



'The Bearer-Beings': Portable Stories in Dislocated Times

Convened by Marina Warner, Weidenfeld Professor of Comparative European Literature, 2016 and President of the British Comparative Literature Association (BCLA) and Prof. Matthew Reynolds, Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation (OCCT). This initiative is kindly supported by the Metabolic Studio.

Two Linked Translation and Creative Writing Workshops that Explore How Stories are Communicated and Transmitted in Different Cultures, Spaces, and Times.

The workshop on **13 May 2016 (3–6 pm)** will use Arabic texts to examine translation as a form of transmission. **Seminar Room 8, St Anne's College, Oxford.**

On **14 May 2016 (10 am–6 pm)**, a creative writing workshop, with the writers Philip Terry, Alice Oswald, Tamim al-Barghouti, and the storyteller Ben Haggarty, will take place. The workshop engages with stories (particularly myth and folklore) and their literary, oral, visual, or musical transmission. **Seminar Room, Radcliffe Humanities Building, Oxford.**

For more detailed information on these events, please go to: <http://www.occt.ox.ac.uk/>. Contact Dr Eleni Philippou at comparative.criticism@st-annes.ox.ac.uk by **1 May 2016** to attend either of these events.

These Oxford-based workshops feed into a 3-day workshop in Sicily in September 2016 that will engage with the expression, translation, and circulation of stories in contemporary refugee and multicultural communities.



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The spirit's speeches, the indefinite,

Confused illuminations and sonorities,
So much ourselves, we cannot tell apart
The idea and the bearer-being of the idea.

Wallace Stevens 'An Ordinary Evening in New Haven'

How did stories travel? How do they move across borders of culture and language? Myths, legends and fairy tales such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and the cycle of *The Thousand and One Nights* have travelled by other means besides the work of skilled multilingual dragomen or the direct and faithful translations of written texts. The processes involved are mysterious, but over time certain elements besides the narrative content and the semantic expression are crucial: prosody (metre, rhyme, refrains, repetition), performance (gesture, sound effects, music, song), as well as para-linguistic elements (cries, whoops, nonsense - Hey nonny no!, Tirra lirra!). This workshop will explore such processes and other vital elements in transmission in two sessions, the first focusing on Arabic (see info here), the second featuring writer/storytellers who re-create traditional material: Alice Oswald, Philip Terry, Tamim al-Barghouti and Ben Haggarty (see here for bios). They will be joined by Marina Warner and Matthew Reynolds for practical translation and storytelling workshops, at which participants will work on 'translations' of selected material (further details will be supplied nearer the time).

The day's explorations aim to build towards a programme that will support and stimulate storytelling in contemporary refugee and multicultural communities. (These themes will be further explored in 'Stories in Transit', a workshop at the Museo Internazionale delle Marionette G. Pasqualino in Palermo, Sicily, from September 26-28 2016.)

A Little About Our Writers and Storyteller:

Alice Oswald calls her book-length poem *Memorial* (2012) an 'excavation' of Homer's *Iliad*. Philip Terry's *DICTATOR* (forthcoming from Carcanet Press) revisits the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in 'Globish'. Tamim al-Barghouti, the Palestinian-Egyptian poet and political philosopher, is re-visioning the Crusader chronicles in a new epic poem. Live performance, often by heart, in the bardic or rhapsode (*rawahi*) and storyteller (*hakawati*) traditions, stands at the heart of each of these writers' practice. Ben Haggarty, performance storyteller, founder of the Company of Storytellers, will also take part in the day.

On **Friday May 13 2016 from 3–6 pm** a *small workshop* will be held focusing on **rendering Arabic**, including literature from Sicily during the period when Arabic was one of the island's languages, stories from the Arabian Nights (including verse passages), folklore, and the work of Tamim al-Barghouti. Foreshadowing the 14 May workshop, this workshop looks at the act of translation as a form of transmission. Writers with other languages to be used as bridges to Arabic are most welcome. Some material will be shared ahead of time. Limited to 24 in Seminar Room 8 of the Ruth Deech Building at St Anne's College, Oxford.

14:00 – 15:00: Registration

15:00 – 18:00: Workshop (Tea/Coffee provided)

19:00: Dinner (By invitation only)

On **Saturday 14 May 2016 from 10 am–6 pm**, Marina Warner and

Matthew Reynolds will hold a **creative writing workshop** with the writers Philip Terry, Alice Oswald, Tamim al-Barghouti, and the storyteller Ben Haggarty. The workshop revolves around the concept of stories and their literary, oral, visual, or musical transmission. The workshop not only hopes to interrogate how individuals communicate stories in different cultures, spaces, and times, but hopes that workshop participants will create and 'transmit' their own interesting variations of ancient myths or more modern folklore. Participants are expected to come to the workshop with either a myth or folktale (from any place or era) in order to actively explore how the transmission of stories is a distinctive, energetic, and dynamic process. Participants are limited to 50, in the Seminar Room of the Radcliffe Humanities Building. Registration will take place at 9 am. The day will be interspersed with breaks for tea, coffee, and lunch.

9:00 – 9:30: Registration

9:30 – 10:00: Welcome and introduction by Matthew Reynolds (OCCT) and Marina Warner

10:00 – 11:15: Philip Terry

11:15 – 12:30: Alice Oswald

12:30 – 13:45: Lunch

13:45 – 15:15: Tamim al-Barghouti

15:15 – 16:00: Ben Haggarty

16:00 – 16:30: Tea/Coffee break

16:30 – 18:00: Workshop

18:00 – Wine Reception

Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation

is a research programme based jointly at [The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities](#) and the Centre for Comparative Criticism and Translation at [St. Anne's College](#). We are supported by a generous donation from Maria Ferreras Willetts, and by the John Fell OUP Research Fund. We run seminars, workshops, a postgraduate-led [discussion group](#) and an annual conference. We stage public events, such as [Oxford Translation Day](#), and edit a book series, [Transcript](#).

Comparative Literature is changing. Its Eurocentric heritage has been challenged by various formulations of World Literature, while new media and new forms of artistic production are bringing urgency to comparative thinking across literature, film, the visual arts and music. The resulting questions of method are both intellectually compelling and central to the future of the humanities. To confront them, our research programme brings together experts from the disciplines of English, Medieval and Modern Languages, Oriental Studies, and Classics, and draws in collaborators from Music, Visual Art, Film, Philosophy and History. We prefer the phrase 'Comparative Criticism' to 'Comparative Literature' or 'World Literature' because it draws attention to the role of the critic in determining the corpus to be explored and the manner of its exploration; and we flag 'translation' as a process fundamental to our work, and indeed to all communication.

To find out more about OCCT go to:

www.occt.ox.ac.uk; <http://www.facebook.com/CompCritOxford>; @OxfordCCT

Contact: comparative.criticism@st-annes.ox.ac.uk

Events Schedule

Embodied Spaces, Embodied Minds

Wednesday 18 May 2016, 17:00 – 19:00 pm; Seminar Room, Radcliffe Humanities Building

Speakers: Richard Walsh (York); Tim Chesters (Cambridge)

Chair: Ben Morgan (Oxford)

Isaac Julien (TBC) (*Co-hosted with Race and Resistance*)

Wednesday 1 June 2016, 16:30 – 18:30 pm; Seminar Room, Radcliffe Humanities Building

Oxford Translation Day

A day of workshops, talks and readings, culminating in the award of the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize.

For more information and to book places see: <http://www.occt.ox.ac.uk/events>.

Saturday 11 June 2016, 10 – 19:30 pm

Stanislaw Baranczak: Poetry Saved in Translation (*Co-hosted with POMP*)

Tuesday 14 June 2016, 16:30 – 18:30 pm; MOLT, St Anne's College

Speaker: Clare Cavanagh (Northwestern University)

Chair: Stanley Bill (Cambridge)

Thinking Colour Symposium

Friday 24 June 2016, 9:00 – 17:00 pm; Trinity College

Discussion Group

Tuesdays, 12:45 – 14:00 in weeks **1, 3, 5, 7** at **St Anne's College**. Fortnightly meetings, led by graduate students and early-career researchers. This term's theme is **Multilingualism**. For preparatory readings and other details, please check on OCCT website or email Karolina.Watroba@magd.ox.ac.uk