Hello and welcome to Comparative Literature’s first newsletter. As it is our first, it includes highlights from the past several years, beginning in 2008. Our online version will take over from the print version, but we want to reach out in this format at least at the beginning. We are hoping to reach as many alumnae as possible, those who earned doctorates in the Graduate Program and those who were Comp. Lit. majors or minors. But this newsletter is written for anyone interested in the field and our Program.

Comparative Literature at Rutgers is thriving. Like all academic departments at big research universities it has seen its fortunes rise and fall. It is now decidedly on an upswing. We are staffed by twenty-two Core faculty, among the finest scholars from the departments of African, Middle Eastern and Arabic Languages and Literatures (AMESALL), American Studies, Asian Studies, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish/Portuguese, and the Program in Cinema Studies. Non-voting Affiliate faculty number twenty-nine and extend our reach to Anthropology, Classics, GSAAP, History, Jewish Studies, Political Science, and Women’s and Gender Studies.

We have moved from cramped small offices in the Ruth Adams building, Douglass Campus to a beautiful house at 195 College Avenue, one of three historic Alexander Merchant homes (see our house, p. 2) just down from Alexander Library and next door to the Faculty Club. The generous foyer, hardwood floors, spacious windows and beautiful afternoon light make people feel happy to be here. We have a large hand-me-down seminar table installed in one of the first-floor parlor rooms, which is now reserved all week for seminars and meetings. We’ve installed a state-of-the-art video system, making it a “smart” room for Film Club events and for seminar presentations.

Better digs are always satisfying, but far more important is that Comp. Lit. is living up to the field’s storied tradition of outward-gazing, theory-sensitive scholarship that crosses disciplinary and linguistic boundaries. We have become a hub for interdisciplinary discussion and innovative thinking among units across the School of Arts and Sciences, and our Core faculty meetings are always lively. We hope this newsletter...
will update you and whet your appetite for more news about Comparative Literature at Rutgers. Again…welcome!

Highlights of what’s inside:
- Comp. Lit.’s new multi-track undergraduate major (see Undergraduate News p. 26).
- Comp. Lit. graduate students invited to participate in the biggest Mellon grant ever awarded to Rutgers (see Mellon, p. 17).
- Grad student profiles: where they are now (p. 32).
- New courses in the Graduate Program (see Graduate Program news, p. 6).
- Conferences, past and present (see sidebar).
- Contribute to Comp. Lit! Join our mailing list (p. 8).

Elin Diamond
Graduate Director

195 College Avenue: Comparative Literature’s New Home

In May 2006, the Program in Comparative Literature moved from the second floor of the Ruth Adams building on the Douglass Campus to its current location at 195 College Avenue. The free-standing shingled house provides Comparative Literature with office space and a seminar room where courses, lectures, and meetings are held. The heart of Comparative Literature, 195 College Avenue houses the offices of the Graduate Director, Undergraduate Director, and Administrative Assistant, with additional space for professors and graduate students on the second floor.

But 195 College Avenue is more than just Comparative Literature’s new home; it is also a significant part of New Brunswick’s architectural history. The house was designed in the early twentieth century by local architect Alexander Merchant (1872-1952).

Born in Glasgow, Merchant moved to New York City, then to New Brunswick where he was apprenticed to an architect. He worked at an architectural firm in New York until he was granted a license, then settled in Highland Park. From 1897 to 1952 he designed homes, schools, churches, and municipal buildings throughout the New Brunswick area. Known for using aspects of classic design in his structures, one of Merchant’s signature elements is a decorative central doorway; the front door to 195 College Avenue exemplifies this aspect of Merchant’s repertoire.

Historical information for this article was provided by the brochure “Alexander Merchant: Highland Park’s Classical Architect” by Jeanne Kolva (May 2003) and the Rutgers University pamphlet entitled “The Merchant Block: 191, 195, 199 College Avenue.”

2008-2011

- Survival Logics: Narrative & the Margins (p. 9)
- Cross-Cultural Ecocriticism(s) (p. 4)
- Postcolonialities (p. 19)
- The Politics of the Common (p. 15)
- Translation³ (p. 30)

Staff Profile: Elin Diamond

Elin Diamond is a professor of English and a member of the Core faculty of Comparative Literature. Her research fields are modern drama, performance studies, and dramatic, critical and feminist theory. Author of two monographs, editor of one volume of essays and co-editor of another, she is now writing a book on modernism and performance, mimetic thinking and the body, and intimations of the global. Since supervising her first Comp. Lit. dissertation in 1997, Professor Diamond has continued her commitment to the Program and has served as Graduate Director for four of the past six years.

Staff Profile: Jorge Marcone

A Core Faculty member since 2002, and the Undergraduate Director since spring 2010, Professor Marcone is faculty in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and affiliated with the Center for Latin American Studies. He specializes in environmental aesthetics and ecological thinking in Hispanic literatures and cultures. His current projects are, first, a study of the representation of Amazonia in the Latin American Romance of the Jungle of the 1900s-1950s; and, second, the impact of global ecological and post-humanist discourses in literature and film in Spanish since the end of the Cold War.

Staff Profile: Marilyn Tankiewicz

Marilyn Tankiewicz joined the Program in Comparative Literature as its Administrative Assistant in Fall 2007, and she has been indispensable ever since. Currently an undergraduate student at Rutgers, Marilyn is majoring in Women’s and Gender Studies, with minors in Psychology and Labor Relations. Marilyn says that she is finally achieving her goal of attending college and expects to graduate in Spring 2012. Married for 36 years, she is an avid Scarlet Knights football fan and is proud to say that she has been to every RU bowl game.
Cross-Cultural Ecocriticism(s): Waves and Undertows

Vaughn Anderson

On February 25, 2011, Comparative Literature held its ground-breaking conference, “Cross-Cultural Ecocriticism(s): Waves and Undertows.” Organized by Professor Jorge Marcone, and proposed in a true comparatist spirit, this event proved a means of drawing together various strains within a uniquely diverse discipline. The day’s four presenters, whose interests range from Postcolonial Studies to Queer Studies, are all at the forefront of continuing efforts to open ecological thought and activism beyond ecocriticism’s one-time association with Western, and largely English, traditions and territories.

The first speaker, Rob Nixon, is the Rachel Carson Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His talk was entitled “Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor.” Nixon, whose work has been instrumental in bringing ecocriticism into dialogue with Postcolonial Studies, aimed discussion toward a broadened notion of what constitutes the environment. Nixon argued that heteronormative discourses of nature are displaced by queer or gay experience.

Cate Sandilands, who presented a talk entitled “Queer Eye: Unthinking Heteronaturativity,” is Canada Research Chair in Sustainability and Culture at York University. Professor Sandilands’ work theorizes through reading environmentalist narratives from/for queer communities. In her talk she argued that heteronormative discourses of nature are displaced by queer or gay experience.

Professor Timothy Morton, who is Professor of Literature and Environment at the University of California-Davis, gave the day’s third talk. Expanding on and revising his previous formulations of “The Ecological Thought,” Professor Morton’s “Hyper-Objects 4.0: Emergency Human-Scale Study Guide” called for a re-evaluation of ecological critique within the flush of epistemological implications arising from recent humanistic and scientific research.

Ursula Heise, Director of Modern Thought and Literature at Stanford University, ended the day’s presentations with a talk entitled “Terminal Species: Narrative, Database, and Biodiversity Loss.” Professor Heise’s recent work deals with the ways in which we narrativize loss of species, and in her talk she argued for database as a form of cultural expression. By acknowledging the aesthetic potential of database, Heise claims, we can better evaluate our conceptions of biodiversity loss.

Our conference ended with a round-table discussion and was followed by a lively (and packed) reception at the Comparative Literature building. Throughout the day the conference drew wonderful attendance from the Rutgers community and abroad.

Professor Andreas Dresen and Christian Petzold

• "Hungarian Roma and African American Autobiographies in Comparative Perspective: Lakatos, Peline Nyari, Wright, and Hurston"
• "Between Symptom and Symbol: Freud, Psychoanalysis and the Jewish Mystical Text"
• "Gauguin, Gilgamesh, and the Modernist Aesthetic Allegory: The Archaeology of Desire in Noa Noa"
• "The United States of Europe: Musil, Svevo, Joyce and the Literary Invention of a Postcolonial Community"
• "Exile and Empire: Post Imperial Narrative and the National Epic"
• "Border Consciousness' and the Re-Imagination of Nation in the Films of Fatih Akin, Andreas Dresen and Christian Petzold"
• "Subversive Bodies in 19th Century Narratives of Paris and London"

New Ph.D.'s (2010-2011)

These graduate students have successfully defended their dissertations in this academic year (2010-2011). Congratulations to:

• Tamas Demeny
• Jacqueline Loeb
• Jennifer McBryan
• Sandra Sokowski
• Kathleen Sclafani
• Kenneth Sammond
• Noa Noa
• Salvatore Pappalardo
• Sandra Sokowski
• Jennifer McBryan
• Kathleen Sclafani
• Sandra Sokowski
• Jennifer McBryan
• Kathleen Sclafani
• Sandra Sokowski
The Graduate Program in Comparative Literature at Rutgers is one of the most innovative and rigorous in the country. On the one hand it requires strong familiarity with at least three foreign languages (with professional spoken and written expertise in one of the three) and a regimen of 48 credits (39 for students entering with an MA). On the other hand it embraces all implications of comparatism, enabling students to pursue the study of literature and/or cinema across national, linguistic, generic, and disciplinary boundaries. Committed to intertextual approaches, Comp. Lit. at Rutgers provides training in literary theory and analysis and welcomes methodologies grounded in cultural studies, cinema studies, performance and gender studies. Our Graduate Program in Comparative Literature draws upon a distinguished, diverse, and welcoming Core and Affiliate faculty, including professors for whom Comparative Literature is the primary site of graduate teaching (Profs. Ousseina Alidou, Edyta Bojanowska, Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Sameh Selim, Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui, Emily Van Buskirk). We are honored to have them in Comparative Literature. Each student arranges her or his program of study in consultation with the graduate director and an adviser. The goal is to create a curriculum that is coherent, structured, yet flexible enough to meet the needs of individual students.

Program Revisions
In 2003, Dean Barry Qualls asked Richard Serrano to convene a committee of faculty (Elin Diamond, Nicholas Rennie, Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui, Ban Wang) to rethink the Graduate Program in Comparative Literature. We eliminated the five-exam structure in favor of one comprehensive written and oral exam to be taken as soon as possible after course work. The prospectus has been shortened to five pages with an extensive bibliography. In the new program, students are encouraged to view exam preparation as a step on the road to writing a prospectus, so that the transition period from Ph.D. exam to dissertation writing runs as smoothly as possible. We resolved to accept only those students we could fund for at least four years, with other funding possibilities available for the fifth year (See Mellon dissertation fellowships, p. 17).

Two New Graduate Courses (2008):
In addition to Introduction to Literary Theory, 195:501, Comparative Literature launched two new graduate courses:

Comparative Literature: the Discipline and the Profession (195:502) is a much-needed seminar setting out the essential debates in Comparative Literature, with sections on translation, publishing, and syllabus-creation. It is required for all graduate students and offered every two years.

Comparative Literature in Dialogue (195:610) is a graduate seminar that includes the participation of a visiting scholar outside Rutgers whose writings are central to the seminar’s themes. The visiting scholar heads a series of workshops for graduate students and visits undergraduate classes.

Comparative Literature in Dialogue Symposia have become a related feature of this new seminar. Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel offered the first iteration of this course in 2008 called “Comparative Literature in Dialogue: Postcolonialities.” Capping her class “in dialogue” experience with Prof. Vincente Rafael (University of Washington), she launched a day-long symposium, “Postcolonialities,” with invited speakers that was sponsored by SAS and open to the public (April 2009 – see p. 19). In Fall 2010 Jorge Marcone taught Comparative Literature in Dialogue with guest scholar Prof. Ursula Heise (Stanford), who joined a day-long symposium entitled “Cross-Cultural Ecocriticisms(s): Waves and Undertows” (February 2011) – see p. 4.

Comparative Literature and Cinema Studies
Comparative Literature is closely affiliated with the program in Cinema Studies, headed by Susan Martin-Márquez. Several Comparative Literature graduate students have made film their central object of study and all students who express strong interest in film may now obtain a Graduate Certificate in Cinema Studies by working with C.S. faculty across SAS. The Graduate Program is proud of its affiliation with Cinema Studies and looks forward to extensive collaboration in the future. Other options for graduate certificates include Women’s and Gender Studies, Jewish Studies, Asian Studies, and Medieval Studies.

Jobs
Post Ph.D. employment, a worrisome issue for any Humanities graduate student, is especially problematic in times of academic retrenchment. Comparative Literature follows the best practices in the Humanities by offering a job-search regimen—we vet job letters, discuss interview and conference protocols, hold mock interviews and mock job talks. Our faculty are eager to participate in these events and they have been, especially in the mock interview, game-changers for our students. In 2008-2009, three out of five newly minted Comparative Literature Ph.D.’s who searched for a job secured a tenure-track position. In 2009-2010, three out of four job seekers were successful. In 2010-2011 two out of three found employment in academe. Please consult our website (http://complit.rutgers.edu) under Alumni-Job Placements.

Comp. Lit.’s recent placement record has been at or above the national average. Some of the best jobs come to those whose foreign languages and national literatures are in demand. Our graduate students also find non-tenure track employment at good universities, and while these jobs come with heavy teaching loads, they provide an important entry into the profession.
DONATE!

New Fellowship Fund—Keeping our numbers up!
Elin Diamond

When I became Acting Graduate Director in 2005-2006, Comparative Literature had over 60 graduate students. We are now down to 37—an upsetting decline, and yet the reasons are happy ones. First, since we accept only those students we can fund, our admission number is kept low, ranging from 3 to 5. Second, our students are defending their dissertations and leaving graduate school far more rapidly than we can replace them. (Note: the Graduate School now asks students, advisers, and graduate directors to review any student in a graduate program longer than 7 years—this has helped spur on completion.) Still, the outflow in Comp. Lit. is astonishing. In 2009-2010, eight students received their doctorate; in 2008-2009, nine students received degrees. At graduation ceremonies in May, I am the graduate director who seems to be almost constantly applauding. Being a lean and successful graduate program is a very good thing, but it’s dangerous to shrink to the point that students no longer feel part of a vital cohort. If you would like to endow a fellowship in your name, or contribute to an existing fellowship so that the Graduate Program may grow, please contact our Grants officer: J. J. Adler, Director of Development (jadler@sas.rutgers.edu).

Awards and Prizes Fund—for Graduate and Undergraduate Student Prizes

We would love to name a prize after you! Consider the following categories and contact our Grants officer: J. J. Adler, Director of Development (jadler@sas.rutgers.edu) if you would like to contribute.

- Best Graduate Student Essay produced in course work
- Best Undergraduate essay produced in course work
- Best Graduate Essay produced on [a certain theme]
- Best Undergraduate Essay produced [on a certain theme]

General Donation to Comparative Literature

If you wish to make a general donation to the Program in Comparative Literature, you may write a check payable to the Rutgers University Foundation and include the designation, "Comparative Literature" or "Faculty Fund for Undergraduate Studies" or "Graduate Student Research and Travel Fund," in the check’s memo line.

Mail to:
Accounting Department
Rutgers University Foundation
120 Albany Street Plaza, Tower 1, Suite 201
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

You may also donate using our website, http://complit.rutgers.edu and follow the link "Donors and Friends." Again, any donation, large or small, strengthens our program and is greatly appreciated.

Survival Logics: Narrative and the Margins

Tara Coleman

Survival Logics: Narrative and the Margins was a graduate student conference organized by Matthew Mangold, Nadia Alahmed and Tara Coleman on March 25, 2011. The goal of the conference was to explore various ways in which narratives of survival come into contact with one another. We wanted to think about the relatedness of literary traditions, cultural memories, histories and futures without eliding or overlooking key differences of location and temporality. The conference theme was formulated through the collective thinking of all in the department; feedback and suggestions were constantly informing our every decision.

The themes of the morning panels were "Identity" and "Marginal Spaces;" and the afternoon panels were "History, Memory, Atrocity" and "Evasion and Appropriation." Five graduate students from Comp. Lit. presented papers: Nadia Alahmed, Ben DeWitte, Matthew Mangold, Louis Segura and Chia-chieh (Mavis) Tseng. They were joined by graduate students from other departments at Rutgers and other universities as far away as California and Ontario. Each panel had a faculty respondent: Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel from Comparative Literature and Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies, Carter Mathes from English, Derek Schilling from French and Cinema Studies, and Yael Zerubavel from History and Jewish Studies. Our panelists provided constructive feedback to presenters and drew connections between the papers, a format which worked well to facilitate discussion through the Q&A period. Our moderators, Vaughn Anderson, Jinhwa Lee, Brendan Rabon, and Jennifer Raterman gave the panels a structured format that led to productive discussion.

In the evening, Professor Michael Rothberg of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign presented his keynote talk, "Multidirectional Memory and the Implicated Subject: On Sebald and Kentridge." Professor Rothberg’s talk expanded upon the concept of multidirectional memory, which provides a way to think about the interconnectedness of narratives of the past without thinking of them as in competition with one another. Although we were already fans of Professor Rothberg’s recent book, Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization, we were pleased to see him expand the concept to consider the work of South African artists. We were particularly impressed by his readings of some of Kentridge’s drawings for projection. The conference was an engaging and stimulating day of presentations and conversations, and we thank all of you involved in making it a success.
New Student Spotlight, 2007-2010
Here are brief biographies of entering students from 2007 to 2010.

Entered in Fall 2007:

Caroline Godart received her B.A. from the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium). She went on to pursue a Master’s in International Relations from the same institution, and left for the United States in 2005 to study at Brandeis University, where she received an M.A. in English and American Literature and Women’s Studies. Caroline’s current work examines the place of rape within patriarchy, from the perspective of difference and feminism. In particular, she is interested in delineating the ways in which women’s and men’s desires and identities are constructed through a dialogue with sexual violence.

Maria Kager has a propedeuse (B.A.) in Italian and Russian and a doctoraal (M.A.) in Comparative Literature and English from the University of Amsterdam. A scholar of James Joyce, Maria has published articles on music in Joyce and Mann in both Quaderni di Synapsis and the Word and Music Association Forum. Her article on music in Joyce’s “Sirena” episode was recently accepted for publication in a forthcoming book on new approaches to Joyce. For the past two years, Kager has delivered papers at the International James Joyce Conference. She has also received a scholarship to study for three months at the Joyce Foundation in Zurich while completing her M.A. thesis, and she has been awarded several scholarships to attend Joyce summer schools and Synapsis, the Italian summer school for comparative literature.

Alessio Lerro graduated from the University of Bologna (Italy) with an M.A. thesis on psychoanalysis and deconstruction in the works of Edgar Allan Poe. His research interests include literary theory, theory of metaphor and allegory, and in general the intersection of literature and philosophy. Alessio works on European Romanticism and Italian Modernism with a special focus on the aesthetics of the sublime from Longinus to Kant and its influence on the poetics of modernity. He is currently working on Vico, Leopardi, Marinetti and on Italian Futurism.

Entered in Fall 2008:

Vaughn Anderson and Lauren Fanelli assumed editorship of Exit 9 and have just completed Issue X, Public Pain, Private Poetics: Memory, Crises, and the Global Community. This issue focuses on an area of mutual interest for the two graduate students, namely the extent to which art, in particular poetry, helps to ease a pain that is shared through communal crises, such as 9/11, Thailand’s 2004 tsunami, and Haiti’s 2010 earthquake. As the editors state in their introduction to the issue: “Though many have pondered the curative effect art has on private pain, how can we consider art’s palliative influence on a pain that is shared through a modern, communal crisis or event? And how do both the invention of art and the subjectivity of memory influence or challenge the documentation, preservation, and circulation of a cultural, historical, and global occasion of pain?” The articles address these questions through an examination of some of the most traumatic events of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Issue IX, Textuality and Terror, edited by Sandra Sokowski, Joshua Beall, Mahriana Rohfert and Monica Filimon, contains articles that explore global literature, culture, and theory around the theme of textuality and terror. They provide a unique set of perspectives on how terror, terrorism, and the text interact.

Lauren Fanelli has a B.A. in English from Cornell and an M.F.A. in poetry from American University. During her M.F.A. work, Fanelli translated original works from German, Spanish, and Italian into English. She continued to engage with translation as Assistant Editor for the Classics Department of Penguin U.S.A., where she worked on manuscripts in both Spanish and English and facilitated translations from China, Saudi Arabia, France, and the Netherlands into English. With a consistent interest in women’s fiction and poetry from across the globe, Lauren plans to examine the women’s movements of the 1960s in the United States and Italy with a focus on authors such as Adrienne Rich and Ruth Stone from the U.S. and Sibila Aleramo and Dacia Maraini from Italy.

Chia-chieh (Mavis) Tseng comes to Rutgers from Taiwan, where she received a B.A. and an M.A. in English and Comparative Literature from National Chiao Tung University. Her thesis examined and expanded the notion of the flâneur; she looks at the flâneur in 19th Century Paris but also understands the protagonist of Virginia Woolf’s “Street Haunting: A London Adventure” as a flâneuse. At Rutgers, Mavis plans to continue work on flâneurie in 19th and 20th Century modern urban literature. She plans to continue broadening the definition of the flâneur across nation, gender, race, and class, focusing in particular on visual culture and the role of the gaze in works such as those by Taiwanese author Chu Tien- hsin.

Entered in Fall 2009:

Tara Coleman received her B.A. in Comparative Literature (Chinese and English) from Barnard College in 2005, after which she moved to Shanghai to teach English. In 2006 she entered the Master of Philosophy program at the Chinese University of Hong Kong completing her M.A. in 2008 with a thesis on Gao Xingjian and Samuel Beckett in which she used postcolonial theory to interpret these authors’ major works. At Rutgers, Tara is continuing her studies in Chinese literature and culture and its complex relation to modernity and modernism in the West.

Ben De Witte earned a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Ghent in 2004 and then a graduate degree in Women’s Studies (2005) and a Masters degree in American Studies (2006) from the University of Antwerp for which he wrote a thesis on Gregg Araki’s queer cinema. He then moved to the U.S. to begin a joint M.A. in English and American
**Matthew Mangold** entered the Ph.D. program in Comparative Literature with a B.A. from St. Johns College (2006) where he majored in philosophy and math, and won a prize for his translation of a passage from Euripides. An abiding interest in languages and the experience of the modern city led him to St. Petersburg to study Russian and to research Pushkin’s poetry, particularly “The Bronze Horseman.” At Rutgers Matthew hopes to work comparatively on Pushkin and Baudelaire’s spatial poetics, on Dostoyevsky, and on Bakhtin’s theory and criticism.

**Louis Segura** received his B.A. from the University of California at San Diego in 1999 and earned an M.A. in Comparative Literature from San Francisco State University. Louis’ interests include the encounter of the linguistic and the literary, the narrative representation of memory and subjectivity, and the problem of witness in the experience of trauma. He wrote his Masters thesis on the relation between fiction and autobiography in the work of Jorge Semprún, who remains a research interest, along with continental philosophy and literary theory. A parallel avenue of research concerns Jewish experience in Costa Rica.

**Comparative Literature’s Film Night**
Monica Filimon (updated by Kathy Sclafani)

The Comp. Lit. Film Night, hosted by the Program in Comparative Literature and the Graduate Student Association, meets on Thursday evenings and has sought not only to encourage academic debates around lesser known yet important films, but also to foster a stronger community of graduate students. The films are chosen to represent various traditions, time periods, languages, and continents in order to engage the regular audience in a dynamic analysis and reinforce the claim film makes nowadays for a better status among academic disciplines. Each film is introduced by a graduate student who also guides the discussions that follow the screening. The introduction often focuses on the social, political, and economic conditions for the production and distribution of each feature, while the debate afterward is more centered on the interpretation of the text and its reception by different audiences. Some of the films screened in the Fall 2010 semester included *Mutter Küsters Fahrt zum Himmel* (Mother Kusters Goes to Heaven) [1975, dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder]; *Le Corbeau* (The Raven) [1943, dir. Henri Georges Clouzot]; *Der Amerikanische Freund* (The American Friend) [1977, dir. Wim Wenders]; *Code Inconnu* (Code Unknown) [2000, dir. Michael Haneke]; *Gegen die Wand* (Head on) [2004, dir. Fatih Akin]; and *Rue Cases-Nègres* (Sugar Cane Alley) [1983, dir. Euzhan Palcy].

**Enter in Fall 2010:**

**Nadia Alahmed** was born in Tanzania, raised in Ukraine, and received her B.A. from Birzeit University in 2007. With a deep interest in cultural representations not limited by borders or nation states, she began graduate school at University of Massachusetts, Amherst and has transferred to Rutgers where she hopes to pursue research on African American, Native American and Palestinian literatures and cultures through the lens of postcolonial theory. She also hopes to link her language strengths to the study of Arabic poetry and Russian/Ukrainian fiction.

**Maria Beliaeva** is a Russian national educated in France who earned her B.A. at the University of British Columbia in 2010. At Rutgers she plans to study nineteenth century French, English and Russian literatures, especially of the fin-de-siècle. She is interested in the complexity of transnational, translinguistic modernism, particularly the effects of scientific, industrial and political revolution on the modern narrative and on ideas of self and collectivity.

**Jinwha Lee** entered the graduate program in Comparative Literature having earned her B.A. (2004) and her M.A. (2008) from Seoul National University. She is interested in looking at the modern literature of East Asia and its associated criticism through the lens of queer theory. Her M.A. thesis, “A Comparative Study of Narrative Strategies in Lesbian Coming-Of-Age Novels,” explored the novels of Rita Mae Brown, Jeanette Winterson, Lee Myungrang and Kim Yeon. She is continuing this line of inquiry at Rutgers, focusing on the novels of the New Woman of Korea, Japan, and China between 1910 and the 1940s.

**Lidia Levkovitch** received a B.S. degree in Computer Science from Drexel University in 1996 and a B.A. in Spanish Language and Literature from Rutgers in 2008. Carrying a full-time job at Rutgers, Lidia will pursue her Ph.D. on a modified schedule, looking forward to studying notions of the marvelous in the Spanish and the Russian novel.

**Brendan Rabon** entered the Graduate Program in Comparative Literature with a B.A. from New College (2007) and a M.A. in Classics from the University of Georgia (2010). His Masters thesis dealt with the amoebean contest in the pastoral poetry of Theocritus, Vergil, Calpurnius Siculo, and Nemesianus. At Rutgers he is investigating themes and tropes of classical antiquity in the literatures of the Renaissance and Modernism in French and English. He will also pursue a long-standing interest in translation as both poetic practice and cultural expression.

**Huseyin Ekrem Ulus** received both his B.A. and M.A. from Ege University in Turkey in 2002 and 2005 respectively. A recipient of a Fulbright Doctoral Research Scholarship, he spent 2009-2010 at Columbia University and at University of Virginia. As a doctoral student at Rutgers, he hopes to consider the intersection of postmodern theory and literature with ancient modes of storytelling and myth. His long-term goal is to establish a program in Comparative Literature at Ege University and to shape an interdisciplinary curriculum there.

**Entering in Fall 2011:**

**Corey Clawson,** B.A., Utah State University; **Emmanuel Martínez,** B.A., University of Pennsylvania; **Lina Qu,** B.A., M.A., Peking University; **Carolyn Ureña,** B.A., Princeton University, M.A. Maryland-College Park.
A number of our graduate students and recent alumni have already published books in both creative and academic writing, among many other achievements. Here are some highlights:

Iva Popovicova (Ph.D. 2006) recently published her dissertation with VDM Verlag Publishing (2008) as New Body Politic: Czech and Polish Women's Art of the 1990s. Popovicova explains that her book explores “two conflicting geopolitical tendencies in Central and Eastern Europe [that] appeared in the 1990s: distancing the communist past as a necessary prerequisite for integration into Western structures (EU and NATO), and embracing communist memories as a tool for promoting wider recognition of the arts in this region. It is precisely there, in the geopolitical inconsistencies of the new Europe, that new visions of feminist subjectivity can be discerned.”

Ignacio Infante (Ph.D. 2009) has published a number of translations including a translation into Spanish of John Ashbery’s A Wave (Una ola/A Wave. Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, 2003).


Several of our Comp. Lit. graduate students have recently published essays in academic journals:


Jacqueline Loeb: “Dissonance Rising: Subversive Sound in Zhang Yimou’s Raise the Red Lantern” (Film-Philosophy, forthcoming).


Caroline Godart: “Cinema and the Curious Body: Lucretia Martel’s La Nina santa” NeMLA, Rutgers University, April 7-9 2011.

Steven Gonzagowski: “Father, Can’t You See I’m Burning?” Dreams, and Desire in Lobo Antuns’ Que Fari e Quandu Tudo Arde” at the American Portuguese Studies Association conference at Brown University, October 2010.


Conference Papers 2010-2011


Caroline Godart: “Cinema and the Curious Body: Lucretia Martel’s La Nina santa” NeMLA, Rutgers University, April 7-9 2011.

Steven Gonzagowski: “Father, Can’t You See I’m Burning?” Dreams, and Desire in Lobo Antuns’ Que Fari e Quandu Tudo Arde” at the American Portuguese Studies Association conference at Brown University, October 2010.


The Politics of the Common - Michael Hardt

On February 18, 2010, Professor Michael Hardt visited Rutgers to give a talk entitled “The Politics of the Common.” Hardt, who teaches in and chairs Duke University’s Program in Literature, is best known for his trilogy of books—Empire (2000), Multitude (2004), and Commonwealth (2009)—which he wrote with Antonio Negri. In his talk at Rutgers, Hardt expanded on certain lines of thinking from his most recent book, Commonwealth, focusing specifically on questions of urban space as they pertain to his conception of “the common.” Professor Hardt delivered his talk to a packed auditorium, and the seminar-style graduate student roundtable that he lead the following day was also a success. There, students from seven Rutgers departments (including a contingent from Comp. Lit.) joined Hardt in a discussion of a selection of short stories from around the globe. The event was organized primarily by Vaughn Anderson, Matthew Mangold, and Mavis Tseng, with help and support from across the Comparative Literature program.
Congratulations!

Graduate Student Awards, 2007-2011

Nadia Alahmed: 2011 Mellon Summer Research Grant to travel to the West Bank to interview Palestinian poets.

Lauren Fanelli: 2008 Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, which finances his graduate education.

Caroline Godart: Mellon Small Departmental Grant (Summer 2010) for a research trip to Norway to study Luce Irigaray; Mellon Summer Research Grant (2011).

Steven Gonzagowski: Mellon Summer Research Grant to fund a trip to Lisbon to deliver a paper at an international conference on psychoanalysis and Portuguese culture.

Monica Filimon: Erna Neuse Prize for Best Graduate Essay in German Studies (2006 and 2007); Mellon Summer dissertation writing stipend to conduct research in Bucharest and Madrid; Mellon Dissertation Fellowship (2009-2010).

Maria Kager: Mellon Summer Grant (2009) to attend a seminar in Dublin; Mellon Small Departmental Grant to fund a trip to a Joyce conference in Prague (Summer 2010); two-month research fellowship from the James Joyce Foundation in Zurich.

Alessio Lerro: Mellon Summer Research Grant (2010) to research the role of visual culture in Giambattista Vico’s Principi di Scienza Nuova; the University and Louis Bevier Fellowship for the 2011-2012 academic year to complete his dissertation.


Salvatore Pappalardo: Mellon Dissertation Writing Stipend (Summer 2009) to work in the archives at Columbia University on Guglielmo Ferrero; Mellon Dissertation Fellowship for 2010-2011 to complete his dissertation, which he defended in April 2011.

Neil Pischner: Social Science Research Council Fellowship (May-September 2007); Graduate School-New Brunswick Special Opportunity Study Grant to Peru/Quechua (2008); Mellon Summer Research Grant (2009); SAS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Undergraduate Education (2011).

Jennifer Raterman: SAS Mellon Summer Research Grant to research French Revolutionary author Louise Michel at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.

Hugo Rios: Mellon Summer Research Grant (2009) to study at the film archives in Madrid and Barcelona; Mellon Small Departmental Grant (Summer 2010) to return to Madrid for further research.


Shirli Sela-Levavi: Women’s caucus travel grant to attend the 42nd annual American Jewish Studies conference in Boston in December 2010 where she organized a panel entitled “Agnon Embodied.”

Sandia Sokowski: Graduate School-New Brunswick Special Opportunity Study Grant to Paris, France (2007).

Comparative Literature Graduate Students chosen to participate in Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Award to Rutgers

In Spring 2008, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant totaling $2,793,000 to the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, the largest grant that Mellon has awarded to Rutgers University. This 3-year renewable grant to the School of Arts and Sciences is for the purpose of supporting graduate study in the Humanities—helping to recruit the most qualified students and providing support that will assure timely progress toward completion of the doctorate. [Note: Thanks to the efforts of SAS Executive Dean Greenberg and Humanities Dean Swenson, the Mellon grant was just renewed for another three years.]

Six SAS units, three large (English, History, Philosophy), three small (Art History, Comparative Literature, Linguistics), were named in the grant on the basis of their excellence in all aspects of graduate study, including job placement.

In 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, Comparative Literature graduate students, along with those in the other five units, competed for either Summer Research grants/Writing stipends ($4K-$5K) or Dissertation Fellowships ($30K). The summer grants enable students to travel to an archive, pursue specialized language training, or to work intensively at home on research and writing. Dissertation Fellowships are for the last year of dissertation writing, after which no other SAS funding is available. Interest earned on the Mellon award made it possible for each participating unit to award “Small Departmental Mellon Grants”—Comp. Lit’s allotment was a total of $6500 for each $1500 award. In addition, some recruitment money was made available for the smaller departments.

In 2008-2009, Mahriana Rofheart won a Dissertation Fellowship and Melanie Holm, Monica Filimon, Maria Kager, Salvatore Pappalardo, Neil Pischner, and Hugo Rios each received a Summer Research Grant.

In 2009-2010, Monica Filimon and Salvatore Pappalardo were awarded Dissertation Fellowships. Alessio Lerro and Jennifer Raterman received Summer Research Grants ($4K). Winners of Small Departmental Mellon Grants included Lauren Fanelli, Caroline Godart, Steven Gonzagowski, Maria Kager, and Hugo Rios.

In 2010-2011, Matthew Mangold and Nadia Alahmed were each awarded Summer Research Grants.

In the past three years, eighteen Comparative Literature graduate students have benefited in some way from Mellon money. We are grateful to SAS and to the Mellon Foundation for recognizing Comp. Lit. and its wonderful graduate students. We are grateful to the graduate students of past years whose excellence led to the recognition of our program.
Graduate Students Continue to Share Research at Colloquia

Several times a year Comparative Literature hosts Graduate Student Colloquia and potluck dinners in the seminar room at 195 College Avenue. Each colloquium features an advanced graduate student who shares a working dissertation chapter or article with colleagues and faculty. Discussion is lively, with presenters receiving suggestions and constructive critique from fellow students and their professors. Responding to diverse perspectives, graduate student presenters receive valuable preparation for conference presentations and job interviews.

Recent Graduate Colloquia:
- Kathleen Scafani, "Dislocating the Nation in Contemporary German Film," December 11, 2007.

Second Annual Teaching Symposium Hosts David Damrosch—2008

On October 4, 2008, the graduate students in Comparative Literature gathered with Rutgers professors and guests to discuss teaching Comparative Literature. Sandra Sokowski organized the symposium, entitled "Building Critical Toolboxes," and featured David Damrosch as its invited speaker.

Professor Damrosch is the author of What is World Literature? and How to Read World Literature, part of Blackwell’s How to Study Literature series. Additionally, Damrosch is general editor of the six-volume Longman Anthology of World Literature. In his talk, entitled "Doing Comparative Literature," Damrosch discussed his anthology as well as his continued interest in putting texts that “do not know each other” in dialogue. Furthermore, his exploration of "The Invention of Poetry" from the Ramayana both instructed us about this fascinating excerpt as well as modeled how we might go about teaching world literature in an undergraduate course.

Featuring talks by Professors Ousseina Alidou and Paul Schalow concluded with presentations by graduate students Chad Loewen-Schmidt, Ignacio Infante and Mahriana Rofheart. Each presented texts that were particularly productive to teach to undergraduates. Comparative Literature looks forward to continuing the yearly practice of sharing graduate students and faculty to address both how we teach undergraduates as well as how we understand the discipline as a whole.

Conference on Postcolonialities

Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel

On April 17, 2009, Comparative Literature organized the conference entitled "Postcolonialities" in collaboration with the Department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies. Our four guest speakers included: Silvio Torres-Saillant (Comparative Literature and Latino Studies, Syracuse University), Vicente Rafael (History, University of Washington), Sonali Perera (English, Rutgers), and Ania Loomba (English, University of Pennsylvania). These colleagues came to establish a dialogue with four respondents from Rutgers: Cheryl Wall (English), Allan Isaac (American Studies and English), Ethel Brooks (Sociology and Women’s and Gender Studies), and Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui (American Studies and Comparative Literature). The conference was successful in fostering an interdisciplinary dialogue on a current theoretical framework among students and colleagues.

We envisioned this academic event as an opportunity to explore the discomfort produced by postcolonial theory among cultural critics and historians specializing in the study of intellectual formations and histories of ideas produced from within colonial contexts. The conference speakers discussed the benefits and limitations of comparative work as it has been conducted in postcolonial criticism. Some of the questions explored in the conference were: How do we define a historically specific but also diverse canon of postcolonial studies? What are some of the key terms and thinkers that are recovered or displaced by contemporary debates on postcoloniality? How can postcolonialism as a field of inquiry become decolonized by displacing the centrality of Eurocentric and/or Anglocentric approaches to postcolonial texts? What happens with other colonial experiences taking place before and after this time frame? What is the difference between colonialism, postcolonialism, coloniality, and imperialism?

The conference also included a pedagogical component. For the Spring 2009 semester Comparative Literature created new graduate and undergraduate courses that were linked to the conference. The graduate course 195:610: "Comparative Literature in Dialogue: Extended Postcolonialities" was taught by Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel, and had students from Comparative Literature, Women’s and Gender Studies, English, and Spanish and Portuguese. Course participants devoted the entire semester to reviewing the history and recent debates of postcolonial studies as applied in Latin American, Caribbean and Filipino studies. They also read works by all of the conference participants prior to their intervention at the conference, in addition to attending the entire event.

The graduate course syllabus included a mini course on the Philippines that was taught by Vicente Rafael and Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel. Professor Rafael designed a syllabus for the three-session workshop, held on April 6th, 13th and 15th. It was offered at the Alexander Library’s Teleconference Center and was open to faculty members and other graduate students from the departments of History, Women’s and Gender Studies, English, Spanish and Portuguese, and French. This experience enriched our class discussions and strengthened the interdisciplinary component of our course.

The undergraduate class 195:307: "Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures and Theory" was
taught by our colleague Janet Walker. For this class the students read José Rizal’s *El filibusterismo* in preparation for Vicente Rafael’s visit, and were expected to attend at least one session of the conference as part of the course requirements. There was a session on Rizal co-taught by Vicente Rafael and Janet Walker, in which students engaged in an interdisciplinary analysis of *El filibusterismo*.

We were very pleased with the outcome of our conference. The one-day event attracted an audience of between 55 and 70 attendees, with a strong representation of faculty members from our School of Arts and Sciences, graduate students, and most importantly, undergraduate students. Colleagues and students from Princeton University, Stony Brook, the University of Pennsylvania and Rutgers-Newark also attended.

### Distinguished Lectures in Caribbean Studies at Rutgers

In Fall 2010, a series of lectures, organized by Professor Martínez-San Miguel, was offered in conjunction with the graduate and undergraduate seminars “Coloniality of Diasporas in Caribbean Literatures” (C.L. 519/480). It was designed to analyze cultural representations of colonialism and diaspora in the French, Anglo and Hispanic Caribbean literatures.

**Monday, September 20**
Sibylle Fischer, Spanish and Portuguese, New York University
*“The Subject of Rights”*

**Monday, October 18**
Paget Henry, Sociology, Brown
*“Caliban in the Work of Silvio Torres-Saillant”*

**Monday, November 8**
Román de la Campa, Romance Languages, University of Pennsylvania
*“Caribbean Culture and the Uncertain American State”*

**Monday, December 6**
Rosamond S. King, English, Brooklyn College
*“The Cult of True Omanhood: Caribbean Women Sex the Bildungsroman”*

All lectures took place in the Teleconference Room, Alexander Library, 4th Floor, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Lectures were followed by reception at Comparative Literature (195 College Avenue)

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**Comp. Lit. Graduates Reflect on RU**

**Geoff Baker**

Geoff Baker (Ph.D. 2006) is an Assistant Professor of Comparative and British literature in the English Department at California State University, Chico. Baker’s dissertation and book manuscript examine imperialism and politics in 19th Century French and British realist narratives and his current research traces the history of debates around political art in the 20th Century. He has published articles in Comparative Literature, Dalhousie French Studies, and the Yearbook of General & Comparative Literature, and has an article forthcoming in *The Journal of Popular Culture*.

When I had settled my plans for grad school and knew I would be coming to Rutgers, I asked my cousin, a professor of Political Science, whether he had any advice for me. “Two things,” he said. “First, know as quickly as possible whom you want to work with and what you want to work on. And, second, treat every seminar paper like it’s a potential article.” His second piece of advice ended up being invaluable: in your first year of a full-time teaching job, you really need some half-finished projects on the shelf that you can dust off and send out to journals, because you will not have time to work on new things and yet they will expect you to “be active in your field.” I am now thoroughly un convinced that the first bit of my cousin’s counsel was correct, though. Because it’s one thing to know what you want to work on in the beginning, but a vibrant program and a brilliant faculty will make you feel pulled in all directions. After a few seminars in the program at Rutgers, everything seemed interesting enough for a dissertation.

I had arrived in New Brunswick dead set on Diderot and the eighteenth century, but that very year the diderotiste retired. No problem—a class on the twentieth century that semester was really lighting me up, so I jumped into that period, chose an adviser, and decided to write on political aesthetics in and after Nietzsche. When my adviser moved to another school in 2002, I was already in Berlin for a year, researching the topic that I would soon abandon. It could have been a really troubling moment, but it wasn’t, fortunately. After a few years of coursework, most of which was outside of my chosen century and topic, there were other topics I’d already begun regretting I hadn’t chosen.

The dissertation that I ended up writing owed itself almost entirely to inspiration from seminars I’d taken outside my original chosen field(s): classes on the 19th-century novel from Bill Donahue, George Levine, Bruce Robbins, and Uri Eisenzwieg; a seminar on otherness in Cervantes, Montaigne, and Shakespeare from Josephine Diamond; one on contemporary literature and the postsecular from John McClure; one on theory from Jim Swenson; one on the Frankfurt School from Nicholas Rennie; and an independent study from Steve Walker on Greek and Sanskrit drama. Sometimes indirectly, sometimes very directly, the ideas I felt I needed in order to write my thesis came from all over our program. They came from seminars that had seemed, at the time I took them, to be pretty distant from my project, and they came from conversations with supportive faculty. I remember in particular that Janet Walker tipped me off to some key works on my new topic of realism, one of which became crucial to my argument. And in the end, I was more excited about writing the dissertation, because it felt like a true culmination of my doctoral education both in and out of the classroom.
Ignacio Infante

Ignacio Infante (Ph.D. 2009) is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and Romance Languages and Literatures at Washington University in St. Louis. His main fields of research include 20th century poetry and poetics, literary theory, Translation Studies and Peninsular cultural studies. He has published articles on the cinema of Julio Medem (Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies), Spanish-American modernismo, and the fiction of Jorge Luis Borges (Variaciones Borges). Professor Infante is currently completing a book project tentatively entitled Transferring Poetics: Translation and Circulation in Modern Transatlantic Poetry that examines from a transnational and interlinguistic perspective the literary history of the transatlantic flow of modern poetry and poetics.

Thanks to a Fulbright fellowship funded by the Government of Spain, I arrived at Rutgers in 2003 after a year of graduate work at the University of California at Irvine. I was absolutely thrilled to be on the East coast after a year in the bunker-like gated communities of Orange County that could hardly be deconstructed by even the most committed Derriennes. Personally, Comp. Lit. at Rutgers provided from the very beginning the perfect environment in which to grow up as a person and a scholar. It gave me the freedom to develop and pursue my own academic interests with a warm and smart cohort of graduate students that soon became my friends (Ping, Chris, Jennifer, Josh, Chad, Geoff, Julie, Atreeye, Sanja, Marinos, and Melanie), along with an amazingly wise and kind mentor in Professor Janet Walker who was graduate director when I arrived. Proximity to NYC allowed me to hang out and walk around when I needed to, which was often. As the first year went along, and I was gradually able to settle at Rutgers, I soon realized how lucky I was to be able to work with faculty as diverse and accomplished as Ben Sifuentes, William Galperin, Nicholas Rennie, Alessandro Vettori, Michael McKeon, Brent Edwards, Richard Serrano, Tomás Eloy Martínez, and Susan Martin-Márquez.

After I took three courses with him (that’s probably what it took!) Billy Galperin agreed to direct my dissertation on modern poetry and translation. It proved to be an absolutely great match. Professor Galperin’s brilliant knack for modern poetry and his intellectual enthusiasm and generosity truly gave me the confidence that I needed to get going and he was always willing to talk, read my work, and provide extremely useful feedback. During this extremely stressful period for me (by then my wife and I had a baby girl), Elin Diamond was extremely supportive with absolutely everything (academic, personal, vital, etc.) and one of the main reasons that I was able to make it through at that time. My scholarly work now is the direct result of everything that I learned from all of my teachers at Rutgers, and I couldn’t be more grateful for their dedication and support throughout the six years I was in the program. The Comp. Lit. Program at Rutgers was absolutely the place for me and it always felt like home. Right now, I am done with my second year as an Assistant Professor at Washington University in St. Louis. I teach both in its Committee on Comparative Literature and in the Spanish side of its Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, and so far it’s been an extremely rewarding experience. It’s definitely been a transition to relocate to the Midwest for all of us, and to suddenly have so many new professional responsibilities, but overall, it is truly a dream come true for me and my growing family (our second child has arrived!). We feel very lucky indeed to be here and I owe it to everyone who made my time at the Comparative Literature Program at Rutgers such an enlightening, crucial and productive period in my life.

Sanja Bahun

Sanja Bahun (Ph.D. 2006) is Assistant Professor of Literature and Film in the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies at The University of Essex, United Kingdom. Bahun’s research interests include international modernism in art, film, and literature; psychoanalytic theory; and women’s and gender studies. In addition to numerous articles and book chapters, she has authored Modernism and Melancholia: History as Mourning-work (forthcoming) and co-edited, with Marinus Poursgruis (Ph.D. 2005), The Avant-garde and the Margin (Cambridge SP, 2006); and, with V. G. Julie Rajan (Ph.D. 2005), Violence and Gender in the Globalized World: The Intimate and the Extricate (Ashgate, 2008), From Word to Canvas: Appropriations of Speech in Women’s Aesthetic Production (Cambridge SP, 2009) and Violence in the Contemporary Female Text: New Cassandras (Ashgate, 2010). Sanja is currently editing Language, Ideology, and the Human: New Interventions (2011) and Balkan Modernisms: Approaches and Sources (2012), as well as writing a monograph on the concept of home in modernism.

When I date my “Rutgers years,” I usually start with one image: it is a hot, spring afternoon in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1999, the spring of the NATO campaign, and access to foreign media and education sources is limited; the air is unbearably still, and I am perusing an old GRE book which I bought in a second-hand bookstore. At the time, I was an aspiring writer and enthusiastic student of world literature; I could recite Eliot’s, Mallarmé’s, and Rilke’s verses by heart, and I knew exactly what kind of whiskey Faulkner had preferred. But I had never heard of a GRE exam. There was something distinctly incongruous about my desire to pursue a doctorate at a U.S. university that afternoon. Still, a year later, I found myself the addressee of Josephine Diamond’s warm letter which offered participation in a vibrant, international research environment; the prospect was so enticing that, soon afterwards, I was squeezing in a New Brunswick cab, drenched by the summer rain.

It is difficult to measure the difference between one’s anticipations and their real-life actualization, but Rutgers did surpass my expectations at every step. The University provided me with research opportunities I could have only dreamt about, and the Program in Comparative Literature allowed me a choice of graduate courses so exciting that, had it not been for the fact my funding was of limited time-span, I could have continued taking them ad infinitum. I had the opportunity to study with some excellent scholars affiliated with the Program from whom I learned to be brave in thought and to value intellectual generosity (thank you, Elin, Gerald, Janet, Jerry, Josephine, Mary, Michael, Nicholas, Steve). It is the lesson of generosity that I remember frequently now as I teach and supervise my own doctoral students.

But I also learned much from my cohort of graduate students. For me, the international constellation of the program was truly inspiring, and many CompLitters soon became my closest friends. In fact, my most memorable—and, later, professionally rewarding—Rutgers experiences were shared with my friends: the International Film Forum screenings, the organisation of the conference Psychoanalysis and the Strategies of Resistance, the organization of ACLA panels, the publication of my first edited collection, and many late-night conversations. They also provided emotional support in the no-nonsense academic transition to the U.K. To enter this highly competitive and closed academic space involved a year of pleasant and unpleasant discoveries, readjustments, realignments, and much patience, but it had a happy ending—my comfortable landing into an excellent and supportive research and teaching environment, the Department of Literature, Film and Theatre at The University of Essex. But that’s another story...
Shreerekha Subramanian

Shreerekha Subramanian (Ph.D. 2007) is Assistant Professor of Humanities at University of Houston–Clear Lake. Subramanian has published articles on contemporary African-American and Caribbean literatures by women and she edited the anthology, Home and the World: South Asia in Transition (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006). Her latest publication evidences her recent interest in cinema, “Whom Did You Lose First, Yourself or Me? The Feminine and the Mythic in Indian Cinema,” in the anthology, Myth and Violence in the Contemporary Female Text: New Cassandras (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010). She is currently at work on her monograph.

Comparative Literature as a discipline eludes and confounds even its champions; as a novice, I had epic notions of the possibilities within the discipline and my own merits. Before arriving at Rutgers, I had some classicist notions of mastering Sanskrit from scratch and connecting the various Indian languages in my grasp, and then reading across the globe in Spivakian leaps, bringing together Bengali, French, German, in one swift stroke. Once having landed in graduate school already in my thirties and then deciding upon marriage and children soon after, each semester’s end promised tumultuous changes, which positioned me in ways that are familiar to some and academically incongruent to others.

I regret none of my choices, including Rutgers. My background was in teaching, which began in Teach For America in Baltimore City in the mid-90s during the crack epidemic. My love for teaching, and various sojourns of teaching in the Northeast, gave me the confidence to say that Rutgers is simply unmatched in its vibrancy and diversity on campus – the classrooms that bring together students of different races, classes, and geographies make the comparatist in me gleeful. It was not uncommon as I type this short statement with my two little ones coughing in their dreams about dinosaurs and spaceships, exactly a year into my first job after the degree in a city new to me, I am beginning to call home, I am content that I still like my dissertation enough to start working on it again.

In the most general sense, studying literature is about learning to think and alternative perspectives, and to resolve that conflict in an original way. This ability, in my opinion, is the very core of education and an important effect has been and will remain that it taught me how to think critically and analyze problems quantifiable. It is not about memorizing a given quantity of information and being able to regurgitate it on command. Instead, it’s about the ability to create new information, to allow conflict to develop between conventional and alternative perspectives, and to resolve that conflict in an original way. Comparative literature certainly has provided me with a broad education in liberal arts. But the most important effect has been and will remain that it taught me how to think critically and analyze problems and contradictions from different perspectives. This latter benefit is precisely what I hoped to achieve in my time at Rutgers University. I wanted an education, not simply a degree, and the study of literature gave me the skills to think and learn independently long after graduation.

Former Majors Reflect on Comp. Lit. at Rutgers

Farah Hussain, 2011. Throughout my undergraduate education, I possessed an interest in studying the literature of the Middle East. I found personal enrichment in the philosophical readings of Sufi scholars and the revolutionary thoughts of Iranian women writers. My major in Comparative Literature at Rutgers played an integral role in my development as a student and a thinker. I am inspired by the professors under whom I studied, who taught me the importance of close-reading and the practicality of theory in understanding the deeper meaning of each perspective.

In analyzing the literatures from different cultures, I became aware of the complexity of text and language. Comparative Literature gave me the freedom to study the principles of literature, from common structures to themes, as well as experience the individual complexities of the writers. I hope to enter academia and I feel that my major in Comparative Literature has provided me a necessary exposure to the literatures, languages, and methodologies I will need.

Yan Lipovetskiy, 2010. Studying comparative literature is not like studying chemistry because the result of its study is not so easily quantifiable. It is not about memorizing a given quantity of information and being able to regurgitate it on command. Instead, it’s about the ability to create new information, to allow conflict to develop between conventional and alternative perspectives, and to resolve that conflict in an original way. In the most general sense, studying literature is about learning to think independently. This ability, in my opinion, is the very core of education and has certainly been the most valuable component of my time at Rutgers University.

The study of literature—Romanticism, for example—is primarily the study of the artful manipulation of words to convey a certain spirituality about life and nature. Verse that has a subtle underlying rhythm and pleasant aural effects can convey an idea of the underlying order of the natural world, just as the language of mathematics produces with regard to the physical world. My study of comparative literature certainly has provided me with a broad education in liberal arts. But the most important effect has been and will remain that it taught me how to think critically and analyze problems and contradictions from different perspectives. This latter benefit is precisely what I hoped to achieve in my time at Rutgers University. I wanted an education, not simply a degree, and the study of literature gave me the skills to think and learn independently long after graduation.
The interdisciplinary major in Comparative Literature continues to offer a number of possibilities for those students who are interested in the study of world literatures, foreign languages, critical theory, cinema studies, and cultural studies. It is one of the most flexible programs at Rutgers, where a student can work closely with an advisor to design his or her own area of concentration. Our recent majors have focused on fields such as “The Postmodern Novel,” “Myth and Religion in Literature,” “Psychoanalytic Approaches to World Literature,” “Comparative Literature of the Americas,” and “Transnational Women’s Literatures.” With few core requirements, the student of Comparative Literature will become familiar with comparative approaches to world literatures and will have the chance to become proficient in at least one foreign language. The minor in Comparative Literature has also attracted a variety of students who want to develop a strong and diverse knowledge of world literatures and awareness of global issues.

Honors Theses
Students who graduate with a major in Comparative Literature often go on to study literature in graduate school, or, because of their training in research, critical thinking, and writing, are also prepared for law school and other professional schools. Paula Park, one of our former honors students, was admitted to the Ph.D. program in Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Texas, Austin. Her honors thesis entitled “De-macondization of Juan Rufbo and Mia Couto: Beyond the Reading of Magical Realism” in Spring 2006, was directed by Prof. César Braga-Pinto. (See Paula’s testimonial, p. 29).


The New Major in Comparative Literature
Since Fall 2009, the program has offered four different options for students who want to major in Comparative Literature: (1) Comparative Literary Studies; (2) Colonial and Postcolonial Studies; (3) Cultural Theories and Practices; (4) Advanced Studies in Comparative Literature. The four tracks reflect the new directions the discipline has taken and the research interests of our faculty.

The option of Comparative Literary Studies is the major for students who want to focus on different literary traditions and at the same time, have an advanced training in a foreign language. Students design their own field of specialization, such as genre, period, region or a topic to be studied across cultures.

The option in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies focuses on comparative methodologies and engages in sophisticated analyses of literary production in multiple cultures, with particular emphasis on the effects of colonialism around the globe. Students who choose this concentration are required to take core courses such as “Literature and Cultural Conquest” (01:195:306) and “Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures and Theories” (01:195:307), and a number of electives related to colonialism in a variety of departments. It requires at least two semesters of course work in a foreign language on any level.

The option of Cultural Theories and Practices focuses on critical theories and is highly interdisciplinary, encouraging the study of visual texts and other artistic productions, such as film, music and performance. It requires at least two semesters of course work in a foreign language, on any level.

The option of Advanced Studies in Comparative Literature is for those students who want to acquire sound preparation for graduate school, and thus requires both breadth and specialization. Students are required to work on a foreign literature, not in translation, and on a classical or non-Western language. They must also write a senior thesis intended to provide a high-quality writing sample for graduate school applications. We believe that this major will prepare Rutgers students for any major in a U.S. graduate program in Comparative Literature or in a foreign literature. According to new SAS guidelines, students who choose a major that requires more than 50 credits, such as the new option in Advanced Comparative Literature, will not have to chose a minor. This is perhaps one of the most rigorous major options in the Humanities at Rutgers, as it requires at least 52 credits to graduate.

Finally, a new Capstone Senior Workshop is required of all Comparative Literature majors. This one-credit workshop has a three-fold purpose: 1) It provides a dynamic workshop atmosphere in which students revise and extend a paper written for a previous Comparative Literature class. Students exchange drafts and offer each other constructive criticism under the guidance of the instructor. The goal is a 12- to 15-page paper to be submitted at the end of the semester. For students who want to go to graduate school in Comparative Literature, this paper could represent a writing sample (different from their senior thesis) for their application. 2) It offers majors a chance to reflect on the discipline of Comparative Literature and the professional and academic opportunities it offers. To this end the instructor introduces three units during the seminar—one on Translation Studies; the second on Comparative Literature and World Literature; and the third based upon the instructor’s own topics and texts. In the teacher-student interaction, undergraduates will understand better what it means to be a doctoral student in Comparative Literature. 3) It produces a sense of belonging and common purpose for Comp. Lit. majors, many of whom have had completely different experiences in the Comparative Literature options. The workshop culminates with a final Spring Graduation Event: student essays are shortened to become panel presentations and are delivered to an invited audience of professors, family and friends. Each section cannot have more than 15 students. These new major options confirm the status of Comparative Literature as one of the most challenging and vibrant majors in the Humanities at Rutgers. For more information, please consult the program’s website (http://complit.rutgers.edu).

Literature Across Borders
One of the main gateways to Comparative Literature, “Literature Across Borders” (195:201) is a multi-section course that features lectures given by Comparative Literature’s Core faculty around a certain topic. The topic is decided in advance by the Core faculty and the course reading is made up of texts or films proposed by each faculty lecturer. Thus students are treated to a unique syllabus of readings and are given the opportunity to become acquainted with a variety of literary and cultural traditions as well as a variety of critical approaches. Taught for the first time in 2004 by Prof. Richard Serrano, this course has a different topic each year—so far they have been: “War,” “Monsters,” “Spying,” “Prison,” “Metamorphosis,” and “Friendship.” In
Comparative Literature and Cinema Studies

While minors in the Cinema Studies Program come from all across SAS, the program's film courses can be integrated into all the tracks of the multi-track Comp. Lit. major. Thus students who major in Comparative Literature can learn about the rich cultural history of world cinema as well as approaches to the study and interpretation of film.

Testimonials from former undergraduate
Paula Park

“To be honest, the reason I began considering going to graduate school during my senior year at Rutgers College was that I had no idea what else I would do after graduating, and with a major in Comparative Literature. I already had a list of schools in mind, but no real enthusiasm. One day, during office hours, my Honors Thesis advisor said very briefly: “Apply to Texas.” What was a last minute idea (and an easy online application!) became a turning point for me. University of Texas-Austin resulted in an auto-confirmation that this—literature—is what I want to do for life. I have recently finished my Masters degree and I will continue seeking a Ph.D. degree at U.T.”

Comparative Literature and New Core Curriculum Requirements

Comparative Literature has played a key role in implementing the SAS core curriculum as well as in the SAS Honors Program. Since 2008, we have conducted discussion sections of “Introduction to World Literatures” (195:101) especially designed for honors students, which take place in the Fall semester of the academic year.

The School of Arts and Sciences has recently approved a new set of general requirements, a number of which will be fulfilled by Comparative Literature's lower- and upper-division courses, including the “Arts and Humanities” and “Writing and Communication” requirements, as well as those in the area defined as “21st-Century Challenges.” The learning goals of the latter courses—“every SAS student will engage in an upper-level comparative, multidisciplinary, or interdisciplinary 6-credit experience to prepare for the challenges of global citizenship”—coincide with the goals of almost all Comparative Literature courses and indeed with the mission of Comparative Literature as a whole. As of Spring 2010, the following courses have been certified as fulfilling requirements of the new SAS Core Curriculum: Intro. to World Literature, Intro. to Short Fiction, Literature across Borders, Intro. to Literatures of South Asia, Modern Literatures of South Asia, Intro. to Literary Theory, Intro. to Postcolonial Literatures and Theories, Literature and Culture of Brazil, and Brazil and the U.S.: Comparative Approaches.

Comp. Lit. Celebrates Rutgers Day

For the past several years Comparative Literature has been the proud host of a WORLD POETRY performance event in conjunction with the festivities of Rutgers Day. Early in the morning of Rutgers Day, Marilyn and the Comp. Lit. directors arrive to set up the booth, which is soon festooned with black and red balloons. Our table is loaded with free books, copies of Exit 9 (our grad student journal), and some amusing Comp. Lit. swag. But the real draw is poetry from across the world. On a stage placed near the booth, our graduate students, undergraduates, and faculty step up to the microphone and read poems in their original language, followed by a full translation. Sometimes they do a little teaching, explaining the poem in context or discussing its translation. One year the Amandala singers from Highland Park High School came to entertain us.

New Jersey is a polyglot state and it is no surprise that Rutgers Day visitors enjoy hearing the poetic news from the global four corners. Passers-by catch the sound of Chinese wafting over the breeze, or German, Russian, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Quechua, Yiddish, or Greek, and come forward to listen and stay to hear more. Families with babies in strollers and grandparents in tow sit for a few minutes or stay for hours. Each year we have been pleased to chat about Comparative Literature with prospective, current, and former students, and anyone curious about our interdisciplinary mission, our majors and minors, and course offerings. Rutgers Day brings New Jerseyans to Rutgers and Comp. Lit.'s World Poetry event offers them a taste of the vibrant literatures beyond our shores. (See Rutgers Day photographs next page)

Elin Diamond
On April 3-4, 2008, Comparative Literature hosted Translation³ (Culture-Institution-Theory). Professors Elin Diamond and Cesar Braga-Pinto, assisted by Ignacio Infante, Salvatore Pappalardo, and Mahriana Rofheart, had workshopped the topic for over a year and planned a conference that combined free-wheeling dialogue as well as delivered papers. In dialogue in the “Culture” portion were Bruce Robbins and Lydia Liu with papers by Emily Apter, Alamin Mazrui and Roja Singh. The “Institution” panel brought together Rosemary Arrojo, Robert Joe Lee, Julie Livingston, and Christopher Taylor. Finally, in the “Theory” portion, Brent Edwards, Michael Levine, and Eduardo Cadava gave papers that dovetailed into a lively dialogue between Xudong Zhang and Richard Sieburth. For conference details, see “Past Events” at http://complit.rutgers.edu.

On May 15, 2011 for the first time in recent memory, Rutgers undergraduate and graduate students joined together in the largest commencement in the University’s history. Toni Morrison, one of America’s most influential writers, addressed the new graduates and received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree. Graduates enjoyed additional festivities and recognition at individual school or departmental convocations and ceremonies, held at various times in the days preceding and following University Commencement. The Program in Comparative Literature held its first Convocation ceremony at 195 College Ave on the afternoon of May 15th. Profs. Marcone, Janet Walker, Steve Walker, Emily Van Buskirk, Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres hosted a reception for our students and their guests, and conducted a ceremony honoring their achievements in our program. Catherine Trestini, a major in Comparative Literature, delivered a few remarks on behalf of the undergraduate students, and Salvatore Pappalardo spoke as a representative of the new Ph.D.s. We acknowledged the following undergraduate honors:

**Donovan Griffin**, High Honors: “Determination and Escape: Manipulations of Time in the Narratives of Tolstoy and Nabokov.”

**Grace Chung**, Honors: “The Vice and Virtue of Masculinity.”


This year’s candidates for the Baccalaureate included: **Grace Chung, Donovan Griffin, Farah Hussain (absent)**, Lucine Kinoian, Kristine Kowalski, **Jonathan Parisi**, Catherine Trestini, and **Victoria Verhowsky**. **Amber Mauriello joined us for this celebration since she has completed her Comp. Lit. major, although she will graduate in January 2012. The Candidates for the Ph.D. were** **Tamas Demeny (absent), Jacqueline Loeb, Jennifer Mary McBryan, Salvatore Pappalardo, Kenneth Sammond, Kathleen Sclafani (absent), and Sandra Sokowski.**

Despite the threat of rain, we all enjoyed a pleasant afternoon in our backyard, with marvelous food and even better conversation. The day’s events were organized under the enthusiastic and detailed supervision of Marilyn Tankiewicz.

**Jorge Marcone**
Sanja Bahun (Ph.D. 2006) is Assistant Professor of Literature and Film in the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies at The University of Essex, United Kingdom. (See profile pp. 23-24).

Geoff Baker (Ph.D. 2006) is an assistant professor of comparative and British literature in the English Department at California State University, Chico. (See profile p. 21).

Josh Beall (Ph.D. 2010) spent the 2010-2011 academic year as a lecturer in the Department of English at Vanderbilt University. His article, “Prasac Irony: Structure, Mode and Subversion in The Good Soldier Svejč,” is forthcoming in the 2012 issue of The Comparator, and he is working on an article entitled “Kundera's Border Crossings: Transnationalism and Resistance in The Book of Laughter and Forgetting.”

Justyna Braun (Ph.D. 2000) recently received tenure in the Department of English at Franciscan University in Ohio.


Helen Fazio (Ph.D. 2004) has a consulting company, HA Fazio Associates, which provides customized coaching to industry in advanced biomedical writing, training development, presentation skills, business ethics, decision making, negotiation, and local and national diversity.

Patricia Ferrer-Medina (Ph.D. 2010) is an assistant professor of Spanish in Marist College. Currently, she is writing an article exploring applications of ecological criticism in the language classroom. As part of her book project, “Ecological Difference in Colonial Caribbean Literature,” she recently presented a paper on reading Arawak subjectivity in 16th century Spanish literature at the Caribbean Studies Association Conference in Curacao, The Netherlands Antilles.

Kathleen Hobbs Formosa (Ph.D. 2004) is Company Secretary for the Architectural Association in the UK, where she oversees the organization’s governance and manages its board of trustees. The Architectural Association is an arts and education charity based in London that also runs the oldest private architectural school in the UK.

Jennifer L. French (Ph.D. 2001) is an associate professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at Williams College, the author of Nature, Neocolonialism, and the Spanish-American Regional Writers and is currently writing a book about the Paraguayan War (1864-1870) in literature and cultural memory. She is Director of the Center for Environmental Studies at Williams.

Barbara Hamilton (Ph.D. 2009) is in her second year of a 3-year appointment at Montclair State. She presented a paper, “Hadowi’sh’s Revision of Troubadour Lyric,” for an MLA subgroup on Christianity and Literature and will present next year to the same group on the concept of celebration in medieval mystic literature. She’s also developing a study with two colleagues on the effect of helicopter parenting on the writing and research practices of first-year writing students.

Ignacio Infante (Ph.D. 2009) is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and Romance Languages and Literatures at Washington University in St. Louis. (See profile pp. 22-23).

Hana Muzika Kahn (Ph.D. 2008) teaches at Temple University in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and in the Latin American Studies Program. She coordinates the department’s Medical Spanish course and has developed a new course on Latin American Literature and Film. She took over as director of a small Guatemalan press, Yax Te’ Books, that specializes in Mayan literature and is reprinting testimonial novels which are read in American university courses on indigenous cultures and literatures. Recently she and a colleague received a Temple University joint research award to study a Maya Kaqchikel community in Guatemala and evaluate the extent to which Kaqchikel language patterns and cultural/ literary traditions are being maintained or are shifting into Spanish.

Richard Lee (Ph.D. 2000) is an assistant professor and chair of English at the Oneonta campus of the State University of New York, has co-edited two books on American short-story writers and published a short text for advanced high-school students and undergraduates entitled Globalization, Language and Culture.

Yianna Liatsos (Ph.D. 2005) is presently a Lecturer in English in the School of Languages, Literature, Culture and Communication at the University of Limerick, specializing in postcolonial literature with an emphasis on South Africa. She is the editor of Family Memory-Work: Writing the Home in Contemporary African Literature (Africa World Press, 2011).

Chad Loewen-Schmidt (Ph.D. 2009) is an assistant professor of English in the Department of English and Modern Languages at Shepherd University in West Virginia. He is currently working on a book on the history and politics of pity/compassion in eighteenth-century fiction.

Jennifer McBryan (Ph.D. 2011) has just become Coordinator of the Center for Writing and Communications at the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken. She joins an active writing community and will have the opportunity to teach literature courses in the Institute’s expanded curriculum for the College of Arts and Letters.

Frances Negrón-Muntaner (Ph.D. 2000) teaches Latino and Caribbean literatures and cultures at Columbia University. She is an award-winning filmmaker, writer, and scholar. Among her books are Boricua Pop: Puerto Rican and the Latinization of American Culture, winner of the CHOICE Award in 2004, and Sovereign Acts (South End Press, 2010). She is currently completing two documentaries on the relationship between the military and U.S. territories: For the Record: Guam and World War II and Regarding Viqueys. Her next projects include Give’Em Reggaoen, a cultural history of the reggaeton sound with hip hop historian Raquel Z. Rivera.


Marinos Pourgouris (Ph.D. 2005) a visiting assistant professor of Comparative Literature at Brown University, had an article accepted for inclusion in the book Nikos Kazantzaki: Fifty Years After (forthcoming, University of Crete Publications), edited by Stamatis Philippides.

Atreyee Phukan (Ph.D. 2004) is an assistant professor of English at the University of San Diego, where she teaches postcolonial literature and literary theory. She is currently working on a book-length project that examines forms of cultural production.


Christopher Rivera (Ph.D. 2010) is currently holding a tenure-track position in the Department of American Culture and Literature at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey. At the present time, he has two articles under review at journals in his field: the first is “Brown(ing) as Other(ing): Richard Rodriguez and America’s Ethnic / Racial Ambiguities” and the second is “Latinophobia / Islamophobia: Arizona’s Senate Bill 1070 and the Fear of Brown Bodies.” In addition, his non-fiction piece entitled “Full of Scars: Las crónicas de Mr. Bundles” will appear in Spilling Over: A Fat, Queer Anthology. Over the next several years he plans to revise his dissertation, “Admission as Submission: Richard Rodriguez’s Autobiographies as an Epistemology of Penetration,” and to make a documentary film about shame and sexuality in Turkey.

Mahriana Rofheart (Ph.D. 2010) has recently returned from a seven-month-long position as an English Assistant in France and is now an online writing tutor at Smartthinking, Inc. She is working on her manuscript “Don’t Abandon ‘Our Boat’: Shifting Perceptions of Emigration in Contemporary Senegalese Texts.”

Caterina Romeo (Ph.D. 2006) is an assistant professor at the University of Rome “La Sapienza,” where she teaches Gender Studies and American Studies. She is the author of Narrative tra due sponde: Memoir di italiane d’America (“Between Two Shores: Italian American Women’s Memoirs”) (Rome: Carocci, 2005) and has recently translated into Italian Louise DeSalvo’s Vertigo: A Memoir (Rome: Nutrimenti, 2006) and Kym Raguas’s The Skin Between Us (with Clara Antonucci, Rome: Nutrimenti, 2008).

Nina Sonenberg (Ph.D. 2001) is Vice President of Communications for Libraries for the Future, a national non-profit organization that supports innovation and investment in U.S. libraries. She is the author of Consuming Passions (New Harbing, 1993) and Art of the State: New York (Harry Abrams, 1998).

Matthew Spano (Ph.D. 2002), a full professor of English at Middlesex County College, recently become co-director of MCC’s new Honors Program. He has published articles in Hermann Hesse Page Journal and Philosophy and Social Action. He has recently had a number of poems and short stories published, including haiku in Dust of Summers (Red Moon Press, 2008), an annual anthology of the best English language haiku selected by an international board of 12 haiku editors.

Shreerekha Subramanian (Ph.D. 2007) is Assistant Professor of Humanities at University of Houston–Clear Lake. (See profile pp. 24-25).

Eugene Thacker (Ph.D. 2001) is newly appointed as Associate Professor in the Department of Media Studies at the New School in New York City. He has published articles on Georges Bataille, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Arthur Schopenhauer, and medieval mysticism. Thacker’s most recent book is After Life, and previous books include The Exploit: A Theory of Networks (co-authored with Alexander Galloway) and Biomedia. He is currently working on a series of short books entitled “Horror of Philosophy.” Thacker also serves on the editorial boards for Ctheory and MIT Press.

Sara Warner (Ph.D. 2003) is an assistant professor of Theater at Cornell University, where she also teaches in the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. She is currently working on two manuscripts. The first is “Outlier Affects,” on the relationship between emotions and political performance, and the second, “Restorytive Justice,” is on prison theater. She has published in has an article forthcoming in the Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism.

Anne Xu (Ph.D. 2007) is an assistant professor of Chinese at Austin College. She spent the last year starting a Chinese Program for the college, as well as attending conferences, workshops, and institutes.


Edyta Bojanowska joined the Rutgers faculty in 2008. Her current book project, Imperial Nationalism in Russian Culture (under contract with Harvard University Press), will trace the intersection of national and imperial discourses in the works of canonical nineteenth-century authors, such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov, and in Russian journalism of the second half of the nineteenth century. Her most recent article, “Empire by Consent: Strakhov, Dostoevsky, and the Polish Uprising of 1863” is being reviewed by The Slavic Review. In Fall 2009, she was invited to lecture on Gogol at Columbia University and the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Her book Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism (Harvard University Press) received the Rutgers SAS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Undergraduate Teaching (Associate Professor category) in May 2010. In Fall 2010, he was a fellow at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, where he completed a book-length manuscript, A Weak Messianic Power: Constellations of the Future in Twentieth Century German-Jewish Thought (under contract with Fordham University Press). He is co-editing a special issue of Comparative Literature Studies entitled “Trials of Trauma: Comparative and Global Perspectives” (August 2011). He is translating from the French the correspondence between the poet Paul Celan and his wife, the artist Gisèle Celan-Lestrange (published by Editions du Seuil in 2001). His recent articles include: “Spectral Gatherings: Derrida, Celan and the Covenant of the Word,” which appeared in a double issue of Diacritics on “Derrida and Democracy” in Spring-Summer 2009; and “A Place So Insanely Enchanting: Kafka and the Poetics of Suspension,” which appeared in MLN Comparative Literature Issue in 2009. His article “The Day the Sun Stood Still: Benjamin’s Theses, Trauma and the Eichmann Trial” is forthcoming in MLN German Issue in 2011. In 2008-2010 he served as a member of the Executive and Editorial Advisory Committee of the Kafka Society of America and is currently chairing the ACLA Presidential Master’s Prize Committee.

Sandy Flitterman-Lewis appears on a bonus of the new DVD of Germaine Dulac and Antonin Artaud’s The Seashell and the Clergyman. The DVD has received an award for “Best Critical Research on a DVD” from the Cinema Ritrovato di Bologna. On a different topic, she delivered a paper in Rennes, France on Agnes Varda’s 2007 installation at the Pantheon in Paris honoring the righteous who rescued Jews during World War II. The article, entitled “Varda, glaneuse d’Histoire(s)” is in the French anthology, Agnès Varda, le cinéma et au-delà. Another essay, on Marguerite Durand’s Hiroshima Mon Amour entitled “Nevers, Mon Souvenir: Marguerite Duras, History, and the Secret Heart of Hiroshima Mon Amour,” is in the collection, In the Dark Room: Marguerite Duras and Cinema. A third article, “Sisters in Rebellion: The Unexpected Kinship of Germaine Dulac and Virginia Woolf” is in the anthology Reclaiming the Archive: Feminism and Film History: All three essays are part of Flitterman-Lewis’s ongoing project, “Hidden Voices: Childhood, the Family, and Antisemitism in Occupation France,” about material culture and daily life during World War II.

Michael Levine received the Rutgers SAS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Undergraduate Teaching (Associate Professor category) in May 2010. In Fall 2010, he was a fellow at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, where he completed a book-length manuscript, A Weak Messianic Power: Constellations of the Future in Twentieth Century German-Jewish Thought (under contract with Fordham University Press). He is co-editing a special issue of Comparative Literature Studies entitled “Trials of Trauma: Comparative and Global Perspectives” (August 2011). He is translating from the French the correspondence between the poet Paul Celan and his wife, the artist Gisèle Celan-Lestrange (published by Editions du Seuil in 2001). His recent articles include: “Spectral Gatherings: Derrida, Celan and the Covenant of the Word,” which appeared in a double issue of Diacritics on “Derrida and Democracy” in Spring-Summer 2009; and “A Place So Insanely Enchanting: Kafka and the Poetics of Suspension,” which appeared in MLN Comparative Literature Issue in 2009. His article “The Day the Sun Stood Still: Benjamin’s Theses, Trauma and the Eichmann Trial” is forthcoming in MLN German Issue in 2011. In 2008-2010 he served as a member of the Executive and Editorial Advisory Committee of the Kafka Society of America and is currently chairing the ACLA Presidential Master’s Prize Committee.

Jorge Marcone currently serves as Comparative Literature’s Undergraduate Director. He has recently published “Jungle Fever: The Ecology of Disillusion in Spanish American Literature” (Inter-American Development Bank), “Mexican and Chicana/o Environmental Writing” in Teaching North American Environmental Literature, and “Central America/Mexico” for the Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy. In July 2008, he lectured in Havana, Cuba on literature and environment, sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. Prof. Marcone specializes in the history of environmental and ecological ideas in Hispanic literatures and cultures, and in the representation of Amazonia in literature, film, and other visual arts. His current research focuses on the Latin American Romance of the Jungle of the 1900s-1950s, and on the history of environmental/ecological thinking in Latin American literature and culture since the early 1990s. Recently, he was the keynote speaker for the conference “Where Have All the Wild Things Gone? Ecocriticism and Comparative Literature” at Texas Tech U, on April 14, 2011.

Susan Martin-Márquez’s most recent book, Disorientations: Spanish Colonialism in Africa and the Performance of Identity, was published in 2008 by Yale University Press. Her current research focuses on the narratives of nineteenth-century Cuban nationalists exiled to a Spanish penal colony off the western coast of Africa; on Spanish and Latin American cinema of the 1960s; and on the filmmaking of Catalan director Isabel Coixet and haptic film theory. She continues to direct the Cinema Studies Program, which collaborates closely with Comparative Literature.

Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel is currently writing her fourth book entitled Coloniality of Diasporas: Rethinking Intracolonial Migrations in the Insular Caribbean. This new book studies cultural representations of intra-colonial displacements in the French, Anglo and Hispanic Caribbean to trace the
formation of symbolic representations of ethnic and cultural identities that have not been appropriately accounted for by postcolonial, transnational, or global theoretical frameworks. She presented sections of the first chapter of this new book in a keynote address at the Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literature held at Washington University-St. Louis on October 2010. She is now the director of the Institute of Research on Women (IRW) at Rutgers and also organized the "Distinguished Lectures in Caribbean Studies at Rutgers" in collaboration with Comparative Literature and Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies (Fall 2010).

Nicholas Rennie is author of Speculating on the Moment: The Poetics of Time and Recurrence in Goethe, Leopardi, and Nietzsche (2005), and he has published articles on these writers as well as on Mollière, Lessing and Benjamin. As a Humboldt Fellow, he has undertaken research at the Free University Berlin and the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, where he also taught. His research focuses on literature of the Enlightenment and the Age of Goethe; aesthetics and intellectual history from the 18th century to the present; and theories of drama. He is currently working on a book project entitled Forbidding Images: Writing and the Visual in German Theory 1766/1939.

Paul Schalow's most recent book, A Poetics of Courtly Male Friendship in Heian Japan (2007), was nominated for the 2007 Warren-Brooks Award for Outstanding Literary Criticism. He and Janet Walker co-organized the Association for Japanese Literary Studies 2009 Annual Meeting on the theme of “Rethinking Gender in the Postgender Era,” with thirty-eight speakers from Europe, North America, and Japan. The co-edited Proceedings volume was scheduled to appear in 2010.


Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui teaches a variety of courses on Latin American and U.S. Latino/a literature, queer theory, masculinity and performance, and cultural practices. His graduate and undergraduate seminars include such topics as “The Discipline and the Profession,” melodrama as hegemonic discourse in Latin American cultures; deconstruction and master narratives; interrogating critical concepts in gender and queer theory as they relate to a broad American context; representations of race, sexuality and gender in the cultural production of the nation; also, and U.S. Latino/a identities and postcolonial theory. Presently he is completing a manuscript entitled “The Avoval of Difference: Queer Latino American Narratives,” which looks at strategies of queer self-figuration in Latin American and Latino texts, particularly looking at the role of silence and disavowal.


Studies on Voltaire. His translation of Jacques Rancière’s The Aesthetic Unconscious recently appeared with Polity Press and Mute Speech: An Essay on the Contradictions of “Literature” is forthcoming from Columbia UP. His current book project has the working title of Republican Institutions: A Short History of Another Concept of Civil Society. After five years as chairman of the French Department, Swenson has become Dean of Humanities in the School of Arts and Sciences.

Emily Van Buskirk joined the Rutgers faculty in 2009 after receiving her Ph.D. from Harvard University with a dissertation entitled: “Reality in Search of Literature: Lydia Ginzburg’s In-Between Prose.” At present she is co-editing (with Andrei Zorin) a Russian critical edition of Ginzburg’s prose from the Leningrad blockade (Moscow: Novizdat), as well as Lydia Ginzburg’s Alternative Literary Identity, a volume of articles and translations into English (Peter Lang). She is also creating a book from her dissertation, which treats issues of narrative, ethics, sexuality, and genre in the in-between prose of Ginzburg, a scholar-writer who began writing documentary prose during the perceived crisis of the novel. Van Buskirk recently published an article in Slavic Review (Summer 2010) entitled: “Preserving the Past for the Future: Guilt, Memory, and Lydia Ginzburg’s Notes of a Blockade Person.” Last summer she gave talks at conferences in St. Petersburg and Stockholm She organized a session for this year’s NeMLA in New Brunswick on Russian representations of the war. In 2010-2011, she took part in an interdisciplinary seminar at the Center for Cultural Analysis on “The Everyday and the Ordinary” (her topic: “Selfhood and Everyday Life in Post-Revolutionary Russia”).

Alessandro Vettori published Poets of Divine Love: The Rhetoric of Franciscan Spiritual Poetry (2004), edited two collections of essays (one on Boccaccio and one on Giuseppe Berto) and one on contemporary Italian poetry, and is currently completing a book on the rhetoric of prayer in Dante’s Divine Comedy. In recent months he has given lectures on Dante at Paris IV-La Sorbonne, the University of Torino, the University of Innsbruck (Austria), and Université Stendhal-Grenoble. In 2009-2010, he spent the academic year in Paris. He has just finished serving as the Graduate Director of Comparative Literature.

Janet Walker has published an essay entitled “Van Gogh, Collector of ‘Japan’” in the May 2008 issue of The Comparatist, the journal of the Southern Comparative Literature Association. Walker’s current project is an essay on nature, modernity, and identity in the Japanese writer Shiga Naoya’s novel An’ya koro (Passage through the Dark Night, 1921-1937). This essay is the last chapter of a book manuscript entitled Landscape, Modernity, and Identity in Modern Japanese Fiction. She served as invited Guest Researcher at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies of the Free University-Berlin from May 16 to July 9, 2010. While in residence there she gave four presentations on modern Japanese fiction and postcolonial literature and theory.

Steven Walker has published “Nabokov’s Lolita and Goethe’s Faust” in Comparative Literature Studies, 46:3 (Fall 2009), pp. 512-535. He recently published in American Vedantist the first part of an essay that makes sense of Arjuna’s “eunuch problem” in the Bhagavad Gita. In September 2010, he gave the keynote address for the conference “Myth, Literature and the Unconscious” at the University of Essex (Colchester, UK) and his new book, Midlife Transformation in Literature and Film: Jungian and Eriksonian Perspectives, is scheduled to be published by Routledge in 2011.
Nelson Maldonado-Torres joined the Program in Comparative Literature as an Associate Professor in 2010. He is also appointed in the Department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies. He obtained a PhD from Brown University (2002) and has taught at Duke University and the University of California at Berkeley. His areas of expertise are comparative critical and decolonial theorizing, comparative ethnic studies, and modern and contemporary philosophical and religious thought. His work is interdisciplinary, in dialogue with philosophy, history, historical sociology, and literary studies, among other fields. He is particularly interested in the multiple forms in which literature has served as a genre for the expression of innovative theories about the self and language, human agency and freedom, as well as emancipation and decolonization, among other key fundamental themes in Caribbean thought and Third World theorizing. He is also interested in the theoretical exploration of the possibilities and limits of comparison, which has been crucial in his work, including his book Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity (Duke UP 2008). Maldonado-Torres is currently writing a book in dialogue with the work of the Caribbean intellectual and activist Frantz Fanon, and he is also the current president of the Caribbean Philosophical Association, which will have its 2011 meeting at Rutgers.

Visiting Professor Andrew Parker

Comparative Literature has been fortunate to welcome Andrew Parker, Professor of English at Amherst College, as Visiting Professor of French and Comparative Literature from 2009-2011. Professor Parker began teaching at Amherst in 1982, and received a Distinguished Teaching Award from the Student Government Organization in 2001. With a doctorate in Comparative Studies from the University of Chicago, Prof. Parker specializes in literary, psychoanalytic and Marxist theory, sexuality and gender studies, and in 19th and 20th century English, European and American fiction. In Fall 2009, Parker taught a graduate seminar for Comparative Literature, “The Linguistic Turn: Theories of Language for Literary Studies”; in Spring 2010, a French graduate course on philosophy and literature after Sartre; in Spring 2010, Comparative Literature’s “Literature Across Borders” with the theme of ‘Sex’.

On the occasion of Professor Parker’s visit, he explained his research interests by noting, “My graduate training was in comparative literature in the late 1970s and early 80s, the moment when European literary and cultural theories took the North American academy by storm. Focusing on the borders between literature and a variety of ‘others’ against which it has tried to define itself historically-philosophy, psychoanalysis, and Marxism, among others-I find myself drawn to the specifically ‘literary’ dimensions of such things as politics and sexuality without which there could be no politics or sexuality.”

Professor Josephine Diamond Retires

Marie Josephine Diamond, Professor of French, Women’s Studies and Comparative Literature, retired in July 2010 after more than forty years of service at Rutgers. She was Graduate Director of Comparative Literature from 1991-2001, during which time she instituted the annual conferences and the journal Exit 9, administered by graduate students. Committed to the study of comparative literature in interdisciplinary contexts, during her tenure as graduate director she expanded the faculty to include professors from disciplines such as Anthropology, Psychology, Political Science, Cinema Studies, and Women’s and Gender Studies, and encouraged students with an interest in marginalized literatures.

Over twenty years she was privileged to direct over thirty dissertations in comparative literature. Her areas of interest include the Renaissance, Revolutionary and Romantic women writers, the nineteenth-century novel, feminist and postcolonial theory, and postcolonial women writers from South Asia and the Caribbean. She is currently finishing two books, Subaltern Fictions in South Asian Literature and The Poetics of Cultural Subversion: Essays on Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Cervantes.

Faculty Profile: Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel

Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel says she is very excited to be here at Rutgers, and we are certainly excited as well. Professor Martinez-San Miguel works on Latin American literature, including Colonial, Hispanic Caribbean, and Latino literature. Her other areas of interest include literary theory, Colonial and Postcolonial theory, and Migration Studies. Since receiving her Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1996, she has published widely in the field of Latin American literary studies.

Professor Martinez-San Miguel’s most recent book, From Lack to Excess: ‘Minor’ Readings of Latin American Colonial Discourse (Bucknell 2008), examines colonial-era Latin American texts in conjunction with current debates surrounding Postcolonial and Transatlantic Studies. She ultimately favors minority discourse studies and Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of minor literatures for close readings of texts by Hernán Cortés, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

In addition to this text, Martinez-San Miguel has published two other books. The first is Saberes americanos: subalternidad y epistemología en los escritos de Sor Juana (American Knowledges: Subalternity and Epistemology in Sor Juana’s Works, 1999). This text is the first book-length study of epistemology in connection with the works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Her second book, Caribe Two Ways: cultura de la migración en el Caribe insular hispánico (Two Way Caribbean?: Culture of Migration in the Insular Hispanic Caribbean, 2003), received Second Prize in the Category of Research and Literary Criticism from the Instituto de Literatura Puertorriqueña, University of Puerto Rico in 2004.
John C. McCormick, Professor of Comparative Literature at Rutgers from 1962 to 1987, died at the age of 91 on April 1, 2010. Born in Thief River Falls, Minnesota on September 20, 1918, McCormick left home during the Depression at the age of fifteen. After a period of riding boxcars, working in a circus and as a merchant marine, he joined the Loyalist cause in the Spanish Civil War, conveying supplies and ammunition. In 1941 he graduated from the University of Minnesota, then served as an officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II. A quick-tempered man, McCormick was reportedly intolerant of nonsense; one of his charges in the Navy was actor Kirk Douglas, whom McCormick threatened to shoot if he wouldn’t stand his watch.

Benefiting from the G.I. Bill, McCormick was able to earn his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Harvard in 1951. He worked first in Salzburg, then Berlin, Mexico City, Leeds and Tokyo before coming to Rutgers. The highlight of his academic career was his groundbreaking study, George Santayana: A Biography (1987). His other major works include Catastrophe and Imagination (1957), The Middle Distance: A Comparative History of American and European Literature, 1919-32 (1971), and Fiction and Knowledge (1975). Always intrigued by Spanish culture, McCormick also sought to challenge Hemingway’s romantic portrayal of bullfighting in Death in the Afternoon. He felt it essential to experience the sport from the inside, so, after working as a matador, he wrote The Complete Aficionado (1967), later re-issued under the title Bullfighting: Art, Technique and Spanish Society (1998).

As Professor of Comparative Literature at Rutgers, McCormick and his wife, poet Mairi MacInnes, were well-known as a hospitable couple, opening their home in Princeton to a large group of friends. Well-respected and admired by his students, many of whom went on to illustrious careers in journalism and academics, he is remembered in the testimonial on the next page as a strict taskmaster whose lessons nevertheless had lasting impact.

(Based on an article from www.telegraph.co.uk, June 9, 2010)

Remembering Professor John C. McCormick

Joan Acocella on John McCormick

I think that all the people in my class in the Comparative Literature department were proud that John McCormick was our chairman. He wore tweeds; he smoked a pipe; he had a successful beard. He was married to the distinguished poet Mairi McCormick, and they invited us over to their house and fed us things that we had never seen before, such as green salad with walnuts in it.

While often courtly, John was capable of astonishing severity. Many of us were frightened of him. He could pour scorn on anyone (me, once) who claimed to have gotten to the end of a book when this was not the case. With another woman, who gave a stupid answer to a question of his, he called into doubt – in front of the class – her competence to continue in the department. Sometimes he would almost snarl at us. (Mairi McCormick, in her memoir Clearances, of 2002, said that he had a cycling depression.) Lordly as he seemed, he was careful not to claim any sort of exalted background. Once, in class, a woman suggested that his judgments issued from fine breeding. He answered that his father had been an unsuccessful salesman and that he, John, had run off to sea at the age of fifteen.

Though he was in a literature department, John seemed more interested in philosophy, or at least ideas, than in the purely literary properties of the books we studied. He loved Proust; he made fun of Dickens and Hemingway. His best course was “Methods,” the department’s introductory course, where we learned that there were different methods of approaching literature, and what they were. We read Jungian books, Communist books, new-critical books. (French theory came later; he deplored it.) In “Methods” he could be his best self, analyzing modes of thought.

He was old-school, in the demands he made on us, in the position of authority that he assumed, and in his certainty as to what we should read. Later, when I came to teach, I tried to be like him in these ways, as much as the times would allow. After he retired, I remained friends with him and Mairi. I saw them perhaps once a year, when they visited New York. John became gentler, sweeter, and I was sorry about that.

Joan Acocella is a staff writer for The New Yorker and a Ph.D. of the Rutgers Program in Comparative Literature

Share your Comparative Literature stories with us! Send to marilyn.tankiewicz@rutgers.edu