to Regis High School where he is teaching, in the original Latin, parts of Ovid’s “Metamorphoses.”

Birgit Kaiser (Ph.D. 2007) is Assistant Professor in the Comparative Literature Department of Utrecht University.

Jessie Labov (Ph.D. 2004) was recently appointed Assistant Professor in the Dept of Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures at "The" Ohio State University.

Susan Matthias's (Ph.D. 2006) book based on her 2006 dissertation—a translation of the novel Six Nights on the Acropolis by Greek Nobel Laureate George Seferis—was published as part of The Modern Greek Literature Library. To date, she has presented lectures, with readings, at Columbia, NYU, and the Hellenic American Educators Association.

Robert McKeir Irwin (Ph.D. 1999) was named Chancellor's Fellow and also promoted to Full Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California, Davis.

Bronwyn Mills (Ph.D. 2003) has a tenure track position at Northern Michigan University's English department starting 9/07. She also has a Fulbright to Benin- January 08.

Marie-Pascale Pieretti (Ph.D. 1998) was promoted to the rank of full professor in the French and Italian Department of Drew University in 2007.

Deniz Sengel (Ph.D. 1996) completed a book on the first Turkish translations of Shakespeare, circa 1881, and prepared for publication the Turkish edition of Michael Baxandall's Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy.

Mariano Siskind (Ph.D. 2006) published his first novel: "Historia del Abasto" (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2007). A substantial part of it was translated and published in "Habitus. A Diaspora Journal" in January 2008 under the title "Here (There)". His son Valentin, now 21 months old, is more beautiful every day.

George A. Thompson (Ph.D. 1983) has retired from the Bobst Library and will be spending his time henceforward in researching early 19th century New York City history, particularly "The African Theatre", the prehistory of baseball, and the history of the underground press of the era.

Alejandra Uslenghi (Ph.D. 2007) will start a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor in the Spanish and Portuguese Department at Northwestern University.

Jason Weiss (Ph.D. 1999) has a forthcoming novel called Faces By the Wayside. He also hopes to have a new translation published in the next year, The World Holds Many Windows: Selected Poems, by Silvina Ocampo.

Peter Wolfgang (B.A. 2004) graduated from Columbia Business School in May of 2008 with an MBA degree in Marketing and Decision Analysis. On other fronts, Peter was married to Heather Cleary (BA, '03, MA, '04, NYU Comp Lit) in Charleston, South Carolina this past March. Peter can be reached at peter.wolfgang@gmail.com and welcomes requests to catch up over coffee.

David Wondrich (Ph.D. 1997) for the last few years has been a contributing editor at Esquire (as well as writing for a number of other magazines, from Oprah to the Malt Advocate). His latest book, Imbibe!, was published last November. David is still living in Brooklyn, with his wife Karen and his 10-year-old daughter, Marina.
The keynote address was delivered on Saturday afternoon by Professor Takahiro Nakajima from UTCP. Speaking on “Critical Comparability in the Age of the ‘Classical Turn,’” Professor Nakajima compared revivals of Confucianism in post-War Japan and contemporary China, relating such cultural trends to a broader philosophical context of liberating classical thought and reexamining structures of modernity. The final event was a roundtable discussion of the question: Can there be comparison without conflict? Responding were Professors Hala Halim and Thomas Looser from NYU, Jean-Marie Grassin from the Université de Limoges, and Jason Mohaghergh from Northeastern Illinois University. Their perspectives were refreshingly varied, with Professor Halim locating the future of Comparative Literature in translation studies, Professor Grassin developing the idea of emergence, Professor Mohaghergh stressing the value of chaos, and Professor Looser bringing up the theoretical problem of violence. Rather than reaching a conclusion, the conference produced a proliferation of question marks. It was in this respect an overwhelming success, providing a welcome occasion for lively debate, convivial conversation, and generative connections all around.

Sage Anderson is a second year Ph.D. candidate whose interests focus on French and German literature and theory around 1900.

In subsequent sessions, the focus shifted from academic politics to students’ and faculty members’ own works-in-progress, but the theoretical and bureaucratic foundations of the discipline continued to attract discussion. In the second session, Professor Jacques Lezra delivered a paper entitled “The Indecisive Muse: A Conversation On Borges, Wittgenstein, Translation, and Comparative Literature” that began with a memorable dissection of the early history of the discipline in the United States, during World War II and immediately after.

In the next session, “Modernism: Singular or Plural?” graduate students Fernando Pérez and Robyn Creswell explored the value of literary modernism and the concepts associated with it in contexts outside of the trans-North Atlantic region, specifically Brazil and Lebanon. Graduate student Haytham Bahoora approached the topic of “other” modernisms as well, via his discussion of architectural modernism in Republican Iraq in his paper “Jabra’s Baghdad: Colonial Modernism and Vernacular Spaces.”

The series proved to be especially valuable for writing projects that are still in the process of completion. Professor Hala Halim delivered a paper about the encounter between European and Egyptian forms of urbanism in the work of E.M. Forster, entitled “Forster in Alexandria: Gender and Genre in Colonial Cosmopolitanism,” which she is in the process of building into a book. Halim explained why the series represents a good opportunity for members of the department: “It provides a much-needed forum for work-in-progress, debates about the future of the department and the discipline, and, above all, a meeting place, bringing together faculty and students, where we can transcend our various ‘fields’ to address our common interests as comparatists.”

Other memorable presentations in the colloquium were made by Professor Jini K. Watson and the graduate students Brad Tabas, Bregtje Hartendorf-Wallach, Ipek Celik, and Jennifer Cayer.

Patrick Gallagher is a second year Ph.D. candidate interested in theories of urbanism and space, the modern and post-modern novel and the culture of creative writing.

Patrick Gallagher gives Professor Hala Halim tips. Magali Armil-las-Tiseyra and Sage Anderson just smile.
Our Faculty— All together & Altogether

In the last several Newsletters, we’ve reported the exciting growth of our faculty. Through both joint and new appointments, we’ve enriched coverage of national literatures, the historical, and the theoretical. So you can see the amazing breadth and depth of this newly invigorated faculty, here they are — All together & Altogether.

Emily Apter
Professor of Comparative Literature; Professor of French; BA 1977, Harvard; MA 1980, Ph.D. 1983 Princeton
Research interests: 19th and 20th century literatures of France, North Africa, the Caribbean, Germany, Britain and North America; translation studies, the history and theory of comparative literature, critical theory, psychoanalysis and politics, postcolonial theory.

Ulrich Baer
Professor of Comparative Literature; Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures; Ph.D. 1995, Yale
Research interests: 19th and 20th century poetry; the poetics and politics of witnessing and memory; theoretical and formal approaches to photography; contemporary German literature and thought.

Gabriela Basterra
Associate Professor of Comparative Literature; Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese; Ph.D. 1997, Harvard
Research interests: Philosophy and literature, ethical subjectivity, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, the tragic, poetry, modern and contemporary literature in Spanish, the ethical and the political.

Kamau Brathwaite
Professor of Comparative Literature; B.A. 1953, Cambridge; D.Phil. 1968, Sussex
Research interests: Caribbean literature, culture, and society

John Chioles
Professor of Comparative Literature; B.A. 1962, M.A. 1964, CUNY; Ph.D. 1972, California (Berkeley)
Research interests: tragedy; mythopoesis; phenomenology; philosophy and literature.

Manthia Diasara
University Professor; Professor of Comparative Literature; Professor of African Studies; B.A. 1976, M.A. 1978, American; Ph.D. 1985, Indiana
Research interests: African literature and film; Afro-English and Afro-American Film

Ana Maria Dopico
Associate Professor of Comparative Literature; Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese; B.A. 1985, Tufts; M.A. 1988, M.Phil. 1993, Ph.D. 1998 Columbia
Research interests: comparative studies of the Americas; North-South studies/cultural politics of the global south; Cuban and Caribbean culture; theory and history of the novel; nationhood and imperialism; photography and visual culture; syncretism, memory and popular culture; national poets, public intellectuals and cultural genealogies; U.S. Latino culture; gender and narrative, psychoanalysis and social mythology

Hala Halim
Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature; Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies; B.A. 1985, Alexandria University; M.A. 1992, American University in Cairo; Ph.D. 2004, UC, Los Angeles
Research interests: modern Arabic, English and Anglophone literatures; post-colonial theory and alternative modernities; autobiography, autoethnography, and travel writing; theory and practice of translation; cosmopolitanism, globalization, gender, and the city.

John Hamilton
Professor of Comparative Literature; Professor of Germanic Languages and Literature; Ph.D. 1999, New York University
Research Interests: The European Classical Tradition, Music and Literature, Poetic and Hermeneutic Theory, Intermedia Studies.

Mikhail Lampolski
Professor of Comparative Literature; Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies; B.A. 1971, Moscow Pedagogical Institute; Ph.D. 1977, Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (Moscow); Habil. 1991, Institute of Film Studies
Research interests: Slavic literatures and cinema; theory of representation; the body in culture.

Daniel Javitch
Professor of Comparative Literature and Italian Literature; B.A. 1963, Princeton; M.A. 1970, Cambridge; Ph.D. 1971, Harvard
Research interests: European literature of the Renaissance; poetic theory before 1700; postclassical history of ancient genres.

Jacques Lezra
Professor of Comparative Literature; Professor of Spanish and Portuguese; Ph.D. 1990, Yale
Research interests: Comparative literature and literary theory; Shakespeare; the literary and visual culture of Early Modern Europe.

Avital Ronell
University Professor; Professor of Comparative Literature; Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures; B.A. 1974, Middlebury; Ph.D. 1979, Princeton
Research Interests: Literary and other discourses, feminism, philosophy, technology and media, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, performance art.

Kristin Ross
Professor of Comparative Literature; B.A. 1975, U.C. Santa Cruz; M.A. 1977, Ph.D. 1981, Yale
Research interests: French literature and culture of the 19th and 20th centuries; Francophone Caribbean literature; urban history, theory, and politics; literature, culture, and ideology; popular culture.

Nancy Ruttenburg
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