Sonothèque nomade founder Jérôme Bouvet operating the Koh Lecteuse, a Stroh accessory inspired by the work of telegraph engineer August Stroh. At NYU, the Sonothèque nomade recorded traditional songs from students and bystanders alike.
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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

WELCOME TO 2019-20!

The temperature in Paris this summer — on July 25, to be exact — reached 42.6°C (108.7°F), breaking the city’s all-time high-temperature record. These are our times. A sixth extinction (our own) is on the horizon. Geological time has caught up with human time. Science alone can provide neither solutions, nor tools for connecting as humans with what we are experiencing. In such a context, the humanities have never been so important as we struggle to imagine and to conceptualize our present and future in the shadow of a deep past that hangs over us. As Latour has put it succinctly, “if we are asked to reimag

In Spring 2020, the graduate program will be hosting two eminent and exciting visiting professors: the philosopher Catherine Malabou (University of Kingston, UK), one of the most important philosophers writing in French today — she will be teaching a graduate seminar on Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception; and Frédérique All-Touati (CRAL-CNRS, EHESS), an early modernist whose research reaches between theater and ecology, is a leading light for the Environmental Humanities in France — her NYU seminar is titled “The Nonhuman on Stage and Page.”

Unfortunately, 2019 has also been a very sad time for the department. The most tragic event was the sudden death of our colleague Jean Michael Dash (1948-2019). Diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic cancer after being admitted to hospital for more minor concerns, Michael’s health worsened quickly and he died on June 2, 2019. A memorial celebration took place on June 27 at St. Hilda’s and St. Hugh’s, which I and a number of colleagues and graduate students attended. We have lost a great scholar of Haitian literature and the French Caribbean — and we have lost a smart and warm colleague, someone who had his head on his shoulders, who could always stand back and provide perspective. A scholarly event in his honor will take place in Spring 2019.

We also miss greatly two other colleagues who both retired in January 2019, our medievalist Timmie Vitz and our poet-translator Richard Sieburth. We will raise a glass to Timmie at a party in due course, where we will also bid farewell to another retiring colleague, Henriette Goldwyn, who teaches her last class this semester (Fall 2019). Richard’s departure was already celebrated in style on May 2 with a fabulous and fun event at the Maison Française, at which musician (and Richard’s long-time friend) Stephen Dembski premiered a piece of music inspired by, and featuring, Richard’s translation of Renaissance poet Louise Labé.

There would be much more to say in this Chair’s letter, many more people to welcome and people to thank, many more events to remember and to announce, but it is better that I stop here so that the real work of 2019-20 can begin. Stay tuned for the first monthly e-newsletter, which is currently in the works. To conclude, I say “Welcome Back” to our colleagues and students and “Bon retour!” after his three years directing NYU Paris and a duly earned year of sabbatical! And I say to everyone “Bonne rentrée!”

Phillip John Usher
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES AND GLOBAL COORDINATOR

Par Ludovic Cortade

In 2018-19, the undergraduate program was marked by several innovations and numerous successful events, attracting a growing number of students. More than 800 students each semester chose to learn French at the New York campus, not including the few hundreds more who did so at NYU Paris, NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai. For the first time ever, the undergraduate program has 112 French majors and nearly 200 French minors who have been taking language, literature, philosophy, history, film, politics, gender studies, fashion, and food studies courses, all of which explore the French and Francophone world.

Students benefited from original learning opportunities such as the immersion trip to Québec over Spring Break and the series of talks “Machines à écrire”, which allowed them to meet and interact with French and Francophone authors at La Maison française, and to study their works.

On Washington Square, our enthusiastic students enjoyed a stimulating (and francophone!) social life which fostered a sense of community. Over the course of the past year, one of the most exciting events was the founding of the French Club by one of our majors, Justin Jian (CAS ’19). The French Club has been enlarging the community of francophone and francophile students within the College of Arts and Sciences and beyond (Stern Business School, Tisch School of the Arts, Tandon School of Engineering, etc.) In addition to their weekly meetings full of conviviality and camaraderie, the members of the French Club co-organized the “French Ciné-Club” and meetings of “Café et Conversation” in collaboration with the PhD program students. With the Institute of French Studies, they also co-sponsored the talk of French Labor minister Muriel Pénicaud, to whom they asked questions about economics, social issues, gender and politics in France.

The first “French Open House” was held last February at La Maison française. The event was dedicated to showcasing the undergraduate program in French. In less than two hours, the event attracted over 100 students who were able to meet professors from the department and to declare their Major or Minor in French. Several alumni including Philip Dalgarino (CAS ’15, NYU Law), Sabrina He (CAS ’18, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism), Giulia Berrebi (CAS ’14, Chanel), Nisa Nejadi (CAS ’10, Wharton Business School at the University of Pennsylvania) came to share their professional achievements, to encourage and to advise our students, who were particularly interested in and motivated by the experiences of their successful predecessors.

To close the academic year, numerous students were honored during the “French Awards” ceremony at the end of April. Nominated by their professors for their excellent work, about 100 recipients (the top five percent of our undergraduate students) received a trophy with their name, an honorary certificate and a book in French. Parents, students and faculty gathered at La Maison française to joyfully celebrate academic excellence.

Six of our students received a special award:

- The Prix Bernard Garniez was awarded to Zeynep Enderer (CAS ’19) for excellence in the study of French literature and culture;
- The Prix Germaine Brée was awarded to Suleikha Barry (CAS ’19) for the best Senior Honors thesis;
- The Prix France-Amérique was awarded to Sarah Sutter (CAS ’19) who made one of the most significant contributions to French cultural life at NYU in her capacity of student ambassador;
- The Prix France-Amérique was awarded to Barry Manno (CAS ’21) who displayed a particular commitment to furthering and elucidating Franco-American relations;
- The Prix Paris was awarded to Brock Hislop (CAS ’20) who, in addition to academic excellence, has made a significant contribution to the NYU Paris program;
- The Prix Michele Lapautre was awarded Renata Arizpe (CAS ’20), one of the most promising sophomore or junior majoring in French;
- The Jindrich Zevula Prize was awarded to Sophia Barry (CAS ’19) for the best Senior Honors thesis in French.

The community of undergraduate students would like to express their gratitude to Violet Horvath, who bequeathed a fund to the department for the study of French and Francophone language and culture. In 2018-19, Meyani Coleman (CAS ’19) and Seden Yilmazturk (CAS ’22) were the happy recipients of the Violet Horvath Studentship, which will fund their travel to a Francophone destination of their choice in order to improve their proficiency in French and deepen their understanding of French and Francophone culture.

After a very rich year, the start of the 2019-20 academic year is filled with promise!
Encounters have been the main reason for my intellectual and professional orientations, more than the construction of a planned career: encounters with books, teachers, ideas, images and sounds. Professors made it possible for a first-generation student like me to discover music, literature and philosophy. It was also the admiration for a text, Sartre’s *La Nausée*, that led me to read all the other books. Motivated by the desire to discover, I followed multiple directions: first the study of the piano, then courses in literature and philosophy, without ever choosing definitively. I passed an ‘agrégation’ (a French teaching degree) in Modern Literature and then a Ph.D. in philosophy at Paris Sorbonne. My dissertation’s topic was the relationship between concepts and metaphors in Sartre’s philosophical texts.

My intellectual work then focused on the notions of resemblance, model and genealogy (*Avant-gardes et modernité*, Hachette 2000; *Pour en finir avec la généalogie*, Léo Scheer 2004; *Hors de moi*, Léo Scheer 2006, *Les Airs de famille, une philosophie des affinités*, Gallimard 2012). Keeping the passion for music, I was also interested in the role of piano playing in the lives of the authors I particularly like (*The Philosopher’s Touch. Sartre, Nietzsche and Barthes at the piano*, Columbia University Press 2012). Listening is a very important philosophical issue and I continue this research by working on sound and aurality. My most recent book is entitled *Penser avec les oreilles* (*Le Génie du mensonge*, Max Milo 2015).

While conducting my research, I have taught permanently because I have a great interest in exchange with students. I was a teacher in high school and then in various universities until I was hired in 2004 at the University of Paris VIII. This university, where Deleuze, Foucault, Cixous, Lyotard and Rancière taught, favors interdisciplinarity and diversity. In the same frame of mind, I headed the Collège international de philosophie, an institution of fifty international researchers working at the crossroads of all knowledge disciplines. I also directed the Collège’s journal, ‘Rue Descartes’, and I still manage two book series, ‘Intempéries’ at the Presses Universitaires de Vincennes and ‘Voix libres’ at Max Milo.

Being a radio producer and host at the radio was another experience of transmission and communication. For eleven years, on the national radio station France-Culture, I offered weekly and daily philosophy programs devoted to contemporary thought. I discovered there another professional environment related to the question of sound, and it inspires my intellectual research on listening.

With these diverse experiences in different contexts, I am happy to take on a new challenge by teaching at NYU and leading the Center for French Language and Cultures. I have a long experience of teaching in the US, including at Johns Hopkins University and at NYU as a visiting professor. Pedagogical and intellectual creativity and the promotion of French and Francophone thought will be my priorities.
Catherine Malabou is a professor of philosophy at the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University, and a distinguished professor of Comparative Literature and European Languages and Studies at the University of California at Irvine. A central aspect of her work is the concept of plasticity that she has been exploring for many years in a wide range of domains, from aesthetics to psychoanalysis to contemporary neuroscience and cellular biology.

Generally speaking, she pays acute attention to everything that deals with form, its emergence as well as its destruction. She is convinced that plasticity is the key concept that currently substitutes for that of ‘difference’ which has been in use for so long in continental philosophy and critical theory. She thinks that our epoch is facing the challenge of a simultaneity between creation and explosion of forms. Terrorism is one of the most convincing examples of such a simultaneity. Ecology also confronts us with this problem. Western culture has come to a point where everything it constructs gets immediately destroyed in some respect.

Her research on plasticity led her to address the question of trauma and cerebral lesions resulting from it. She has worked on Alzheimer patients in particular, as discussed in two of her books: *The New Wounded, From Neurosis to Brain Damage* (Fordham, 2012), and *Ontology of the Accident* (Polity Press, 2012). The two books explore the transformations of identity occurring after trauma, and challenge the classical psychoanalytic approach to such changes. These issues affect people’s everyday lives by helping them situate the importance of current neurobiological research, giving them a sense of what ‘brain’ means at both a rational and emotional level, and understand without judging the behaviors of cerebral patients that are so difficult to bear, particularly when they don’t recognize their family, and most of the time themselves.

Malabou has also built a confrontation between continental philosophy and contemporary epigenetics, thus fostering an approach to epistemology that tends to elaborate a renewed concept of rationality. Her book *Before Tomorrow, Epigenesis and Rationality* (Polity Press, 2016) is a reading of Kant, and his affirmation by which we might, by analogy, declare that a “system of epigenesis of pure reason” exists. She confronts this affirmation to the contemporary use of epigenesis and epigenetics: Is the origin of our categories of thinking innate, are they constructed through experience, or are they “a priori”, as Kant says, and can the “a priori” have an epigenetic development? These issues are also a way to address ‘speculative realism’, the new philosophical movement that tends to dismiss Kant and critical philosophy in the name of hard sciences, and a dismantlement of ‘correlationism’, that is of the subject/object relationship.

Her most recent book, *Morphing Intelligence, From IQ Measurements to Artificial Brains* (Columbia UP, 2018) deals with the urgency to deal with IA in a responsible way, that is outside the technophobia-technophilia debate.

Malabou’s graduate seminar at NYU this year will propose a reading of Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* around the question: What is a substitute?
Astronomy and fiction, theater and ecology, optics and imagination: these are some of the themes I explore and combine in my books and stage productions. From literature to science, from theater to philosophy, questions migrate. Cyrano de Bergerac’s lunar fiction becomes a thought experiment in Kepler’s work that upsets our representation of the cosmos; the sublime clouds of the baroque machine that we admire in Corneille’s Andromède become objects of debate for 17th-century philosophers. Bringing together opposites is for me a means of setting in motion what we tend to fix and categorize.

I was also educated “in-between”: between England and France, literature and science, the academic world and the world of art.

After studying literature at the École Normale Supérieure (where I obtained the agrégation in 2001), I moved to England, which turned out to be turning point: I was supposed to stay for one year (as a French Lectrice at Trinity College, Cambridge), but I ended up living there for twelve years. I discovered the history and philosophy of science, created my theater company, held my first academic position at Oxford University… My Ph.D. dissertation (2008, Paris IV-Sorbonne) combined my long-term passion for literature and my newer discovery of the history of science. I studied the poetics of the scientific genres and the relationship between fiction and knowledge in the 17th century. Far from the arid material I expected to find, I discovered descriptions engraved like miniatures and detailed like Dutch paintings, whose objects were the ring of Saturn, flying machines, cosmic travelers, optical instruments with surprising properties. Above all, I discovered rich, intriguing, and magnificent texts. From their former status as mathematicians, 17th-century astronomers have retained their confidence in the demonstrative power of the diagram; with fellow travelers, they have learned the art of anecdotes to give flesh and movement to two-dimensional images; like cosmographers, they have had the ambition to map the new worlds discovered. I have found in these texts a largely unexplored field in which to conduct literary analysis (published in my books Fictions of the Cosmos, Contes de la Lune, Histoires et Savoirs, and Le Monde en images).

Since then, my research interests have gradually moved from the sky back to Earth. The dramatic ecological situation in which we are entangled makes the interdisciplinary perspective more urgent than ever: how did we come to consider the Earth as an inert “décor,” as an appropriate and exploitable space? What is the “scene” of the anthropos, and how can it be shared with other living beings? My current research combines my work as a historian and productions with my company Zone Critique. For the past ten years I have been developing different forms of performative writing with the philosopher Bruno Latour in which we explore forms of the new climatic regime. Finally, teaching is where I find a renewed inspiration: at the EHESS with my research students, at the ENS where I organize a seminar on theatre and ecology, and at Sciences Po where I lead the experimental Master in Political Arts (SPEAP) bringing together researchers and artists. At SPEAP I met the co-authors of my latest book: Terra Forma, manuel de cartographies potentielles (2019) – knowledge is always built collectively, between generations and disciplines.
September 24, 2018. Full house at the Maison Française of New York University for a talk with author Linda Lê and Machines à écrire's host François Nouvelmann.
During my first year as a post-doc, I focused on teaching and developing my research. In March, I gave a talk on the shifting intellectual borders that mark geographical space in Astolphe de Custine’s La Russie en 1839, a topic that stems from one of my dissertation chapters, at the 40th Annual Conference of the Nineteenth Century Studies Association in Kansas City. I plan to return to this conference in the coming academic year. Over the summer, I have been working on two articles: one about the ambiguous border between the human and the animal (specifically, the bear) in L’ARC - N’, which places the arts of rhetoric and of politics at the summit of philosophy. This classification (or division, or hierarchy) of the sciences is first found in Brunetto Latini’s Tresor, a thirteenth-century political compilation, and is later used in the Legs d’Amors, Guilhem Molinier’s fourteenth-century art of poetry and, finally, in the Livre de la mutation de Fortune. The changes undergone by the classification from one text to the other trace the development of political thought and systems of government from the thirteenth-century republics of north Italy to fifteenth-century French monarchy; they accompany the development of cities and of vernacular literatures. My research is at the intersection of literature and philosophy, and it participates in the history of thought and epistemology.

These interests are the background for my course about debate culture in France, Fight Like the French, which will be offered in the Spring 2020. We will first look at the dialectical and rhetorical origins of debate, and then analyze certain quarrels, debates and polemics of French literature, philosophy and politics, from the fourteenth to the twenty-first centuries. We will focus on the usefulness as well as on the techniques of debate as much as on the content, and hopefully reenact some good debates in class.

I spent the summer of my NYU postdoc in Paris, braving canicules and library summer hours. I worked on a paper for a conference and on a performative reading for an art festival. The International Christine de Pizan Conference took place at the Sorbonne–Newel in June. My paper, ‘Le noble chappel de mère Nature: l’acquisition de la prudence à travers la vision dans Le livre de la mutation de Fortune’, shows how the allegorical figure of the mother legitimizes a woman to teach matters previously reserved for men: history and political prudence. The Hildelund Art Festival took place in Västra Ämtervik (Sweden) in July. Among other things, I talked about Lars von Trier, Jean Paulhan, Dominique Aury and the Story of O. During the rest of the summer, I worked on transforming the Christine de Pizan paper into an article.

Christine de Pizan was a remarkable fourteenth- and fifteenth-century author, whose allegorical dream poem, Le livre de la mutation de Fortune, is the center of the third and last chapter of my dissertation. I defended in September 2018 and received the Peter T. Ricketts dissertation prize in 2019 for the innovative approach and quality of my work. My dissertation follows the path of a thirteenth-century classification of the sciences, which places the arts of rhetoric and of politics at the summit of philosophy. This classification (or division, or hierarchy) of the sciences is first found in Brunetto Latini’s Tresor, a thirteenth-century political compilation, and is later used in the Legs d’Amors, Guilhem Molinier’s fourteenth-century art of poetry and, finally, in the Livre de la mutation de Fortune. The changes undergone by the classification from one text to the other trace the development of political thought and systems of government from the thirteenth-century republics of north Italy to fifteenth-century French monarchy; they accompany the development of cities and of vernacular literatures. My research is at the intersection of literature and philosophy, and it participates in the history of thought and epistemology.

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Hayet Sellami holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and an MA in International Relations (with a specialization in East Asia and Asia Pacific) from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris and Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales – INALCO, Paris, respectively. Her research interests include migration and identity formation, the impacts of migration on societies, and philosophical theories and concepts of identity (philosophical foundations of identity through the concept of Self and the Other). She has conducted extensive fieldwork on migration in China and Taiwan using ethnographic research methodologies. Her professional experience also includes over ten years of work as a journalist in East Asia, and consulting work for the private sector and numerous non-governmental organizations and international agencies. She teaches French language courses at all levels and covering a range of specific focuses, as well as courses on migration and diplomacy.

Dane Stalcup (PhD, NYU Department of French, 2013) studies the intersections of music, literature, and autobiography in the works of the composer Hector Berlioz. Dane has recently published an essay that explores the origins of Berlioz’s opera *Les Troyens*, tying the epic musical work to an epiphany the composer experienced while reading Virgil as a child. He has also published on the parallels between Berlioz’s serialized music criticism and the composer’s method of writing music. More broadly, Dane is interested in the performing arts culture of nineteenth-century France and its links to literature. Dane is an Associate Professor of Modern Languages at Wagner College.

Michael Krimper received his Ph.D. in 2018 from the Department of Comparative Literature at NYU, where he has been teaching literature and French language courses for two years. He is currently revising his dissertation as a book manuscript, entitled *Beyond Work: The Ethics and Politics of Inventive Literature in Postwar France*. Last fall, he gave a paper on the modern literary import of diaspora for the “Timing Blanchot” symposium held at NYU’s Department of French. In the spring, he co-organized an international conference on Beckett and modernism at Glucksman Ireland House, featuring keynote lectures by Jean-Michel Rabaté and Lisa Dwan. His articles have appeared or are forthcoming in *New Literary History, SubStance*, and *Los Angeles Review of Books*, among other venues.

Paul Wimmer has been teaching French at the college level for 12 years. Most recently, I studied letters in short fiction in 19th-century French literature, and especially how changes in epistolary rhetoric during the Renaissance affected short-story writing. Before that, I worked on the novels and criticism of the late 19th-century writer Rachilde. This is my 6th semester at NYU, where I have taught language as well as writing in French. I was also one of the department’s undergraduate tutors last semester.

Krystin Christy is a new Ph.D. student in the French Literature program and she is accompanied by her loyal companion, Noodle. Prior to coming to NYU, she studied literature at the American University of Paris, and then graduated with honors with a degree in English and a minor in French from Arizona State University. She graduated from high school in Hong Kong and she loves languages, cultures, and the environment. At NYU, she intends to focus her research on ecocriticism, and more specifically the depiction of other animals, peoples, and environments in medieval literature. She has studied gender and sexuality in twentieth-century French literature, and would also like to focus on Animal Studies and Gender Studies in medieval French literature.

Jessica Lynn Smietana was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. There, she earned her B.A. in English from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Having discovered her passion for French and Francophone literature while minoring in the discipline, she went on to receive her M.A. in this subject from the same university in 2017. Following the completion of this degree, Jessica went on to work for two years as an English assistant in the Esoonne department of Île-de-France. As she prepares to resume her graduate studies as a doctoral student at NYU, Jessica intends to continue her exploration of 20th-century Francophone literature, focusing on Quebec. She is particularly interested in examining how language, identity, and nationalism interact in literature arising from or inspired by the Quebec sovereignty movement.

Pierre Schwarzer studied philosophy between Berlin and New York and specialised in Aesthetics, Critical Theory, Psychoanalysis and Modern French Thought. Prior to joining NYU, he was active in contemporary art, co-edited a book (*en plein air: Ethnographies of the Digital*, Spector Books, 2019), worked at the New School and taught experimental film there. At NYU, he will follow two main research axes: a topology of digital subjectivation (1), mapping the tensions arising in our modes of being through the cultural process of digitization, entangling discussions of contemporary art and writing with genealogies of subjectivity, so as to provide concepts to complicate our present. a philosophy of the limit (2), to examine, in an epoch marked by the erosion of polities, mass migration, climate change and state violence, the functions, possibilities and range of the concept of the limit for theory, politics and writing.

A CONVERSATION ABOUT TRANSLATION

THE THÉÂTRE DU SOLEIL: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

The Théâtre du Soleil is France’s foremost independent theatre company, in existence since 1964, when it was formed as a workers’ cooperative. In 1971, the company moved into the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, which it helped transform into one of Paris’s most exciting avant-garde creative communities. The Soleil has produced some 28 shows, five of which have been penned by Hélène Cixous, most of which have been collectively created. Touring extensively, the company has brought productions to every continent except Africa, garnering praise especially for their Shakespeare Cycle (1981-1984), and House of Atreus quartet (1990-1993), their bunkrau-inspired allegory (by Cixous), Tambours sur la digue (1999-2002), and Le Dernier Caravansérail (2003-2005), a production based on testimonies Mnouchkine and company members collected from refugees in various camps in Australia, New Zealand, and France.

Judith Miller: As you know -- because you also participated in this project -- I’ve just handed over to Routledge the translation of Béatrice Picon-Vallin’s comprehensive study of the Théâtre du Soleil: The Théâtre du Soleil: The First Fifty Years. I think all of us who translated the various chapters of this history ran into some interesting translation dilemmas. What were the most pressing for you?

Rachel Watson: Well, as we discussed in our first collective meeting about this translation, the first problem was imagining the audience for this text and slightly changing the way the author addresses her readers. Béatrice Picon-Vallin assumes not just a French audience, but also French readers already quite conversant with the Théâtre du Soleil; and, like her, people who are comfortable thinking about “Ariane,” a major public figure, as well as a major artist. So I had to think in terms of “Ariane Mnouchkine,” director, company manager, dramaturg, sometimes author, always the inspirer, and make sure that Mnouchkine’s position and function were clear. I also found it necessary to add, either in footnotes or parenthetically, a little more information about context (for example, about the tainted blood scandal that prompted the Soleil’s 1994 production La Ville Parjure ou le Réveil des Erinyes.) It’s daunting to think that this theatre history, so intimately connected to the contemporary history of France and to the way in which the Soleil and Ariane Mnouchkine situate themselves and their work in the world, needs to speak to Anglophone readers not only in the USA and the UK, but also in India, Australia, South Africa, West Africa, and so on. At least I know that’s what your hope is for this volume!! What did you find trickiest?

Judith Miller: There were many things, in addition to what you’ve just enumerated -- the thorniest being the question of tense. Picon-Vallin has written her history in the “historical present.” In French, this gives the narration a feeling of immediacy, a kind of “you are thereness.” But to my mind, the present tense is really not a viable option for an historical study in English; and changing everything to a form of past tense was not nearly as easy as I initially thought, especially because I wanted us to maintain the liveliness and enthusiasm of Picon-Vallin’s prose. The problem was compounded by her exceedingly long sentences, ideas or descriptions often strung together in such a way to give in French a strong impression of a produc-
A CONVERSATION ABOUT TRANSLATION

the actors speak directly. Emelyn Lih, in fact, worked on a chapter almost entirely in dialogue form.

Judith Miller: Yes, and that asks for another way of thinking about translation – capturing the sense of orality, the quirks of individual speakers. It’s what’s closest to translating theatre itself, and what I personally like doing the best.

Rachel Watson: What was the hardest part of your work?

Judith Miller: Imposing one narrative voice on the various translators in this project, as I recognize that all of us, as translators, while wanting to “serve” the original, of course, also give of ourselves, of our own writing talents, of our own love of words. Standardizing some of the vocabulary, rephrasing certain parts of the narration made me feel as if I were taking something away from other translators. Yet, at the same time, because we worked so collectively over the past year, the ultimate sense I have of this project is that it is really “ours,” which is actually fitting, as this replicates the Soleil’s own way of collectively creating most of their plays.


Judith Miller: Yes, but mine is concise, an introduction, and not at all the kind of sweeping discussion that Picon-Vallin proposes, one that both follows the Soleil from its beginnings and situates the company’s work within the major theoretical paradigms informing French theatre of the 20th century. And, then, there are all those stunning production photos by Martine Franck and Michelle Laurent, among others. That’s the kind of documentation that will nourish other theatre makers for years. But Rachel, you’re also a Mnouchkine and Théâtre du Soleil specialist. Why do you think it was important to translate this text?

Rachel Watson: Because the Théâtre du Soleil is one of the 20th-century’s most important and interesting theatrical experiments. And I mean “experiment” in the broadest sense – an experiment that includes not only their work and its originality, but also an ethos, a way of living and working together as a collective, a special relationship to its “popular” audience, and a political engagement through their art. At 50 years old, the company has also enjoyed a longevity that’s rare. This means they’ve been able to build on their skills, play after play, and create a working vocabulary truly unique to them. We can see this in the genealogy of their work; especially in how Picon-Vallin has analyzed it. She shows us how threads emerge, where the rupture points are, or the moments of particular growth and experimentation. And, too, this is a delicate moment in their history, a moment when Mnouchkine is thinking about her legacy, worrying about the future of the company. It’s a good moment to take stock, while she’s still around and the company isn’t experiencing a major upheaval. And, finally, Picon-Vallin has had unusual access to the company, been allowed into the life of the troupe in a way rare for an academic. That’s made it possible for her to capture the day to day workings of the company, a narration that’s really compelling.
Une nouvelle époque s'ouvre pour notre CENTER FOR FRENCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURES

Interview avec François Noudelmann
Propos recueillis par Phillip John Usher

En 1978, le professeur Tom Bishop fonda le Center for French Civilization and Culture de NYU dont il assura la direction jusqu’en 2016. Reconnu comme centre d'excellence par les Services Culturels de l'Ambassade, il est depuis un peu plus de quarante ans un lieu d'échange entre les États-Unis et la France ainsi qu'entre le monde universitaire et les communautés francophones et francophiles de New York. Au fil des années, notamment lors de grands colloques annuels, le Centre a vu se défiler les plus grands noms, de Barthes à Cixous et de Laferrière à Latour. Sous la direction de la professeur Sarah Kay, le Centre changea de nom, devenant le Center for French Language and Cultures, ce dernier mot très emphatiquement au pluriel pour souligner que l'axe Paris-New York sera un axe parmi d'autres dans une nouvelle cartographie plus « mondialisée ». À partir du mois de septembre 2019, le directeur par intérim que je suis passera le bâton au nouveau directeur, le philosophe François Noudelmann qui quitte l'Université de Paris-VIII pour rejoindre le Department of French Literature, Thought and Culture et pour nous aider à imaginer l'avenir de notre Centre.

PJU : François, tout d'abord, laisse-moi te dire combien je suis... combien nous sommes ravis que tu aies accepté de diriger notre Centre. Je suis confiant que tu es l'homme de la situation et suis très impatient de voir ce que le Centre va devenir dans les années qui viennent ! Je commence par une question toute simple. Philosophe, professeur, ancien directeur du Collège international de philosophie, ancien producteur-animateur sur France Culture, tu as publié des dizaines de livres, tu fais la navette entre Paris et New York depuis bien longtemps... Pourquoi — vu ton parcours et tes activités nombreuses à Paris — t’installer pour toi ?

FN : Le Centre et la Maison Française me sont familiers depuis une vingtaine d’années. New-yorkais de cœur, j’ai eu régulièrement rendez-vous avec ces lieux, dont les acteurs ont toujours été des références intellectuelles et des hôtes bienveillants, de Tom Bishop à Sarah Kay et moi, avec Francine Goldenhar et tous les membres du département. Renouveler le Centre est un immense défi, à la suite de ceux que tu as cités : après avoir promu des recherches et des productions culturelles internationales depuis Paris, je suis heureux de le faire à New York où je vais m'installer durablement. La centralité parisienne fait parfois oublier que la pensée en langue française s’exerce aussi dans d’autres lieux du monde. Il y a parfois plus d’énergies aux carrefours qu’au centre, c’est-à-dire là où se croisent les idées, les mouvements et les formes. Et New York est sans doute le carrefour le plus intense de la planète. Je souhaite ardemment initier depuis NYU de nouveaux débats intellectuels qui seront moins une importation des valeurs en cours à Paris que la connexion et l’invention de nouvelles pensées, en phase avec les transformations du monde contemporain.

PJU : Tu n’es pas encore arrivé à New York et je sais que l'année 2019-20 sera surtout une année de consultation et de transition... Néanmoins je me laisse te demander : qu’aimerais-tu qu’on dise du Centre dans trois ans ? Et pourquoi le dira-t-on ?

FN : J’aimerais que toutes celles et ceux qui s’intéressent aux événements culturels et intellectuels à New York se demandent, comme par réflexe : « Quel est le programme du Center for French Language and Cultures de NYU ? ». Quels sont les prochains rendez-vous ? ». Il faut que cette curiosité devienne systématique et qu’on sache que la Maison Française est un foyer permanent où il y a toujours quelque chose à découvrir, à discuter, en langue française et en langue anglaise. Le Center doit devenir The rendezvous à New York.

PJU : As-tu déjà quelques idées de projets ou d’événements ?


PJU : Comme tu le sais, le Chronicle of Higher Education a annoncé que, depuis trois ans, 651 programmes de langue étrangères ont été fermés aux États-Unis. Et pourtant, au département nous avons vu, sur cette même période, le nombre de majors doubler... Dans un tel contexte, un pays...
D'après deux ans, le Centre organise conjointement avec l’Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie le Festival des cinq continents, une manifestation culturelle dédiée à la promotion de la littérature de langue française. Créé par Guillaume Parodi, Sarah Kay et l’équipe new-yorkaise de l’OIF, ce festival cherche à répondre au besoin de créer un nouvel axe qui se décentralise de Paris et qui permet aux écrivains, aux universitaires et aux éditeurs de s’exprimer en dehors des cadres établis. Nous sommes heureux d’avoir réussi à pérenniser cet objectif que nous nous étions fixés il y a deux ans tout en parvenant à inscrire New York comme traduction d’un inédit de l’écrivain Fabienne Kanor (à gauche).

Le festival des cinq continents
Par Guillaume Parodi

Buckley, The Strokes... ou encore la rafraîchissante Sarahmée, à travers l’action du festival ! Il est aussi à noter que le festival offre la possibilité aux étudiants du département de français de s’engager physiquement en littérature : on doit une série de lectures bilingues dans la librairie Kew & Willow Books à Emelyn Lih et un translation slam au Nuyorican Poets Café à Claire Reising. Ce dernier, remarqué par l’American Translators Association, faisait la part belle à nos étudiants en permettant à Andrew Nsirim, un doctorant en deuxième année, et Janet Lee, une alumna, d’exercer leurs talents de traducteurs.

Nous sommes heureux de savoir que le festival est une réussite d’ensemble, comme sont soulignées les salles comblées de la soirée de lancement 2019 et du concert de Sarahmée et le reportage de TV5 Monde, mais aussi un succès d’un point de vue politique et culturel. Nous avons eu la chance de recevoir très tôt le soutien des services culturels de plusieurs représentations gouvernementales, à savoir la Délégation générale du Québec à New York, le Consulat de Suisse à New York et Wallonie-Bruxelles International. Ces différents sponsors ont permis la venue de plusieurs artistes, ce qui nous a offert en retour la possibilité d’agir comme tremplin : repérée dans notre festival, Kim Thúy a par la suite été invitée au Brooklyn Book Festival 2018, l’écrivaine suisse Arthur Brügger a été invitée à la Georgia Tech et à l’Alliance Française d’Atlanta, et les lauréats du Prix des cinq continents ont participé à plusieurs activités aux États-Unis et au Québec.

Le Festival des cinq continents a toutes les cartes en main pour s’inscrire comme un acteur fort des domaines culturels et littéraires à New York et à l’international. Nous espérons faire mieux dans les années à venir et pouvoir échanger avec vous au cours de la prochaine édition, au printemps 2020 !

Janet Lee, alumna du département, en conversation avec Andrew Nsirim à propos de leur traduction d’un inédit de l’écrivain Fabienne Kanor (à gauche).
On constate aujourd'hui, des deux côtés de l'Atlan
tique, un renouveau de la pensée de la littérature,
 aussi bien chez les penseurs analytiques que chez les
philosophes et critiques dits continentaux. La
littérature, qu'elle tente d'approcher au plus près
du réel ou qu'elle ait l'ambition de réinventer les
imaginaires, qu'elle se tienne au cœur de l'intime
ou qu'elle ambitionne de traverser les mondia
ts... la littérature participe à la refonte de nos cadres
de pensées. Cette relation indirecte au réel, induite
par le travail de la langue littéraire, est le détour
nécessaire à la compréhension et à la transforma
tion du monde. Il importe donc au plus haut point
d'écouter tout ce qui se joue dans ce qu'on appelle
de francophonie, tel qu'il est encore utilisé en
France et la littérature françaises à partir d'un centre.
Parlons du Centre au printemps, tu as mis en avant
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**PJTU** : Comme j'ai dit en introduction, Sarah Kay
a changé le nom du Centre pour que l'axe Paris-
New York trouve sa place dans une cartographie
plus complexe. À un moment donné, quand nous
parlons du Centre au printemps, tu as mis en avant
l'idée (d'après Glissant) d'une « archipélisation» du
Centre. Qu'est-ce que tu entendais par-là ?

**FN** : C'est en effet une condition de la réussite :
que les étudiants s'impliquent dans les activités du
Centre, de la conception de ses programmes jusqu'à
leur réalisation. Ils constituent la richesse en cours
de l'université, comme en témoignent leurs sujets
de recherche, souvent en phase avec les mutations
sociales, ethniques et culturelles d'aujourd'hui. Je
ferai appel à certains d'entre eux pour les intégrer
dans le Conseil scientifique du Centre et je les sollici
terai tous, régulièrement, afin de recueillir leurs
souhaits, commentaires et critiques. Les profes
seurs, évidemment, sont une richesse essentielle à
l'activité du Centre et j'ai déjà reçu des suggestions
que je mettrai à l'ordre du jour. Pour avoir dirigé
une institution de cinquante philosophes venus
de tous pays, j'ai une bonne expérience du travail
collectif et je n'oublie pas qu'avec les ressources
de NYU nous lançons des projets forts.

**PJTU** : Faisant suite à ma question précédente :
penses-tu que le Centre puisse être un lieu non
seulement de « dissémination » mais aussi de «
production (de pensée) » ?

**FN** : Pour filer la métaphore des abeilles avec le
Conseil qui sera la ruche, nous devons à la fois
chercher le nectar et polliniser alentour. Butiner,
transporter, partager, digérer, construire, ventiler,
métamorphoser... c'est un peu le travail de la pensée,
non ?

**PJTU** : Je voudrais terminer par deux questions
peut-être un peu espigles : La première : dans ton
Génie du mensonge, livre très fin, tu t'intéresses
de plus en plus aux « affirmateurs », celles et ceux qui
éprouvent le besoin d'affirmer quelque chose, une
idée, une vérité, un jugement... Le rôle d'un directeur
de Centre n'est pas d'affirmer, ni même de parler.
Sa fonction est d'agir. Il est dans le ‘faire’. Donc me
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Plus fondamentalement, les contradictions sont
moins des mensonges que les versants d'une person
nalité à plusieurs facettes. Loin d'être des maladies,
les singularités multiples, si elles étonnent chez
les philosophes, sont le lot des êtres humains. J'es-
espère montrer parmi les meilleurs des mien
t et ne pas être enfermé dans un rôle unique.

**PJTU** : Deuxième question espigle, si je n'abuse
pas trop. Il y a, tu l'as probablement vue, une
« Nous ne pouvons plus penser la langue
et la littérature françaises à partir d'un
centre qui serait Paris ou la France. »

**FN** : Ah, en effet, personne n'est indemne du
mensonge à l'égard de soi-même ! La Rochefo
cauçauld écrivait : « Il ne faut pas s'effacer que les
autres nous cachent la vérité puisque nous nous la
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Fatima Mazmouz en exposition à La Maison Française

Par Guillaume Parodi

Le Centre et Cécile Bishop ont organisé au mois d’avril 2019 une exposition photo à la Maison Française. Les œuvres de Fatima Mazmouz questionnent l’héritage du colonialisme au Maroc et nous donne à réfléchir sur les questions identitaires et idéologiques qui continuent de déchirer l’espace public. Elles sont actuellement visibles dans les locaux du département.

L’histoire coloniale marocaine

Au premier regard, les photographies de Fatima Mazmouz hésitent. On découvre à travers Résistants et Bouzbir un pan de l’histoire coloniale marocaine oubliée du plus grand nombre et anéthésiée par la mémoire collective. En effet, Résistants présente 30 portraits de résistants marocains qui se sont battus pour libérer le Maroc et dont les noms figurent aujourd’hui sur les grandes avenues de Casablanca, mais que ses habitants seraient bien en peine de relier à une certaine partie de leur histoire. De la même manière, Bouzbir rend une voix et un corps aux prostituées de Casablanca, paraguayes par les autorités françaises dans le quartier éponyme. Fatima Mazmouz exhume au cours de recherches une série de cartes postales photographiées par Marcelin Flandrin, et décide de leur rendre la place qui est la leur dans l’histoire de la photographie marocaine.

La photographe-plasticienne comprend très tôt qu’une partie de son travail consiste non seulement à donner un corps dans l’espace public à ceux qui ont été. Le but de l’intervention graphique est d’emboîter une mémoire collective qui n’a pas été soulevée dans l’espace public. C’est en montrant ces femmes, et en tramant leurs images avec des collages d’utérus malades, qu’elle intègre la question de l’intime dans la guerre coloniale via le prisme de la domination masculine. Selon elle, il n’est absolument pas question de cacher ce qui a été. Le but de l’intervention graphique est dans un premier temps d’établir une réécriture de l’histoire, et dans un deuxième temps de faire entrer ces photographies dans l’histoire du Maroc et de créer un patrimoine photographique pour les générations futures.

Dans Bouzbir, comme dans Résistants, le désir de Fatima Mazmouz n’est autre que de replacer l’être humain au cœur de son histoire. Le contexte colonial a infligé de très nombreuses blessures, mais le discours qu’il en reste n’excède plus qu’à travers un prisme qui est débarrassé des histoires personnelles qu’elles soient arabes, berbères, juives, italiennes, espagnoles ou françaises. Elle veut donner à voir, à entendre et à ressentir ces histoires individuelles dans un contexte de domination politique, sexuelle et masculine, à travers les tatouages qui portaient les filles de Bouzbir, des « Je t’aime untel » et des « Ti regarde ma tenue ». Ces fragments d’histoire, Fatima Mazmouz y tient. C’est son moyen à elle de célébrer sa ville, son histoire et son héritage.
Cartographies for the Anthropocene
A Conversation between Thomas Murphy and Phillip John Usher
Exterranean: Extraction in the Humanist Anthropocene

It’s hard to use languages and conceptual tools produced by modernity when we attempt to re-frame and to tackle the very real, very concrete problems produced by that same modernity.” In this conversation, Thomas and Phillip explore how early modern literature might provide another way for elaborating new cartographies for our era of global warming and ecological disaster.

Thomas Murphy: Your new book, published this year by Fordham University Press, is called Exterranean: Extraction in the Humanist Anthropocene. What is the focus of the book?

Phillip John Usher: Well, in the simplest formulation — to quote the first sentence of the introduction — “This is a book about the extraction of stuff from the Earth.” The focus is squarely on developing tools for perceiving our relationship, as humans, between the Earth we stand on, the matter we extract from it, and the life of that matter once it’s extracted. To reconnect, if you will, the hillside, the lump of coal, the pollution created when I light the fire, and how the smoke then fills my lungs. Does that make sense? It’s a book whose goal is, ultimately, extremely simple. But also, I think, very important. The COP 21 Paris agreement about the future of planet Earth talks everywhere about “emissions” but not once about “extraction” or “mining.” The hunch, if you will, is that one reason we stumbled into the Anthropocene is that, collectively, we have divorced Earth from what I call “exterranean” material, a certain kind of willed blindness. To do this, I work through a lot of 16th-century literature and connect my project to that of contemporary eco-theory—which I have come to see as a strikingly motivated connection—but, au fond, these are the means to an end. It was a very different book to the ones I’ve written before, much more “driven.”

TM: How did you first become interested in mines and their relationship to 16th-century literature?

PJU: Right, so... initially, my “3D turn” owed much more to the truly spellbinding photos of Edward Burtynsky. Especially his photos of quarries. All of Burtynsky’s photographs — whether of quarries, of scrap piles, of airplane graveyards, etc. — all “dwarf” the human. In the case of his photos...
CARTOGRAPHIES FOR THE ANTHROPOCENE

of quarries — in places as far apart as Vermont and Carrara, Italy — this was all the more the case. As you look at one of these photos, you see this sculpting of our planet, which seems so huge that it must have been performed by giants. And yet, if you look closely, you see, somewhere in the photo, a tiny little human, perhaps a crane operator, or someone with a shovel. One of the initial starting points for the project was thus, very openly, to see if anything similar existed in the literature of “my” century! Bit by bit, the project took shape... I quickly realized that the sixteenth-century was the period when mining first reached industrial scales. I also quickly discovered a huge trove of technical mining manuals from the period, and also countless poems and other literary texts that, in one way or another, dealt with our relationship to depth, to extraction.

**TM:** You call the theoretical space in which you work the “Humanist Anthropocene.” How do you see the intersection between the Anthropocene, the environmental humanities, and 16th-century French literature?

**PJJ:** That’s several questions in one. I don’t much like the term “Environmental Humanities.” It’s an institutional necessity, to locate one’s fellow thinkers, to draw attention to a program, to secure funding, but the term itself is heinous! I agree with Michel Serres that the word environment has to be redefined, to see the role of nature(s) and/or Nature in all of this?

**TM:** You and Frédérique Aït-Touati co-hosted the *French Natures* conference-festival last fall—which notably featured the U.S. premiere of Bruno Latour’s lecture-performance *Inside*—where these sorts of questions were addressed head on from a variety of theoretical and disciplinary angles. Where do you see the role of nature(s) and/or Nature in all of this?

**PJJ:** The hesitant wording here—are we talking about nature, natures, or Nature?—gets to the heart of things. Latour’s lecture-performance, which Frédérique staged so hauntingly at the Romulus Linney Courtyard Theatre on 42nd Street last October and which can now be viewed at frenchnatures.org, stages a conceptual shift from seeing the planet from “outside” (i.e. from afar, as a big blue globe floating in space) to seeing it from “inside” (i.e. close-up, with alternate cartographies that capture all sorts of physical processes, the movement of animals, the circulation of chemicals, etc.), enacting a detachment from Nature as something “over there” (i.e. the nice verdant hills in the distance or in a frame) to nature(s) as being “right here,” in my MacBook, in my coffee, in my body, in the feedback loops that connect Little Me to this week’s farewell to the Ok glacier. The exterranean, as a concept, is part of all this. It’s a pre- or post-natural notion that gets “inside” in opposition to terms like “extraction” or “mining” that split off the Earth from that which comes from it...

**TM:** What do 16th-century thinkers have to teach us about the work of contemporary ecological thought?

**PJJ:** I’m co-editing a book at present, called *Early Modern Écologies* (note the accent on écologies), which responds exactly to that question, taking up a slightly longer point raised by my fabulous colleague Louisa Mackenzie at a conference a few years back. On a panel about so-called “environmental” approaches to the Renaissance, she pointed out the following: “It’s more important to ask what early modern French literature can do for ecological thought than what ecological thought can do for early modern French literature.” I agree. What I hope *Exterranea* shows, and what the various authors in *Early Modern Écologies* show too, is that 16th-century thinkers can provide essential lexicons and non-modern connectivities. It’s hard to use languages and conceptual tools produced by modernity when we attempt to re-frame and to tackle the very real, very concrete problems produced by that same modernity. It’s like... trying to see a sewing machine to unpick the shirt you just made. It’s much better to get something else, i.e. a seam ripper, a pair of scissors, even your teeth. Non-modernity is one such “other thing” that can help us, I believe, to un-stitch modernity’s closed framings.

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Photograph by Martin Argyroglo. All rights reserved.
It is only when I sit to write this that I realize I know very little about Michael’s background—his upbringing, his early days in Trinidad, his family there, his origins. I look up his surname and find that it is either an Oriya brahmin name, or else is derived from the Anglo-Norman French de-aesc, of the ash tree. Either origin seems plausible, as Michael had an Indo-Trinidadian grandmother, who spoke French Creole, and was himself an Episcopalian, “Anglo-Indian Trinidadian,” as one of his Jamaican university professors described him. I recall, too, that Michael said one time he had family in Barbados, and it seems that the Dash surname is quite prevalent in that most British of Caribbean islands. His three-part name—Jean Michael Dash—suggests already a composite identity, one made up of different parts. In the taxi on the way to his memorial service in New York, I cross a bridge inscribed with the motto *E pluribus unum*, and think how apt that is for that city, for Trinidad, for Michael.

The search for roots, talk of trees, origins, names, authenticity—Michael would laugh at all of this and at the mess you can get into by placing too much emphasis on the past and thinking of it as the key to one’s identity. For Michael was above all presence, whether you were in his company or out of it, in the same room or thousands of miles away. That is, he was always at hand, willing to respond to messages and requests, and he was a presence in the sense that you knew he was there to offer support and guidance. He also had *presence*, you felt it when he was around, which makes it all the more of a shock that he is so suddenly absent.

We know what Michael became—a world-leading scholar in a world-leading department and university. But how did he get there? How did he become interested in the field? What was he like as a young scholar? I want to know more about this time in his life and career, the early days, as I feel that he, no doubt like all of us, is of a certain time and place, a product of a generation that grew up in its own context that may be difficult to imagine now, but in which I feel we can find the origins not only of Michael’s academic work, but of Francophone Caribbean studies as a discipline, at least in Anglophone academia. That context was one of change and possibility, new ideas and new ways of teaching French studies in the Caribbean. To understand this background better, it is important to be aware of history, politics, and culture, the relationships between them, and the way they influenced teaching and research in Michael’s alma mater, the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. In beginning to comprehend this, I reached out to two former lecturers at the UWI, Gertrud Aub-Buscher and Beverley Noakes (at that time, she was Beverley Evans—she married an Ormerod in 1969, and a Noakes in 1999), both of whom taught Michael and shared their memories generously.

1948 was an important year in Caribbean history, one that still resonates in the present. On 22 June 1948, the *Empire Windrush* arrived in London, carrying some 500 West Indian migrants. As they disembarked onto the “mother country,” a plummy-voiced reporter identified a man as the “spokesman” for the new arrivals, and the man declared himself to be Lord Kitchener, the king of calypso, and sings ‘London is the place for me…I am glad to know my mother country’. Lord Kitchener offers the song like a gift, a guest freely giving all that he possesses, but the host seems not to be...
receptive and moves on, leaving Kitchener standing there, alone, looking at his feet and making a slight tutting sound with his tongue. Seventy years later, Kitchener would still be tutting at the treatment of his people in the mother country.

Michael Dash would also emigrate, but not to London, as his generation tended not to see England as a homeland and sought different ways to imagine the Caribbean. Michael was not unlike a calypsonian—always one step ahead of you, he never forced an idea, just let it take its time. Timing is everything. As a calypsonian would play with words and turn them round, Michael would do the same with ideas, testing you with a smile, nudging you to rethink your ideas.

Michael's own arrival in the world came less than a month later, on 20 July 1948. Trinidad was still a British colony, but it was changing quickly. In 1956, the People's National Movement under the leadership of Eric Williams won its first election, and would win every subsequent election until Williams' death in 1981. In 1958, the United Kingdom tried unsuccessfully to establish an independent West Indies Federation comprising most of the former British West Indies. Trinidad and Tobago achieved full independence by means of the Trinidad and Tobago Independence Act 1962 on August 31, 1962, when Michael Dash was fourteen years old.

Culturally, too, this was a time of ferment and change. Derek Walcott founded the Trinidad Theatre Workshop in 1959, while V.S. Naipaul's literary career began with his masterful novels on Trinidadian life, *The Mystic Masseur* (1961). Carnival was the most striking and powerful expression of Trinidadian culture by this time, a dazzling visual display, and a great popular cacophony of noise, sound, and music, fueled by the classic calypso music of the time, and the steelbands. Michael Dash was a great Carnival man, playing in bands every year, and knowing intimately the importance of play and ritual to Caribbean being.

Michael studied at St. George's College, a co-educational school in San Juan, which opened in 1953 and was something of a challenge to the culture of the elite Port of Spain schools, like St. Mary's or Queen's Royal College, which Naipaul, Williams, and other luminaries such as CLR James attended. That said, his education would have been colonial in nature, based on the English curriculum and no doubt with little emphasis on local history. It was here that Michael was taught French by Randolph Hezekiah, a teacher at the school who went on to lecture at UWI St Augustine, and to be a lifelong friend—until Randy's death, Michael would meet up with him each Carnival time. Randy would himself later teach and publish on Francophone Caribbean literature, and one imagines it must have been in those classes at St. George's that Michael's interest in the field was first sparked.

1968 was another big year, not just in France and the United States, but also in the Caribbean, where many of the Anglophone islands were enjoying the first years of their independence. Free since 1962, Jamaica had been visited by Dr. Martin Luther King in 1965 and Emperor Haile Selassie in 1966. In 1968, Kingston erupted in what became known as the Rodney Riots, following the government's refusal to let UWI lecturer Dr. Walter Rodney return to the country. Culturally, the nation was blooming, perhaps most notably, of course, in music, which was taking on important social and political roles, just as it constantly renewed its forms. The UWI Mona campus was part of the country's intellectual, cultural, and social life, and it was in this ferment that Michael Dash began his graduate studies (he started his undergraduate degree in French at Mona in 1966). The Mona campus was, he said, "the place to be in the late sixties. Lloyd Best, Orlando Patterson, Kamau Brathwaite, Rex Nettleford and so on were all on the faculty at Mona. The Waiters played at the Students' Union fetes. We had had the Walter Rodney demonstrations in 1968, shut the university down and occupied the Creative Arts Centre."

The heady atmosphere encouraged, Michael said, intellectual "risk-taking," and for him that meant working on Haiti, which was largely ignored across the UWI campuses at the time, except for at St. Augustine, where David Nicholls, who was Anglican Chaplin and senior lecturer in Government, was carrying out his foundational work on Haitian political history, which resulted most notably in his monumental study, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*. Nicholls' advice and encouragement were "invaluable" to Michael, and the two men remained close friends until Nicholls' death in 1996.

In contrast to the militant energy across much of the Mona campus in 1968, the French department was, according to then-lecturer Dr. Beverley Noakes fairly conservative. Noakes, and the rest of the department was, however, affected by the general mood, and following a suggestion from one of her students, she gave a well-received public lecture on Fanon. The events in Jamaica and around campus led her to read Francophone Caribbean writers in new ways, especially Césaire, whose *Cahier struck her* she says, "like a thunderbolt." Her readings in turn gave her a new perspective on the Caribbean, and influenced her own work, which became more sensitive to politics and history. Noakes's own *An Introduction to the French Caribbean Novel* (1985) remains a key work in the early scholarship in the field.

When Noakes was appointed in 1962, the department was still largely following a British syllabus (UWI had been a college of the University of London until that year). It was not until 1966 that the department decided to create a Francophone literature course. Bridget Jones, a fellow Cambridge graduate, was the leading spirit in the new initiative, but she did not want to do it herself, perhaps, Noakes says, as she was busy writing her own Ph.D (on Antonin Artaud) at the time. The rest of the staff encouraged Noakes to take on the task, as she was the only West-Indian born member of the department.

Another former UWI lecturer, Gertrud Anb-Bucher, recalls that the events in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean greatly affected the academic staff, who joined students manning the University gates at the time of the Walter Rodney crisis. This was the period, she says, when many of the territories contributing to the University had become independent and what was the University College of the West Indies, a college of the University of London, became the independent UWI. This spirit of independence translated into quite radical changes in the teaching of language and literature:

“Having had to teach syllabuses approved by London (not a Caribbean author in sight...), we were encouraged to rethink what we were teaching in the context of the Caribbean. This led not only to the creation of new courses and research projects in Caribbean and African literature, but also to the transformation of language courses: traditional prose and translation exercises now included Caribbean texts, and the methodology of language teaching was revised and brought up to date decades before language courses in most UK universities were modernized. Developments in other departments, e.g. English, History, were similar to those in French. Spanish had been teaching Latin American literature for some time."

The 60s were, she says, “a very exciting time to be in the UWI French department, which became a separate department only in 1964, after being part of the Department of Modern Languages. The combination of a mainly young staff, most of them with strong Caribbean connections, and a university which encouraged innovation gave us a freedom that was probably unusual at the time.” In addition, there were strong links across the

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Édouard Glissant, Michael Dash, and Nathalie Stephens during a lecture at La Maison Francaise of New York University.
“One imagines the young Michael listening avidly to her impressions of these authors, particularly Glissant, of course, who would become a close friend and deeply influence Michael’s thinking on Caribbean history and culture.”

friend and deeply influence Michael’s thinking on Caribbean history and culture.

It was Michael’s choice to focus on Haiti for his doctoral research. Ormerod had spent six weeks in Port-au-Prince in 1968, and shared with him her knowledge of the material available at the Institution Saint-Louis-de-Gonzagues. The most useful thing she ever did for Michael was, she says, to give him a personal introduction to Frère Lucien and Frère Raphaël, who had been helpful and welcoming to Ormerod on her trip to Haiti. She knew he would not run into the problem she had: “the Brothers were keen to preserve from my sight certain texts that I requested, and that they felt were unsuitable for a nicely brought up young woman like me! I suspect it was on the same grounds that they gave me coffee when they invited me to meet Laleau, but allowed Michael a rum when he went for a similar meeting!”

It is fascinating to read now, fifty years later, the abstract to Michael’s Ph.D. thesis. The thesis was a study of the four decades between the American Occupation of Haiti and the Revolution of 1946. The focus was to be on literature, as it “reflected the national desire to unsettle colonialism.” He was interested in nationalism in Haitian writing, and traces its development back to 1816, the year of Haitian independence. The American Occupation of 1915-34 sparked a “literary revolution” that remained an internal phenomenon “with a sustained dialogue between the ‘Marxists’ and ‘Africanists.’” This changed with the advent of the global Négritude movement and the advancement of the “notion of black cultural homogeneity.” The key contribution of Haitian literature, and indeed of Michael’s thesis, would be the refutation of such ideas. “Haitian writers were among the first to question the validity of such a monolithic black culture,” he writes. As such, in this first work, which was to become the landmark work Literature and Ideology in Haiti, 1915-1961 (1981), Haitian literature leads Michael to work through notions of race, to become suspicious of totalizing, homogenizing cultural movements, and to explore instead the “distinctive complexity” of Haitian national culture that enables him to see the “limitations of négritude” and to immediately move beyond race in a sense, in a way that no doubt prepared him for his future engagements with Glissant’s work in particular. If Michael belonged to a race it was to the race of travelers, migrants, free spirits. He was himself one of the “other Americans” he would so eloquently evoke in his later work.

We can sense that even at this early stage, Michael was drawn to complexity and contradiction, the paradoxes of Caribbean history and culture, and that he was to be a leading voice in exploring more difficult, experimental ideas of Caribbean being. “You never had the sense, which one sometimes has with graduate students, of having to prop him up or help him along,” Noakes says of the early Michael. “He knew where he was going.”

Noakes left UWI and Jamaica for Australia early in 1970, about the same time that Michael went on his first trip to Haiti. She would stay in touch with him, when Michael worked in Nigeria, then Mon and New York. Michael invited her to contribute to a number of volumes that he edited, perhaps most notably the enduring study A History of Literature in the Caribbean. “I appreciated the way in which Michael helped me to feel that I still belonged in Francophone Caribbean circles. He had a great gift for friendship and inclusiveness — though it is his laughter that I most remember,” she says.

After Michael returned from his trip to Haiti, Bridget Jones undertook the supervision of his Ph.D. studies. Jones would herself go on after leaving Jamaica in the 1980s to be a leading light in the Association for the Study of African and Caribbean Literature in French (ASCALF), which was itself a forerunner of the Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies. Before teaching the French Caribbean course, Noakes taught 16-19th century French literature, and after Noakes left, took over the Francophone Caribbean course (and the supervision of Michael’s thesis). “Bridget had a particularly interest in Damas and French Guianese literature,” Noakes says, “but she was also very widely read in Caribbean literature, although she was such a perfectionist that she published very little. She was a fascinating person to talk to. Very serious though — probably more so than Michael or myself! Bridget and I were friends from our student days at Cambridge. I admired her scholarly knowledge of everything.”

Gertrud Aub-Buscher has similar memories of the UWl French program in the 1960s, where she was hired to teach medieval literature and the history of French language, and became interested in the French-lexicon Creole language of Trinidad. At the time, she says, she was the only person in the French Department whose main interest was in language. The first course in Caribbean linguistics was developed by Mervyn Alleyne, she says, who, “although he had done his postgraduate work in French dialectology, was technically not in the French Department; he became one of the leading scholars in creolistics.”

One can sense therefore that the UWl French Department at Mona was a key player in the early development of the field of Francophone Postcolonial Studies, and that Michael Dash could barely have arrived at a more propitious time. For the next thirty years he would give largely unbroken service to the UWl, an institution that remained dear to him. It was arguably at NYU that full and proper recognition of his work would come, thanks to his continued publication of ever challenging and original work and his numerous lectures at national and international venues.

Michael’s energy never faded, his light never dimmed—it glowed as brightly as ever right to the end, and that light, that energy will sustain those of us privileged to have known him as we mourn and remember him.

It seems finally fitting to recall the motto of the high school Michael attended back in San Juan, Trinidad: Ex Fructibus Cognoscetis Eos—By their Fruits You Shall Know Them.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Gertrud Aub-Buscher and Beverley Noakes for their invaluable input into this article. “Detours and Distance: An Interview with Michael Dash”, published on March 2012 on The Public Archive.
Faculty News

Emily Apter: As Daimler Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin in Spring 2019 I was able to engage with numerous institutions in Berlin, lecturing at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, the Freie Universität, the Wissenschaftskolleg, the Institute for Cultural Inquiry, diffract, and the American Academy in Berlin. Other highlights included a series of lectures and exchanges with Jean-Luc Nancy on the topic of “Trans-ontology” at the Festival delle donne e dei saperi di genere/nel segno delle intersezioni, in Bari, Italy, serving as a judge member, panelist and catalogue contributor to the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts in June, 2019 (“The Micropolitics of Memes”), a dialogue with Samo Tomšič at a conference sponsored by the Swedish Art Agency in Stockholm on the topic of “Choreographies of Life,” and a week-long seminar/ workshop with students from NYU, Morocco and Paris titled “Justification: Rule, Norm, Law, Charia” co-taught with Ali Bennakhloul at the Fondation Abdul Aziz in Casablanca. In Fall 2018 I was the keynote speaker at the TRANScuratorial Academy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and the keynote participant at TRANSform: Comparative Literature with Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, Urdu at the Stanford Humanities Center. I also delivered the Renato Poggioli lecture at Harvard University, a talk titled “Fired! De-grading and Social Suffering as Political Technologies from Drefyus to Now” at the Nineteenth-Century French Studies Colloquium, lectured in the French department at Yale and spoke on a “Pedagogy and Critical Practice” panel at a conference commemorating 50 years of the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum. Additionally, I co-edited (with Martin Crowley) a special issue of Divertículos on “Economies of Existence,” and published several articles (including “Untranslatability and the Geopolitics of Reading,” in PMLA) and review essays. A Japanese translation of The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature came out in fall 2018. My service as member of the MLA Executive Council ended in December 2018 and I continue to serve as a New York MLA delegate and representative of the CLCS 20th- and 21st-century program division.

Claudie Bernard published edited and digitalized version of Penser la famille au dix-neuvième siècle (Saint Etienne : Publications de l’Université de Saint-Etienne, 2019).

Cécile Bishop: On sabbatical from January to June, I had the opportunity to make significant progress on my forthcoming book examining the relationship between blackness, race and form. I was also delighted to be able to present some aspects of this work at the MLA Symposium in Lisbon this July, and to have been invited at the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics in January.

A few weeks ago, I published a special issue of L’Esprit Créateur on “Race and the Aesthetic in French and Francophone Cultures,” which I co-edited with Dr. Zoe Roth of Durham University (UK). The special issue explores the specific contribution the study of the aesthetic can make to emerging debates about race in France, and particularly the role perception, appearance, and the imagination play in the construction of racial categories. The collection includes articles by J ewon Baek, Lia Broegal, Maxime Decout, Clémentine Fauré, K aia ma L. Glover, Tony Haouam, Katelinn Knox, Xiaoan Amy Li, Zöe Roth, Lise Schreier, and Dominic Thomas. My own contribution to the special issue dealt with the elusive presence of Zamar, a servant to the Comtesse du Barry, who rose to fame during and after the French Revolution. This year, I also published an essay in Word and Image dealing with another figure from the revolutionary period – the woman represented in Marie-Guillemin Benoist’s famous 1800 Portrait d’une negroise (recently renamed Portrait de Madeleine) as sung in the famous song “Une bonne nègresse” at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. This essay is part of a project dealing with another figure from the Revolutionary period, the woman represented in Marie-Guillemin Benoist’s famous 1800 Portrait d’une negroise (recently renamed Portrait de Madeleine) as sung in the famous song “Une bonne nègresse” at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. This essay is part of a project dealing with another figure from the Revolutionary period, the woman represented in Marie-Guillemin Benoist’s famous 1800 Portrait d’une negroise (recently renamed Portrait de Madeleine) as sung in the famous song “Une bonne nègresse” at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

Leanne at the Musée d’Orsay’s exhibition “Le Modèle noir de Géricault à Matisse.” I also had the great pleasure of participating and networking at events in NYU. One of the highlights of my year was the organization of a roundtable as part of the Festival des Cinq Continents, dealing with silence and the archives, and featuring the writer Fabienne Kanor, the artists Kid Kréol & Boogie and Fatima Mazmouz, as well as the historian Frédéric Régent. I was also proud to present a small exhibition of Fatima Mazmouz’s work, which was kindly hosted by the Center for French Language and Cultures.

Finally, no account of the past few months would be complete without mentioning the birth of my son Théodore last August, which made 2018-19 both an extremely busy and a tremendously joyful year.

Ludovic Cortade was director of Undergraduate Studies and Global Coordinator. He published “The Ineffable Joy of Being One with the Universe: Absorption and Reflexivity in Louis Malle’s Phantom India” in Philippe Met (dir.) The Cinema of Louis Malle, foreword by Volker Schlöndorf, Wallflower/Columbia University Press. He also co-organized with Guillaume Soulez (Université Paris III Sorbonne–Nouvelle) an international colloquium entitled “Thinking Space in Cinema and Literature” at La Maison Française in April 2019.

This past year was an exciting one for me: I moved to New York with my family and taught a number of new and fun courses (including a graduate seminar on “Proust in the World” and a senior seminar on “Ecological Thought”). Much of my intellectual energy was directed toward my second book, The Beach Effect, which is forthcoming in the “Modernist Latitudes” series at Columbia University Press. I lectured on The Beach Effect at Cornell, Duke, CU-Boulder, and NYU—as well as at a number of professional conferences—and completed essays drawn from the project which will appear soon in Bulletin Marcell Proust and in the edited volume, Modernism and Close Reading. In addition, I published an article titled “Heart sick: The Language of French Disgust” in Modern Language Quarterly. This essay offers a taste of my third book project—a study of the force of revulsion in modern French thought. Finally, I worked in 2018-19 to co-edit (with Thangam Ravindranathan) a special issue of Contemporary French & Francophone Studies (CFFS). This forthcoming issue, titled “Sous les paves,” explores the political and aesthetic legacy of May ’68.

Stéphane Gerson edited, oversaw the translation, and prefaced France in the World: A New Global History (Other Press, 2019), the English-language edition of the Histoire mondiale de la France. With historians and editors Patrick Boucheron and Pierre Singaravelou and other scholars, he intervened in round tables around the book at the University of Chicago, the French Cultural Services, and the annual meeting of the Society for French Historical Studies. He was also invited to speak in several media, among which PBS NewsHour, the Guardian, and the World Affairs podcast (NPR/KQED). At the SFHS annual meeting, he co-organized and participated in a
roundtable, on “Writing in Different Key: (French) Historians as Novelists, Memoirists, Essayists, Journalists.” The History department voted to make Gerson an associate faculty member. His second year as director of the Institute of French Studies saw a 10% rise in Ph.D. applications and, over the past two years, a tripling of M.A. applications. Our incoming class will be the largest in two decades, the most diverse (diversity M.A. applications increased by 30% for 2019-2020), and no doubt one of the strongest.

The IFS organized five major events to mark its 40th anniversary: scholarly conferences, three-day film festival, book launch, and a hugely successful alumni reunion that Gerson co-organized with Isabelle Genest. Gerson also set up two new partnerships (with the Lycée français de New York and a local school, La Salle Academy) that are providing students with pre-professional training and service opportunities with low-income, minority pupils. Gerson organized a packed event in which UG/graduate students from French, IFS, and other departments entered into conversation with French Labor Minister Muriel Pénicaud. Finally, he continues to serve on the editorial board of the Journal of Modern History, the French Review Advisory Panel.

H enriette Goldwyn’s fifth and final volume of Théâtre de femmes de l’ancien régime, co-edited and published by Garnier, 2019, covers plays by female dramatists during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century: Mme de Genlis, Fanny de Beauharnais, Anne-Hyacinthe de Saint-Léger, Olympe de Gouges, Isabelle de Charrière and Mme de Staal-Holstein. There are 8 comedies and 3 drames bourgeois. Le Favory, a tragi-comedy penned by Mme de Villedieu (Vol. 2) was staged with great success in 2015 and La folle enchère by Mme Ulrich (vol. 3) will be performed in Paris this fall. She contributed to a volume of L’Esprit Créateur to be out in 2020 by publishing “les vœux du désert et de l’exil,” in Writing/Creating in the Feminine in Early Modern France. In 2018, she was invited to Washington University in Saint Louis to deliver a talk on “Ecstatic Predication After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.”

S arah Kay: The fall semester of 2018-19 was my last semester as chair of department and director of the Center, much of it spent in a pitifully lame duck capacity as I prepared to pass the reins to Phillip Usher. I am very grateful to him not only for taking the weight off my back but for doing such a splendid job! The end of January saw me transition to being on leave. I spent two months of the spring semester at NYU Berlin, with very great pleasure. The gloriously advantageous conditions of the GRI not only gave me time to work on my current book project, Medieval Song from Aristotle to Verdi, but also the opportunity to re-learn German, which I had studied long ago at school and have continued to read but in which I had largely lost the ability to speak and write – it has been a joy recovering those skills. My book is moving forward, thanks also to invitations to speak in a number of fora including a conference on Sounds of War in Friburg, Switzerland and one on the Sound of Writing at Johns Hopkins, Baltimore. I also had the pleasure of presenting my work in the seminar Dialogues interspeckiales at the EHESS in conjunction with the INHA. In 2018 the volume Spoiled Distinctions: Aesthetics and the Ordinary in French Modernism, 2018.

J udith Miller has enjoyed being back full time in New York and teaching across colleges – with Tisch this time, offering a course on “Theatre and Immigration.” Her research time has been taken up with translating and editing for Routledge a collection, this time on Versions of the Natural, co-edited with Nicolette Zeeman, will come out as vol. 49.3 of the Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies. I am very happy that the papers for the conference on Apollinaire and Sutherland that I held at NYU London in 2017 are set to appear in revised form as an open access book with UCL press before too long, largely thanks to the work of my co-editor Timothy Mathews. My leave will continue through the fall and I look forward to resuming my departmental duties as a civilian in January 2020.

Soun dings and Soundscales that I coedited with our incoming colleague François Noudelmann appeared as Paragraph 41. This summer, another collection, this time on Versions of the Natural, co-edited with Nicolette Zeeman, will come out as vol. 49.3 of the Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies. I am very happy that the papers for the conference on Apollinaire and Sutherland that I held at NYU London in 2017 are set to appear in revised form as an open access book with UCL press before too long, largely thanks to the work of my co-editor Timothy Mathews. My leave will continue through the fall and I look forward to resuming my departmental duties as a civilian in January 2020.

La Folle Enchère

Comédie de Madame Ulrich

La folle enchère by Mme Ulrich, edited by Henriette Goldwyn, will be performed in Paris this fall.

La Folle Enchère

Comédie de Madame Ulrich

Languages at Queens, Drew Jones, have participated on the translation team. The book will come out in March 2020. She has also lectured and/or animated discussions at the Théâtre Pandora in Montreal and The University of Buffalo, participated in the Department’s conferences on Sanctuary, French Natures, and the Festival des Francophones, chaired a thesis defense at the University of Paris, and organized a panel of NYU and CUNY grad. students (T. Haouam, T. Murphy, R. Watson, and A. Hubert) around the question: “Is African Theatre dead?” for the African Literature Association’s annual meeting. She has been named to the Board of Directors of the African Studies Review and of New York’s Theatre Mitu; and she is currently translating, for a conference on Caribbean theatre at CUNY in December, a play by Haitian writer, Guy Régis Junior. As new Advisor to the First Year students, she has learned a great deal about the challenges of graduate school in our current times and about the tenacity of intellectuals who believe in what they do.>
This past year John Moran served his twelfth year as a Faculty Fellow in Residence in Lipton Residence Hall. He also continued to volunteer as the Faculty Affiliate for the French Explorations Floor. John organized two one-day conferences during the academic year, both with a focus on foreign language learning and teaching: “Promoting Student Engagement and Facilitating Oral Production” (with support from the AATF) at the Maison Française in the fall and “Teaching and Learning Beyond the Classroom” (with the support of the office of the Dean of the Humanities) at the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center in the spring. In addition, with NYU Shanghai colleague Melanie Hackney, John presented a talk at the annual CALICO conference in Montréal entitled “A Student-Driven Multimedia Project to Promote and Preserve Louisiana French,” a talk that grew out of his and Professor Hackney’s work with students in Francophone Louisiana. He continued his work with the College Board, serving his final year as the chair of the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) French Language Test Development Committee. He was chosen to be the next Chief Reader for the scoring of the Advanced Placement (AP) French Language and Culture Exam. His work with College Board also includes working on the AP French Language and Culture Exam Development Committee and presenting the exam and curriculum at College Board World Language Symposia.


He was invited to the following lectures and colloquia: “Complexité narrative du début de À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs”, Paris, Sorbonne, January 16, 2019; “Le cinéma de l’Oeuvre des Mers”, Colloquium Cinéma/Littérature, NYU, Maison Française, March 7, 2019; International colloquium À l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs (co-organized by Mireille Naturel and Eugène Nicole) Paris, Sorbonne, Amphithéâtre Durkheim, June 24 and 25. Opening remarks, President of the first session.; Lecture : “Bains de mer” (June 24). Lastly, he served as Member of Editorial Board on the Bulletin Marcel Proust.

Richard Sieburth officially retired from the department in Jan 2019. In February, he was awarded the PEN Prize for Poetry in Translation for his English version of Henri Michaux’s A Certain Plume (NYRB/ Poets). A musical setting of his Louise Labé translations by Stephen Dembski was performed at the Maison Française in May.

Phillip John Usher writes: “I published two new books in 2018–19. Most recently, in March 2019, Fordham University Press published my Exterranean: Extraction in the Humanist Anthropocene, a book (as I write in the first line) “about the extraction of stuff from the Earth.” In a nutshell, it’s a book that shuffles back and forth between early modern texts and contemporary eco-theory in an attempt to draw attention away from pollution-as-emission (as we see in the COP21 agreement) to more integrated ecologies, in which matter goes from being underground to being detached from it — in a sense to boucler la boucle. It is a book that attempts to re-ignite our perception of ourselves, in the Anthropocene, as anthropotubers! With chapters on poets (such as Ronsard), mining engineers (Georgius Agricola), and many others, Exterranean opens up the much-maligned humanist library in order to provide new conceptual tools for the Anthropocene into which, as many have written, we have stumbled. In December 2018, the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies published my translation and edition of The Tragedy of Pious Antigone, a play by France’s first career tragedian Robert Garnier, first published in 1580 amidst the Wars of Religion that pitted Protestants and Catholics against each other. While the play re-tells the story well known from Sophocles — how Antigone stands up against the tyrant Creon, a political act that has been examined by Hegel, Lacan, Butler, Žižek, and countless others — it also includes a three-act prequel, which draws on other ancient authors. What motivated me to translate Garnier’s play — beyond the fact that translation is, as Spivak puts it, the “most intimate act of reading” — was how it never takes sides in the war between Antigone’s brothers Eteocles and Polynices. It is clearly a play against war, but never a play that takes sides in the war, and never just an allegory of the Wars of Religion. I also published a number of articles and gave talks in various venues in the United States and elsewhere, and also co-organized with Frédérique Aim-Touati a major conference-festival for NYU’s Center for French Language and Cultures called French Natures, which featured a dozen or so speakers as well as the US-première of Bruno Latour’s conference-spectacle Inside. Most of the Spring semester and summer have been spent transitioning into my three-year stint as Department Chair for calendar years 2019, 2020, and 2021.”

Students and Alumni News

Robert S. April (MD MA, 2009): I published an article “What Would the Dreyfus Affair Have Been Without Octave Mirbeau?” in EXCA-VATI Vol XXX 2018. I will be the discussant of Michel Houellebecq’s novel, Serotonin on March 23, 2020 at the Book Club of La Maison Francaise of Columbia University. I spend most of my time in the practice of neurology and am on the Faculty of the NYU School of Medicine, but there is time to read my favorites — Balzac, Zola et Verne — whenever there is a spare moment of tranquility.

Christian Bratu: I am happy to announce the publication of my book, « Je, auteur de ce livre », l’affirmation de soi chez les historiens, de l’Antiquité à la fin du Moyen Âge.

When Willemena Don (Ph.D. 2012) is not busy running after her toddler, Lucas (born April 2018), she edits and translates academic texts. She’s always open to new opportunities and challenges - find her at www.donlanguageservices.com

Manoah Avram Finston was named Assistant Registrar at Columbia University in August.

Tony Haouam’s article “Qu’est-ce que l’Africain ? Humour, performance et construction de la race sur la scène du rire français” was published in L’Esprit Créateur this summer. In the fall, he organized the IFS graduate conference “Betrayal,” during which he led a roundtable with visiting professor Kaoutar Harchi. This spring, he presented at the Early Modern Exchange series at University of Delaware Press.

In December 2018, I attended the annual meeting of the Society for Interdisciplinary French 17th-Century Studies in Fribourg, Switzerland, at which I co-organized a panel on “Metateatricality and Spectacularity,” and gave a blitz-style talk in a session on “New Approaches to 17th-century French Literature.” Former Visiting Assistant Professor Saman Nader-Esfahani and I were invited to speak on early modern mirror texts at The Renaissance Seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University in April. It was great fun to prepare and present a talk collaboratively. I continue to serve as the prose editor on the 17th-century French Literature editorial desk for the Literary Encyclopedia, and look forward to assuming a more active role in collaborating on the Portal for 17th-Century Studies (earlymodernfrance.org) in the coming year.

Kathrina LaPorte: The 2018-2019 academic year was a fruitful one from a teaching and research perspective. After working as a postdoctoral lecturer and visiting assistant professor in the department, I started my first year as a language lecturer and completed my book manuscript, Performativity Polemic: Anti-Absolutist Pamphlets and their Readers in Late Seventeenth-Century France (1667–1715) offers a literary history of the sometimes serious, sometimes scurrilous texts that denounce Louis XIV’s regime and will be forthcoming with the Early Modern Exchange series at University of Delaware Press.

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Jeannine LaVallee (McCraken Scholar, 2002-04): I learned several months ago that my ancestor, Calixa LaVallee, composed the musical score for the Canadian national anthem! Daughter, Frannie, will be attending Concordia University in Montreal beginning this Fall, so there will be opportunities to learn more about him and his work in the coming year. I am currently a World Languages Educator at a private girl’s high school on the upper east side.

Robert McD. Parker continues to serve as an art advisor to collectors, museums, and foundations regarding acquisitions and collections management. He is an international specialist in provenance research and artworks looted by the Nazis. Currently, he is also Special Projects Director for an exhibition and catalogue of ‘American historical documents, Colonists, Cultures, Selective Provenances from the Dorothy Tapper Goldman Foundation,’ scheduled to open at the New-York Historical Society in February 2020. The exhibition catalogue he oversaw has been written by James F. Hrdlicka with a foreword by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Recent exhibition projects to which he was a contributor have received awards of excellence from the Association of American Museum Curators and the Dedalus Foundation.

Samantha Presnal has accepted a two-year appointment as a fellow and visiting lecturer at Amherst College. As a fellow at Amherst’s Center for Humanistic Center (CHI), she will conduct intensive, collaborative research with other fellows under the rubric of the theme “home.” During her residency, she will expand her dissertation research fin-de-siècle home cooking instruction, exploring its imperial and transnational dimensions. She will also hold an appointment in the French department, where she will teach a course related to the CHI theme.

Anna G. R. Miller teaches French and is the Upper School Coordinator for Equity and Inclusion at a private school in Wilmington, Delaware. In addition to her teaching, she continues to translate plays by modern and contemporary playwrights.

Myron McShane: This year, I was the R. David Parsons Long-Term Fellow at the John Carter Brown Library (JCB) at Brown University. My research was for a project entitled “Reframing Worlds: Translating Travel Literature and Early Modern Print Culture.” I gave papers on various aspects of the liminary poetry to André Thévet’s Les singularitez de la France antarctique at the JCB, the Renaissance Society of America and St. Thomas More College. Additionally, I gave a talk on at a conference dedicated to Renaissance translation of Latin and Greek on the 557th anniversary of the death of Leonardo Bruni at the Casa Petrarca in Arezzo. An essay on Du Bellay and Petrarch will be published by Legenda this fall in the volume Translating Petrarch’s Poetry: L’Aura del Petrarca from the Quattrocento to the 21st Century (edited by Carole Birkan-Berz, Guillaume Coatalen and Thomas Vuong).

Laura Reec: She has a Ph.D. in French literature from NYU (1979). After working under Jacques Garelli on a dissertation that dealt with a phenomenological analysis of Michel Butor’s “nouveaux romans,” she turned to philosophy and obtained a second Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Navarra in Spain in 1986. She has been a member of the Department of Philosophy at St. John’s University in NY since 1987 where she is presently teaching Ethics and History of Medieval Philosophy. Among her many publications, she is working on a book which consists of fifteen essays in ancient and medieval philosophy and theology of which she is the editor and which will appear in the summer of 2020 with The Catholic University of America Press with the title: “Beauty and the Good: Recovering the Classical Tradition from Plato to Duns Scotus.”

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Kleppinger in a book launch of their co-edited volume, Post-Migratory Cultures in Postcolonial France (LUP 2018), at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Relations.

Claire Reising received a Fulbright Student Award to Canada to conduct dissertation research on diasporic writers in Montreal. During the 2018-2019 academic year, she worked as Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies for the department. She also organized a translation slam for the Festival des Cinq Continents in April.

Scott Sanders: My forthcoming essay - “Code Noir in Marivaux’s Theater,” Eighteenth-Century Fiction. 32, no. 2 (2020) - is part of my second book project, which examines theatrical representations of race and slavery in eighteenth-century France. In support of this project, I received funding from The Leslie Center for the Humanities at Dartmouth College to complete a research trip in Bordeaux, France where I combed the archives for information on Bordeaux's theater and slave trade. I also have a book under review entitled Voices from Beyond. In it, I argue that eighteenth-century French writers, especially Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, theorized the voice through a unique blending of vocal physiology with the philosophical and literary voices represented in British moral philosophy and sentimental literature.

Maria Beliaeva Solomon published the following articles:

Deborah Steinberger (Ph.D. 1994) was recently appointed Associate Chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the University of Delaware, where she is also Professor of French. As Columbia celebrates the centennial of its Core Curriculum, she is undertaking significant initiatives to revise the framing and curriculum of Literature Humanities to ensure its relevance in the years ahead. Her second book, The Rest Is Silence: Last Writings and the End of Enlightenment, is forthcoming with Yale University Press in the Walpole Series. Her recent publications include articles on Madame du Deffand, Jean Starobinski and what is, or isn’t, left of Enlightenment.

Chelsea Stieber (French/French Studies ’13) is assistant professor of French and Franco-phone Studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. She recently launched the RSHHGG Lab, an interactive online index of Haiti's top social science journal, the Revue de la Société Haïtienne d'Histoire, de Géographie et de Géologie. She developed this multilingual digital humanities project (available in English, French, and Creole) in cooperation with the Library of Congress's digital LABS project to facilitate collaboration among scholars in the Global North/South and empower the scholarly production of all. Her book, Haiti's Paper War: Post-Independence Writing, Civil War, and the Making of the Republic is due out with NYU Press in summer 2020. She welcomed a son, Frederick, in 2015.

Downing A. Thomas (Associate Provost and Dean, Professor of French, University Capitole Centre) published twice this year:

Kaliane Ung successfully defended her dissertation Écritures blessées : Joë Bouquet, Violette Leduc, Hervé Guibert, Simone Weil in May 2019 and accepted a VAP position at the University of Pittsburgh. She has forthcoming articles on Violette Leduc, Hervé Guibert and Jean Rouan in France and the United States. Her short story Stigmates is currently shortlisted for the Prix du Public Meobius.

Rachel Watson presented papers on Wajdi Mouawad, Hélène Cixous, Jean Genet, and Kofi Kwilah at the Cairo International Festival for Contemporary and Experimental Theatre in Cairo, Egypt, and the annual conferences of the American Society for Theatre Research, the ACLA, and the African Literature Association. Her article “Wajdi Mouawad’s Seuls: When the body performs memory” was published in Arab Stages in the fall. Her co-authored article with Judith Miller, “Jouer avec les arts et les écrits: Jean-Michel Basquiat et Féla Kuti dans le théâtre de Kofi Kwilah,” is forthcoming in the Revue ARTS, a new theater journal published by the Université d’Abidjan. She also had the pleasure of joining Judith Miller’s translation team in translating Beatrice Picon-Val- lin’s history of the Théâtre du Soleil, The Théâtre du Soleil, The First Fifty Years (forthcoming with Routledge). She is currently working on a chapter on the dramatic theory of Hélène Cixous, which will be included in Women’s Theatre Theory and Dramatic Criticism: An Anthology (currently under peer review). Rachel enjoyed 5 weeks in Paris last fall on the GRI, where she took in the theater work in the Festival d'Automne. She traveled to NYU-Shanghai in March to lead a Rassias Method teaching workshop for the language lecturers. For the 2019-2020 academic year, Rachel was awarded a GSAS Dean’s Dissertation Fellowship and a Center for the Humanities Doctoral Student Honorary Fellowship. Finally, Rachel and her husband, Drew, were thrilled to welcome their son, Andrew, into the world on July 10th.

Catherine Webster (Ph.D. 2005): I continue to serve as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Central Oklahoma. In March 2019, I served as lead organizer for the 19th and 21st-Century French and Francophone International Colloquium, which welcomed nearly 300 scholars to Oklahoma City and featured literary critic Annie LeBrun and novelist Antoine Volodine.

Elizabeth Catherine Wright (Ph.D. 1975): I returned to San Francisco on October 1, 2018, after living 10 years in France in Sainte Foy la Grande, a small town on the Dordogne river about an hour east of Bordeaux. While there, I gave a number of talks around France about my grandfather, Frank Lloyd Wright, and about the book I published of my parents’ love letters from 1932-53. Here is a link to a video of the talk I gave in the Maison de l’Architecture in Carcassonne: https://www.les-caue-occitane.fr/rgards-croises-sur-frank-lloyd-wright.
Maison Française Highlights 2018-2019

September 20
What is a Space for Ethics? Roundtable discussion of Sharing Common Ground (Bloomsbury 2017) with ROBERT HARVEY, EDWARD S. CASEY, JEANNE ETELAIN, DENIS HOLLIER

October 10
CONCERT: A Look Behind the Curtain Poulsen’s iconic 1956 song cycle, Le travail du peintre, and works by contemporary composers Barbara Jazwinski, Friedrich Kern, Louis Karchin, Andrew MacDonald and Guy Saure. JEREMY HUW WILLIAMS, baritone PAULA FAN, piano Co-sponsored with the League of Composers-ISM and the FAS Department of Music

October 30
The Cabinet des médailles: Luxury and Power from Ancient Rome to Modern France Lecture by CLARE FITZGERALD, Associate Director for Exhibitions and Gallery Curator, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, NYU Held in conjunction with the exhibition Devotion and Decadence: The Berthouville Treasure and Roman Luxury from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, on view at NYU’s Institute for the Study of the Ancient World.

November 12
Les Réféts
GERTY DAMBURY, Guadeloupean novelist and theatre director; author of Les Réféts, in conversation with, JUDITH MILLER., Professor, Department of French Literature, Thought, and Culture, NYU; translator of the novel (The Restless, The Feminist Press, 2018)

November 13
Józef Czapski and His Lectures on Proust in a Soviet Prison Camp
ERIC KARPELES

December 10
Soirée Musicale: French Songs from the 19th and 20th Centuries
SAM BOUTRIS, clarinet MARINA IWAO, piano Music of Debussy, Poulenc, Messiaen, Ravel, Bozza, Cahuzac, Pierne Commentary by MICHAEL J. GILLIGAN

March 11
20th Century French Music: A Clarinet Recital
SAM BOUTRIS, clarinet MARINA IWAO, piano Music of Debussy, Poulenc, Messiaen, Ravel, Bozza, Cahuzac, Pierne Commentary by MICHAEL J. GILLIGAN

March 12
Dance through Time: Antiquity and the Ballets Russes
Lecture by CLARE FITZGERALD Associate Director for Exhibitions and Gallery Director, ISAW Held in conjunction with the exhibition Hymn to Apollo: The Ancient World and the Ballets Russes, on view at NYU’s Institute for the Study of the Ancient World

April 2
Soirée Baroque: Dances from the Salon of the Duchesse du Maine
Lecture by director and choreographer CATHERINE TUROCY; Performance by the NEW YORK BAROQUE DANCE COMPANY

November 12, 2018 Gerty Dambury and Judith Miller

February 26
Speak Up (Ouvrir la voix)
Film screening and discussion with director AMANDINE GAY, art historian SANDRINE COLARD, and poet/scholar SYLVIE KANDE Presented with Institute of African American Affairs & Center for Black Visual Culture in the 21st Century

March 5
Chez mon père
Unpublished text read by MARIE DARRIEUSSECQ, author of Truismes, Il faut beaucoup aimer les hommes (Prix Médicis), Notre vie dans les forêts
Exclusive presentation in the U.S.

May 9
La Maison Française GALA BENEFIT
The 2019 Gala Benefit of La Maison Française honored MICHAEL BURKE (CEO, Louis Vuitton) and VIRGINIE MORGON (CEO, Eurazeo)

May 10
PEN WORLD VOICES FESTIVAL
Terrible Truths: Confronting History and Memory DANIEL BLAUFUKS, CATHERINE FILLOUX, TANISHA FORD, and DOMENICO STARNONE Moderated by ULRICH BAER

This Transfronterizo Life
JENNIFER CLEMENT and WILLIVALDO DELGADO

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ERIC KARPELES
Author of Almost Nothing: The 20th-Century Art and Life of Józef Czapski; translator of Czapski’s Lost Time: Lectures on Proust in a Soviet Prison Camp in conversation with ANKA MUHLSTEIN
Historian, biographer; author of Monsieur Proust’s Library; The Pen and the Brush
Co-sponsored with New York Institute for the Humanities and New York Review Books

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May 10, 2019. PEN World Voices Festival panel: Ulrich Baer (moderator), Daniel Blaufuks, Catherine Filloux, Tanisha Ford, Domenico Starnone. Photo: Giuseppe De Lauri
Paris est une fête ! Non contente d’être la capitale culturelle que tous connaissent, son dynamisme fait d’elle aujourd’hui un des grands pôles européens pour les entreprises de technologie et les start-ups.

Le centre académique de NYU Paris est situé au cœur du quartier Latin, dans le quartier intellectuel et universitaire de la ville. Les cours offerts à NYU Paris par le département de Français permettent aux étudiants d’acquérir des compétences linguistiques et d’approfondir leur connaissance de la culture française, en abordant des sujets tels que la littérature ou le monde de l’art contemporain français. Nos cours de contenu (en français ou en anglais) traitent aussi de sujets de société tel que les questions de genre, de classe sociale et de race dans la société française, ou le rôle de la France dans une Europe en crise. En outre nous avons des partenariats avec un bon nombre d’universités parisiennes prestigieuses, comme la Sorbonne ou Sciences Po, ce qui offre des possibilités quasi-illimitées à nos étudiants. Nous offrons également au sein du centre toute une gamme de cours proposés par d’autres départements de NYU dans des domaines aussi vastes que la philosophie, l’histoire de l’art, les études cinématographiques, allant jusqu’à l’informatique et les mathématiques.

À NYU Paris, la scolarité est complétée par des visites de célèbres musées environnants tels que le Louvre, le musée d’Orsay, et le centre Pompidou, ainsi que de sorties au théâtre ou à l’opéra, et des voyages culturels en dehors de Paris. L’équipe vie étudiante organise aussi de nombreuses activités, comme des dégustations, des soirées à thème, ou des rencontres avec des étudiants parisiens.

La plupart des étudiants de NYU Paris sont logés dans des résidences universitaires, facilement accessibles par les transports en commun, parmi lesquelles plusieurs maisons de la Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris. Ils peuvent également choisir de vivre dans une famille d’accueil pour une expérience culturelle encore plus immersive. NYU Paris n’accueille généralement pas de cours le vendredi, ce qui permet aux étudiants de profiter des week-ends pour découvrir Paris, d’autres villes de France (Bordeaux, Marseille, Lyon, Lille, Strasbourg...) et d’Europe.

Ceci étant dit, nous espérons avoir le plaisir de vous accueillir à Paris prochainement !

For all questions about circulation between New York and Paris, please reach out to Ludovic Cortade (lc104@nyu.edu)
The Carnaval de Paris, a charity event benefiting the Maison Française, took place on May 23, 1962 on Washington Mews. It featured “dancing typical of a French street carnival, a buffet supper of French food and an entertainment program”, according to the New York Times.