



**SAN FRANCISCO
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Kitty Millet, CHAIR
DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH STUDIES

1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

Tel: 415/338-3152

Fax: 415/338-6080

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ICLA Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature / 2022

I. Scope

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 rethink 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, and ethics coalesce around an aesthetic and/or literary object. In this way, the committee proposes literature to be unique in its ontology.

II. Publication and Research

Several committee members have proposed monographs currently under consideration in Professor Millet's series *Comparative Jewish Literatures* (Bloomsbury). These proposals concern a comparative study of monsters in Jewish literatures; an analysis of competing theories of psychoanalysis focused on case studies concerning Ukrainian Jewish conscripts during WWI, and an analysis of Levinas and *aggadot*. The first four volumes of the series are slated for publication in 2022-2023. They include Cynthia Gabbay's edited collection *Jewish Imaginaries of the Spanish Civil War*, Agata Bielik-Robson's *Derrida's Marrano Passover*, Phyllis Lassner and Judith Baumel-Schwarz edited collection, *Our Words: Their Lives*, and Kitty Millet's *Kabbalah and Literature*. All of the forthcoming publications map facets of Jewish writing in relation to comparative literature.

III. Conferences

The committee sponsored one 2022 ACLA seminar, "The Sacred and the Profane," comprising twelve presentations over 3 days. The ACLA seminar added several new members to the committee. The committee also sponsored three panels of twelve papers for the ICLA congress. As a result of the popularity of both of these venues, we have added several members.

IV. Membership, General Information, and Officers

The research committee comprises 89 members, gaining approximately 3-6 members annually. We have five officers, Professor Kitty Millet (San Francisco State University) chairperson; John Hawley, Professor (Santa Clara University), first vice president; Katie Lally, Doctoral Student (University of California, Santa Cruz), second vice president; Zainab Mahmood, Assistant Professor (NYU/Shanghai), third vice president/secretary, and Mari Rethelyi Assistant Professor (Louisiana State University), fourth vice president and coordinator for regional events.

The committee website is currently being revised. It should be up and running again in Fall 2022. It 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. Although Professor Kitty Millet

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kmillet1@sfsu.edu chairs the committee, committee members remain actively engaged in growing the committee, determining its next events, and targeting potential audiences. The committee remains active in the national comparative literature associations and offers at least one multi-day seminar at the ACLA annually.

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