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# Chair's Newsletter Fall 2017

## Letter from the Chair

Emily Apter

At the turning circle of the academic year 2017/18 and as I enter my third year as Chair, I welcome you back from summer work and play with an overview of high points in last year's events and some news of what's ahead, including introductions to new faculty members, appointed, associated and affiliate.

First off, our physical *habitus*. Comp Lit's floor renovations, undertaken in collaboration with German, were completed last year, in time to make it a more hospitable space at a difficult time in our political history.

Chris Wood (chair of German) and I hope it will become a space of critical sanctuary;" of safe harbor

for a community engaged in critical work, creative thinking, and resistance to the daily barrage, as well as an informal space for exchange and spontaneous readings and screenings.

Renovations include extra chairs that can be pulled out at a moment's notice, some mobility in the front office furniture, and we are working on procuring a desk to be added to the back area for graduate student use.

Our new look was completed by our own graphic design talent,

Andrea Chu, who has given us a gallery of posters, and we look forward to their continuation.

We warmly welcome the new student workers Daniel Cheng and Zachary Martin, both current Comp Lit students.

As always, we have quite an exciting semester of events. Two of note are, **the fall department welcome party**, scheduled for 9/12/17 at 5:00, as Casa Italiana!

We are also very excited about the **Poetics & Theory** Conference that Avital Ronell and Tom Bishop are organizing in honor of Hélène Cixous, 9/14-9/16.

## Welcoming New Faculty

We had happy outcomes of searches conducted last year.

**Zakir Paul** will join the department as an Assistant Professor, 100% in Comp Lit. Zakir comes to us from several years teaching at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He brings to the department a deep knowledge of philosophy and poetics, with special strengths in French literature, German aesthetics, and Urdu poetics. His dissertation was on Proust and intelligence and he is the translator of Jacques Rancière's *Aistheses*, as well as works by Maurice Blanchot. His period expertise covers Romanticism, comparative modernisms, and 20<sup>th</sup>/21st century critical theory.

We would also like to welcome **Shirin Edwin**, an affiliate faculty member and Professor of literature working in postcolonial studies, who joined the NYU-Shanghai campus after a joint Comp Lit-NYU Shanghai search last year and has two books published, *Privately Empowered: Expressing Feminism in Islam in Northern Nigerian Fiction*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2016 and *islam mis en relation: le roman francophone de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, Paris*: Kimé, 2009. She, along with **Celina Hung** and new Affiliate **Todd Meyer**, will help us consolidate our ties with the Shanghai site.

**Thomas Foley** a specialist of Modern Chinese literature and the relationship between ideas of human and animal in modern and contemporary Chinese literature, was appointed an APFF in EAS and Comp Lit for the next two academic years.

We are also excited to announce the arrival of **Hent de Vries**, one of the most distinguished scholars working today in critical theory and theology. Hent will split his appointment between German and Religious Studies, and will also be CL Associated Faculty. His fall seminar on Heidegger's *Being and Time* already has many Comp Lit students enrolled. Hent joins us from Johns Hopkins where he directed the Humanities Center. He is currently Director of the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell.

### OUR VISITING SCHOLARS FOR AY 17/18:

**Djuna Haag**  
**Ozen Nergis Dolcerocca**  
**Tetsuro Irie**  
**Bernat Padro Nieto**  
**Lakshmi Padmanabhan**  
**Ye Qing**  
**Gong Shuyun**

## Faculty Updates and Honors

**Emily Apter** became president of the ACLA in 2017/18 and will continue on the MLA Executive Council.

**Gabriela Bastera** (fall) and **Emmanuela Bianchi** (spring) served as Directors of Graduate Study.

**Benjamin Conisbee Baer** was a visiting faculty member from Princeton in fall 2017 and co-taught with Apter a graduate seminar co-sponsored with the English department on "Colonial Violence, Force of Law and the Politics of Translation."

**Gabriela Bastera** was awarded a Humanities Center Fellowship for 2017/18.

**Ana Dopico** serves as Director of the King Juan Carlos of Spain Center.

**Andrea Gadberry** passed her Third Year Review and served as Director of Undergraduate Study, covering brilliantly for Jay Garcia, who resumes the post this year following his sabbatical.

**Hala Halim** and **Mark Sanders** worked on a proposal for a new Certificate Program (Comparative Approaches to Literatures of Africa, the Middle East and the Global South, or CALAMAGS) which goes for official review in September 2017.

**Celina Hung**, NYU-Shanghai passed her Third Year Review.

Former Chair and colleague **Jacques Lezra** finally took the difficult decision to depart for a new position in Spanish at the University of California, Riverside We wish him all

the best - he will be greatly missed! - and look forward to celebrating his contributions to the department and to the Poetics & Theory Certificate program on one of his return visits to New York.

**Avital Ronell** took over as Director of Poetics & Theory and continues in that capacity this coming year.

**Kristin Ross**, longstanding DGS and CL colleague, retired last spring. She has been engaged in research projects in France and teaching incarcerated students upstate.

**Mark Sanders'** book *Learning Zulu: A Secret History of Language in South Africa* (Princeton, 2016) was nominated for the Alan Paton Award in non-fiction from *The Sunday Times*.

**Richard Sieburth** who is on a phased retirement but will teach in the spring, won an Arts and Letters Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

**Xudong Zhang** (fall) and **Cristina Vatalescu** (spring) have kindly agreed to be DGS in 2017/18.

## Grad Student News and Spotlights!

*\*Please send in information if you do not see it here\**

### Comp Lit warmly welcomes a large incoming cohort for 2017/18

**Anna Banker**  
**Tuhin Bhattacharjee**  
**Juan Manuel Avila Conejo**

**Sylvia Gorelick**  
**Angela Haddad**  
**Yue Pu**  
**Anneke Rautenback**  
**Rebekah Smith**  
**Honey Watson**

### Congratulations to Ph.D. Graduates 2016-17

**Siarhei Biareishyk**  
**Dafne Duschesne**  
**Lucy Ives**  
**Anastasia Osipova**  
**Erag Ramizi**  
**Qin Wang**

### Job Market/Post-Doc/Fellowship Report

**Siarhei Biareishyk** obtained a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship in Berlin.

**Nienke Boer** continues in a tenure-track post at Yale-Singapore.

**Lori Cole** is teaching at The Center for the Experimental Humanities and her cross-listed course is entitled "Nothingness: Art, Literature, Sound, and Screen."

**Robyn Creswell** moved from Brown to Yale's Comp Lit department last year.

**Michael Krimper** was awarded a Mellon Dissertation fellowship.

**Katharina Piechocki** is now in her third year as an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard.

**Erag Ramizi** is entering the second year of a two-year Mellon

postdoc at the University of Toronto.

**Mert Bahadir Reisgolu** joined the faculty of Comparative Literature at the University of Koç in Istanbul.

**Daniel Hoffman-Schwartz** has been a Visiting Faculty member at Princeton for the past two years.

**Emily Larson Sibley** was awarded a Mellon Dissertation fellowship.

**Mariano Siskind** was tenured at Harvard.

**Qin Wang** held the Shanghai postdoc this year (having turned down an NYU Humanities Center fellowship) and was recently awarded a postdoc at the Institute for Critical Theory in Beijing for AY 17/18.

**Sonia Werner** has been teaching at Draper.

### Current Grad Student News

**Cecila Corrigan** performed in several plays which she also wrote and directed in New York

**Smaran Dayal** attended the School of Criticism and Theory this past summer.

**Tyler Harper** presented at the Alain Badiou symposium on "Number."

**Giancarlo Tursi**, **Tyler Harper**, **Amy Obermeyer** and **Lauren Wolfe** published professional translations.

**Lucy Ives** has been part of the art collective Triple Canopy and

published a novel shortly after defending her dissertation in March 2017.

**Alexander Miller** participated at the Comp Lit/SIPP conference on Freud's *Three Essays on Sexuality* and was awarded a GSAS summer fellowship for summer 2017.

**Erag Ramizi, Sonia Werner, Daniel Howell, Nastia Ostipova** and **Elizabeth Benninger** organized the spring graduate conference on "Anachronisms."

**Emily Larson Sibley** was elected graduate student representative to the ACLA.

**Giancarlo Tursi** attended the Institute of World Literature in Copenhagen.

**Devin Marco Thomas** made a feature length film in Senegal which was entered at Sundance.

## Happened and Happening

2016/17 was a crazy-busy schedule during which, in addition to multiple job talks, the department organized and co-sponsored lectures ranging across a broad spectrum of theoretical and regional/linguistic specializations. The list of distinguished speakers included:

**Alain Badiou** (Ecole Normale Supérieure) with whom we organized a panel on "Number" (with Jacques Lezra and CL graduate student Tyler Harper).

A Comparatorium panel with **Benjamin Conisbee Baer** (Princeton), **Emily Apter** and **Emanuela Bianchi** devoted to the problem of "Geschlecht" moderated by CL graduate student Gabriel Quigley.

**Ali Benmakhlof** (Paris-Créteil), who gave a series of talks in the areas of Islamic philosophy,

medical ethics, and translating Arabic philosophical terms).

**Barbara Cassin** (CNRS, Paris) who gave a seminar on Lacan's *L'Étourdit*.

A month-long mini-course on Hegel's *Phenomenology* given by **Rebecca Comay** (University of Toronto).

**Daniel Heller-Roazen** (Princeton) who was a respondent to Professor Benmakhlof.

**Elnathan John**, (Nigerian writer and critic) who gave a reading and Q & A moderated by Mark Sanders.

**Elissa Marder** (Emory), who gave a seminar on Cixous and Derrida.

**Kevin McClaughlin** (Brown) who gave a Poetics & Theory lecture on "Biophilology."

**Jacques Rancière** (Paris VIII) whose keynote at the graduate conference "Anachronisms" was on "Anachronisms and the Conflict of Times."

"Recomposing the Humanities," organized by **Phillip Usher** and **Timothy Duffy**.

**Renata Salecl** (Birkbeck, London) who delivered a talk entitled "A Passion for Ignorance."

**Shaden Tageldin** (Minnesota) who gave a lecture entitled, "Toward a Transcontinental Theory of Modern Comparative Literature."

**The Magic of Concepts**, a Comparatorium event featuring Rebecca Karl (NYU, History).

## Upcoming Events

Poetics & Theory Conference Honoring **Hélène Cixous**.

**Alain Badiou** Lecture.

Cosponsored **graduate conference** with the Department of Classics.

Look out for more information on our Comp Lit **EVENTS** page soon.

## Upcoming Events Cont....

Specters of Kant, a conference in the works under the direction of **Gabriela Basterra** and current graduate student **Arash Aminian Tabrizian**.

**Cristina Vatulescu** is planning a conference this year on "Bodies and Archives."

## Ongoing Group Work

Feminist Reading Group

Barricade

*brio*

Comparatoria

## STAFF UPDATES

Introducing **Tara Hardy**, our Graduate Program Assistant! In her own words: "I am thrilled to be joining the Comparative Literature department this fall. As a recent graduate of NYU, where I studied Music Education in Steinhardt and spent a semester abroad in Prague, I bring my insiders knowledge of student affairs through my experience as a Resident Assistant at NYU, as well as my time working in residence life at the Manhattan School of Music and the Boston Ballet School. I look forward to meeting you all this coming academic year."

**Alyson Wild (NÉE Lounsbury)**, Department Administrator, was appointed the Social/Cultural Co-Chair for NYU's Pride@work Initiative and remains in the role for this coming academic year.

**Laryssa Witty**, our much esteemed Graduate Assistant has relocated in order to pursue a lifelong dream of working and studying in France. In her own words, "thank you to everyone for making this goodbye a difficult one; for if it was easy, I would have to pause and ask myself why."

## STAY IN TOUCH



## PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

<http://as.nyu.edu/complit/admissions.html>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<http://as.nyu.edu/complit/events.html>

Please see our website for links to our twitter and facebook accounts!



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