



Professor Kitty Millet
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ICLA Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature

The research committee investigates the philosophical and theoretical roles of religion and ethics in relation to literature, as well as explores the fraught relationship between secularism and post-secularism. It examines global literary phenomena as instances of subject formation in order to think new relationships between these three disciplines. We are particularly concerned with the modern displacement of religion, and modernity's epistemological underpinnings as these aspects reflect judgments about the world, culture, and its relationship to a religious past. While the examination of religious imagery, symbolism and the role of myth will not be the purview of this committee, the signifiers of religion in as much as they motivate "an ethical turn" in the text is a key element of the committee's purview.

As a result, the committee has a wide-ranging concern with the interstitial space that literature makes visible, a space that is not reducible to the literary, religious, or ethical, and yet intersects with all of these nodes of expression. In other words, we question the epistemologies and categories that underwrite the ways that religion, literature, and ethics coalesce around an aesthetic object.

This year marks the fourth year of our operation. The committee sponsored two seminars, comprising 27 papers, at ACLA last March. We added 7 new members, bringing the membership to 71. The membership comprises a broad and global cohort at every rank within the profession.

The committee's first research volume, *The Fault Lines of Modernity: the Fractures and Repairs of Religion, Ethics, and Literature* comes out in September with Bloomsbury. The publisher has already begun a soft marketing campaign and the text is available in pre-order at a substantial discount. A collection of thirteen essays, the contributors represent early career researchers, graduate students and senior scholars in comparative literature and related disciplines. Its essays engage a range of theoretical projects, encompassing literary traditions in Russian, German, French, Hebrew, English, Hindi, Afrikaans, and Japanese. The collection is listed as part of Bloomsbury's Religion, Philosophy, and Literature division, and marketed not only to comparatists, but also scholars within religion and philosophy.

Professor Millet is still working with Brill to develop a new journal on the research committee's themes. The journal will be peer-reviewed and Millet has assembled an editorial board as well as a staff with the projected first issue for 2020. Brill aims for two issues a year. The hope is that the journal will offer another mechanism for members to refine their research through peer-review as well as provide opportunities for publication.

The committee remains committed to identifying venues in which members can submit their research for peer review and publication. To that end, Professor Millet has begun two new projects: 1) she will edit a special edition of *religions*, on "Jewish Secular Culture." For information on the submission process, please visit the *religions* website

(http://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/jsc); and 2) she is developing a series proposal on comparative Jewish literatures. The series will be the first of its kind and aims to establish Jewish literatures as a comparative literature subfield.

The committee website contains a copy of our quarterly reports, lists our sponsored panels at different conferences, provides a list of our members, updates our publications progress, and offers instructions for membership (<http://online.sfsu.edu/kmillet1/faultlinesgrp.html>). Although Professor Kitty Millet (kmillet1@sfsu.edu) chairs the committee, committee members remain actively engaged in growing the committee, determining its next events, and targeting potential audiences.