

**DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**  
Senior Honors Thesis Presentations – May 5, 2022

**Nara Benoit Kornhauser**, “A Re-Education in Reading using Nabokov’s *Lolita*”

This thesis is about the physical act of reading. Many take literacy for granted, but reactions to books have dictated countless violences, wars, and tenth-grade English classroom rivalries. In truth, this is the result of the latter. Misunderstanding *Lolita* is easy. This project sought a way to advocate for the novel, without aligning itself to Humbert’s cause, with the help of Maurice Blanchot and Roland Barthes’s analyses of what reading fundamentally is. | Faculty readers: Stephen Foley, Michal Oklot

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**Ben Connor**, “A Translation of Vidal & Salvia’s *Les Aventures de Tom Sawyer*”

A complete translation of Julien Salvia and Ludovic-Alexandre Vidal’s 2017 musical comedy adaptation of Mark Twain’s 1876 novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. It includes a critical introduction that examines the technique of dynamic translation, the unique challenges of translating into dialect and working directly with the original authors, as well as a summary of the translation methodology. | Faculty readers: Ourida Mostefai, Curt Columbus

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**Daviana Pérez**, “Fluidity and Nomadic Subjects: The Maternal Legacy of Julia de Burgos in the Poetry of Sandra María Esteves and Luz María Umpierre”

This thesis explores the maternal legacy of Puerto Rican poet Julia de Burgos, namely through her articulation of the nomadic subject. This fluid consciousness embarks on a temporal and spatial journey in her verse, searching for a place to settle beyond the colonial limitations of the poet’s respective cultural cartography. While de Burgos’ nomadic subject has been symbolically “gifted” to countless future Puerto Rican writers, my analysis focuses on its representation in Sandra María Esteves’s “puerto rican discovery number 43, a julia y a mí” and Luz María Umpierre’s *The Margarita Poems*. | Faculty readers: Esther Whitfield, Andrew Colarusso

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**Nell Salzman**, “Literatures of Immigration: The Ethicality of Depicting Migrant Stories”

This thesis focuses on the tensions between fact and fiction—reportage, memoir and creative writing. It provides broad context and reconceptualizes the way that migrant narratives can be read and written. Through close-reading, interviews with journalists and authors, and transcribed conversations with migrants/refugees, it demonstrates the importance of storytelling at the border and anticipates more compassionate ways of telling stories. It weaves critical analysis of form with personal reporting and reflection. Ultimately, it reflects on what literary writing can learn from

journalism. It invites readers to question what might make journalism about immigration more readable and honest. | Faculty readers: Esther Whitfield, Ralph Rodriguez

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**Penina Satlow**, “Days Recounted”

This thesis is a translation of seven out of twelve stories from the previously-untranslated collection *Days Recounted* by Emily Nasrallah, originally published in Arabic in Beirut in 1997. Nasrallah is one of the “Beirut Decenterists,” a phrase coined by Miriam Cooke to refer to the Lebanese women authors who wrote of their experiences living through the civil war in Beirut. She received the Goethe Medal from the German government and Lebanon’s Cedar Medal of Honor in honor of her contributions to Arabic and world literature. This particular collection is intended for a young-adult audience, and engages with themes of memory, retelling, healing, and coming of age. | Faculty readers: Elias Muhanna, Sawako Nakayasu

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**Michael Wang**, “Life is But a Dream: Cross-Cultural Conceptions of Dreaming and Maturity in Late 18th-Century Literature through Cao Xueqin’s 红楼梦, Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Christabel*, and Denis Diderot’s *Le Rêve de d’Alembert*”

This thesis presents three texts written in the latter half of the 18th century: *The Story of the Stone*, *Christabel*, and *Le Rêve de d’Alembert*. Through the lens of dreams in these three texts, this thesis focuses on the ways in which these texts treat the idea of sex dreams and the role they play in helping characters achieve maturity, both sexual and otherwise. What is it about dreams that render them a powerful mechanism to help these characters come to new realizations and mature? How can these dreams help illuminate what it really means to mature? | Faculty readers: Dore J. Levy, Jacques Khalip

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**Amelia Anahid Wyckoff**, “Geryon Variations and Queenplay: Recrafting the Fragmented Poetry of Stesichorus’ *Geryoneis* and *Thebais*”

This thesis aims to translate the fragmented works of genre-bending poet Stesichorus. I emphasize the distance between words and lines created by the ripped papyri, as well as the distance between the original text and the modern reader. It uses affect theory to craft methods of translating sound and compound epithets, and argues for using original writing to reframe works as a translation method. “Geryon Variations” translates Stesichorus’ *Geryoneis*, a story about a three-bodied monster who is killed by Herakles. *Thebais/Queenplay* is a play which translates *Thebais*, a lesser-known telling of the Theban myth about Oedipus and his family. | Faculty readers: Pura Nieto Hernandez, Kenneth Haynes