

2019-2020

## Katharina von Hammerstein named Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor

Professor Katharina von Hammerstein has been named Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor. This title is the highest distinction that the University bestows on faculty who have demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, and service. The department is very excited that this very prestigious honor has been awarded to a faculty member in LCL for a second time in the only the past three years.



*Katharina von Hammerstein*

Professor von Hammerstein is an internationally recognized scholar in the field of Germanic Studies. She has authored two book-length monographs and over 70 articles and

chapters in academic journals and books, as well as 10 edited volumes including literary editions, collective books, and special journal issues. Professor von Hammerstein has been invited to speak at numerous venues, including keynote addresses at national and international conferences in the US,

France, Roumania, Germany, Italy, Namibia, Russia, South Africa, Spain, and the UK, with talks at world-renowned institutions such as La Sorbonne in Paris, Humboldt University in Berlin, Oxford University in the UK, and Harvard University here in the US.

Professor von Hammerstein's scholarship has focused on a number of areas within the general field of modern Germanic Studies. Her work can be divided in four distinct, albeit interconnected, areas of scholarship: her early work in the field of Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC), her seminal work on German Romanticism and particularly her discovery and critical edition

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## Head's Note of Farewell



Dear LCL  
Community,

It is with mixed feelings that I write this note of farewell for our department newsletter, partly

due to my personal reckoning as I prepare to step down from this role, but mostly because of the general unforeseen circumstances the COVID-19 pandemic has so abruptly brought about in the last couple of months. The world seems to have turned upside down in a matter of days and without warning. And yet, despite any and all difficulties, we have so many reasons to be proud of our accomplishments and to look forward to the future, filled in equal measure with uncertainty and opportunity.

Serving the department over the last five years has been a profoundly enriching and transformational experience. I have learned and grown immensely, both in the practical institutional matters that are needed for the job, and in the intangible, unexpected, enduring lessons learned while working and interacting with all of you on a daily basis. Your collective talent, wisdom, creativity, and commitment are the true engine that moves us forward, and they have never ceased to amaze and enlighten me.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication, and for the opportunity to serve and spend a bit of time at the helm of this incredible department! With best wishes for a swift return to normalcy and for a fun-filled summer,

—Gustavo Nanclares

## LCL Grads on the Pitch



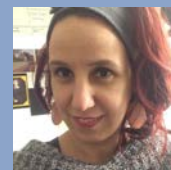
LCL graduate students teamed up this year to kick a ball around the pitch and play some fútbol (also known as soccer). Men's and coed teams competed in UConn's intramural league. They won nothing other than joyful moments, some good memories, and some bad cramps.



**"Not so Quiet"**  
*The Quiet Corner*  
Interdisciplinary Journal,  
Five Years Since



**'People on the 2nd Floor' becomes 'People at Home'**  
Academics stay connected  
in digital environments



**The Verses of *Las tierras rojas***  
Eilyn Lombard publishes  
her new poetry collection

## Greetings from the New Head of LCL

It is a great pleasure and honor to represent LCL within the UConn community. I have loved serving as Associate Head and I am passionate about our mission and



Jennifer Terni

about the people of LCL whose talents, dedication, and knowledge animate that mission every day.

When I was named incoming Head in February, none of us could imagine the conditions in which we now find ourselves living. We are clearly in the process of moving into a different world. In February, LCL's outlook for the next five years filled me with optimism, and despite everything, I find that I am still optimistic about it. Not because I don't think we will have to adapt to significant changes in the ways we do things and perhaps even in some of the roles we play, but because we will do this as we always have, by talking, learning, and working together.

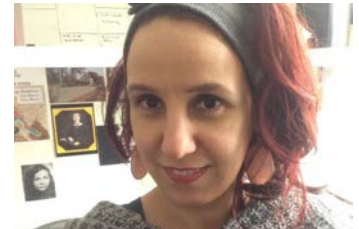
I have learned so much in the past few years and know I will learn even more in the years that come. My job is to hear you and support your needs and get behind new initiatives even in this climate. It will also mean doing all I can to champion and protect our mission: to foster knowledge of, and engagement with, languages, cultures, literatures, and *peoples* from around the world at a time when the connections between us are being seriously disrupted.

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## Eilyn Lombard and the Verses of *Las tierras rojas*

Eilyn Lombard has been at UConn since the Fall of 2017 and is pursuing a PhD in Spanish in LCL. Before she came to UConn, she was a well-established poet and editor. She has published several collections of poems including *Suelen ser frágiles las muchachas sobre el puente* (Reina del Mar Editores, 2005) and *Todas las diosas fatigadas* (Ediciones La Luz, 2012). Other poems and writings have appeared in journals and anthologies such as *Papeles de la Mancuspia* and *El libro verde*.

In 2019, Lombard published *Las tierras rojas*, a collection of poems about the “problematic or impossible project of finding a home.” *Las tierras rojas* was conceived as a journal about living at her aunt's home in Colón, Cuba. Her cousin, who was residing the U.S., had begun a process to bring her mother to live with her in the US. Until 2007, Cuban law decreed that if a person left the



Eilyn Lombard

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## Translating Perrin Langda with Pauline Levy-Valensi

PERRIN LANGDA  
A FEW MICROSECONDS ON EARTH



Translated by Pauline Levy-Valensi

Pauline Levy-Valensi, a PhD candidate in the French section of UConn LCL, published her first book-length translation *A Few Microseconds on Earth* by French poet Perrin Langda in World Poetry Books. Pauline was interested in translation before she ever arrived at UConn. Her Master's thesis in Comparative Literature at Université de Paris III was on English translations of Maupassant's short stories. At UConn her interest in translation blossomed and became much more hands-on. While taking Peter

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## Coffee Hours: Breaking Through to Other Cultures

O Coffee: the fuel of the mind. In the *Catcher in the Rye*, J.D. Salinger writes, “that’s something that annoys the hell out of me—I mean if somebody says the coffee’s all ready and it isn’t.” The legendary David Lynch argued that “even bad coffee is better than no coffee at all.” In a cup, in a mug, or in a tiny porcelain demitasse, coffee is that pure nectar that feeds creativity and helps us work. On the second floor of Oak Hall, in LCL, we always had a pot of coffee on the stove.

LCL's coffee hours were some of the most popular events in the department. On the one hand, coffee hours are occasions for faculty, graduate students and especially undergraduates from the different sections' language and literature courses to gather informally to meet and relax. Yet, the coffee hour is also a way for members of different culture and language groups to share how coffee breaks are organized in their parts of the world. For instance, the French section prepares crepes to snack on with coffee and even organized an event where students had the chance to bake their own *croissants*.



Glorimarie Peña Alicea, Sandra Ruiz Lopez,  
Carmen Quintero, Yasmine Essafi, Sinéad Murray



Floyd Beaufort

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## Kevin Smatko, Major in French, Has a Word About Toulouse Program

“My experience in France was one that I don’t think I could ever properly put into words. The time I spent there with the program felt like I was truly a student in the world. Every day I would learn the language in the classroom and was free to learn the culture. Not just the history, but the present and the future. It felt as if I was discovering a new world that I never knew existed. After a week, it felt to me as if Toulouse had welcomed me as a brand-new member, eager to show everything that it has to offer. But with so much to take in, it was easy to feel overwhelmed at times. I’m incredibly thankful for the UConn program led by Professor DalMolin for providing incredible guidance through her advice from class, her assignments of our hosts and the incredible experience at Langue Onze, the language school in Toulouse. All the teachers at the school were passionate about teaching the language to anyone willing to learn. My time learning the language at Langue Onze was, without a doubt, the most beneficial experience I have had in my journey to learn the French language. Despite being in the most foreign environment I’ve ever been in, I felt like I was truly welcomed.

My personal favorite part of the program was the free weekend we had towards the end of the month. Professor DalMolin had earlier suggested that we visit Collioure, a small town on the Mediterranean coast of Southern France. After spending some time buying some train tickets and booking a hotel, our program was soon on its way to enjoy the warm, South France sun. Let me tell you, it did not disappoint. The city had cliffside restaurants surrounded by some of the bluest water I’ve ever seen. From the seafood to the classic French cuisine to the more international foods, all were delicious and filled with flavor. That weekend I spent in Collioure was one of the most relaxing and peaceful weekends I’ve had the pleasure of experiencing.

I also consider myself extremely lucky that I was able to become good friends with the other UConn students on the trip. Before the trip, I was worried that there might be discomfort in the group since no one knew each other, but I know now that I had no reason to worry. Everyone quickly became friends, brought together by our curiosity to explore the world we would be living in for the next month. We would explore the city together eating at restaurants, riding the subway from place to place, even going to the movies and hiking the Pyrenees. Roaming around Paris and Toulouse with my classmates felt like an experience I never could have even imagined before.

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## Not So Quiet: *The Quiet Interdisciplinary Journal,* Five Years Since



Michael Pffremmer, Vialcary Crisóstomo, Charles Lebel, Simone Puleo, Eilyn Lombard

Launched in 2015 by graduate students in Literatures, Cultures, and Languages, *The Quiet Corner Interdisciplinary Journal* (TQC) is an open-access research forum in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Archived by UConn's Open Commons, the journal publishes creative writing, scholarly articles, interviews and questionnaires. In keeping with its interdisciplinary focus, the journal invites contributions on a wide range of questions, topics, and themes, and encourages submissions in any language. The diverse graduate student body in the department of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages has meant that journal has been able to enlist editors and reviewers who are multilingual. Since its launch, the journal has published three issues and has garnered thousands of downloads from across the globe. TQC was founded by graduate students Carlos Gardezabal Bravo, Charles Lebel, and Bill Stark. Soon after, Arnab Dutta Roy and Simone Maria Puleo joined the editorial team. Today, the editorial board consists of five members: Lebel and Puleo, Vialcary Crisóstomo, Eilyn Lombard Cabrera, and Michael Pffremmer—all advanced PhD students in the department.

Beyond the publication of creative writing and peer-reviewed articles, the journal offers graduates invaluable insights into the processes of scholarly publishing. TQC allows graduate students to gain experience at different stages of the publishing process: as editors, as reviewers, and as authors. Graduate editors learn to manage submissions, identify appropriate reviewers, draft .cfps, and recruit authors. To this end, the journal has developed a master list of reviewers, which includes both professional scholars and graduate students.

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# 'People on the Second Floor' becomes 'People at Home'



*Ana María Díaz-Marcos*



*Kaidi Chen*



*Eun-Ju Shin*

This year, the Social Media team launched an Instagram for the LCL department (@uconnlcl). In addition to producing spotlights, graduate profiles and event coverage, the team tried to think of an interesting way to promote its people, its students, and also the joy of reading. Inspired by “Humans of New York,” a photoblog featuring New Yorkers, started on Facebook in 2010 by photographer Brandon Stanton, we created “People on the 2nd Floor.” People on the 2nd Floor is a series about the community that exists on the 2nd floor of Oak Hall, where our department is housed. Following the same concept (a picture and a caption), we collected small spotlights of people sharing their interests and their favorite books (some examples are pictured on the page opposite). Regrettably, the semester was shortened, which led us to pick up on a new trend: “People at Home.” The concept stayed the same, people sharing their passions for language or literature. Not in the hallway this time, but from home with a smile and a nice book in their hands.



## People on the 2nd Floor



*Thomas Meireles*



*Gregory Manz*



*Colleen Carroll*



*Wei Wan*



*Xingya Zhao and Jiawen Jiang*



*Shuotain Chen*

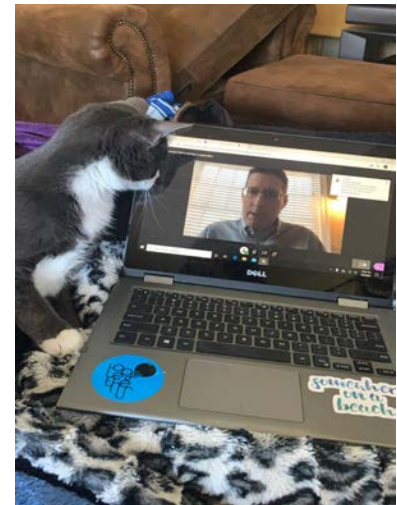
## People at Home



*Estelle Hughes with brothers*



*Ana Rodriguez Gallego*

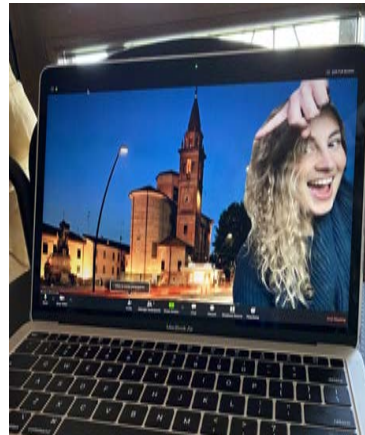


*Avinoam Patt*





*Maha Darawsha*



*Monica Martinelli*



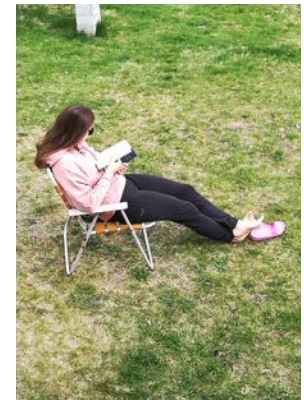
*Fiona Somerset*



*Nan Meng*



*Ruwa Majid-Pokorny*



*Verena Aschbacher*

### At Home Graduate Awards Ceremony



## Cinema Gender



On March 4, Ana María Díaz-Marcos, Professor of Spanish Studies, organized the one-day Colloquium CinemAGender on representations of aging and sexuality in Spanish-language film. The event created a forum for interaction, learning, and the sharing of ideas with the goal of promoting interdisciplinary debate and research. It featured D. Raquel Medina, Senior Lecturer and Head of Spanish Studies at Aston College (UK) and Dr. Barbara Zecchi Director of Film Studies and Professor of Spanish at the University of Massachusetts who presented their outline for the CinemAGender project in their talk on “How Hispanic Cinemas visualize Sexuality and Memory in old Age.” The exploration of the cultural aspects of aging and gender as represented in film drew scholars and graduate students not only from the humanities in LCL, WGSS and El Instituto, but also clinical staff and faculty from UConn Health who work on topics related to aging. The event was livestreamed to Farmington Campus. The symposium kicked off with a meet-and-greet luncheon for graduate students and faculty that offered a social opportunity for a diverse group of scholars who work on adjacent projects to meet with each other and with the event speakers informally. The film and talk part of the event attracted a capacity crowd to the auditorium in Austin 101 with over a hundred participants at Storrs, including large contingents of undergraduate students from Spanish, El Instituto and WGSS, plus faculty and students from UConn Farmington. The quality of the exchanges and presentation and the importance of the topic, underscored by the large attendance, made it one of the highlights of the Spring semester. The Symposium was generously sponsored by LCL, The Humanities Institute, WGSS, El Instituto and the UConn Center on Aging.



*Graduate students during trip to Vermont*

## World Poetry Book Anniversary

On Thursday, February 6th, UConn’s Humanities Institute celebrated its new collaboration with World Poetry Books (WPB), the country’s first independent publisher dedicated exclusively to the publication of poetry in translation. The publishing house was established by Peter Constantine, Professor of Translation Studies in the Literatures, Cultures and Languages Department at UConn, and founder and director of the UConn Translation Program. As part of their partnership, World Poetry Books has relocated its offices from LCL to the UConn Humanities Institute.

The partnership between the Humanities Institute and World Poetry Books signals a shared commitment to broaden the readership for poetry in translation. Although poetry currently makes up less than 0.5% of all books published in the United States, the National Endowment for the Arts has been tracking a substantial uptick of interest in poetry among young audiences (defined as people between 18 and 24 years old). World Poetry Books brings poetry from across the world to new audiences in translation, celebrating both the text and its relationship to the reader. Literary translation thus represents an important way to enrich our bookshelves and thus to enlarge the literary canon. During a reception commemorating the press’s relocation, UCHI Director Michael Lynch argued that World Poetry Books strives to discover, translate, and promote a “canon beyond the canon” of exceptional works of poetry across languages. Moreover, it foregrounds the task of translation by supporting translators’ works.



*Carrie Slayton, Ana Rodriguez Gallego, Pauline Levy-Valensi, Carmen Yús Quintero, Peter Constantine*

The idea for the literary press emerged when Peter Constantine first came to UConn as an external fellow at the UCHI in 2015-2016. Constantine has translated works from a wide variety of languages, including Russian, French, Modern and Ancient Greek among others. He has been the recipient of numerous literary awards, such as the PEN Translation Prize for his *Six Early Stories* (1997) by Thomas Mann, and the National Translation Award for *The Undiscovered Chekhov* (1998). During his first year at UConn, Constantine and Lynch began to discuss the prospect of launching a Program in Translation along with a literary press and a magazine focused on literary translation. In the Fall of 2016, Constantine, Lynch, and Gustavo Nanclares, the Department Head of LCL, inaugurated the Program in Literary Translation.

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## Kevin Smatko, Major in French, Has a Word About Toulouse Program (continued)



I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity I was given to be able to study in France and I often miss the day-to-day culture from asking the baker for my morning chocolate croissant, to enjoying a coffee at lunchtime in the sun, to my quest to find the best chocolate in Toulouse. If anyone is on the fence about studying in Toulouse, I would strongly urge you to go. It is truly an incredible experience that you have to be a part of to understand. My only regret from the trip is eating the bread, since now I can't enjoy bread unless it's from a French Bakery."



*Xiaoqiao Xu*

## Setting the Stage with Xiaoqiao Xu

In 2015, Xiaoqiao Xu earned a BA in English Language and Literature at Sichuan University in Chengdu, China. She had originally intended to become a translator and interpreter, but a professor who taught foreign language and culture, Dr. Yungang Liao, inspired a love

of literature in her that she has nourished ever since. During her BA, she became keenly interested in early modern English literature. Her introduction to Shakespeare and Marlow, a standard part of the curriculum for any early modern English literature program, grew into a passion for drama in general that, in turn, led her to University College London (UCL) where she pursued an MA in Early Modern Studies.

Her experience in London was extraordinary; there were delights but also a fair share of challenges. The coursework was extremely difficult, and she found that her undergraduate education "had not quite prepared me for the rigor of the program." Faced with the high expectations of studying early modern English literature in a native language setting, she felt she "lost the privilege of being a student." Nevertheless, she persisted. London in the meantime offered some consolations, especially its theater scene. During her time in the Old Smoke, Xu regularly attended plays. The Rose Theatre Kingston was among her favorite theaters. Graduating from UCL, she ultimately decided to pursue a PhD.

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## Greetings (continued)

Our department has a tremendous advantage going forward: a track-record of collaboration, generosity, mutual respect, ingenious problem solving, and joy even during difficult times. We will get through this together because we must and because we have always understood that in this way lies strength and creativity. I have no doubt that we will continue to pull rabbits out of the hat in the years to come for all of these reasons.

I invite you all to knock on my virtual door—and on each others' doors—with any suggestions you think might help. More heads make for a better table of ideas, doubled by the solidarity of the gesture. In the meantime, I encourage us all to stay in close communications with our partners in Connecticut and abroad as we continue to serve the UConn community.

*Jennifer Terni*

## The Quiet Corner (continued)

Submissions to the journal, which have come both from scholars and graduate students, go through a double-blind peer review, and whether the submissions are published or not, the authors receive anonymous feedback on their work from either a scholar or an advanced graduate student in their field. Mostly recently, the editorial team has been thinking about how to integrate advanced undergraduate research into the project

—encouraging ambitious undergraduates to submit and potentially planning an undergraduate feature issue. TQC aims to bridge the gap between the world of publishing and the world of the university department, finding ways to acquaint graduate students with the mechanics of scholarly publishing before they enter their respective fields. Vialcary Crisóstomo underscores this, noting that "as an editor, I have had the opportunity to develop manuscripts into peer-reviewed academic articles that are read and cited by scholars and graduate students around the world." TQC is thus an incredible professionalization tool.



*Incoming graduate assistants talk shop with Philip Balma and Valérie Saugera at orientation.*

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## World Poetry Book Anniversary (continued)



*Brian Sneed, Peter Constantine, UCHI Director, Michael Lynch, and UConn President, Tom Katsouleas*

It has been a fantastic success and is now considered among the foremost literary translation programs in its field. World Literature Today recently described it as “among the finest

translation programs in the world.”

World Poetry Books and its companion magazine New Poetry in Translation (<http://newpoetryintranslation.com>) have been extremely successful. Book production is overseen by Brian Sneed who is the Managing and Senior Editor of the press as well as the Program Coordinator of the Program in Literary Translation.

By housing World Poetry Books, the University of Connecticut joins other universities with prestigious literary presses. In recent months, World Poetry Books has been proud to feature translations by established poets working in English of other important poets from other languages. One of the press’s missions is to spotlight new and brilliant professional poets as well as young and gifted translators. It has become an extraordinary platform from which UConn undergraduate and graduate students can shine by publishing some their own translations. Some of these have gone on to win their own awards, including Jeanne Bonner and Brian Sneedon who won PEN awards in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

## Katharina von Hammerstein (continued)

of the Nineteenth-Century German female writer Sophie Mereau-Brentano, her pioneering work on colonial and postcolonial German-speaking Africa, and her scholarship on Human Rights and textual and artistic representations of war. The diversity of her research is marked, however, by some common threads: it is innovative in nature; it is international in focus; and it is interdisciplinary in its methodology.

In addition to her remarkable accomplishments as a scholar, Professor von Hammerstein is a generous colleague who selflessly dedicates her time and expertise to the department, the university, and the community at large. The wisdom, positive energy, and inclusiveness that she brings to her service are the trademark of an engaged and dedicated colleague who tackles any manner of adverse or difficult circumstances with smart ideas, practical solutions, and a positive and optimistic attitude. Professor von Hammerstein is incredibly generous with her time and talent and not only does she not shy away from service work, she has always been, and continues to be, a steadfast proponent of the idea that it is critical that all members of the university community should be involved at every level of the administration and decision-making processes of the institution.

For this reason, she has served several multi-

year terms as section Chair and/or Director of Graduate Studies for the German program since the late 1990s. Likewise her tenure on the PTR Committee for LCL. She also served as Interim Department Head when David Herzberger went on sabbatical because she was recognized by her peers as a generous, level-headed, and consensus-building colleague. One of Professor von Hammerstein’s especially notable contributions both to LCL and to the university at large was her role as a co-founder and director of the innovative and highly acclaimed Linkage Through Language program.

Beyond her very significant contributions to LCL, professor von Hammerstein has held an impressive number of senior appointments across the university. She has served on the International Executive Council’s Subcommittee on International Undergraduate Education among many other contributions to her vision that students should learn by engagement to make contact with perspectives and experiences different from their own.

Professor von Hammerstein is a natural-born teacher with a genuine desire to share her knowledge and interests with her students and anyone who wants to engage in the adventure of learning. Indeed, her approach to teaching crystallizes the qualities that also distinguish her contributions to research and service, to wit, the importance of teaching as a communal enterprise and the value of the opinion, individuality, and

dignity of each student in that enterprise. Thus, even in her large lecture classes, she insists on calling each of her students by name and builds her classes so that she is constantly soliciting the students to create their own learning experiences. In the process of empowering and recognizing the voice of each one of her students, Professor von Hammerstein transforms her classes into laboratories for incubating multiple perspectives, and, just as importantly, for how to respectfully manage this multiplicity.

Professor von Hammerstein’s impact has been just as substantial at the graduate level. She has taught, mentored, guided and supported in all ways imaginable the academic progress of close to 100 graduate students, both at the MA and PhD levels. Her work as graduate advisor of the German MA and PhD programs is legendary. She runs her classes so that students engage in their own research early, an approach that has led to a slew of graduate student publications. She is also the coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Human Rights for CLAS. In this capacity she also advises, guides, and mentors graduate students interested in pursuing the Certificate. In modeling these forms of engagement, Katharina invites her students to look beyond “the rim of their plates” as she describes it, to recognize the worlds of others made up of often very different experiences, understandings, and expectations. As a result, Katharina is one of the most beloved teachers of the German program and of LCL.

### Coffee Hours (continued)

The Italian section has brought an espresso machine to their events. They drink the strong, short, little coffee while eating Italian cookies and pastries—one graduate student usually brings her tiramisu, the decadent coffee-flavored dessert. The Spanish section hosts a weekly, one-hour gathering with food, songs and dance alongside other activities connected to Spanish and Latinx culture—and typically the evening's dancing is fueled by coffee.

The Chinese section centered their coffee break on coffee's next-of-kin, the caffeine-infused relative we also know and love: tea. Students enjoyed Chinese tea while doing calligraphy or making paper lanterns. The German section takes a coffee break with German snacks and treats, and they even have a specialized term, "Kaffeestunde," or "the Hour of Coffee," which has become a popular term in German departments across the country. For the future, there are plans within the department's Arabic section to have a coffee hour with Arabic coffee (typically spiced with cardamom) and sweet baklava.

Coffee and tea are not simply a delicious beverages, the rituals and snacks surrounding their preparation and consumption point to different ways of thinking about the pauses in life, (suggestion: the moments every day that help make life worth living). These variations on a similar ritual remind us that our need to pause, come together, and re-energize is almost universal.



Students gather for the Tea and Calligraphy Hour



Rosa Helena Chinchilla

### Eilyn Lombard and *Las tierras rojas* (continued)

country, his or her property would be seized, unless members of the immediate family were still living on the property. Lombard's aunt "invited her to live, or rather pretend to live with her," so that the property could stay within the family. The Cuban government did not accept that Lombard was actually living there. The property was seized and she returned to her parents' house. *Las tierras rojas* is a reflection on that crisis and is dedicated to both the "beautiful people" she met and those that made her feel "unhappy, alone, disappointed" during that time.

The poems tell the story of the search for a home. At the time, Lombard "felt isolated and unprotected, without a place." The redness of *Las tierras rojas* was a reference to the color of the land, yet Lombard smiles at the association of red with communism, especially in the U.S. "Languages is more powerful than reality," Lombard says, "I didn't know it when I wrote it, but the book is also about a country that is not my home anymore." As time passed, those associations began to be grafted into new situations like relocating to the U.S. and living apart from her family and her daughters. Upon reflection, she sees that poem "21" was

about the moment in which she wrote it, but when she reads it now, she believes "that it's about what I don't have living here." Lombard's daughters currently reside in Cuba and the family is working through the long and exhausting process of reunification.

The book's publication in Cuba was interrupted several times. Living in the U.S. has further complicated its appearance in print. "I did not feel that they were delighted to publish the book with me living in the U.S.," commented Lombard. "They did not wait for me to [return to] Cuba for the release of the book, and they did not acknowledge publicly that I [was] living in the U.S. [Instead], they invited my family that resides in Cuba." Lombard does not dismiss the challenges facing Cuban writers, editors, and publishers, but acknowledges that the tensions that exist between her native land and her current place of residence have worked their way into the publishing process for *Las tierras rojas*. Being both poet and editor has thus created "wounds that are still fresh" in the words of Lombard.

Lombard's next collection, *Bienvenido a Facebook*, is centered around her discovery of Facebook as a "sort of land." The book contains many poems she had originally published on Facebook as well as reactions from her friends on the platform. *Bienvenido a Facebook* is forthcoming from Letras Cubanas.

### Setting the Stage with Xiaoqiao Xu (continued)

Xiaoqiao Xu has been working on her PhD in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Connecticut since the Fall of 2017. She was attracted to UConn by Dr. Liansu Meng, a professor of Modern and Contemporary Chinese literature, who approaches literature from a transnational perspective as well as through the lens of gender politics. Xu's dissertation focuses on Chinese women's drama of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), China's final imperial dynasty, with an emphasis on playwrights such as Wang Yun and Liu Qingyun, or "Guxiang."

Her research explores how these playwrights subtly carve a space for expanding the female gaze, even though the women characters often find themselves "restricted to their boudoirs." Xu hopes to show how women during the Qing Dynasty sought to work out their own conceptions of freedom and belonging. She appreciates the quiet of Storrs, Connecticut very much compared with the hustle-and-bustle of New York City or London. To Xu, these megapolises are too expensive and fast-paced. Xu prefers watercolor painting, jogging by Mirror Lake at sunset, and listening to Rachmaninoff.



### The Quiet Corner (continued)

Despite its undeniable benefits, TQC presents some big challenges. Graduate student turnover creates a situation in which new editors have to be recruited and trained before the existing editors graduate. Fortunately, the journal has attracted incoming graduate students over the years, but editors have had the added burden of recruiting successors willing to take on the workload with no financial compensation and keep the project alive. The other big challenge is attracting high-quality submissions on a consistent basis. As a young journal with an interdisciplinary focus and open-access digital format, submissions seem to ebb and flow—at times, they have steadily trickle, while, at others, there has been complete radio silence. The editorial team has experimented with different solutions to that problem. This year, *The Quiet Corner Interdisciplinary Journal* is partnering with LANGSA, the Languages Graduate Student Association in their annual conference. Presenters at the conference are encouraged to submit their essays for publication. Moreover, editors have invited submissions from graduates among their ranks and look to feature articles written within the walls of the department. These challenges, as daunting as they can be, have offered important lessons to the journal's editorial team. The editors recognize that they will inevitably face similar challenges elsewhere in the world of scholarly publishing.



Reflecting on his work with TQC, Charles Lebel writes, “When we got started we were the first graduate-run, digital-born, open-access publication at UConn, and that has got to mean something.” *The Quiet Corner Interdisciplinary Journal* is still the only project of its kind at the University of Connecticut—and one of two journals archived in OpenCommons@UConn. In the relatively short time since its launch, TQC has publishing articles featuring well-established scholars, translators, and authors such as Esther Allen, Mary Ann Caws, Peter Constantine, Edith Grossman, Nancy Kline, Amara Lakhous, Damion Searls, Karen Van Dyck, Alyson Waters, among others. In an academy where credible scholarship is often paywalled and available only to subscribers, *The Quiet Corner Interdisciplinary Journal*, though peer-reviewed and archived in Open Common @UConn, is available to all. Despite its obstacles, TQC looks forward to continued growth at the University of Connecticut and in the broader academy.

Because it does not have formal funding, the projects relies solely on the efforts of its graduate editors, who must manage teaching responsibilities, their own research, and their personal lives alongside the journal. Occasionally, TQC's editorial work cannot be a priority and therefore publication times can be drawn out. The worry is that long periods of inactivity can harm the journal's reputation.

### Translating Langda with Pauline Levy-Valensi (continued)

Constantine's now celebrated translation seminar, she actually started doing literary translations of her own. She discovered a vibrant new side to her interest and soon she had begun to publish her translations of Langda's poems in *World Literature Today* and *New Poetry in Translation*. The success of this early collaboration led to the book project and the publication of *A Few Microseconds on Earth* this past December.

Langda's poetry presents the reader with a unexpected and comically cynical visions of everyday life scored by remarks on topics like man's effect on the environment, the problems caused by technology or an unsustainable food industry: “little plastic fish / dash along the chains / of breaded filets.” His tone is often bitter and melancholic as it confronts a world out of control, and yet there is an underlying playfulness to his work that brightens otherwise sardonic observations. He has an ability to link the absence of punctuation to a rhythm that is specific to each poem, alternating impressions of transience, whimsicality, speed, heaviness, regret, and confusion. Although the absence of punctuation presents a challenge to the reader and, by extension, to the translator, it focuses the mind on the impact of the words and the freight of their flow and sound. At first glance Langda's poetry might seem enigmatic, sparse, and even alien, but it is in fact very grounded. The combination of humor and concerned engagement with this of the world brings a new and vital perspective to contemporary poetry. Pauline received a Pushcart nomination in 2017 and was shortlisted for the Käpylä Translation Prize in 2018 and 2019 for her translations of Langda's work. *A Few Microseconds on Earth* also received a Pushcart nomination last year.



*The Social Media Team: Simone Puleo, Prof. Jennifer Terni, and Lodi Marasescu, during one of their weekly meetings.*



## Numbers at a glance

Did you know that in LCL there are...

**314** majors

**289** minors

**142** dual degree students

**436** courses taught

**16** MAs who are also TAs

**39** PhD students who are also TAs

**12** MA/Ph.D. students who are active but not teaching

**55** students abroad in France, Spain, Italy and Germany

**51** full-time faculty members (including **33** tenured or tenure-track professors)

## LCL Alumni Contact Form

*We want to hear from you! Please e-mail the following information to Nathaniel Abbott [nathaniel.abbott@uconn.edu](mailto:nathaniel.abbott@uconn.edu) to receive departmental updates and news.*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Graduation year from UConn:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Past program in LCL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current profession (optional):** \_\_\_\_\_

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