The Comparative Literature Luncheon Series presents

The Disintegration of Civil War Memory in Brown v. Board Literature

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2015
12:15 - 1:20 P.M.
102 KERN

Presentation and discussion begin at 12:30
Lunch provided!

In 1963, as the Civil War centennial commemoration unfolded in the midst of the Civil Rights movement, James Baldwin declared that “the country is celebrating one hundred years of freedom one hundred years too soon.” In the decade leading up to Baldwin’s declaration, Flannery O’Connor, Carson McCullers, and Gwendolyn Brooks staged the aesthetic disintegration of Civil War memory even as they represented racial integration in public education. O’Connor’s “A Late Encounter with the Enemy” (1953) and McCullers’s Clock Without Hands (1961) counter the lost cause mythology of Gone with the Wind by irreverently converting Civil War memory from lived experience to cultural narrative. Brooks’s 1960 Emmett Till poems explicitly represent the generic disintegration of Civil War memory as chivalric romance.