On November 5, 2015, the Department of Comparative Literature was delighted to welcome Alexa Huang, Professor of English, Theatre and Dance, East Asian Languages and Literatures, and International Affairs at George Washington University, as the presenter of the third annual Albert Wertheim Lecture in Comparative Drama.

Professor Huang’s talk, entitled “Worlds Elsewhere: Global Shakespeare and its Discontent,” explored aspects of embodiment of Shakespeare’s plays, as the number of professional productions of his plays around the world has grown. These embodiments have added layers of cultural complexity to audiences’ perception of the plays, through performances by a wider range of actors, but also through use of language, costumes, set elements, and music from the “host” cultures. As a result, these productions both enhance our awareness of the roles of cultural difference within the plays, which were written and performed at a time of increased encounters with other cultures, and create dialogue between Shakespeare’s plays and cultures around the world in our own time.

Professor Huang’s talk drew an audience of students, faculty, alumni, and friends from Comparative Literature, as well as other departments, including English, French, and Italian, Theatre and Drama, and East Asian Languages and Cultures. The questions after the talk led to lively discussion. On the second day of her visit, Professor Huang met with graduate students and faculty from several departments for an informal conversation over coffee and lunch about the issues raised by her talk.

At George Washington, Professor Huang also directs the Dean’s Scholars in Shakespeare program, and she co-founded and co-directs that university’s Digital Humanities Institute. This past year, she was the Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellow at the Folger Shakespeare Library, a fellowship sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies. In 2014-15, she was the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Global Shakespeare Studies at Queen Mary University of London and University of Warwick. Her latest book is *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation* (Palgrave, 2014).

At the lecture, the department announced the inauguration of new Wertheim prizes for the best essays on comparative drama topics written for undergraduate and graduate courses in Comparative Literature. The annual Wertheim Lectures in Comparative Drama commemorate the life and work of Professor Albert Wertheim, who held appointments in English, Comparative Literature, and Theatre and Drama at Indiana University. We thank Judith Wertheim, Theodore Widlanski, and Martha Jacobs for their generosity in making this series of lectures and related events possible.
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once again I have the privilege of writing to our comparative literature community about all that has happened in the past year. First, I’d like to welcome two new colleagues, professors Sonia Velázquez and Daniel Lukes, to the faculty. Sonia, who also teaches in Religious Studies, has joined us by moving part of her appointment line from Theatre and Drama to Comparative Literature, and Daniel is in the first year of a Visiting Assistant Professorship. We extend a warm welcome to them! These are two fabulous additions to our family of comparatists who are already offering us many new areas of much-needed expertise, ranging from Spanish drama to twenty-first-century fiction. We can take great pleasure in knowing that their achievements will be adding glory to new issues of Encompass.

The department has been busy with new initiatives and several public events during 2015–16. As our feature article explains in some detail, in the fall semester, we hosted the Albert Wertheim Encompass. This spring, we sponsored a Shakespeare Around the World, entitled “Worlds Elsewhere: Global Shakespeare and Its Discontent,” was splendid, attracting a wide array of people from our department and from around the university. Dacha Tran, this year’s exchange student from Université Paris-Ouest Nanterre La Dfense, took the photographs of Alexa’s visit that we have included here. Another important event took place when Rosanna Warren, Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago and one of the most widely respected poets in the United States, gave a poetry reading of both her own work and her original translations of poems from several languages. Also, Professor Eileen Julien and her collaborators were awarded a very substantial NEH grant of almost $200,000 for an interdisciplinary and international summer institute dedicated to African culture. It will take place this July here in Bloomington.

In January 2016, alumni Joon Park visited Bloomington to speak about the value of his undergraduate education in the humanities, something of great importance in this day and age. Joon, who majored in Comparative Literature and East Asian Studies at IU, is Chief Operating Officer at Ayleska Investment Group, a firm that handles investments for institutions such as the University of California and Washington University in Saint Louis. He gave a talk entitled “The B.A. in the Humanities and My Journey in a Globalized World.”

His presentation was among the most memorable I have heard on the importance of the humanities and the liberal arts. We had an informal question and answer session afterward, followed by dinner in the FabLab, an arts location in downtown Bloomington. Joon is among the most articulate spokesmen for the humanities in an era in which its huge significance in higher education and in our democracy has been unwisely questioned by some. I particularly enjoyed his detailed recollections of challenging readings from his classes on East-West literary interrelations from years ago. One of his favorite teachers, Professor Emeritus Eugene Eoyang, attended with his wife. It was great to see them get together again.

When I told William Adams, the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, about Park’s talk, he asked to see information about the event, and I sent it to him. This spring, we sponsored a presentation by José Pedro Silva, visiting professor from the University of Lisbon, who also taught a special eight-week class on the interrelations of Greek and modern drama to an enthusiastic group of students. On April 19, 2016, he spoke about the mysteries of “Saudade”—that elusive and alluring Portuguese word expressing a combination of longing and loss—for a special gathering of comparatists and friends. Good conversation and food followed his memorable talk.

Another new development at IU Bloomington was the second large-scale graduate student conference in comparative literature, in early April 2016. The chief organizers were our own graduate students and SAB members. Submissions came in from all around the country, and the final roster of presenters came from five states. One speaker came all the way from Stanford University. (For more details, see the section featuring graduate news.) A particular high point was a keynote address from Scott Herring of the IU English Department informing his intrigued audience about rarely seen documents and manuscripts from the Samuel M. Steward Collections in the Kinsey Institute. This second graduate student conference built on the exploration of gender, theory, literature, and culture that was clearly of interest during the first conference, in the spring of 2015.

Turning toward the national scene, the annual ACLA conference took place at Harvard University from March 17 to 20, 2016. I saw many alumni there who came to present talks or attend lectures. I was delighted and proud to be in the audience when honorable mention for the Horst Frenz Prize went to Meg Arenberg, one of our current students. Later, more good news followed. Meg was recently awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University! I am sorry to have to inform our community that yet another of the early comparatists is good news: Meg was recently awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University! I am sorry to have to inform our community that yet another of the early comparatists is good news: Meg was recently awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University! I am sorry to have to inform our community that yet another of the early comparatists is good news: Meg was recently awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University! I am sorry to have to inform our community that yet another of the early comparatists is good news: Meg was recently awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University! I am sorry to have to inform our community that yet another of the early comparatists is good news: Meg was recently awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University!

While it is important to remember our glorious past, I am happy to report about the comparatists of the future and how we will encourage them. Recently I learned about the newly operational Sanders-Weber Scholarship Fund for students majoring in Comparative Literature, up and running as of April 2017 and available annually thereafter. Those interested can read about it here: https://college.indiana.edu/studentPortal/undergraduate-students/scholarships/sanders-weber.html. It is a fabulous opportunity for an outstanding student who is already dedicated to the study of comparative literature on the undergraduate level, and it should help us maintain the major in the years to come.

Even without this important new scholarship, we still do have a sizable percentage of our undergraduates who are showing academic excellence of one sort or another. At a recent College dinner,
dissembled in disagreement, insisted
of issues in popular culture and of
also had an astonishing command
and published at least one book
a walking encyclopedia of film
1 year, some of which I read as
an insightful formal critic
some of which I read as
and film must have been left to him.
the reference is not casual: the
about improvements that might have
offering Shakespeare suggestions
than I could have envisaged, it often
Over the course of what has turned
warren of streets.
seat and closed his eyes during my
Professor Geduld sat in the passenger
they were young, unfussily climbed
herd Professor Geduld’s sons when
occasional favor, such as bundling
recompense, all I could do was the
and commenting on the final chapter
family in his home as I completed
the profligacy of my tastes in art
with my own very different interests,
strongly held beliefs, was patient
learned works from French and
character of translations of certain
of theory, even less for the sloppy
character of translations of certain
learned works from French and
German. But he taught me to respect
strongly held beliefs, was patient
with my own very different interests,
attempted without success to reform
the profily of my tastes in art
and music, and had me stay with his
family in his home as I completed
my first monograph (a decade after I
had ceased to be his charge), reading
and commenting on the final chapter
as the pages left the printer. In
recompense, all I could do was the
occasional favor, such as bundling
his sick English Sheepdog into
my car and flying off to the vet with
my pizza deliverer’s sense of traffic
regulations: the dog, a gigantic
time stage actress, had set me on the
course towards Shakespeare, then
turning my interest in Shakespeare
and film must have been left to him.
I listened with sympathy to tales
of my wanderings from country
to country in my younger years.
Only later, some time after he had
become a close family friend, did
I discover that the travels of my
childhood hardly compared with his,
for he had lost relatives to monstrous
regimes, heard bombs dropping on
his neighborhood, and suffered an
exhaustion that separated him from
his parents. His experiences marked
his passion for knowledge
or film historians, New
whether microhistorians
or film historians, New
Russian Modernism and Beyond
A monograph,
of criticism on Vladimir Sorokin.
The two volumes contain twenty-one
title in a centennial volume dedicated
workers — pasquino's Poetics of
coins" (Slavic Review); "Sigizmund
Khrizhansovsky's Poetics of
Passivity" (Russian Review); and
"The Customs House of Hades:
Why Dickens and Gogol Traffic
with the Underworld" (Yearbook
of Comparative Literature). Reprints of
two more essays are in the works—one
in a centennial volume dedicated
to Andrei Bely’s Petersburg, the other
in a Russian-language anthology
of criticism on Vladimir Sorokin.
A monograph, Children of the
Revolution: Fantastic Families in
Russian Modernism and Beyond,
is due out from the Slavic Series at
Northern Illinois University Press.
He also gave invited talks at UC-
Berkeley, Stanford, and Harvard,
and presented at conferences
in Vancouver (MLA) and Tokyo
(International Congress of East
European Studies). In the
coming year, he is slated to speak at Princeton
University, at a symposium on
Russian science fiction at New York
University, and at a symposium
on passive resistance in Delhi.
In addition, he is co-organizing
with Alex Spектор) the first-ever
conference on the recently discovered
Russian modernist Sigizmund
Khrizhansovsky, to be hosted by IU
Bloomington and funded by the
College Arts and Humanities Institute
and a National Endowment for the
Humanities grant administered by
Todd Valentino. He has been
awarded a small research grant
by the College Arts and Humanities Institute,
as well as a College Arts
and Humanities Institute research
fellowship and a New Frontiers in
the Arts and Humanities fellowship,
which will fund a teaching leave
in the 2016–17 academic year
to complete a book on clone fiction.
David Hertz
In April 2015, Professor Hertz gave
a talk to the Committee on Social
Thought, University of Chicago.
The title of his presentation was “Eugenio
Montale and the Great Modern Cycle
of Love Poetry.” It was followed by
a poetry reading of Montale poems,
both in the original and in translation,
with the participation of Rosanna
Warren, Rebecca West, and Sylvia
Guslandi. Hertz’s work at the NEH
continues. He attended two more
White House events, and in July 2015,
he visited the offices of the two
Indiana senators and Congressman
Todd C. Young to speak on behalf of
the humanities, both for NEH and IU.
(continued)
**Bill Johnston**

Professor Johnston published a translation of Polish writer Tomasz Różyczy’s 2004 mock epic poem “Twelve Stations” (Zephyr Press, 2015). In January 2016, the book was long-listed for the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation. In April, he gave readings with Różyczy at the AWP Convention in Minneapolis and at IU Bloomington. In the spring, Johnston served as sole judge of the Harold Morton Landon Poetry Prize awarded by the Academy of American Poets. Throughout the year he continued to work on his new translation of Adam Mickiewicz’s 1834 epic poem, Pan Tadeusz. He is currently finishing work on an ethnographic study entitled “Coming into the Word: Ethnography of an Evangelical Christian Language School in Poland,” to be published by Multilingual Matters.

**Eileen Julien**


**Paul Losensky**


**Daniel Lukes**


**Rebecca Manning**

Through the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Professor Manning organized a conference on early modern Bengali literature at the Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) in October, bringing together key scholars of the period for a full day of papers and exciting conversation. Her own paper, “Child Sacrifice in Rupram’s Dharmamangalama,” draws from her current translation project of the mid-17th century Bengali epic.

**Daniel Lukes**


**Said Pスタートana, Ishmus Zapotec artist, collaborator on New Frontiers grant “Zapotec Artists and their Art.”**

Mexican scholar to be a recipient. There was also a 2016 reprint of her book Prestigio y Afiliación en una Comunidad Urbana: Juchitán, Oaxaca. This was a special commemorative edition of the 25 most important books about the Ishmus Zapotec. She received the New Frontiers exploratory research grant 2015–16, for her project “Zapotec Artists and Their Art: Heritage and Innovation.” The following papers have been accepted and are currently in press: “Landschapes of the In-Between: Artists Mediating Cultures,” in The Artist Turned Inside-Out, a volume commemorating the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. Helen Phelan and Graham Welch, eds. “Being Curated by a Divine Force: The Forty plus year Success of the Pilobolus Dance Theater,” a chapter in the volume Psychology Cultural.
Sarah Van der Laan

Sonia Velázquez
Professor Velázquez is thrilled to have joined the department this semester. She is now teaching two courses for CMLT, one on the Human Condition for upper-level undergrads and a 200-level course on Romance and the Western Tradition.


Recently at the MLA in Austin, she presented a paper from her second project on Cervantes, “The Politics of a Common Language in Cervantes’ *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*,” as part of a guaranteed session on Cervantes’ last novel sponsored by the Cervantes Society of America, January 2016. Earlier in the fall, she organized two panels on “*Giorgio Agamben’s The End of the Poem and Renaissance Baroque Poetry*,” at the 12th Biennial Conference of the Society for the Study of Renaissance and Baroque Hispanic Poetry, October 24-26, 2015, where she read a paper on “*Fray Luis de León and The End of the Poem in ‘La oda en la Ascensión’*.”

Professor Herb Marks enjoys a moment outside the IU Auditorium.

“Al-Akhṭal at the Court of ʿAbd al-Malik: The Qaṣīda and the Ordeal of a City.” By Fawzi Qasida. Toward an Aesthetics for the Arabic Qasida: Fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī wa-al-ʿArabī, fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī wa-al-ʿArabī, fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī wa-al-ʿArabī, 30.3). Last year he worked for Instructional Television and was published in the American Spectator and the Wall Street Journal. Owen taught literature and writing at Albion College, Earlham College, and Indiana University. He also worked for the original Saturday Evening Post during its last year in Philadelphia. When he titled an article about Columbus, IN, “Athen of the Prairie,” it was a tag line that remained for many years. He also worked as a wordsmith at the Agency for Instructional Television and was published in the American Spectator and the Wall Street Journal. Owen taught literature and writing at Albion College, Earlham College, and Indiana University. He also worked for the original Saturday Evening Post during its last year in Philadelphia. When he titled an article about Columbus, IN, “Athen of the Prairie,” it was a tag line that remained for many years. He also worked as a wordsmith at the Agency for Instructional Television and was published in the American Spectator and the Wall Street Journal.
Mary Ann Cain (B.A., CMLT and English, 1980), Professor of English at IPFW, received an Indiana Arts Commission individual artist grant for 2015–16 to work on a manuscript about the Chicago artist-activist, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, co-founder of the DuSable Museum of African American History and the South Side Community Arts Center. The book is currently under advance contract with Northwestern University Press. She presented a paper on Burroughs and the SSCAC at the National Women’s Studies Association meeting in November. She has also published poetry in various journals, including the fall issue of The Bitter Oleander.


Devin Gardner Last (B.A., 1990), is currently working as an education consultant to several school districts in the Puget Sound (Seattle) area. He is happily married and a father to two children, Gael and Natasha.

Daniel Simon (M.A., 1994, Ph.D., 2000), published his verse chapbook Cast Off, with Edwin E. Smith Publishing in fall 2015 and has been nominated for the PEN Center USA, Oklahoma Book, and Independent Publisher (IPPY) awards. His second book, After Reading Everything, is forthcoming from London’s Eyewear Publishing in spring 2016. Individual poems have been nominated for Pushcart Prize XXI. Best of the Small Presses, and reprinted in the anthologies World English Poets (2015) and Oklahoma Poems . . . and Their Poets (2014). They have also appeared in various literary journals—including The Adirondack Review, Prairie Schooner, Poetry International, and Fulcrum—and have been translated into German, Greek, Spanish, and Turkish. A poet and translator, Daniel is assistant director and editor in chief of World Literature Today magazine at the University of Oklahoma, where he also teaches for the Department of English. His professional memberships include the Academy of American Poets and PEN American Center. He lives in Norman, Oklahoma, with his wife and three daughters.

I had the opportunity to catch up with Comparative Literature M.A. student Stephan Crowne-Weber. For the 2015–16 academic year, he has been appointed lecturer at Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, teaching various courses in English. Comparative Literature at IU has an excellent relationship with this Parisian university, routinely exchanging scholars for academic appointments.

Describe the courses you have been teaching, or in particular that you’ve enjoyed teaching others and why:

I have liked all of my classes and have loved teaching “Expression Écrite” (Written Expression) in particular. In “Expression Écrite,” we’ve explored how to create a variety of documents in English, from a thank-you letter to a written advertisement. What I like about the class so much is that we’ve actually created examples of all kinds of genres in class. So, we wrote the opening to a short story together, and the students (who were game) had to come together as a group and create a coherent text.

What piece of advice would you give the next graduate student instructor to come to Nanterre from the U.S. or from this department to do what you are doing?

Relax.

Name the best meal you’ve had or the best thing you’ve eaten thus far in your current life?

The best thing I’ve eaten in Paris this year? (“If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.”)

I don’t exactly know what Hemingway was talking about. I’m kind of puritanical at the moment, so there’s a whole spectrum of Hemingway-ish lifestyles that involve drinking and smoking and who knows what else that are foreign to me at the moment. I’d like to think that what’s there’s accordian music that will soon envelope me on a café terrace and all will be revealed.

Name a quote in light of your experiences in Paris this year? (“If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.”)

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Where is your favorite place to go in Paris and what do you do there?

Saint-Sulpice; listen to organ music.

Name the biggest difference between teaching French and American students.

When my American students at IU haven’t known something, they’ve admitted to being confused. When my French students don’t know something, they’ll start whispering to their neighbors in hopes someone else will know, and will continue even when I tell them that I’ll help them if they don’t understand part of what I’m trying to say.

Who’s learned more in your classes this year: you or your students? Why do you think this is the case?

I’d like to believe my students learn a lot. But it’s hard to say who has learned more. A teacher is a performer who has to put on a show that’s very different from anything expected from someone sitting at a desk. I learned a lot of French vocabulary just to maintain control of my class. They would have sensed weakness if I didn’t know how to translate the word “surge” or “clapotor.”

What will you take back with you to the United States when you return, e.g., what have you learned in your year at Nanterre? How have you grown? Do you think you will be a different person, college instructor, or scholar when you come back?

I would like to think I have learned how to handle independent students. The students I’ve had in France have been more likely to disregard commands than American students that I’ve had.

What piece of advice would you give the next graduate student instructor to come to Nanterre from the U.S. or from this department to do what you are doing?

Relax.

Name the best meal you’ve had or the best thing you’ve eaten thus far in your current life?

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Graduate Student News

This year the Student Advisory Board of Comparative Literature organized its second Graduate Student Conference. “Crystal Queer” took place April 1 and 2, 2016, with five panels and a total of sixteen papers by graduate students from five states. Intended as a gesture toward disrupting discursive arrangements of seeing and knowing, the conference sought to trouble normative models of knowledge production and the politics of visual representation, merging with questions of invisibility, dis/identification, in/coherence, and il/legibility. The keynote speaker was Professor Scott Herring, from the Department of Comparative Literature at IU Bloomington, who spoke on “Warriors and poets: the voice in drag in Le Roman de Silence and The Woman Warrior.”

Sean Sidky presented a paper at the Northeast Modern Languages Association conference in Hartford, CT, in March. He organized the 4th Annual Jewish Studies Graduate Student Conference here at IU in February. The theme was “Jews Between Public and Private Space.”

Meg Arenberg was awarded an Honorable Mention in the American Comparative Literature Association’s Horst Frenz Prize competition for best graduate student paper for the paper she presented at the March 2015 annual meeting of the ACLA in Seattle. The paper was titled “The Disenchantment of the World: Intertextuality and Disillusionment in Euphrase Kezilahabi’s Nagona and Mzingile.” Her article “Rethinking Hwaa: Gender in Abdilatif Abdalla’s Utenzi wa Maisha ya Adamu na Hawa through the Lens of John Milton’s Paradise Lost” was published in the fall 2015 issue of Research in African Literatures.

Lily Li presented a paper “Integrating the Self: Gao Xingjian’s One Man’s Bible” in the panel “Transnationalism, Autobiography and Nostalgia” for the American Comparative Literature Association’s annual conference held at Harvard on March 17–20, 2016. She received IU’s 2016 CAHI (College Arts and Humanities Institute) Graduate Conference Travel Award. She also received IU’s 2015 College of Arts and Science Travel Award. She presented a paper “A New Reading of Ha Jin’s Waiting: Domestic Life as Allegory of Migration” in the panel “Contemporary Chinese Literature” at WCAAS (Western Conference of the Association for Asian Studies) Annual Conference, titled “Asian Civilizations and Communities: Frontiers—Borders—Landscapes” held at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City on October 8–9, 2015.


Catherine Riccio-Berry published Afterlives of Romantic Intermediality: The Intersection of Visual, Aural, and Verbal Frontiers in December 2015 through Lexington Books. Afterlives was co-edited and co-translated from German with Dr. Leena Eilittä. In addition to working on her own publications, Catherine has begun to branch out and publish others. After two years of publishing both crafting and educational textbooks, her small publishing company, Caribe House Press, has been formed into an LLC as of April and is now making its foray into the fiction market. Catherine also continues to enjoy helping the Comparative Literature Department with its undergraduate outreach by assisting with the new website design and by developing activities that promote a warm, welcoming community.

Morgane Flahault received the Newton P. Stallknecht Memorial Essay Prize in May 2015 from the Department of Comparative Literature for her essay “Warriors and poets: the voice in drag in Le Roman de Silence and The Woman Warrior.”

Mystical Connections, a welcoming community. Catherine also continues to enjoy helping the Comparative Literature Department with its undergraduate outreach by assisting with the new website design and by developing activities that promote a warm, welcoming community.
Comparative Literature seniors Jordan Riley and Madeleine Steup met to talk about the college experience, food, travel, books, and what they were like as children. 

How was studying abroad? What was your favorite moment?

Madeleine: I studied abroad in St. Petersburg my junior year and lived with a Russian family. I loved it: our classes were in an ornate old cathedral complex and the city was so beautiful and fun to explore! There were a surprising number of cute coffee shops and restaurants. My favorite part was probably going to my host family’s dacha (lake house/cottage) and banya, a type of Russian sauna, that they built themselves. You can just spend a whole afternoon in the banya, going back and forth between the sauna room and a little room outside where you can eat oranges and drink water and smear honey on your face.

Jordan: I studied in London in the spring of 2015. I lived in student housing in Kings Cross with other students in my program. It is absolutely one of my favorite experiences. I chose the program because I wanted to be in the city and surrounded by all the international arts, culture, and cuisine that London has to offer. I absolutely fell in love with London, which is not hard to do. My favorite day was probably the one I spent completely absorbed by the British Library, looking at handwritten letters from Queen Elizabeth I and birthday cards that had original lyrics on the back written by John Lennon. I am so glad I chose to be in the heart of the city, but some of my favorite weekends are the ones where I traveled elsewhere in the UK, like Bath, and Edinburgh, because traveling through the countryside was absolutely beautiful. And despite everyone’s warnings, the rain wasn’t that bad.

What is your senior project?

Madeleine: I’m writing my thesis on a strange Russian novel from the ’80s, School for Fools, by Sasha Sokolov, focusing on sound, genre, nature, and Ancient Greek references.

Jordan: My thesis focuses on the narratives that female poets create for themselves, and how those narratives get hijacked and imposed upon throughout time, specifically discussing Sappho, Elizabeth Barret Browning, and Virginia Woolf.

What’s the coolest book you’ve ever been assigned to read?

Madeleine: I think Plainwater by Anne Carson definitely wins, but there are so many close seconds. A lot of Russian things are spectacular by virtue of just being so weird.

Jordan: I had to read One thousand and One Arabian Nights for a few different classes, but it was always one of my favorites to discuss.

What’s your favorite spot in Bloomington?

Madeleine: My porch, or the Jordan Hall greenhouse, or the concrete in front of the Art Museum if it’s sunny out.

Jordan: I love the courtyard outside of Sycamore on a sunny day.

Piece of advice for younger students?

Madeleine: Talk to your professors! It will help you so much. And do things you like. Try to avoid doing things you don’t like, unless it’s homework. Do your homework.

Jordan: I’m going to say talk to your professors as well! It’s something I’m not very good at, but it really helps and Comp Lit professors are nice, helpful, and happy to talk. Also, the Comparative Literature major allows for a lot of exploration outside the major, so my advice is to take advantage of that. Explore your interests! I’ve found that a lot of classes I wouldn’t have expected to enjoy have been some of my favorites.

Favorite food?

Madeleine: Dried cherries, golden raisins, dolma, mochi, and gnocchi.

Jordan: Basically any type of noodle.

Favorite movie?


Jordan: That or The Princess Bride, because I’m a sucker for something romantic.

What’s your favorite children’s book?

Madeleine: Harry Potter books, hands down.

Jordan: A fox.

What’s a weird career goal you had as a kid?

Madeleine: For a brief period I was really inspired by the Alps and wanted to just live as a sheep farmer and spin wool. I also did a lot of research on becoming a princess, but it ultimately didn’t work out.

Jordan: I used to go back and forth between owning an apple orchard and being on the Supreme Court, neither of which are jobs that I, as an adult, think I would be very good at.

Madeleine: My favorite book was actually an obscure child’s semi-autobiography called Mink on Weekdays, Ermine on Sundays. It was about a New York family traveling around, having governesses, and redecorating their house. It was very funny; I read it all the time.

Jordan: Harry Potter books, hands down.

What’s your spirit animal?

Madeleine: A deer.

Jordan: A fox.

Madeleine in Sparrow Hills, in Moscow, spring 2015

Madeleine in Stratford upon Avon, spring 2015.
MLA announces a new prize in honor of IU Professor Matei Calinescu

The Modern Languages Association has just announced the creation of the Matei Calinescu Prize for a distinguished work of scholarship in twentieth- or twenty-first-century literature and thought. The prize, which consists of a cash award and a certificate, will be presented to the winning author at the MLA’s annual convention in Philadelphia in January 2017.

The endowed prize has been established in honor of Matei Calinescu (1934–2009), Professor of Comparative Literature and West European Studies at Indiana University. Professor Calinescu was the author of Five Faces of Modernity (Duke University Press, 1987), translated into eight languages, and Reweading (Yale University Press, 1993). He was a Guggenheim fellow (1976–77), a National Endowment for the Humanities fellow (1991), and a Woodrow Wilson Center fellow in Washington, D.C. (1995–96). Beginning in 1999, he devoted himself to the memoir form. A notable result was Matthew’s Exigency (Indiana University Press, 2009), a biographical portrait of his son based on copious diary entries kept over many years.

In Romania, Calinescu had published two volumes of poetry, the short novel Viata si opiniiile lui Zaharias Lichter [The Life and Opinions of Zacharias Lichter (1969), due to appear in English from the New York Review of Books this coming year], and seven volumes of literary criticism and theory. He was an editor on the staff of the literary weekly Romania and also taught comparative literature at the University of Bucharest. In 1973 he emigrated to the U.S., continuing his distinguished academic career at Indiana University.

We are pleased to announce that in July 2016, the Indiana University Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) will host a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for college and university teachers, “Arts of Survival: Recasting Lives in African Cities.” Institute faculty include project co-directors, Eileen Julien, Comparative Literature and Director of the IAS; and James Ogude, Research Professor in African Literature, University of Pretoria, South Africa; as well as Grace Musila, Associate Professor, English, Stellenbosch University, South Africa; Akin Adesokan, Associate Professor, Comparative Literature and Media School, IUB; and Oana Panaïté, Associate Professor, French and Italian, IUB. The Institute will explore contemporary urban culture and arts in Accra, Lagos, New Orleans, and Port- au-Prince. These cities share African “roots,” but are distinctive because of the unique “routes” that subsequently shaped them: landscapes and histories; multiple languages; waves of immigrants who brought and continue to bring their labor, culture, and creativity; and the sometimes tragic events, both natural (hurricanes and earthquakes) and manmade (legacies of colonialism, slavery, and political violence), that these cities have undergone. The Institute will examine how the arts engage political and social hierarchies embedded in these cities and often recast marginalized and precarious lives into lives that exceed their constraining structures.

The Newton B Stallknecht Fellowship

As many of you have heard, William Slaymaker (Ph.D., Comparative Literature, I.U., 1975), Eugene Eoyang (Ph.D., Comparative Literature, I.U., 1971), and I recently joined together to establish a new fund—in honor of Newton P. Stallknecht—to support graduate students who are completing their dissertations. Over the course of the year, many of you have already contributed to this effort and I thank you heartily! Others may wish to join us as our fund drive continues.

Let me explain a little more about what we have in mind for the new Stallknecht fund. We hope to help those graduate students who have completed all their coursework and are experiencing financial pressures while they are in the midst of the writing process. Simply put, too many are in danger of falling between the cracks, and we anticipate that this new fellowship will fill in exactly where there is little support for graduate research at the present time.

As I mentioned in a previous letter to many of you, Comparative Literature has little to offer worthy dissertation writers who just need an extra month or two of support to get that last chapter written or revised, or pull together a clean copy of that last draft of a dissertation manuscript. The funds to cover a month or two of rent and food can make a huge difference. At times, the College steps in to help, but we cannot always count on this generosity, especially in the current era of budget constraints and reduction in support for the liberal arts.

It would be wonderful to have this option ready to go in the future! It is desperately needed by some deserving person almost every summer, for example.

William, Eugene, and I believe that timing is everything when it comes to helping graduate students succeed. Each of us has made a modest start-up gift to seed the fund. Would you consider joining us if you have not already done so? Helping our many talented graduate students is a very fitting way to honor Newton Stallknecht. As you know, Professor Stallknecht was one of the first great scholars to teach Comparative Literature at Indiana University. The wide-ranging list of dissertations he supervised from 1951 to 1980 documents the extraordinary range of his intellectual interests. Should you wish to see the complete list, I have it. I found it simply astonishing when I reviewed it recently!

Please consider joining us in making a gift. The Newton Stallknecht Fund has a growing balance and an account number at the I.U. Foundation, should you wish to make a gift (P370012125). In order to keep this funding in place in perpetuity, we need to raise $25,000 over the next five years. While we have made a tremendous start, we are not there yet. Every dollar is a step toward establishing the fund permanently, and every contribution, small or large, is welcome!

David M. Hertz
Chair, Comparative Literature