

BIO:

Thomas Patrick Wisniewski is a graduate fellow at Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies. His research centers on rhythm, prose, and modernism. He holds graduate degrees in Comparative Literature from Dartmouth College and Harvard University, and he has held visiting lectureships at Boston University, Tufts University, and Harvard College. His work has been supported by the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies and awarded the Global Humanities Junior Fellowship at Freie Universität Berlin. He currently resides in Florence, Italy.

PAPER TITLE: "Karen Blixen, Local Literature & Global Marketability"

This paper address the question of the local and the global in the circulation of world literature through the case study of a single author: the early work of Isak Dinesen/Karen Blixen composed at the author's family home of Rungstedlund, now the Karen Blixen Museum. Blixen's début collection of fiction, *Seven Gothic Tales* (1934), first written in English and published in in the US, led to a decades-long popular reception in America, culminating in a celebrity tour in 1959, when the author gave public performances at clubs and universities in New York and Boston. In this respect, Blixen, a Dane writing primarily in English, joins the international celebrity and company of master modernist prose stylists, including Nabokov and Conrad, for whom English was not a native language. Scholars generally agree that Blixen's subsequent Danish translations of texts written and published in English are considerable rewritings. Blixen's first writing in English for a global audience under what her biographer Judith Thurman calls a "double" pseudonym—that of a foreign language (English) and that of gender (the male Isak Dinesen)—and then rewriting in Danish for a national and local audience raises questions critical to understanding global marketability framed by the related fields of translation studies and world literature: why might an author choose to publish first in a second or third language for global visibility? Beyond commercial demands, what are the aesthetic reasons for doing so? Studying Blixen's self-translations, rewritings, and bilingual transnational publications will deepen scholars' understanding of the circulation and reception of local literature as world literature as it moves beyond national and linguistic boundaries, crossed by the author's persona, publisher, and choice of global language and local identity.