

Transatlantic Aestheticism: Oscar Wilde, Raymond Chandler and the Decorative Arts

This project's research goal for the summer will be to construct a narrative of the transatlantic relations between Irish author Oscar Wilde and American novelist Raymond Chandler. In order to study how Wilde's philosophy on art influenced Chandler's detective writing, Adeline and Jacob will conduct archival research at the Raymond Chandler Papers, held at UCLA's Charles E. Young Research Library. Jacob will be trained in archival research methods such as organizing, prioritizing and analyzing primary source materials in relation to secondary texts. This research material will allow Adeline and Jacob to explore how Wilde's 1882 American tour on Aestheticism continued to fascinate writers like Chandler decades later.



Adeline Tran
Ph.D. Candidate
Comparative Literature

Adeline Tran is currently finishing her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at UC Berkeley. Her dissertation, "Hard-boiled Aesthetics: High Art and Mass Culture in the American Detective Novel," studies how 1940s hardboiled writers like Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and James Cain draw from nineteenth-century European aestheticism to elevate the artistic merit of the detective novel.

Adeline will work with Jacob to develop an archive of material on defining moments in literary history such as Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Movement, the transatlantic dialogue between England and America at the turn of the century, and Raymond Chandler's position as one of the innovators of the hardboiled American detective story. Through the SMART program, Adeline will be able to draft the final chapter of her dissertation as well as to mentor Jacob through first-hand exposure to archival research and the process of pursuing a long-term writing project.



Jacob Gerstel,
B.A., May 2015
English and History

Jacob Gerstel recently graduated from UC Berkeley with degrees in both English and History. He wrote two theses his senior year — one for each major — when he spent much of his time reading and researching. His History thesis, "Loitering in the Crimea: The Anglo-French Split at the 1856 Paris Peace Congress," allowed him to travel to Oxford for research. His English thesis, "The Windy Side of the Grave: Questions of Culture and History in Victorian Medievalist Poetry," focused on the underlying fatalistic and historical trends in the work of England's most popular Victorian poets.

Working with Adeline, Jacob plans to sharpen his researcher's eye and expand his knowledge of nineteenth century America. Jacob hopes the SMART program will finally settle his debate as to whether or not he will attend graduate school. In his free time, Jacob writes genre fiction and performs improvisational comedy.

UC Berkeley's Student Mentoring And Research Team (SMART) is a paid professional development program that engages doctoral students in creating mentored research opportunities conducted with selected undergraduate student mentees during a ten-week period over the summer. Both participants receive compensation and training throughout their participation. SMART broadens the professional development of doctoral students and fosters research skills and paths to advanced studies for undergraduates.

Expenses associated with each team total \$10,000 000 (\$5K graduate stipend/ \$3.5K undergrad stipend/\$1.5K research and conference costs). As a donor-supported program of the Graduate Division, the majority of teams are underwritten through a combination of donor funds paired with matching support courtesy of the Graduate Division.

Learn more at smart.berkeley.edu