

Cultural Studies in Literary Interzones

Professor Peter Morgan, Director of the European Studies Program

Cultural Studies in Literary Interzones is a joint doctorate platform funded by the European Union's Erasmus Mundus program. The Interzones project prepares doctoral students for academic research careers in the sphere of global cultural phenomena.

The Ph.D. program takes place over three years, with each cohort beginning the first semester at the University of Bergamo, Italy. After that, students' trajectories vary according to the mobility track set out for each. The subject areas covered by the Doctorate include comparative literature, cultural anthropology and visual culture. Interzones students must be fluent in English and French in addition to their native language(s), and complete foundation semesters at the University of Bergamo (pictured) before undertaking further studies in Germany, France, Brazil, India, the USA, Latin America, Poland, Russia or Australia. Highly competitive on account of its generous stipend, the Literary Interzones program involves a consortium of 16 universities worldwide.

As representative of Sydney University on the Interzones Board of Directors, I attended this year's administrative meeting in Bergamo and got to know the 10 students in the current round of scholarships. One of these students, Tilahun Bejital Zellelew, will come to Sydney University in 2014; currently in 2013 we have two Interzones scholarship holders, Anne Fett and Paul Anumudu.



Two views of Bergamo



Peter Morgan and Didier Girard

At the recent meeting in October, 2012, I met with Interzones General Co-ordinator, Chairman of the Academic Council and of the Board of Directors, Professor Didier Girard (pictured), Director of implementation at the University of Bergamo, Prof. Franca Franchi and Board representatives from various of the Degree-Awarding and Associate members, which include the University of Bergamo, Eberhard Karl University of Tübingen, Via Domitia University of Perpignan, Federal Fluminense University (Rio de Janeiro Brazil), Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi, India), Brown University (USA), Iberoamerican University (Mexico), New Sorbonne University (Paris), University of Barcelona, Jagiellonian University, European University of St. Petersburg and more.



Giulia Sissa and Didier Girard

Prominent UCLA Classicist, Giulia Sissa (pictured) addressed this year's commencing candidates with a series of lectures and seminars on the origins of utopian thinking in ancient Greek literature. Prof. Sissa's lecture on the critical aspects of utopian thinking in Aristophanes "Birds" and in Thomas More's Utopia was a magnificent piece of philologically informed comparative literary analysis.

In 2014, Ethiopian Interzones Doctoral student, Tilahun Bejital Zellelew will be at Sydney University completing his Ph.D. dissertation on "Narratives Beyond the Knife: Food, Space and Religious Identity in Ethiopia – food-contexts as converging and diverging zones for Muslims and



Tilahun Bejital Zellelew and Peter Morgan

Christians" I discussed his research proposal with Tilahun who explained that it is based on his own experience in the Christian and Muslim households of his family in Ethiopia and posits food contexts as cultural spaces that serve as both diverging and converging zones, serving as an identity marker for both religions in specific ways in Ethiopia and northern Africa.

Australian students may apply for Literary Interzones scholarships and are strongly encouraged to do so. Further information may be found on the official website: <http://www.mundusphd-interzones.eu/>.

Peter Morgan
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