

**DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**  
**SENIOR HONORS THESES – MAY 2009**

Agnes Bezecsky

“The Construction of Perspective in *Le Planétarium* and *Middlemarch*.”

Readers: Sanda Golopentia, Peter Saval

Hee Kyung Chung – thesis in Development Studies

“Intellectual Dissidence in Authoritarian Regimes: A Case Comparison between Writers of German Democratic Republic (1945-1990) and Egypt (1954- 1981).”

☐ Focuses on two main questions: how does an authoritarian state go about establishing its hegemony in its relationship to dissident intellectuals, and how do these intellectuals enact gestures of counter-hegemony through their writing? Relying on Gramsci's distinction between 'rule' and 'hegemony,' I conduct a case comparison between an Egyptian writer Sonallah Ibrahim and an East German writer Jurek Becker to show how they dealt with state hegemony and censorial authorities, while working to retain their creative license and their independence as critics of their societies.

Readers: Elliott Colla, Marilyn Rueschemeyer

Nathan Driskell

“Murmuring Graves and Silent Heavens: Seductive Educations in the Fiction of Juan Rulfo and Flannery O'Connor.”

Readers: Stephanie Merrim, Esther Whitfield

William Garrity III

“Early Heidegger and Scholastic Philosophy.”

Readers: Susan Bernstein, Zachary Sng

William Guzzardi

“*My Memory*: Twenty-Six Poems by Dai Wangshu.”

Readers: Susan Bernstein, Keith Waldrop

☐ Translation of a book of poems by the twentieth-century Chinese symbolist Dai Wangshu, accompanied by a critical study of the connections between Dai's 1929 work and French symbolist poetry. That investigation leads to a consideration of China's fraught and fascinating relationship with the West.

Hannah Levintova

“The Plurality of Realism: Censorship in the Soviet Union and Fascist Italy.”

☐ A comparative study of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward*, and Alberto Moravia's *Inverno di Malato*. Both authors had been banned or censored under the totalitarian regimes (the Soviet Union and Fascist Italy). The threat of censorship is palpable in both works as these authors aim at a delicate balance: they imply political commentary and indicate societal flaws, but they do so without wholly defying each regime's mandatory literary conventions.

Readers: Vladimir Golstein, Massimo Riva

Amy Littlefield

“Fugitive Women, Fugitive Words: Belonging and Resisting through Testimony”

☐ Compares the testimonies of fugitive enslaved women from the mid-nineteenth century to narratives by today's undocumented Mexican and Guatemalan immigrant women. The thesis focuses on experiences of illegality, marginalization, and migration, and explores the political impact and limitations of published testimony. I also reflect on my own experience as a journalist interviewing undocumented women.

Readers: Stephanie Merrim, Keisha-Khan Perry

Benjamin Mandelkern

“Reading Virgil at Duino: A Critical Look at Alienation in Virgil's *Eclogues* and Rilke's *Duino Elegies*; The Ten *Eclogues* Rendered in English”

Readers: Susan Bernstein, Joseph Pucci

Claire Maria Mehling

“Self-Deception: Narrating the Self/Preserving the Self.”

Readers: Susan Bernstein, Bernard Reginster

Alexander Ortiz

“*Frequent Stops*: A Novel by Salah al-Azab, translated from the Arabic.”

Readers: Elliott Colla, Mohammad El Sharkwi

Cassie D. Owens

"*A Breath of Life (Pulsations): Um sopro de vida (pulsações)* [by Clarice Lispector]; Translation of the opening chapters."

Readers: Nelson Vieira, Dore Levy

Sylvanus Polky

"When South Meets North: Marginalization and Isolation within Changing Societies in *The Sound and the Fury*"

□ The impact of Northern integration on Southern societies in Italy and the United States during the 1860s, as particularly shown within the novels *The Leopard* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa and *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. Despite being unrelated situations, both societies experienced feelings of marginalization and despair as control of their families was lost and their former hierarchical moral codes were exchanged for the more modernized values of their powerful Northern neighbors.

Readers: Massimo Riva, Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg

Gretchen Roecker

"Silenced Symptoms: Literary Treatments of Pediatric HIV/AIDS."

□ Explores different representations of pediatric HIV/AIDS in francophone and English literature from Europe, Africa and the U.S. Looks specifically at prevalent literary tools (including metaphor, metonymy and comparative references) and how they reflect and shape wider discourses, and question the efficacy of this sub-genre of responsive "AIDS literature" in telling the stories of traditionally silenced seropositive children.

Readers: Arnold Weinstein, Patricia Symonds

Catherine Rogg "Literarchitecture: Perceptions and Influences of the Home, Domesticity, and Residential Design in 20th Century Literature."

□ Explores the social and philosophical significance of the Home by primarily comparing two novels, including E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910) and Zadie Smith's contemporary, American-set adaptation of Forster's novel, *On Beauty*. I draw conclusions about how literature can portray the home and household in light of evolving notions of class, gender, and personal identity."

Readers: Susan Bernstein, Dietrich Neumann

Amelia Rosenman

"Bodies Touch Across Time: Jesusa Rodriguez Re-Imagines Sor Juana."

□ Translations of three performances by contemporary Mexican writer and actress Jesusa Rodríguez, as well as a selection of seven sonnets and a speech by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. In my introduction, I reflect on Rodríguez's interaction with Sor Juana as a "queering" in which Rodríguez uses her body to reach back through time and re-imagine Sor Juana."

Readers: Patricia Ybarra, Forrest Gander

Lauren Weindling

"'Narcissus so himself himself forsook': The Narcissus Myth in the Renaissance."

□ Narcissus *chooses* a love of himself over the love of another. When this myth is incorporated into a Christian tradition during the Middle Ages, the larger implications of Narcissus's choice emerge including: vanity, pride, and finally, the choice of self-love over a love of God. By virtue of thematic syncretism, the medieval allegorical tradition that worked to legitimize the pagan myth continued to have a strong presence in Renaissance reinterpretations."

Readers: Michel-André Bossy, Coppélia Kahn

Jennifer Wyron

"*Torn*: A translation of Lila Zemborain's *Rasgado*."

Readers: Esther Whitfield, Aldo Mazzucchelli