



**19th Annual GRACLS Conference
“Temporality, Epistemology, &
Eschatology”**

24-26 October 2024

Sponsored by The Program in Comparative Literature

Image Courtesy of Nemo Ramjet, *All Tomorrows* (2006)

The University of Texas at Austin

***Temporality, Epistemology, &
Eschatology***

An Interdisciplinary Conference at the University of
Texas at Austin Organized by the Graduate Association of
Comparative Literature Students (GRACLS)
And the Program in Comparative Literature.

October 24th - October 26th, 2024

The keynote conversation will take place at the
Glickman Conference Center in Patton Hall (RLP) on
Thursday early evening, with a reception to follow.

Conference programming will take place in the Student
Activity Center (WCP), Friday and Saturday



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For more information: <https://sites.utexas.edu/graclsconference/>

Schedule

Thursday, October 24th

4:00pm – 5:30pm	Keynote Address: “The waste of the years and the perishing of stars’: Cosmic Time and Eschatology in the Modern Literary Imagination” by Dr. Adam Barrows
5:30pm – 8:00pm	Reception

Friday, October 25th

10:00am – 11:00am	Registration and Breakfast
11:00am – 12:30pm	Panels 1, 2
12:30pm – 1:30pm	Break for lunch
1:45pm – 3:30pm	Panels 3, 4

Saturday, October 26th

10:15am – 11:00am	Registration and Breakfast
11:00am – 12:30pm	Panels 5,6
12:30pm – 1:30pm	Break for lunch
1:45pm – 3:30pm	Panel 7
1:45pm – 3:45pm	Panel 8

Acknowledgements

The Program and its Graduate Students would like to thank the following for their generous support:

Dr. Donald Davis and the Department of Asian Studies
Dr. Jorge Pérez and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Dr. Diane Davis and the Department of Rhetoric and Writing
Dr. John Morán González and the English Department
Dr. Mary Blockley and the Visiting Lecturer Committee, the Department of English
Dr. Samantha Pinto and the Humanities Institute
Dr. Martha G. Newman and the Department of History
Dr. Cinzia Russi and the Department of French and Italian
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Dr. Sung-Sheng (Yvonne) Chang and the Center for Taiwan Studies
Dr. Mary Beth Rose and the Program in the Human Dimensions of Organizations

The College of Liberal Arts

Special thanks to:

Dr. Hannah Wojciehowski
Director of the Program in Comparative Literature
Dr. Tracie Matysik
Graduate Adviser, Program in Comparative Literature
Dr. César Salgado
Graduate Steering Committee Chair, Program in Comparative Literature
Blake Lee Plate
Graduate Coordinator, Program in Comparative Literature
Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza
Conference Faculty Advisor
Sisi Liu, Gwendolyn Walker, Orlando Zabala
Conference Organizers

And to our conference volunteers for their generous support throughout the conference.

Thank you all!

A Welcome from the Director

On behalf of the Program in Comparative Literature, and together with the organizers of the 19th annual GRACLS Conference, “Temporality, Epistemology, and Eschatology,” I extend my heartiest welcome to all participants. The conference organizers have invited us to “consider the ways in which people have wrestled with time and their understanding of it in an attempt to find certainty--and perhaps even comfort.” Persons, communities and whole cultures organize themselves through shared perceptions and understandings of time. To wrestle with time is to link past, present, and future in a narrative that provides clarity and optimally a sense of purpose and commitment. To wrestle with time is to come to terms with the time we have, together and separately. To wrestle with time is to imagine the timeless, the incommensurate, the infinite, whatever may stand outside of time. In uncertain times like these, we may seek out evidence of cyclical time, the reassuring recursions of the natural world, or signs indicating that we or others have been here before, proof that what's past is prologue.

Here, at this gathering we are making the time to listen to each other and to speak of time and its truths as we perceive them. We are delighted to host Dr. Adam Barrows of Carleton University and his reflections on "'The waste of the years and the perishing of stars': Cosmic Time and Eschatology in the Modern Literary Imagination." And we look forward to hearing our many speakers address topics such as post/colonial time, temporal identities, temporal poetics, post/national time, queer temporality, translation and time, and temporal crisis and disjuncture. The rich and provocative program assembled by the GRACLS organizers Sisi Liu, Gwendolyn Walker, and Orlando Zabala; faculty advisor and former program director Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza; Graduate Coordinator Blake Lee Pate; and all the conference participants merits our thanks and appreciation. Thanks, too, to Graduate Advisor Dr. Tracie Matysik and GSC Chair Dr. César Salgado for their guidance during the long preparations for this event. After a hiatus of eighteen months since our last graduate conference, it's time to reconvene. Welcome, one and all, and congratulations!

Dr. Hannah Wojciehowski



A Note from the Conference Adviser

The newsfeed on my smartphone and the digital clock on the laptop on which I write this short text are only two of the myriad ways in which straight time regulates and imposes various teleologies of the everyday, inviting urgency in the service of an imagined and imposed necessity to be productive in a certain way by a certain deadline. Whether in the form of a single *eschaton*, or an eternal repetition of *ekpyrosis*, Western metaphysics is preoccupied with linear temporality and with ways of making sense of the present almost by evading it. Our orientation to time, whether following the natural seasonal and diurnal patterns or structured according to transactional and pragmatic logics of progress and productivity, depends upon both something somatic — our need for sleep, for example — and something external — being in sync with others and their expectations.

David Landes more than 40 years ago reflected on the ways in which our relationship to time, in the most material senses, determines the shapes of our human cultures. Whether we have a clock, whether that clock is one with which we must check in, whether that clock is on our wrist or in our phone, not only determines whether we are “on time” but also determines our relationship to materiality via horology. Temporality is a central part of how we know the world. Heidegger and Derrida, to name only two very different figures, center epistemology in the temporal. For Derrida, time is non-linear and irregular. *Différance* provides a way to analyze how signs, like words, symbols, and metaphors, come to have meaning through discrepancy and multiplicity. Meaning is not inherent in a sign, but rather arises from its relationships with other signs from the ways in which it differs and defers.

Three remarkable people, along with their friends and colleagues, have seized this moment to convene us. Rather than hectically racing towards the end of the semester, Gwendolyn, Orlando, and Sisi have afforded us a pause. The support of so many colleagues and academic units, and most of all of our leadership team in Comparative Literature, Drs. Hannah Wojciehowski, César Salgado and Tracie Matysik, has made this pause possible. Colleagues and allies have created a program that dilates and expands temporality, allowing us together to position ourselves in the midst of so many fluidities and precarities. Amidst global elections and invasions, amidst storms and droughts, this time together is precious. After more than two decades of supporting student conference organizers, I cherish this, my last advisory moment, anticipating so many conventions yet to be imagined. As José Muñoz eloquently noted: “Some will say that all we have are the pleasures of this moment, but we must never settle for that minimal transport; we must dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds.”

Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

A Note from the Conference Organizer

The idea for this conference began as a joke. While Gwendolyn, Sisi, and I were brainstorming, I threw three academic-sounding words together—those being “eschatology,” “genealogy,” and “epistemology”—and came up with an explanation about why they worked. Interestingly, everyone liked it, and we ran with it. The choice was not exactly random, but instead it emerged from a preoccupation of my own research and three remarkable texts. The primary inspiration was a work of speculative fiction called *All Tomorrows*, by CM Kosemen, whose haunting artwork appears in our posters. Kosemen’s speculative work imagines an alternate future where humans populate the galaxy, face terrible challenges, splinter into different species, and eventually disappear. The text reminded me that, although contemporary science has much to say about our origins, it is another field, theology, that considers what our end might be. How might humanity, the world, the universe really end—if it actually does? What might we know about that future? How might that knowledge inform our present lives? Eschatology.

The second text is from Hebrew Scripture. *The Book of Ecclesiastes* presents the musings of a teacher who has experienced all of life and been left disillusioned, despairing at the vanity of the material world. Although certain phrases such as “there is nothing new under the sun” and “for everything there is a season” have entered popular culture, I was drawn to *Ecclesiastes* 7:10: “Do not say, “Why were the old days better than these days?” for it is not wise to ask that.” These ancient words pose an all too familiar question. We often comment on the bleakness of the present and the uncertainty of our lives. We question whether we have ever lived in certain times. What troubles us now has always caused suffering. There is a disturbing continuity with the past. Today’s problems are real and dire, but they are not entirely novel. Assuming that the old days were better creates rupture; continuities make interventions possible. Genealogy.

The final text is “A Song on the End of the World” by Polish poet Czesław Miłosz. In his unexpected vision, Miłosz portrays nature as behaving as usual. He adopts an unnervingly quotidian air for those expecting a spectacular finale. The poem admonishes those who are disappointed: “Do not believe it is happening now.” Paradoxically, disasters reveal the hold of routine and normalcy over us. We cannot live in a condition of constantly expecting the worst. When the worst happens, however, those of us who survive return to our recently deformed routines with a better sense of what to do next time. Epistemology.

Although the topic came in jest, I recognize its seriousness and severity — the hurricanes attacking the Southeast United States, the tragedies of war around the world, the multiplicities of souls lost to disease, earthquakes, famines, and other traumas taking place as we meet for this conference. These lives matter—as do ours during this conference. We recognize our incredible privilege and honor those who suffer. I end with the same words that end Kosemen’s book: “What you do today influences tomorrow, not the other way around. Love Today, and seize All Tomorrows!”

Orlando Zabala Figuero

Accessibility

*The WCP and RLP buildings are fully accessible by ADA standards. All restrooms are accessible.

*Gender-inclusive restrooms in the WCP can be found in the following locations:

2nd floor, across from the Ballroom

2nd floor, across from the Gender & Sexuality Center

1st floor, food court area

*A gender-inclusive restroom in RLP can be found on the fourth floor, Room 4.128.

*Scent-free soap is provided at reception if you would like to take it to the restroom, use it, and return it.

*A designated space for rehearsing your paper, resting, and reflecting can be found in Room 3.1 of the WCP on Saturday

*We have built in 15 minutes of transition between panels as well as a lunch break on both days.

*There will be breakfast tacos from Central Market, fresh fruit, coffee, tea, and water available at registration in Room (3.114) beginning at 10:00am on Friday and 10:15am on Saturday and while supplies last throughout the day.

*Food options available on the first floor of the WCP.

*During panels and the keynote conversations, feel free to stand up, move to the back of the room, eat, drink, and do whatever you need to do to be comfortable in the space.

*During panels and the keynote conversation, questions can be written on paper and submitted to the moderator or posed orally.

4:00pm – 5:30pm

Keynote Address

**“The waste of the years and the perishing of stars’
Cosmic Time and Eschatology in the Modern Literary Imagination”**

Dr. Adam Barrows

Glickman Conference Center

RLP (1.302B)



5:30pm – 8:00pm

Reception

Glickman Conference Center, RLP (1.302B)

Program

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25th

10:00am Registration opens. Breakfast tacos, fresh fruit, coffee, tea, and water will be available while supplies last. (WCP 3.114)

11:00am-12:30pm

Panel 1. Post/Colonial Time (3.106)

Panel moderator: Acacia Chan (she/her)

1. Orlando Zabala (he/him), *UT Austin*
“I’m telling you that we’re born well before that’: Curses and Determinism in Maryse Condé’s *Crossing the Mangrove*”
2. Temitope Adetoyese (she/her), *UT Austin*
“Reclaiming Black Futures: Afrofuturism as a Transformative Response to Afropessimism”
3. Jack Riordan (he/him), *UT Austin*
“Independent Filmmaking in Cuba Post Decreto-Ley 373: Cine Renegado”

Panel 2. Temporal Identities (WCP 3.114)

Panel moderator: Arfa Ezazi (she/her)

1. Sydney Sterrett (she/her), *UT Austin*
“The Forewoman”
2. Amara Ali (she/her), *UT Austin*
“The Kashmiri Marṣiya: Negotiating Identity Through Narrative and History”
3. Michelle Crabtree (she/her), *UT Austin*
“Inscribing the Canon: Transformation and the Queer Female Subject in *Las aventuras de la China Iron*”

12:30pm – 1:30pm Break for lunch

1:45pm – 3:30pm

Panel 3. Temporal Poetics (WCP 3.106)

Panel moderator: Weston Richey (they/them)

1. Oleksiy Ostaltsev (he/him), *UT Austin*
Tolkien and Bakhtin: Symphony of Time in *The Lord of the Rings*
2. Channing Li (she/her), *UT Austin*
“Things (Not) As They Are”: Subjective Perception in James Schuyler’s *Poems on Things*
3. Acacia Chan (she/her), *UT Austin*
Cloudy with a Chance of Apostles: Cloud Travel in Acts of Andrew and Matthias
4. Steven Nien (he/him), *UT Austin*
“Affect in Timeless Photographs of the Homeless: A Discussion of Michael O’Brien and Tom Waits’ *Hard Ground*”

Panel 4. Post/National Time (WCP 3.114)

Panel moderator: Orlando Zabala (he/him)

1. Kirill Veselkin (he/him), *UT Austin*
“A Disaster Waiting to Happen: Post-Nuclear Poetics in David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest*”
2. Jordan S. Goheen (he/him), *UT Austin*
“A Contested Nationalism: Taiwan’s Shifting Trauma, History, and Futures”
3. Pouya Nekouei (he/him), *UT Austin*
“Sounding Sovereignty and Nation: Political History of Sound and Aurality in Modern Iran (1921 - 1953)”
4. Hanne Janssens (she/her) *Trinity University*
“Müll und Menschen in Krisenzeiten”

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26th

10:15am Registration opens. Breakfast tacos, fresh fruit, coffee, tea, and water will be available while supplies last. (WCP 3.114)

Prep/Quiet Room → Balcony Room C (WCP 3.116)

11:00am – 12:30pm

Panel 5. Time and Historiography (WCP 3.112)

Panel moderator: Jittawat Kunyamoorn (they/them)

1. Aidan Keys (she/her), *UT Austin*
“Liberata, Emancipated, Missing, Escaped”
2. Akashneel Ghatak (he/they), *UT Austin*
“‘It’s Nation Time’- An Eschatology of the 1970s”
3. Chapman Matis (he/him), *UT Austin*
“Self-Interest Between Two Births: On the Origins of Certainty in Neoliberal Subjectivity”

Panel 6. Queer Temporalities (WCP 3.114)

Panel moderator: Sisi Liu (she/her)

1. Sam Parrish (they/them), *UT Austin*
“Queer Temporality in Oksana Vasyakina's *Wound*”
2. T Lim (she/her), *UT Austin*
“Daring Beyond an End: Recasting the Future of Transness Through Tarot”
3. Alfonso Ayala III (he/him), *UT Austin*
“‘One Day at A Time’: Queer Reflections of Sober Time”

12:30pm – 1:30pm Break for Lunch

1:45pm-3:30pm

Panel 7. Temporal Crisis and Disjuncture (WCP 3.112)

Panel moderator: Alfonso Ayala III (he/him)

1. Sisi Liu, (she/her) *UT Austin*
“Dissonant Time: Modern Memory and Subject in Baudelaire’s *Spleen II*”
2. Weston Richey (they/them), *UT Austin*
“‘A failed man is often the most dangerous’: Failure, Impossibility, and Outlaw Intimacy in *Red Dead Redemption 2*”
3. Gwendolyn Walker (she/her), *UT Austin*
“Empathy, Reader Identification, and the Understanding of Difference in *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*”

1:45pm-3:45pm

Panel 8. Translation and Time (WCP 3.114)

Roundtable moderator: Dr. Thomas Garza (he/him)

1. Bianca Quintanilla Melton (she/her), *UT Austin*
“Mujería Allegory: Olmec Stone Heads and Chicana Futurity”
2. Jittawat Kunyamoorn (they/them), *UT Austin*
“Translation and Revolution: Translating Juan Rulfo’s *El Llano en Llamas* into Lao-Isan”
3. Ana Duclaud (she/her), *UT Austin*
“A Translation as legitimation: the translation and reception of French avant-garde literature in *Contemporáneos*, *Ciclón*, *Sur*, and *Locus Solus*”

Keynote Information

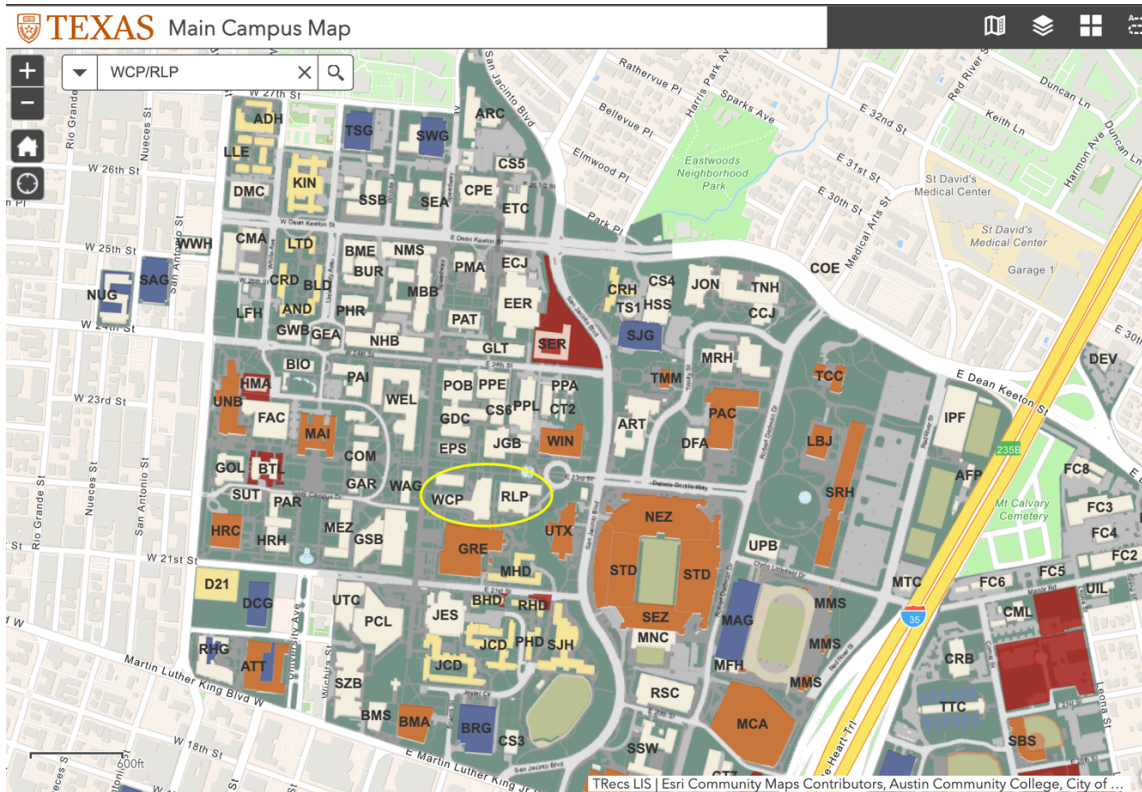
‘The waste of the years and the perishing of stars’: Cosmic Time and Eschatology in the Modern Literary Imagination

Astrophysical research in the early twentieth-century began to reveal the age and extent of an impossibly old and unthinkable vast universe. For some, the spatiotemporal limitlessness of the cosmos bolstered hope and optimism in a *longue durée* of human possibility and achievement. “We are drawing plans and laying foundations for a longer future than we can well imagine,” wrote the physicist Sir James Jeans in 1929. For others, the limitlessness of the cosmos counseled despair and humiliation, rendering insignificant the potential legacies of human endeavor. This talk explores the politicized discourse of cosmological time in the modern literary imagination, and the ways in which cosmic time has both nourished and frustrated eschatological imaginations of the end of humanity.

About Dr. Adam Barrows

Adam Barrows is a Professor of English Literature at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. He is the author of two books on the subject of time and temporality: *The Cosmic Time of Empire* (California, 2011) and *Time, Literature, and Cartography After the Spatial Turn* (Palgrave, 2016). He has published numerous book chapters and journal articles on the relationship between literature and time in such venues as *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Modern Language Quarterly*, *Journal of Literary & Cultural Studies of Disability*, and *Modern Fiction Studies*, which awarded him the Margaret Church Memorial Prize. His current book project investigates the temporality of madness in twentieth-century fiction.

Maps



Circled Area: The William C. Powers Student Activity Center (WCP) and Patton Hall (RLP), where the entirety of the conference will take place.



*First and Third Levels of the WCP
Circled Area: Elevators to the Third Floor*

Participant Bios

Temitope Dorcas Adetoyese is a graduate student in the Department of Comparative Literature, the University of Texas at Austin, USA. Her latest research interests entail 1.) Yoruba and African literature, 2.) Afro-European/diaspora literature 3.) digital humanities. She speaks Yoruba, English, German, and French.

Amara Ali is a fourth-year PhD student in the Department of Asian Cultures and Languages. Her research focuses on Kashmiri and Urdu literature, with a particular interest in Shia and Sufi devotional literary traditions. She completed her master's degree from the University of Cambridge in Modern South Asian Studies where she worked on Urdu poets Mirza Ghalib and Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

Jordan Goheen is a second-year Ph.D. Social Anthropology student with interests in indigeneity, religion, identity, historical consciousness, and statecraft in Taiwan. His initial work explored the activist functions of the Christian Church in Taiwanese Indigenous communities but he is now increasingly interested in the Indigenous Taiwanese response to a shifting Taiwanese nationalism. Jordan's initial connection to Taiwan is through his mother, a first-generation immigrant to the United States. With that, he also has a personal interest in mixed-race and diasporic experiences. Outside of academia, he dabbles in several creative practices (mostly poetry, documentary film, and design), has a deep spiritual practice, and loves basketball.

Hanne Janssens is a postdoctoral researcher with specialism in ecocriticism and contemporary German-language literature. She is currently affiliated with both the University of Texas at Austin and Trinity University in San Antonio. In March 2024, Janssens successfully completed her doctoral studies at Ghent University. In her dissertation, she examined Germanophone literary narrative texts about nature and ecology from an ecopoetic perspective. The text-oriented approach focuses on the influence of literary imagination on ecological sensitivity, with particular attention paid to the study of formal complexity and the role of waste, disharmony and loss in literary imaginary worlds.

Jittawat Kunyamoorn, or Pao, is a PhD student in Iberian and Latin American Languages and Cultures at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, The University of Texas at Austin. After his Bachelor's degree in Spanish and Linguistics from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, he received the Queen Sirikit Scholarship to pursue his graduate studies in Latin American languages, literatures, and cultures. His interests involve transpacific studies (connections between Southeast Asia and Latin America), language politics in (post)colonial world, literary geography-cartography, comparative contemporary urban literature, and translation studies and theory.

T Lim (she/her) is a graduate student in women's and gender studies and information studies. Her interests are in time as a mode of queer and crip subjectivity. Investigation of queer-crip temporalities as contingent upon experiences of migration, race, and medicine inform her understanding of time. Lately, she investigates how the materiality of tarot enacts attunements to non-linear temporalities. T has experience working in memory repositories, with experience in theological, academic, public, federal, and corporate libraries and archives. Currently she is a GRA at the Harry Ransom Center.

Sisi Liu is a third-year PhD student in the program of Comparative Literature. She works on the long 19th-century Anglophone and Francophone literature, Film studies, critical theories, novel theories, and narratology. She currently focuses on the intellectual history and the politics of realism.

Chapman Matis is a 2nd year in the English PhD program. His research interests cluster around literary theory, psychoanalysis, and representations of finance, commerce, and markets. Prior to pursuing a PhD, Chapman worked in capital markets for banks and financial institutions in New Orleans and New York City.

Pouya Nekouei is a PhD student in Middle Eastern history at the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas, Austin. He works on the social and cultural history of Iran and the global and connected histories of the Middle East and South Asia. His writings have appeared in several Persian and English peer-reviewed journals. His forthcoming work on gender and cultural history of music is under press with the Journal of Iranian Studies. He is also a musician of Iranian classical music.

Steven Jeng-Ying Nien is current PhD student in Comparative Literature at UT Austin. His research focuses on homelessness and poverty. As a comparatist, he seeks to examine such issues in literary representations, intervening and complementing with an interdisciplinary endeavor in economy, sociology, anthropology, and urban planning.

Alex (Oleksiy) Ostaltsev, a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin (Comparative Literature). Currently he is working on his dissertation dedicated to rhetorical structure of a literary character in European Literature of different periods. MA in British and American Literature (Florida Atlantic University, 2020). BS in Russian language and Literature (Ukraine, 2000). He is the author of two books of fiction.

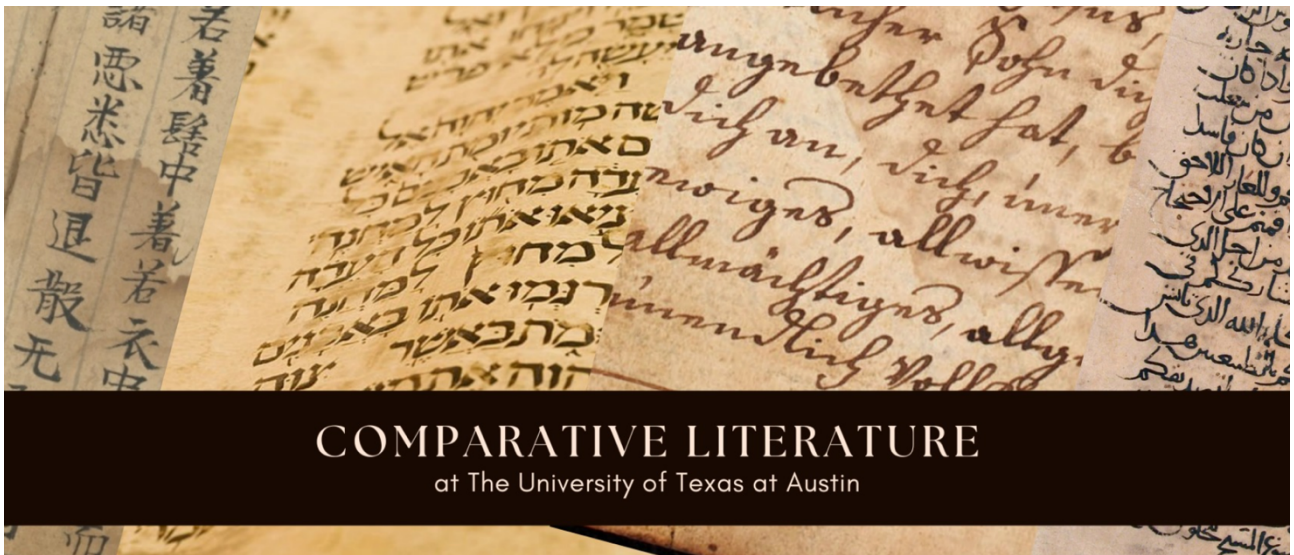
Jack Riordan is a 2nd year PhD student in the Spanish & Portuguese department at the University of Texas at Austin. Jack's areas of focus are Cuban studies and Cuban cinema. More recently he has worked concerning independent filmmaking in Cuba with recent restrictive legislation. He recently published the article: *Intergenerational Conflict in Contemporary Cuba: Rivalry within Las Congas Santiagueras*.

Kirill Veselkin is a first-year PhD student in Comparative Literature from Moscow, Russia. He holds both a BA and an MA in Journalism from Lomonosov Moscow State University, where he wrote his thesis on David Foster Wallace's novel *Infinite Jest* and its reception in American literary criticism. In 2023, he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to further his research at the Harry Ransom Center archives, where he examined materials from David Foster Wallace's typescripts and presented his findings at the 2024 International David Foster Wallace Conference.

Gwendolyn Walker (she/her) is a 3rd year PhD student in Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. She earned a BA in International Studies and Russian Studies and an MA in Comparative Literature from the University of South Carolina. Her interests primarily involve theory, particularly critical theory, psychoanalysis and poststructuralism., and pedagogy.



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