

ESTHER WHITFIELD
Departments of Comparative Literature and Hispanic Studies
Brown University
(June 2023)

Professional appointments

Brown University

Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Hispanic Studies (2012-the present)

Associate Professor of Comparative Literature (2010-2012)

Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature (2002-2010)

Harvard University

Lecturer on History and Literature (2001-2002)

Education

Ph.D. Harvard University, June 2001. Romance Languages and Literatures.

A.M. Harvard University, June 1998. Romance Languages and Literatures.

B.A. Oxford University, June 1994. Modern Languages (First Class).

Publications

Books

“A New No-Man’s Land: Writing and Art at Guantánamo, Cuba (2002-2022).” Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, forthcoming in 2024.

Havana Beyond the Ruins: Cultural Mappings of the City after 1989

Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. Essay collection co-edited with Anke Birkenmaier.

Reviewed in *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* 45:2 (2012); *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* XLVII:2 (2013); *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 66:1 (2013); *Social Anthropology* 21:1 (2013).

Cuban Currency: The Dollar and “Special Period” Fiction.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Reviewed in *Encuentro de la cultura cubana* (otoño 2008); *Journal of Latin American Studies* 41 (2009); *American Literature* 81:3 (September 2009); *Hispanic Review* 78:3 (2010); *The Americas* 67:1 (July 2010); *Revista Iberoamericana* 10:39 (2010); *Latin American Research Review* 45:3 (2010); *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 15:1 (2011).

New Short Fiction from Cuba.

Anthology co-edited with Jacqueline Loss. Evanston, Il.: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

Un arte de hacer ruinas

Critical edition of Antonio José Ponte’s short stories. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005.

Peer-reviewed journal articles

“From Guantánamo to the Global South: Mohammed el-Gharani in Literature and Art.” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 13, no.3 (Winter 2022): 367-380.

“Guantánamo, Cuba: Poetry and Prison on Divided Ground.” *Comparative Literature* 72, no. 3 (October 2020): 299-315.

“Art, Ecology and Repair: Imagining the Future of the Guantánamo Naval Base.” *Sargasso: A Journal of Caribbean Literature, Language and Culture* (2017-18) I&II: 49-65.

“Cuban Borderlands: Local Stories of the Guantánamo Naval Base.” *MLN* 130 (2): March 2015, 276-297.

“Empire, Nation and the Fate of a Language: Patagonia in Argentine and Welsh Literature.” *Postcolonial Studies* 14:1 (February 2011): 75-93.

“A Literature of Exhaustion: Cuban Writing and the Post-‘Special Period.’” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* XLV:1 (March 2011): 27-44.

“Welsh-Patagonian Fiction: Language and the Novel of Transnational Ethnicity.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 14:2 (2009).

“Dirty Autobiography: The Body Impolitic of *Trilogía sucia de la Habana*.” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 36.2 (May 2002): 329-351.

Book chapters

“Cuban Fiction of the Special Period.” Invited contribution for *The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature*. Eds. Vicky Unruh and Jaqueline Loss. New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2023.

“Natural Borders and Animal Life: Inhabiting Guantánamo.” Invited chapter for *The Routledge Companion to Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Latin American Literary and Cultural Forms*. Eds. Guillermina De Ferrari and Mariano Siskind. New York: Routledge, 2022. 225-233.

“Guantánamo and Community: Visual Approaches to the Naval Base.” Eds. Don E. Walicek and Jessica Adams. *Guantánamo and American Empire: The Humanities Respond*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 149-172.

“Truths and Fictions: The Economics of Writing in Cuba, 1994-1999.” Ed. Ariana Hernández-Reguant. *Cuba in the Special Period: Culture and Ideology in the 1990s*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 21-36.

“El presente en ruinas.” Ed. Teresa Basile. *La vigilia cubana. Sobre Antonio José Ponte*. Rosario, Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo Editora 2008. 73-82. Previously published in *Miradas* (on-line journal of the Havana International Film School). November 2005.

“La narrativa cubana y el ejemplo del exilio: el caso Zoé Valdés.” Ed. Juana Martínez. *Exilios y residencias. Escrituras de España y América*. Madrid/ Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/ Vervuert: 2007. 245-254.

“Economías literarias de los noventa.” Eds. Anke Birkenmaier and Roberto González Echevarría. *Cuba: un siglo de literatura*. Madrid: Ediciones Colibrí, 2004. 391-402.

“The Novel as Cuban Lexicon: Bargaining Bilingualism in Daína Chaviano’s *El hombre, la hembra y el hambre*.” Ed. Doris Sommer. *Bilingual Games. Some Literary Investigations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 193-201.

“*Mordecai a Haman: The Drama of Belonging in Welsh America*.” Ed. Marc Shell. *American Babel: Literatures of the United States from Abnaki to Zuni*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002. 93-116.

“Comprando y vendiendo: Lenguaje e intercambio en *Te di la vida entera* y *The Aguero Sisters*.” Ed. Rafael Hernández. *Culturas Encontradas: Cuba – Estados Unidos*. Cambridge, Mass. & Havana, Cuba: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies and Centro Juan Marinello, 2001. 99-112.

Book reviews

Shalini Puri and Lara Putnam, eds., *Caribbean Military Encounters*. For *Social and Economic Studies: The Social Sciences Journal of the University of the West Indies* 69 1 and 2 (2020): 189-191.

Daniel G. Williams, *Black Skin, Blue Books: African-Americans and Wales 1845-1945*. For *Planet: The Welsh Internationalist* 211 (Autumn 2013): 142-44.

Paul Bowman, ed., *The Rey Chow Reader*. For *Culture Machine* (June 2011).

James Buckwalter-Arias, *Cuba and the New Origenismo*. For *Hispanic Review* 79.3 (2011): 518-521.

Ana Menéndez, *In Cuba I was a German Shepherd*. For *The Women’s Review of Books* XVIII.10-11 (July 2001): 31-32.

Translation

José Ramón Sánchez, *The Black Arrow/ La flecha negra*. Poetry collection translated by Esther Whitfield and Katerina Gonzalez Seligmann. Barcelona: Linkgua Press, forthcoming 2023.

Grants, Fellowships and Honors

Presidential Award for Faculty Governance, Brown University, April 2023.

Wilbur Marvin Visiting Scholar of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS) at Harvard University, Spring 2021.

Faculty Fellowship, Cogut Institute for the Humanities, 2020-21.

National Endowment for the Humanities “Dialogues on the Experience of War” grant awarded to Brown University, 2017-2019. Principal Investigator.

Center for Public Humanities Faculty Fellowship, Brown University, 2017-19.

Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women. Grant for faculty and graduate student workshop on “Approaching War,” 2015-16.

Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University. Collaboration Grant for Conferences “New Perspectives on Guantánamo: Art, Activism and Advocacy,” 2013-14; and “Cuban Transitions: What’s Left Out?,” 2015-16.

Cogut Center for the Humanities Faculty Fellowship, Brown University, 2009-10.

PEN Club New York Council of the Arts Translation Grant Award for *New Short Fiction from Cuba*, 2006.

Brown University Henry Merritt Wriston Fellowship. Teaching award for untenured faculty providing one semester of paid leave. Fall 2006.

Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Merit Fellowship (1998) and Eliot Fellowship (1999-2000) for dissertation completion.

Kennedy Scholarship, awarded annually to a British graduate student to attend Harvard or MIT, 1995-96.

Lectures and Presentations

Keynote lectures

"Cuban Cultural Studies and Caribbean Borderlands." Keynote lecture for conference on "New Directions in Cuban Studies," The Cuban Heritage Collection of the University of Miami. October 2019.

"Cuban Writing and the post-"Special Period." Keynote lecture at Graduate Student Conference, Department of Modern and Foreign Languages, University of Connecticut. March 2011.

Invited talks

"Guantánamo and Cuba." Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies, Edinburgh University, June 2022.

"Guantánamo and the Idea of Home." "Camps, (In)justice and Solidarity in the Americas" conference, University of Graz, Austria. May 2022.

"Guantánamo, Cuba and the Arts." Cuba Studies Seminar, Harvard University. September 2021.

"Guantánamo: Writing, Art and War." Public Humanities Summer Institute. University of New Hampshire. June 2019.

"Guarding Guantánamo." "Caribbean Cosmopolis" symposium. The Humanities Institute, Stony Brook University. October 2017.

"Cuba and the Future of Guantánamo." "Cuba at a Crossroads" symposium. SUNY Geneseo. April 2017.

"Guantánamo: Writing, Art and War." "Guantánamo: Promises of Closure and Justice" symposium. Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico. August 2016.

"Guantánamo and the Border." Faculty colloquium at Brown University's Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. March 2015.

"Art and Guantánamo." Round table on "Angola and Guantánamo: Art and Incarceration." Stone Center for Latin American Studies, Tulane University. October 2014.

"Guantánamo's Cuban Border: Art, Literature and the Naval Base." Symposium on "Cubans in Movement." King Juan Carlos Center of New York University. November 2013.

“La narrativa cubana y el cambio social.” Casa del Caribe, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba. February 2013.

“La narrativa cubana después del ‘periodo especial.’” Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico. April 2010.

“Literature and the Market in Post-Soviet Cuba.” Workshop on “Economies of Art in an Entrepreneurial Society.” Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University. June 2009.

“Havana and the Aesthetics of Ruin.” Symposium on “ReViewing the Revolution: Fresh Perspectives on Cuba, 1959-2009.” Tulane University. April 2009.

“Havana in Recent Fiction.” Bristol Community College, Fall River MA. Hispanic Heritage Week Speaker Series. October 2007.

“Writing for and against the market in Cuba’s Special Period.” New York University, Department of Spanish and Portuguese. May 2007.

“Images of Havana in Recent Fiction.” College of the Holy Cross, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. April 2007.

“Truths and Fictions: The Economics of Writing in Cuba, 1994-1999.” Conference on “The Special Period: Cuban Culture in the 1990s.” University of California, San Diego. December 2005.

“Caribbean Havana.” Symposium in honor of Antonio Benítez Rojo. Amherst College/ University of Massachusetts. November 2005.

“The Present in Ruins.” Symposium in honor of Josefina Ludmer. Brown University, Department of Hispanic Studies. November 2004.

“Centro Habana: Ruins and the Fiction Industry.” University of Connecticut Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies/ Department of Modern and Classical Languages. 2003-04 Cuba Speaker Series. April 2004.

“La narrativa cubana y el ejemplo del exilio: El caso Zoé Valdés.” Conference on “Exilios y residencias.” Universidad Complutense, Madrid. May 2003.

“Cuban Literary Economies.” Conference on “Cuba: One Hundred Years of Independence, A Century of Literature.” Yale University. October 2002.

“Dirty Autobiography: The Body (Im)politic of *Trilogía sucia de la Habana*.” Symposium on “Culture, Politics and Change in Contemporary Cuba.” University of Iowa. October 2001.

“Polémicas de los noventa.” Roundtable discussion on “Cuban Culture: Conflicts and Debates.” Harvard University. November 2000.

“Intercambios culturales en dos novelas cubanas de los 90.” Conference on “Culturas encontradas: Cuba-Estados Unidos.” Instituto Juan Marinello, Havana. January 1999.

Conference panels organized and papers read (selected)

Convener, symposium on “Camps in the Twenty-First Century Americas, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Brown University, December 5, 2022.

Presentation, “Hospitality in Guantánamo’s Borderlands.” Paper read for panel on “Homes and Hospitalities: Cuban Culture Beyond Havana.” Meeting of the International MLA. Glasgow, Scotland, June 2022.

Presentation. “Borderland Friendships.” Paper read for panel on “Afterlives of Guantánamo and the War on Terror.” Annual meeting of the Modern Language Association. Online, January 2021.

Panel organizer, “Translation and Justice in the Americas,” Annual Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association. Boston, May 2019. Paper read: “Translation, Compassion, Guantánamo.”

Panel organizer, “Making Amends: Apology, Repair and the Arts in Latin America,” Annual Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association. Barcelona, May 2018. Paper read: “Post-Guantánamo Reparation.”

“Militarism and Intimacy at Guantánamo.” Paper read for panel on “Caribbean Militarisms,” Annual meeting of the Modern Language Association. New York, January 2018.

Panel organizer, “Guantánamo and the Arts,” Annual meeting of the Latin American Studies Association.” Lima, Peru, May 2017. Paper read: “Guards and Detainees at Guantánamo.”

“Untranslatables and the Translation of Welsh-American Writing.” Paper read for panel on “Wales and the Longfellow Institute 20 Years On.” North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History International Conference. Harvard University. July 2016.

“Guantánamo’s Futures.” Paper read for panel on “Back to Cuba’s Futures.” Annual meeting of the Latin American Studies Association.” New York. May 2016.

“Guantánamo’s Space: Visual Approaches to the Naval Base.” Paper read for seminar on “Cuban Art and Capital.” American Comparative Literature Association Conference. New York University. March 2014.

“Encierro y traducción: Poetas presos en la base naval de Guantánamo.” Paper read at Congreso Transatlántico. University of Havana, Cuba. June 2013.

“Digital Newspapers and the Re-shaping of Cuba’s Diaspora.” Paper read at conference on “Re-Imagined Communities: Benedict Anderson in the Twenty-First Century.” School of European Languages, Translation and Politics. University of Wales, Cardiff. July 2012.

Panel organizer, “Patagonia: Migration, Identity and Community,” Annual meeting of the Latin American Studies Association,” San Francisco, May 2012. Paper read: “Patagonian Road Movies and Migration from Wales.”

Panel organizer, “Democracy, Justice and the Arts,” Annual Meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association. Providence, April 2012. Paper read: “War and the Arts in Latin America.”

“From *Boarding Home* to *Boring Home*: Photo-blogs and the Re-Mapping of Cuban Exile.” Paper read at the Transatlantic Conference, Providence, April 2010.

“The Aesthetics of Ruin.” Paper read at conference on “Fractured Identities: Hispanic Visual Cultures.” School of European Studies and School of Welsh, University of Wales, Cardiff. July 2009.

“Patagonia and Nationalism in the Novels of R. Bryn Williams and Carlos Dante Ferrari.” Paper read at conference on “Spaces of Comparison: Welsh Writing in Comparative Contexts.” University of Wales, Swansea. March 2009.

Teaching and Advising

Undergraduate courses taught at Brown University

Humanities 1975: Censorship and the Arts

Comparative Literature 51: War and the Arts: Guantánamo, Twenty Years On

Comparative Literature 51: Caribbean Re-writes.

Comparative Literature 51: Fidel Castro and Che Guevara: the Men and the Myths.

Comparative Literature 81: The Colonial and Postcolonial Marvelous (with Prof. Stephanie Merrim).

Comparative Literature 81: Confession, Autobiography, Testimony.

Comparative Literature 142: Tales of Two Cities: Havana-Miami, San-Juan-New York.

Comparative Literature 181: Reading Revolution: Representations of Cuba.

Comparative Literature 181: Latin American Literature in Dialogue with France.

Comparative Literature 181: War, Anti-War, Postwar: Culture and Contestation in the Americas.

Humanities 1970: Literature and the Arts in Today’s Cuba.

Hispanic Studies 1370: Literature and Film of the Cuban Revolution

Graduate Courses taught at Brown University

Comparative Literature 282: Latin America and Theory.

Comparative Literature 282: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Cuba (with Prof. Adrián López).

Comparative Literature 282: Metaphor.

Comparative Literature 282: Translation: Theory and Practice.

Hispanic Studies 2520: Critical Readings in Cuban, Puerto Rican and Dominican Literature

Comparative Literature 282: War (with Prof. Kenneth Haynes).

Comparative Literature 282: New Directions for Comparative Literature (with Prof. Ken Haynes).

Advising at Brown University:

I currently direct or co-direct three dissertations in Comparative Literature, and I am on a further three committees in Brown’s Departments of Comparative Literature, Hispanic Studies and History, as well as Harvard’s Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. I have previously directed and been on committees in Brown’s Departments of French Studies, American Studies, Africana Studies and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies; and at Emory University and the University of Puerto Rico.

Since 2002, I have been primary advisor to twenty-six senior thesis writers in Comparative Literature and second reader to twenty-one in Comparative Literature, Hispanic Studies, Latin American Studies, Women’s Studies and Modern Culture and Media.

Since 2002, I have been freshman advisor to twenty-seven students and sophomore advisor to twenty.

Service

Service to the Profession

Advisory Board, “Camps, (In)justice, and Solidarity in the Americas: Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Guantánamo Bay Detention Camps.” Conference held in May 2022 at the University of Graz, Austria, in collaboration with the University of Puerto Rico.

Grant Reviewer, National Endowment for the Humanities, 2019.

Advisory Board, *International Journal of Welsh Writing in English*, 2012-the present.

Editorial Board, *Cuban Studies*, 2013- 2018.

Member of Prize Committee, American Comparative Literature Association Undergraduate Award, 2014.

Tenure/ promotion reviewer for junior faculty members at approximately ten universities, 2010-2022.

Manuscript Reviewer for the University of Alabama Press, SUNY Press and Verso.

Article reviewer for *Differences*, *PMLA*, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, *Habana Elegante*, *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, *Hispanic Review* and *Cuban Studies*.

Service to Brown University

Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Comparative Literature, 2011-12, 2013-2016 and 2018-2020.

Member of University Committee on Faculty Equity and Diversity, 2021 – (2024).

Advisory Committee Member, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Brown University, 2019-20

Faculty and Postdoctoral Search Committees, Comparative Literature and Hispanic Studies, 2016-2022.

Faculty Director, Brown-in-Cuba program. 2007-2016. Member of CASA-Cuba Faculty Committee, 2016- 2021.