**CLGA Panel: "Translating your skills"**

***Panelists: Dr. Solimar Otero (English), Dr. John Pizer (Foreign Languages), and Dr. Adelaide Russo (Comparative Literature/French)***

Dr. Otero talked about different pedagogies and also interdisciplinary connections. Emphasis on digital media and humanities, advised studies to envision their future in broad terms.

Dr. Pizer emphasized both traditional paths toward academic tenureship in universities and colleges as well as non-academic tracks such as translation for both academic and non-academic organizations.

Dr. Russo advised students to look at skills in research, writing skills; emphasis on growth of international languages in international corporations and advised students to explore career possibilities in these areas.

Foreign service, state departments, etc. are possible career trajectories.

Attached to our skills as researchers is to explore skills that interest the individual. Emphasized a focus on developing teaching skills.

Amy asked the panel to speak about opportunities in the USA and abroad

Dr. Russo talked about Fulbright scholarship and fellowships in other countries. To prepare, research Fulbright opportunities, international networking (Harvard institute)

Dr. Otero suggested the importance of contact with people and institutional backing (Fulbright); she discussed a new field school for American folklore society in Cuba; new opportunities in places that are becoming more global.

Dr. Russo discusses new intersession in Haiti; emphasized the importance of experience working somewhere (fieldwork) in governmental and institutional contexts; interdisciplinary experience as a way to reinforce the literary skills.

Dr. Pizer suggested that study abroad opportunities and work abroad are growth fields (University of Georgia and New York University)

Dr. Russo states that your scholarly career begins with the first day of admission to a PhD program, students are constantly adding credentials. Choose your conferences (not too many), a few publications (more prestigious journals), learn new kinds of administrative skills and it is very important to not be anxious about what happens after you finish because it keeps you from working effectively. Folding chair appointments that only last 1 year are part of your training. Finding a job shouldn't undermine your real objective, making the most out of your studies and finishing the best dissertation (calling card) should be the main goals.

Thana asked about going abroad, if going abroad is better. If you don't know much about the foreign place, how can you be sure you're making the right decision?

Dr. Russo says it's important to insert yourself in universities as a comparativsit with an emphasis (e.g. Arabic). Rely on your cultural competence as translators, speakers of other languages, etc. Cultural understanding allows you to go somewhere else and represent your culture and compare several cultures.

Vida asked about other national languages besides European languages.

Dr. Russo acknowledges that African languages are very important and it is a limitation of LSU to not have these languages.

Dr. Otero states that LSU used to have Swahili, which is necessary for African & African American Studies program because it helps qualify for funding opportunities so it is something to fight for.

Dr. Russo states that graduate students are advocates for the addition of new curriculum. We are limited if we only know European languages.

Dr. Pizer acknowledges the difficulty of bringing back programs once they've been cut and the impetus to bring Swahili here was because of a particular professor who had a passion for Swahili.

Thana asked about co-authoring articles with people doing similar kinds of research or on subject in same place and building on each other's knowledge.

Dr. Russo explains that co-authoring articles is good because it results in networks of people in other fields. It is necessary to do the work individually but embrace collaboration even if it is not always easy. Emphasis on reciprocity and exchange, no parasites that take credit for things you propose and not someone overbearing to relegate you to a lower level. She advises that we find someone with whom to collaborate, produce the work, try to place it.

Dr. Pizer observes that collaboration is the norm in the sciences and that it is the exception in the humanities. David Damrosch predicted that it is what would happen and people are generally moving toward the collaborative work.

Dr. Russo reminds the group of the conference for Femi Euba that was organized by Eric Garcia-Meyer that will result in a collaborative volume.

Dr. Otero agrees that collaboration is key and exciting. She also stresses the importance of interdisciplinary work that includes different genres in the same volume. Also, the interesting possibilities of creating conference panels that include people from different fields (e.g. folklore, dance, literature, etc.)

Dr. Russo indicates that the multi-language conference being organized by the Comp Lit grad students can be a step in that direction. Her own experience included working for and contributing to a journal created by her professor. Important for students to make creative editorial engagement.

Dr. Hachman added that the LSU library repository has resources for online journal creation (Lauren Costelo)

Amy asks about team teaching at the college level

Dr. Hachman answers that the current dean is less open to team teaching but that it can be good to learn from each other and to develop as teachers because you prepare differently with a colleague in the room. However, financial constraints can prevent this practice.

Dr. Russo explains that team teaching isn't always an option because the salary is not sufficient. She advises us to teach in as many departments as possible

Maria Anna asked about selecting a dissertation topic, should it be something you like or something more focused on the job market.

Dr. Russo stresses the importance of being passionate about your subject. She advises the inclusion of lesser-known authors in the context of others who are more well known. Instead she advises favorite writers and period and attaching them to the mainstream.

Eric Meyer-Garcia notes that his research was decided based on what was needed in his field (theater) in the United States. Other people have been known to check job ads in their field and focus their research on what's being looked for. Importance of knowing it isn't just what the field needs to know but also what they are looking for people to teach.

Dr. Russo stresses the importance of knowing how to do archival research, having a strong background in history, being involved in cultural studies, having interdisciplinary interests, and showing a panorama of expertise with little known and well-known things. Also important how your force of character and passion are expressed. Find something and that can lead from one thing to another. Advisors are also good at pointing you in a particular direction.

Dr. Otero emphasizes the layered aspects of of being a comparativist. One project will be a basis for another project later. You will branch into different directions from your original grounding.

Dr. Pizer acknowledges that there are advantages to a small program that allows you the freedom to let you do what appeals to you. He did his PhD on literary forms in Germany and influence on German genre theory. His first book led to a second book. He noticed trends and you are not always conscious of the process.

Dr. Russo tells us that things change, jobs change, and ideas change. Emphasizes the importance of curiosity and of feeling like you're inspired and empowered.

In Attendance:

Vida

Thana

Maria Anna

Jingyuan

Stacy

Mulin

Eric

Ghassan

Shiqi Yan

Emily O'Dell

Jeanne Jegousso

Eric Mayer-Garcia

Gundela Hachman