

# University of California, Santa Barbara

## Comparative

## Literature

Fall 2011- Summer 2012

### Message from Catherine Nesci, New Chair

I am delighted, and somewhat intimidated, to come on board as the new Chair of the Comparative Literature Program at a time when so much thinking and writing, and myriad world upheavals are reshaping the (in)discipline of comparative literary studies and their interdisciplinary and transnational possibilities. From Germaine de Staël's *Corinne or Italy, On Literature and On Germany*—foundational texts of Western European comparative literature—to the most recent work of Franco Moretti—which has influenced my own research on cities—I have been exposed to the old and the new practitioners of comparative inquiry and literary theory. My own work has focused mostly on modern Western European cultures, and nineteenth-century *flâneries* have structured my own intellectual peregrinations (via Walter Benjamin's *Arcades project*), so I look forward to discovering and supporting the research and teaching of students and affiliate faculty working on literatures and cultures from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, the Middle East ... and Europe. Their diverse methodologies and critical paradigms will enhance my knowledge of current conversations on the interactions (or collisions) between national literatures and world literatures, and on the shift from a Eurocentric focus for the discipline to a more global one. I will also seek answers for what the "comparability" of comparative literature entails and how it can be (or has been) achieved in an era of increasing transculturation.



Despite infelicitous budget cuts and pressures to fulfill the needs of majors and graduate students first in their own home department(s), our affiliate faculty have renewed their intellectual commitment to our innovative and rigorous curriculum. As a result, the Comparative Literature Program will offer once again a rich array of stimulating courses and seminars. I would like to express my gratitude to all colleagues who are contributing to our 2012–13 course offerings; I look forward to working with them. I would also like to extend the opportunity for teaching in comparative literature further across disciplines and incorporate more affiliate instructors who are interested in comparative study. Regarding instruction, I also wish to thank Katherine Kelp-Stebbins (doctoral candidate in comparative literature), our 2012–13 Lead Teaching Assistant, who is organizing workshops that will greatly enhance the pedagogical experience of our TAs in comparative literature. The first workshop, entitled: "A Resource-Full Community," is planned for September 24, 2012, 1:00–4:00pm.

In the face of a depressed academic job market, our most recent doctors in comparative literature have been able to find wonderful ladder-rank positions. Congratulations to Dr. Anne Marcoline, now Assistant Professor of European Studies at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and Dr. Lily Wong, now Assistant Professor of Literature at American University. Please read the updated section of our web site on our graduate alumni, courtesy of Anne Marcoline: <http://www.complit.ucsb.edu/people/recent-graduate-students>. In early October 2012 we will welcome back Dr. Lisa Swanstrom, one of our alumni and an Assistant Professor of English at Florida Atlantic University (<http://swanstream.org/>). She will organize a job market workshop and a forum on professional development. Check our web site for information: <http://www.complit.ucsb.edu/>

I am looking forward to working with everyone involved in the Comparative Literature community, and with Joell Emoto, our new Graduate Program Assistant, who has already been a great brainstorming and working partner.

Last but not least, on behalf of the Comparative Literature community, I would like to address my warmest thanks to Professor Susan Derwin for her wonderful work as the Chair of the Comparative Literature Program. Her creativity, energy, and dedication will be sources of inspiration to me. We all wish her the best as she takes her new position as Director of UCSB's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center.

Catherine Nesci, Professor of French  
Affiliate in Comparative Literature and Feminist Studies  
<http://www.complit.ucsb.edu/>

## Fall 2011 to Summer 2012 Faculty Publications and Completed Projects

**Julie Carlson**, professor of English: *Speaking about Torture*, Elisabeth Weber, co-ed. (Fordham University Press, Sept. 2012).

**Susan Derwin**, professor of German and Comparative Literature: "What Nazi Crimes Against Humanity Can Tell us about Torture Today," in *Speaking About Torture*, Elisabeth Weber and Julie Carlson, co-eds. (Fordham University Press); *Rage Is the Subtext: Readings in Holocaust Literature and Film* (Ohio University Press, April 2012).

**Francis Dunn**, professor of Classics: "Metatheatricality and Crisis in Euripides' *Bacchae* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*" in *Crisis on Stage: Comedy and Tragedy in late fifth-century Athens* (De Gruyter & Co.); "Electra" in *A Companion to Sophocles* (Wiley-Blackwell, May 2012); "Dynamic Allusion in Sophocles" in *Brill's Companion to Sophocles* (Brill, Sept. 2012).

**Colin Gardner**, professor of Art: "Barnett Newman's Zip as Figure," in a special Issue on "The Smooth and the Striated," *Deleuze Studies* 6.1 (Spring 2012).

**Dominique Jullien**, professor of French and Comparative Literature: edited *Foundational Texts of World Literature* (Peter Lang, July 2011); "Entre psychiatrie et philosophie: la folie dans *Adieu de Balzac*," *Littérature* 162 (June 2011).

**Suzanne Jill Levine** professor of Spanish: a new book, *Reckoning* (Finishing Line Press); latest translation, Jose Donoso's *The Lizard's Tale* (Northwestern University Press, fall 2011).

**Francisco Lomelí**, professor of Spanish and Chicano Studies: *The Writings of Eusebio Chacon*, G. Meléndez, co-author (Univ. of New Mexico Press, March 2012); *The Chican@ Literary Imagination: A collection of critical studies by Francisco A. Lomelí, J. Cañero & J. Elices*, co-eds. (Instituto Franklin, 2012); "The Sense of Place in Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's *Historia de la Nueva Mexico*," *Camino Real: Estudios de las Hispanidades Norteamericanas*, 4.6 (2012); "The Reinvention of Chicanos and the Quinto Sol Generation: The Cases of Rolando Hinojosa-Smith and Miguel Méndez M," *Puentes: Revista méxico-chicana de literatura, cultura y arte* 9 (Otoño 2011).

**Juan Pablo Lupi**, Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature: *Reading Anew: José Lezama Lima's Rhetorical Investigations* (Iberoamericana/ Vervuert, 2012).

**Ellen McCracken**, professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature: "The Postmodern Continuum of Canon and Kitsch: Narrative and Semiotic Strategies of Chicana High Culture and Chica Lit," *Analyzing World Fiction: New Horizons in Narrative Theory*, Frederick Luis Aldama, ed. (Univ. of Texas Press, Sept. 2011).

**Catherine Nesci**, Professor of French, Comparative Literature and Feminist Studies: "Sensual Re-readings: Gender, Streetwalking and the Underworlds of Modern Culture," *Dix-Neuf* 16.2 (July 2012); "Paris Palimpseste ou Paris révolutionnaire? Les chroniques du *Tableau de Paris* de Jules Vallès," *Autour de Vallès* 41 (2011) ; "Bas-Bleu ou femme de plume ? La littérature au féminin selon Daumier et Gavarni," *Le Magasin du XIXe siècle* 1 (fall 2011); "Droit de réponse : lettre apostolique et lettre polémique dans le journal féminin des années 1830." *Médias* 19 : <http://www.medias19.org/index.php?id=305>.

**Élide Valarini Oliver**, professor of Portuguese and Comparative Literature: *Variações sob a mesma luz: Machado de Assis repensado* (University of São Paulo Press and Nankin Editorial, April 2012).

**Eric Prieto**, Professor of French and Comparative Literature: *Literature, Geography, and the Postmodern Poetics of Place* (Palgrave-Macmillan, forthcoming); "Adaptation and Adaptability in Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 48.2 (2012); "Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism," *Epistémocritique* 9 (2011); "Geocriticism, Geopoetics, Geophilosophy, and Beyond," *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*, Robert Tally Jr., ed. (Palgrave-Macmillan Press, October 2011).

**Elisabeth Weber**, professor of German and Comparative Literature: *Speaking about Torture*, Julie Carlson, co-ed. (Fordham University Press, Sept. 2012); "Literary justice? Poems from Guantánamo Bay Prison Camp," *Comparative Literature Studies* 48.3 (Fall 2011); "'Eine noch viel unerhörtere Fremde'—Resonanzen zwischen Aichinger, Lévinas und Derrida," *Absprung zur Weiterbesinnung: Geschichte und Medien bei Ilse Aichinger*, C. Ivanovic & S. Shindo, co-eds. (Stauffenburg); "Subvertir le désir de royaume: Enjeux politiques de la déconstruction," *Revista Filosófica de Coimbra* 41 (2012).

**Sara Pankenier Weld**, visit. Prof. of Russian and Comparative Literature: "Towards a Genealogy of the Kharmasian Hedgehog," *Till en evakuerad igelkott: Festskrift till Maria Nikolajeva*, M. Lassén-Seger & M. Österlund, eds. (Makadam, 2012) Österlund, eds. (Makadam 2012).

## Fall 2011 to Summer 2012 Faculty Lectures and Presentations



**Julie Carlson**, professor of English: "...Books and Friends in post-1790s British Radical Discourse," University of York, University of St. Andrews, UC Berkeley, CSU Northridge, University of Colorado at Boulder.

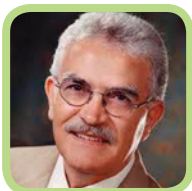
**Francis Dunn**, professor of Classics: "On Middle Ground: Greek constructions of cultural identity," "Visualizing Antiquity," The University of Victoria, BC.



**Colin Gardner**, professor of Art: "Samuel Beckett's 'Peephole' Venus: Re-Sexualization, The Oral Mother and the Masochist Contract in *Eh Joe*, *Ghost Trio* and ...*but the clouds...*," plenary lecture for "Venus as Muse: Figurations of the Creative," Internationales Kolleg Morphomata and the Centre for Media Studies, University of Cologne, Germany; "Out of the Cool, Into the Hot," docent lecture at "Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980" exhibition, Santa Barbara Museum of Art; introductory talk and post-screening discussant for Curtis Harrington's film, *Night Tide*, at "Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980," SBMA; introductory talk and post-screening discussant for Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie's film, *Pull My Daisy*, at "Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980," SBMA; introductory talk and post-screening discussant for Tom Neff's film, *Beatrice Wood: Mama of Dada*, at "Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980," SBMA; "Transversality, Deterritorialization and the A.O.C.: Constructing Lines of Flight from Flights of Wine," at panel on "Wines of Flight, Flights of Wine: Fusions and Crossings with Deleuze," 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Century French & Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Long Beach, CA.



**Dominique Jullien**, professor of French: "Proust: vers une éthique de la traduction," Universidade de Sao Paulo, Brazil; "Borges's Wisdom Tales," UCSB; "Yves Bonnefoy and Translation," UCLA; "Translating Destiny: from the Arabian Nights to Hoffmannsthal," NYU-Abu Dhabi; "Mallarmé's Poe: Translation as Illustration," Columbia University; "Withdrawal into Nature in Modern Catastrophic Texts," panel on "The Day After: Individual Survival and Collective Responsibility in Catastrophic Texts," ACLA, Brown University (panel organizer); organized Caribbean Crossroads Colloquium, UCSB (Eric Prieto, co-organizer).



**Francisco Lomeli**, professor of Spanish and Chicano Studies: "El panorama de textos transfronterizos en la frontera México-Estados Unidos," HispaUSA 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Chicano Literature, Toledo, Spain.

**Ellen McCracken**, professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature: "Beyond Print: Enhanced Electronic Books and Chicano/Latino Writers," HispaUSA 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Chicano Literature, Toledo, Spain; "Advertising and Long-Form Fiction on Portable E-Readers: The Semiotics of Meaning Construction," Semiotic Circle of California, UC Berkeley.



**Catherine Nesci**, professor of French, Comparative Literature, and Feminist Studies: "« Le prisme des songes, des hallucinations ». L'imaginaire fantastique de J. J. Grandville (1803-1847)," Ewha Womens University, Seoul, South Korea ; « Le masculin et la catabase », Institut d'Etudes Françaises et Francophones, University of Basel, Switzerland ; "Image détournées: le recyclage d'*Un Autre Monde* de Grandville dans le *Diable à Paris* de Hetzel (1868-1869)," University of Victoria, British Columbia.



**Eric Prieto**, professor of French and Comparative Literature: organized Caribbean Crossroads Colloquium, UCSB (Dominique Jullien, co-organizer); "Koffi Kwahulé's Coltranean Theater of Cruelty," 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Century French & Francophone Studies International Colloquium, Long Beach, CA.



**Jon R. Snyder**, professor of Italian Studies and Comparative Literature: "Analogous Cities: The Architect Aldo Rossi and i Sacri Monti," California Interdisciplinary Consortium for Italian Studies (CICIS), Scripps College; "Under the Volcano: Vesuvius, Naples and Religion Today," public humanities symposium, "The Wrath of the Gods: The Religious Dimension of Natural Disasters," Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (co-organizer).



**Sara Pankenier Weld**, visiting professor of Russian and Comparative Literature: "The Censor and the Child: Authorities and Aesopian Language in Osip Mandelstam's *Two Tramcars*," Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEES) Annual Convention, Washington, DC.



## 2012 Faculty Awards and Appointments

**Susan Derwin**, professor of Comparative Literature and German, was appointed the new director of the UCSB Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (IHC). <http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/>

**Jill Levine**, translation of Jose Donoso's *The Lizard's Tale* has won the PEN Center USA 2012 award for Literary Translation. Congratulations to Professor Levine!

**Catherine Nesci**, professor of French, was appointed chair of the Comparative Literature program.

**Eric Prieto**, professor of French and Comparative Literature, was appointed Chair of the Department of French and Italian.

## Fall 2011 to Summer 2012 Graduate Student Advancements: Degrees



Linda Kick, Ph.D.



Anne Marcoline, Ph.D.



Lily Wong, Ph.D.



Michael Grafals, M.A.



Shari Sanders, M.A.



Marcel Brousseau, ABD



Devin Fromm, ABD



Meaghan Skahan, ABD



Kuan-yen Liu, ABD

## Fall 2011 to Summer 2012 Graduate Student Advancements: Field Exams

**Marcel Brousseau**: "The Last of its Kind: Monument Valley and Simulations of Landscape".

**Devin Fromm**: "Reading Modern Mystery: Counter-Enlightenment, Analytical Detection, and the Politics of Investigation."

**Meaghan Skahan**: the Latin American Neofantastic; Feminist spatial studies.

**Kristie Soares**: Spanish Caribbean Literature, Culture, and Philosophy.

**Kuan-yen Liu**: "A Comparative Study of Victorian British Darwinism and Late-Qing Chinese Darwinism: The Intersection between Biology and Philosophy."

## Fall 2011 to Summer 2012 Graduate Student Publications

**Marzia Milazzo**: "Racial Power and Colorblind Ideology: The 'Sad Black Stories' of Kgebetli Moele's *Room 207* and 21st Century Black South African Fiction," in *Something New out of Twenty-First-Century Africa?*, special issue of the *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* (forthcoming); "White Supremacy, White Knowledge, and Anti-West Indian Discourse in Panama: Olmedo Alfaro's *El peligro antillano en la América Central*," in *Interoceanic Diasporas and the Panama Canal's Centennial*, special issue of *The Global South* (forthcoming).

**Lily Wong**: "Projecting a More Habitable Globe: Hollywood's Yellow Peril and its Refraction onto 1930s Shanghai National Cinema," in *World Cinema and the Visual Arts*, David Gallagher, ed.; "Intimate Temporalities: Affective Historiologies in Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Dust in the Wind*" *Asian Cinema* 23.1, 2012.1; review of *Stateless Subjects: Chinese Martial Arts Literature and Postcolonial History*, by Petrus Liu, *Chinese Literature Today* (forthcoming).

**Claudia Yaghoobi Massihi**: "Shifting Sexual Ideology and Women's Responses: Iran between 1850-2010." *Sexuality in Muslim Contexts: Restrictions and Resistance*, eds. Homa Hoodfar and Anissa Lucas-Helie (Zed Books, 2012). Reviews of: *Inventing Womanhood: Gender and Language in Later Middle English Writing* by Tara Williams for *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 43 (2012): 298-300; of *The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran* by Arzoo Osanloo, for *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32.2 (summer 2012): 447-448; of *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*, by Margot Badran for the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43.4 (2011): 754-755.



## 2011-2012 Graduate Student Conference Presentations



**Marcel Brousseau:** "Counting Sheep: Navajo Livestock Reduction and the Creation of a Dream Landscape," in panel "Racial Economics or the Economies of Race," ACLA, Brown University, Providence, RI; "Cowboys, Indians, Posthuman Dynamis!: Machinic (other)Worlding in Buffalo Bill's Wild West," PechaKucha Night, UCI Visual Studies Conference, Irvine CA; "New Witnessing, Old Testimony: Can Crowd-Sourcing Technology Help us Reimagine Indigenous Contagion Narratives?," Contagion/Control: Speculative Futures Graduate Conference, UCSB.

**Katherine Kelp-Stebbins:** "The Medium is the Masses: Embodied Amplification in Urban Occupation," at Global Studies Conference, UCSB, Allison Schifani, co-presenter; "Crisis in the Humanity?: Comic Books and Corporeal Hybridity," ACLA, Brown University, Providence, RI; co-organizer Contagion/Control: Speculative Futures Graduate Conference, UCSB, "Monsanto: Our Mortgage," Contagion/Control: Speculative Futures Graduate Conference, UCSB, Kevin Kearney, co-presenter.



**Anne Marcoline:** "An Ethics of Music in George Sand's *Les Maîtres Sonneurs* and *Le Dernier Amour*," Women in French Annual Meeting, Arizona State University; "Musical Fiction, or the Crisis of Representation," ACLA, Brown University, Providence, RI.



**Marzia Milazzo:** "'Triumphing Over the History of Apartheid?': The Racial Politics of Memory in Contemporary Black South African Fiction," at "Africa's Golden Jubilee: Assessing 50 Years of Scholarship and Development in Africa," Interdisciplinary International Conference, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), Nairobi, Kenya; "Reconciliation Without Justice: Enforcing Colorblindness in Post-Apartheid Scholarship on Race" at "Reconciliation in Post-Colonial, Post-Conflict, and Multi-Ethnic Africa," 18th Annual Conference of the International Society of African Philosophy and Studies (ISAPS), University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa; "'Capturing the Black Experience in Latin America?': Diasporic Identity and Antiracist Discourse in the Works of the Afro-Panamanian Writer Cubena," at "The Black Atlantic: Colonial and Contemporary Exchanges," Stanford Forum for African Studies Conference, Stanford University.



**Shari Sanders:** "I Haven't A Clue": The Sound of Wisdom in Ursula Le Guin's *The Lathe of Heaven*," ACLA, Providence, RI; "Let It Be: Countering Crisis in Ursula Le Guin's *The Lathe of Heaven*," at CISM Music and Crisis conference, UCSB.



**Allison Schifani:** "Biotechnical Ecologies: Common Life in Los Angeles," MLA, Seattle, WA; "The Medium is the Masses: Embodied Amplification in Urban Occupation," at Global Studies Conference, UCSB, Katherine Kelp-Stebbins, co-presenter; "Junked City: Waste, Recycling and the Buenos Aires Libre Autonomous Network," at ACLA, Providence, RI; presentation on bio-technical ecologies in Buenos Aires and Los Angeles, at "Prototyping Futures, Occupying the Present," Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam; co-organizer Contagion/Control: Speculative Futures Graduate Conference, UCSB.



**Meaghan Skahan:** "Gendered Spaces in Modern Paris," ACLA, Brown University, Providence, RI.



**Kristie Soares:** co-organizer, second annual graduate performance conference, ::Bodies in Space: Flow/s:: See video on youtube: <http://youtube/xYq5Ep4qLPI>.

**Claudia Yaghoobi Massihi:** "A Comparative Study of the Significance of Love in Shaykh San'an and Abelard and Heloise's Religious Transgression," Middle East Studies Association, Denver, CO; "Sexual Transgression in Farid al-Din 'Attar Nishapuri's Sufi Works," Literature { } Religion Conference, University of California, Irvine; "Sexuality and Spirituality: A Comparative Study of Rabi'a al-Adawiyya's and Margery Kempe's Traumatic Experiences," ACLA, Brown University, Providence, RI; "From Black Roots to Green Blossoms: Iranian Women's Empowerment 1900-2011," Associated Students Human Rights Week, UCSB.



**Lily Wong:** "Theorizing Attachments: an Affective Turn Towards Critical Studies of 'Chineseness,'" ACLA, Brown University, Providence, RI; "Moving Serenades: Aesthetic Transformations of *Rose Rose I Love You* From Song to Novel," Association for Asian Studies Annual Convention, Toronto.

## Graduate Student and Alumni Awards

**Silvia Ferreira** was awarded a U.S. Department of State 2012 Critical Language Scholarship for Intensive Summer Institutes. She used the scholarship to travel to Morocco to study Arabic.

**Katherine Kelp-Stebbins** received the UCSB GSA Excellence in Teaching Award.

**Kieran Murphy** (Ph.D, 2009) won the Schachterle Essay Prize for his article "Electromagnetic Thought in Balzac, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Joseph Breuer" (*SubStance* 40.2 (2011): 127-147). The prize is awarded by the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts to recognize the best new essay on literature and science written by a nontenured scholar.

**Shari Sanders** received the UCSB Academic Senate Outstanding TA Award.



Silvia Ferreira



Katherine Kelp-Stebbins



Kieran Murphy



Shari Sanders

## Events Sponsored by the Comparative Literature Program, Fall 2011 to Summer 2012



### *Conversations on the Sublime lead to Beautiful Reading Group*

On Friday, October 29th 2011, we had a splendid display of intellectual sociability. We brought our own wines, and the tables were decked with sumptuous cheeses, delectable fruits and other assortments of sweets and savories. It was the first meeting of our new comparative literature reading group, with twelve colleagues coming together to discuss the sublime and the power of literature. Our little symposium would have made Socrates proud.

We started with Northrop Frye's essay "Criticism as Education," and discussed Frye's bold idea that the "function of literature" is to "recreate the primitive conception of the word of power." We had an interesting discussion about whether the function of literature was primarily one of feeling an aesthetic experience or if it had a more social role, one that helps us disentangle the webs of discourse and power that literary texts are often implicated in.

From Frye, we moved on to sections from Longinus' *On the Sublime*, in which we see literature as power first eloquently argued (writing around the first century AD, Longinus, we should add, was an early practitioner of comparative literature, using not only Greek sources but Hebrew ones as well). For Longinus "the sublime is a certain eminence or perfection of language." Sublime writing or speech throws its audience into transport; it takes us out of ourselves, strikes us with a powerful force like a stroke of lightning and exalts us into a contemplation of the greatness both of an idea and of our souls. Encountering this burning enthusiasm today, we cannot underestimate the importance the reception Longinus' text had on 18th century theories of the aesthetic. In a neoclassical culture that once espoused beauty (and its suggestions of harmony, balance and symmetry) as the ultimate ideal of aesthetics, Longinus' theory did much to push aesthetics into the direction of Romanticism.

Discussing Edmund Burke's 1757 *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, we noted aesthetics shifting from the realm of language to one of experience. As Terry Eagleton put it, 18<sup>th</sup>-century aesthetics was born of a discourse of the body. For Burke the feeling of the beautiful is grounded in our feeling of pleasure, but the sublime is one in which we find delight in pain. The beautiful is something our imaginations can grasp, but the sublime takes us to feelings wherein "our imagination is finally lost."

At the end of the night, although satisfied with cheeses and fruits, we were left hungry, still striving to understand this mesmerizing ideal of the sublime. We hope to make this reading group an ongoing tradition in our comparative literature program. We hope you might leave with sublime ideas, but we are sure you will find some beautiful, intellectual sociability.

—Michael Grafals

## Comparative Literature Lecture Series: Françoise Lionnet

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On April 24th, 2012, the Comparative Literature Program welcomed celebrated academic Françoise Lionnet for a lecture entitled “Indian Ocean Literature Between Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Amitav Ghosh.” Lionnet, a professor of Comparative Literature at UCLA, runs the Center for African Studies, and is the past president of the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA). The second event in a series, this lecture was planned entirely by a committee of Comparative Literature graduate students who also came together to discuss Lionnet’s work at a rousing roundtable. Professor Lionnet’s talk examined Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s national mythologization of the shipwreck of the *Saint-Gerán*, and showed how this mythology is problematized by archival research. She concluded by analyzing further historical reworkings of the shipwreck in the fiction of Amitav Ghosh.

—Meaghan Skahan



The Comparative Literature Lecture Committee and their honored guest. From left to right: Kuan-Yen Liu, Aurélie Chevant, Sylvia Ferreira, Meaghan Skahan, Françoise Lionnet, Shari Sanders, Mike Grafals, Tegan Raleigh.



Mike Grafals, as always, an index of delight.



A good lecture deserves a nourishing meal. The Comparative Literature Lecture Committee, with special guest Françoise Lionnet and former chair Susan Derwin, awaits a hearty repast.



## The Center for Portuguese Studies and the Comparative Literature Program presented Isabel Gil



(Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon): "The Risk Doctrine. Modernism, Fernando Pessoa and Big Business".

**Isabel Capeloa Gil** is Professor of Cultural Theory at the Catholic University of Portugal. Her main research areas include intermedia studies, gender studies as well as representations of war and conflict. She is currently the Dean of the School of Human Sciences at the Catholic University of Portugal (Lisbon). In her paper, Gil studies the ways in which risk and uncertainty narratives have been dislocated from the discourse of economics into the realm of culture and literature, thus framing the production of knowledge in modernity and its reflexive self-awareness. Reading Fernando Pessoa's *The Anarchist Banker* (1922) with

Georg Simmel's *Philosophy of Money*, Gil analyzed the contentious relations between the risk and uncertainty narratives in literary discourse.

Co-sponsors included: Speculative Futures: Critical Issues in America & The College of Letters and Science; The Interdisciplinary Humanities Center; The Series in Contemporary Literature; The Department of French & Italian; and The Department of Germanic, Slavic and Semitic Cultures.

### 2012 Holiday Party



From left to right: Katie Kelp-Stebbins, Allison Schifani, and Lily Wong ascertain what stage of the image they currently occupy.



Devin Fromm (left) and Eli Evans (right) debate whether Pynchon is a Steelers or a Packers fan.



From left to right: Claudio Fogu, Elisabeth Weber, and Megan Skahan wonder what order of things Foucault made for his catered affairs.



From left to right: Susan Derwin, Tilly Govender, and Ron Egan enjoy some good post-structural holiday conversation.



Would Serres also say that the hand is no longer a hand when it has taken hold of the vibraphone mallets?



## "Food for Thought," 2012

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The UCSB Comparative Literature program concluded the 2011-2012 academic year by convening for its second annual potluck in which each participant brought a dish relating to his or her work. Without fail, the group shared delicious thoughts and thoughtful food.



For some, just desserts: The Comparative Literature Program's 2011-2012 award winners. From left to right: Kristie Soares, Cory Hansen, Nicole Valencia, former chair Susan Derwin, and Wallace Wilson III.



From left to right: Nicole Valencia, Katie Kelp-Stebbins, and Emily Hunt doing their best to exemplify the name of the event.



Wolf Kittler, raconteur, embodying the survivance of the oral tradition.

## News and Notes from the Outside World

### Fragments from a Year in South Africa

Marzia Milazzo

Located at the foot of the colossal Table Mountain and the Newlands forest (a conservancy area of spectacular natural beauty), Newlands is one of the most charming neighborhoods in Cape Town. It is a quiet, safe, picturesque, upmarket suburb. With its Cape Dutch style houses, luxury guesthouses, police patrolling the neighborhood on bicycles, White residents and Black cleaning ladies, Black nannies, Black construction workers, Black gardeners, Newland is, like Khayelitsha, Soweto, or Hillbrow, a product of apartheid that the post-apartheid state has not deracialized, and will not deracialize in the foreseeable future. In 2010, other students from the University of California and I were assigned housing in Newlands. It was possible, in our backyard, to ‘forget’ that we were living in a country where most people survive on less than 10 Rand (\$ 1.25) per day, or in which most hospital beds are occupied by victims of HIV and AIDS. The quietness of Newlands often felt disquieting.

At the University of Cape Town (UCT), I studied and performed research on Black fiction, Black radical thought, and hegemonic racial discourse in post-apartheid South Africa. The academics at UCT are excellent, and the campus, which overlooks the city, is simply gorgeous. In South Africa, I also travelled through the country and lived in Soweto. As cliché as it sounds, I fell in love with the people, the literature, the music, the languages, and the landscape. With eleven official languages, several varieties of each language, and residents from everywhere in the African continent and beyond, South Africa is a treasure for sociolinguists and people who, like myself, revel in linguistic and cultural diversity. In 2012, I returned to UCT to conduct further research and write a dissertation chapter. I also studied isiZulu, thanks to a language grant provided by the UCSB Comparative Literature Program. This time, I lived in a small studio downtown. From my place, I could see people protesting in front of parliament almost daily. It is no wonder, in fact, that South Africa has been called the “protest capital of the world.”

Almost two decades after the formal end of apartheid, White people—less than 10 percent of the South African population—own 91 percent of the companies listed in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, 87 percent of the country’s farmable land, and approximately 85 percent of all wealth, salaries, and assets. Today, the ANC government builds RDP houses that are smaller than the average house built by the apartheid government; most people are not provided with any housing at all. While the government’s choice to implement neoliberal policies has not served the interests of the majority, poor people continue to make their voices heard. Grassroots movements such as Abahlali baseMjondolo (the shackdwellers’ movement), and the Landless People’s Movement, Black-only organizations such as Blackwash and the September National Imbizo (SNI) that keep alive the legacies of Black Consciousness, and millions of individuals who experience the precariousness of racial freedom under democracy, continue to fight for justice. Apartheid is not over.



The University of Cape Town campus.



Catherine Nesci, Linda Kick (Ph.D, fall 2011), and Julie Carlson.

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