

Call for Papers

**Cartographies of Silence:
A Conference for Readers and Writers**
23rd Annual CLIFF Conference
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
March 15-16, 2019
Keynote Speaker: Professor Irena Klepfisz

****Extended Submission Deadline:** December 21st, 2018

*It was an old theme even for me:
Language cannot do everything–
-- Adrienne Rich, “Cartographies of Silence”*

Silence is not an absence, but is charged with meaning and action. To speak of silence means to speak of a multitude of paradoxes, as well as to enter an exciting avenue for literature, activism and interdisciplinary scholarship. Our conference interrogates what it means to plumb silences in the archive in search of unheard voices, and invites scholars to investigate the meanings of silence as a critical category. In particular, this conference is interested in mapping – across scholarly and creative disciplines – questions of translating silences in the archive, in the text, in the subject, and in activism. What are the possible ways of translating silence when events and experiences resist such translation? What challenges and possibilities does silence offer translators and scholars, who are tasked with making meaning of both the enunciated and the unsaid or untranslatable? How can we engage with knowledge that does not yield itself to current academic frameworks? In what ways can a focus on silence help to transform knowledge itself?

We welcome papers that take creative, interdisciplinary, and experimental forms. In addition to academic panels, the conference will include a reading of creative written work. We invite applicants who are submitting a paper proposal to include a written creative piece (3-5 minutes) that they would like to read. Acceptances to the conference will be based on paper proposals.

Professor Irena Klepfisz received her doctorate from the University of Chicago in Victorian literature, and later did post-doctoral work in Yiddish at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. In addition to teaching in numerous universities around the country, Klepfisz taught for ten years in the college program at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, a women’s maximum security prison. Last year, she retired after 22 years of teaching Jewish Women's Studies at Barnard College. Klepfisz immigrated to the U.S. at age 8 and was raised among Yiddish-speaking, Jewish Labor Bundist (socialist) Holocaust survivors in the Bronx, where she attended public schools, a Yiddish *shule*, and *mitlshul*. She was an activist during the Second Wave, particularly in the lesbian/feminist movement, and addressed issues of anti-Semitism, Israeli/Palestinian peace, Jewish identity, and *veltlekhe yidishkayt*/secular Yiddish culture.

Klepfisz’s extensive publishing and performance record includes founding and co-editing *Conditions* magazine, serving as the Yiddish editor of the Jewish feminist *Bridges*, contributing

to *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology*, and co-editing *The Tribe of Dina: A Jewish Women's Anthology*. She authored two performance pieces commissioned by the Jewish Museum (NY): *Bread and Candy: Songs of the Holocaust* and *Zeyre eygene verter: In their own words* (Yiddish women writers). She is the author of *A Few Words in the Mother Tongue* (poems) and *Dreams of an Insomniac* (essays), and most recently co-edited *The Stars Bear Witness: The Jewish Labor Bund 1897-2017* and *Koved zeyer ondenk: Honor to Their Memory* (for the 75th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising).

Some areas of focus could be:

- political silence
- voice
- sound studies
- disability studies
- technologies of hearing/recording
- amnesia, trauma, and affect
- lacunae and absence
- resistance and activism
- queer Yiddishkeit
- black feminisms, Jewish feminisms
third world/ women of colour feminisms
- liminality, borders, and margins
- decolonization
- critical race theory
- animal studies
- post-humanism
- alternative epistemologies
- intersectionality
- LGBTQIA identities
- marginal archives
- difference
- language
- translation, including self-translation
- poetics of silence
- life writing, autobiography, and
testimony/testimonio
- erasure and institutional forgetting
- post-colonialism
- untranslatability
- queer studies
- the politics of location
- critical cartography
- aesthetics
- migration

We invite graduate students in Comparative Literature and across the humanities that address the concerns outlined above. Paper proposals of no more than 250 words may be submitted to cliff.complit@umich.edu by December 7th. Please include a short bio of yourself with the abstract.

Grace Zanotti, Genta Nishku, Shalmali Jadhav, Shira Schwartz, Duygu Ergun
Conference Organizers
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