Professor Howard Louthan Remaps the Reformation in Central Europe

NYU: October 22
Irina Vukosavic

As part of the Eastern European Workshop series held at the Center for European and Mediterranean Studies, Howard Louthan, Professor of History at the University of Florida, presented his talk “Remapping the Reformation in Central Europe: Confessional Cartography and Renaissance Poland.” Louthan describes himself as an early modernist of central Europe and intellectual and cultural history, with a specific focus on religion.

In his talk, he highlighted some of the challenges, methodological and historiographical, facing the field of early modern religion in central Europe.

Firstly, he considered some of the challenges that scholars of early modern religion and eastern Europe faced with historiography of the scholarship.

Louthan used the 1935-1936 portrait of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk by Oskar Kokoschka, an Austrian artist, to highlight his point.

“This painting embodies the ideal of looking at the Czech past from a nationalist perspective, embedded in this diachronic framework,” said Louthan.

Louthan pointed out that in Masaryk’s tradition, Czech religious history was deeply embedded in the nationalist narrative. But he questioned this and asked: what if things were put into the broad world of Catholic reform and looked at from the cosmopolitan and international context?

Catholic Reformation in Czech lands is a topic he explored in his book Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation. In it, he used Bohemia as a window for examining the Counter-Reformation and the nature of early modern Catholicism. He also argues that the Catholic church’s re-establishment in the Czech lands was less a product of violence and force than of negotiation and persuasion.

He then moved on to an 1869 painting by Jan Matejko, a Polish painter, depicting the 300th anniversary of the Union of Lublin.

He pointed out that the unknown peasant being brought into the scene holds the ideographic key to the whole painting.

Louthan outlined that it is due to the fact

In This Issue:
New Philosophies in France ................................. 2
The Other Side of the Tiber: Writer Remembers a Youthful Chapter in Rome .......................... 3
Professor Priscilla Ferguson Talks Food ............................. 4
Cruelty in Artistic Expression .................................. 5
Perspectives of the Future of Migration into Europe ............................... 8
Panelists at Columbia’s Maison Française Discuss: How Fragile Is Europe? .................. 10
Péter Forgács’s Presents his Exhibit “Letters to Afar” ................................. 11
that he is the only one in the painting not a member of the Polish nobility, the szlachta.

He also pointed out how there is religious heterogeneity in the painting.

He outlined the figures in the painting, including a member of the Bohemian Brethren who later converted to Lutheranism, a figure who would become Greek Catholic, an Orthodox noble, a member of Polish Brethren, an anti-Trinitarian group, Lithuanians, and a Calvinist.

Louthan interpreted this painting as an allegorical representation of Poland as a tolerant place, a kingdom of many different religions. Hence, he concluded, although the story of sixteenth century religious culture in Poland is often embedded in nationalist framework and is remembered as the great Polish Golden Age, there are some distortions, based on this painting, that resonate in today’s historiography.

Louthan then moved on to consider Anglophone historiography of early modern religion in central Europe by drawing on the case of Stanislaw Ojokovsky in 1551.

Ojokovsky, Louthan pointed out, was involved in one of the great scandals of the winter season and he described the scandal in detail: Ojokovsky was about to get married to a 16-year-old woman who was the daughter of a powerful Burgrave in Kraków. The cause of the scandal was that Ojokovsky was a priest. For years, he had been encouraging members of his cast to throw off their vows of celibacy and to marry. In 1551, he got married himself and was celebrated as great hero throughout the countryside. Emboldened by the support of the nobility, he went to church where he was priest, and hammered a proclamation to the door that said he was never going to leave his wife. Ojokovsky was put on trial and excommunicated from the church. As the case fueled a lot of attention across the kingdom, Ojokovsky took the fight all the way up to the papacy and wrote diatribes against the popes in this period, particularly Pope Julius II.

Louthan pointed out that if he had told this story to colleagues who study religion in sixteenth century Europe, with a more western orientation, they may have said that this was an expression of late Protestantism developing in Poland. But according to Louthan, that is not the case.

Ojokovsky’s inspiration, he emphasized, was not coming primarily from the Protestant world: it was coming from his mother’s father who was an Orthodox priest. He said that the Orthodox could do two things—marry and celebrate the Eucharist using both bread and wine—which the Protestants adopted as major planks of their program.

“There is a really vibrant religious world that has been flattened out too often by most treatments of this region. There aren’t too many treatments but those that do exist I think do a disservice to the great diversity that we see here,” Louthan said.

Lastly, Louthan said some general words about his own project that examines the religious landscape in 16th century Poland.

“It might not be surprising after what I’ve said that historiography on reformation Poland in the Anglophone world is very rich in Polish and it’s not terribly bad in other languages specifically German. But in English it is relatively thin,” he said.

Louthan explained that he is setting himself up to tackle the rise and fall of Protestantism in the 16th century. The challenges to pursuing this project, he said, were geography—the very simple question of what is Poland in the 16th century; political and social context—what makes for a successful reformation; and the issue of religious diversity.

New Philosophies in France

NYU: October 28
Adrija Roychowdhury

What is the situation in the field of Philosophy today in a country that produced world renowned philosophers like Derrida and Lyotard? The department of French studies at NYU set out to discuss this as it organised the roundtable conference, “Philosophy in France Today.” The conference was a celebration of the publication two issues of the journal Cités la philosophe en France aujourd’hui. It was moderated by John Richardson, Professor of Philosophy at NYU. The panelists consisted of Yves Charles Zarka, Professor of Political Philosophy at the Paris-Descartes University, Avital Ronell of NYU’s German and Comparative Literature department, Jean Charles Darmon of the Institut Universitaire de France, Abraham Anderson of Sarah Lawrence’s Philosophy department, Gabriela Basterra of NYU’s Comparative Literature department and
Simon Critchley of The New School’s Philosophy department.

The conference set out on the note that there are new philosophers in France today and new challenges. The new generation sometimes writes in reference to old philosophers and sometimes not. In the journal, there is a subjective analysis of philosophy in France today.

Zarka said that he personally saw transformations in philosophy in France and made a few remarks about them. Firstly, he said that the journal does not discuss French philosophy, but philosophy in France. There is a certain style of writing philosophy which can be different in different countries. It is rooted in the state of a society at a particular time. However what is important is that philosophy is rooted in a certain language.

“Would Hegel write the same philosophy in English? I do not think so,” said Zarka. However, he said that this does not deny the universality of philosophy. Secondly, he said that philosophy in France today is taking the direction which departs from the twentieth century philosophers. Thirdly, Zarka said that our time is one of global changes. What makes this generation unique is that human actions no longer just concern human fortune, but also that of the whole world. In this context, what is urgent is that philosophy changes its relation with history and events and makes use of a global explanation. Fourth, he pointed out that there is no longer any space for controversy or polemics in philosophy which was very much a part of French philosophy earlier.

Darmon began his talk on the note that philosophy in France today is a creation of forces outside France, perhaps in America. New philosophers, she said, are having problems with that.

Basterra shed a new light to the discussion by suggesting that philosophy in France today is a creation of forces outside France, perhaps in America. New philosophers, she said, are having problems with that.

The discussion ended on a note of criticism by Critchley and Richardson of Zarka’s denial of a split in French Philosophy between the analytical and continental spheres. They said that a very clear split existed and one cannot overlook it.

The Other Side of the Tiber: Writer Remembers a Youthful Chapter in Rome

NYU: October 28
Kavitha Surana

On October 28 NYU’s Casa Italiana invited the essayist and poet Wallis Wilde-Menozzi to present her new memoir, *The Other Side of the Tiber, Reflections on Time in Italy*. She was joined by the writer and scholar Megan Marshall, a fellow at the New York Public Library who won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for her biography of Margaret Fuller, an American journalist and women’s rights advocate in the 19th century. Fuller, like Wilde-Menozzi, had also spent a
Professor Priscilla Ferguson Talks Food

Columbia: October 15
Irina Vukosavic

Priscilla Ferguson, professor at the Department of Sociology at Columbia University, presented her talk at Buell Hall, “Word of Mouth: What We Talk About When We Talk About Food.” Her previous books include *Paris as Revolution: Writing the 19th-Century City* and *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine.*

Ferguson spoke about her new book, *Word of Mouth*—a book, she described, as about the contemporary culinary scene, mostly in America. Ferguson said it is about food and the different ways in which people talk about it. She talked about how she needed to stay in Italy for many years to appreciate the country’s beauty and history and to write her four books. As a young aspiring writer who had barely begun her career in earnest, Wilde-Menozzi was at once unnerved and excited by the clerk’s ambitious proclamations. “And there you have what Italy is about,” said Wilde-Menozzi. “The fact that you could go to the police and tell them you were a writer and they would believe that immediately. They would respect that.”

Marshall also asked Wilde-Menozzi to elaborate on her feelings that women might be more empowered in some ways in Italy. “She told me before that it’s not all just ‘Berlusconi’s babes,’—there’s more to the story,” Marshall said. “I think women hold a central position in a Mediterranean culture, though it doesn’t correspond completely to our models of what women should have or where women are going,” said Wilde-Menozzi, pointing to the lack of mobility in women’s careers. But she seemed to think that lack of mobility coincided with more stability and allowances for family duties. “I doubt any Italian woman would say she could ‘have it all,’” she mused. “But there’s an understanding that family will have a whole lot of calls on you in the workplace, maybe even if work suffers. There seems to be more space for people to not have to drive themselves simply to make a career….though it may be because there’s not a lot of mobility.”
Cruelty in Artistic Expression

NYU: October 30
Adrija Roychowdhury

ART, films, theatre and ceremony can often be an expression of inherent human fears of violence and death.

This is the subject matter which scholar and writer, Ian Buruma’s new book, Theatre of Cruelty: Art, Film and the Shadows of War deals with. The Center for European and Mediterranean studies at NYU along with the Remarque Institute organised a panel discussion on the book. The panel consisted of Ian Buruma, who is the Paul W. Williams Professor of Human Rights and Journalism at Bard College, along with Tamsin Shaw, Associate Professor of European and Mediterranean Studies and Philosophy at NYU, Ulrich Baer, Professor of German and Comparative Literature and the Vice Provost for Faculty, Arts, Humanities and Diversity at NYU, Adam Gopnik, a staff writer at The New Yorker, Catharine Stimpson, Professor of English at Columbia, and Adam Tooze, Professor of History and Co-Director of International Security Studies at Yale and Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Professor of Italian Studies and History at NYU.

“A lot of essays in the book deal with the violence and death in World War II and how we deal with the memory of it,” said Buruma, beginning the discussion. He said that growing up in the shadow of World War II in the 1950s and 1960s, children in the Netherlands, his home, were given a very clear perspective that...
the world was divided between the good and the bad - the bad having somehow collaborated with the Germans.

This atmosphere started changing with the student revolts. The whole idea of good and bad began to dissolve into a more complicated picture. Buruma said that he was more interested in understanding how the Germans and Japanese felt. He said that this was perhaps as a reaction to what he had learnt since childhood. He was interested in understanding the other side of the story. Buruma added that his stay in Japan fed into this interest further.

Buruma went on to say that his essay dealt with the fears of violence and death as reflected in art. "German and Japanese artists of the 1920s interested me because they dealt most directly with the horrors of World War II," Buruma said. He put across a question to the audience asking "if art and ceremony are ways of dealing with fears of death and violence, does that itself provoke bad behavior?" He explained this further by giving the example of football fans in football stadiums.

Football stadiums are a place where taboos are broken very nastily. Some people feel that such behavior provokes violence while others feel that it is a good outlet for fears of violence. "I personally believe in the latter. The expression of it should be allowed. It is better for people to express their fears and desires artistically rather than in real terms," said Buruma. He went on to say that this does not mean that there should be absolute freedom of expression. However, instead of using law to ban certain expressions, they can be made to be of bad taste in social life.

Buruma’s introduction was followed by several questions and comments by the panelists. Ben-Ghiat commented on Buruma’s work on art that comes out of political context. She said that it is difficult to say that the subject was unworthy and that the art was a genius. "I would like to ask you about such kind of aesthetic value judgments," she said.

Buruma responded to the question by saying that some political movements are unworthy of the lavish title of art. "Art that creates much of a dubious politics is not necessarily bad art. Even if one disagrees with some of the political ideologies of a piece of art, the ideology itself gives a certain fire to that piece of art and transcends it to a different level," said Buruma.

Baer commented on Buruma’s work by saying that the law is more flexible than some make it to be. “Maybe we should look at law as something that encourages rather than prohibits,” said Baer. Buruma responded to the comment by suggesting that some things can be dealt with better through custom rather than through law.

Shaw commented on his work by saying that Buruma was describing these pictures of mass emotions. However, she said that there is much more to be said about the differences between the ways different groups of people experience different emotions. Buruma responded that there is something about basing one’s identity upon mythology and history. This is where, he said, he lumps people together way too much. Pride in a trauma experienced by another as a shared experience is problematic. He said that if the core of one’s collective identity is victimhood, then it is not very good for the future development of the group as a whole.

**Theater of Cruelty**
*Art, Film, and the Shadows of War*

**IAN BURUMA**
Theater of Cruelty/New York Review of Books

**The Italian Occupation in Ethiopia Through Stories and Literature**

**NYU: October 24**

**Kavitha Surana**

**ON** October 24 NYU’s Casa Italiana hosted the international symposium “Legacies of the Italian Occupation in Ethiopia.” The symposium, hosted by Professor Ruth Ben-Ghiat of the History and Italian Studies departments and Maaza Mengiste of the Creative Writing department, brought together academics and researchers from Ethiopia and the U.S. In an attempt to get a closer and more intimate understanding of the impact of the occupation, the symposium focused on visual and storytelling cultures, including panels on plays and performance, literature and storytelling, and visual arts.

The afternoon panel, focused on literature and storytelling, welcomed Shiferaw Bekele of Addis Ababa University, in dialogue with Dagmawi Woubshet of Cornell University and Heran Sereke-Brhan, and independent researcher Maaza Mengiste moderated the panel.

Bekele focused on Ethiopian “well-articulated” expressions of nationalism in history, which he said very much preceded the occupation. He began by arguing that Italy's wars in Ethiopia were not colonial, but imperial, and should be situated in the history of World War II instead of the colonial wars.

He reminded the audience that, in contrast to the European wars on African polities in the 19th century, Italy's invasion of Ethiopia took place in a very different context. Both countries were members of the League of Nations, and it was “a war of one state against another state recognized by the international community,” Thus, “one form of nationalism confronted another form of nationalism.”

Bekele also brought up the history of Ethiopian collaboration, including that many prominent Ethiopian leaders were invited to Italy during Mussolini’s rule. He said that after Ethiopia’s liberation, there was a collective drive to forget and overlook the history of collaboration. “Perhaps they did it because it would not help the process of consolidating Ethiopian nationalism,” he said. Bekele also focused on how this view of “collective amnesia” showed up in poetry and literature, and
transmitted through monuments, education, military, police and church, which were used as institutions to pass on this message.

Sereke-Brhan came at the topic from a different angle, sharing experiences from doing oral history research in Ethiopia in the ’90s. Though her topic was on politics and marriage and not related to the Italian occupation, she heard many stories that did not fit into her final dissertation. “I felt almost like I had shortchanged the history I was being told to transmit,” she said. She wondered who becomes the custodian of these stories, and shared two stories of Ethiopian encounters with Italians.

She said she hoped to find a better way to incorporate the intimate aspects of story into history, “The thing that I realized in my efforts to read and write history is that a lot of these stories that seem tangential, that seem like meandering explorations in the telling — you know, you want to get to a subject and you’re trying to push them to stay focused on the subject— but they are a very rich storytelling tradition,” she said. “People would stop in the middle of the interview and begin a poem or sing a song. Who am I to write a history that doesn’t have that? That becomes the dilemma in the end.”

The last speaker, Woubshet, discussed the writing of history in the context of professionalizing history. In working with Ethiopia’s history under occupation which would entail discussing collaboration and defeats, he said, “one has to confront a deeply Ethiopian temperament and sensibility of pride. When we have a history that goes against that temperament, how do we begin to confront that legacy?” He also added that it is only now that Ethiopia’s “professional” history is taking into account the history of people at the margins, without status or rank and incorporating their oral narratives into the history.

He closed by mentioning his latest project, translating a book by an Ethiopian author written in the late ’60s that includes specific expressions of homosexuality in Ethiopia. “If you think about the ’60s, with the exception of maybe James Baldwin, it’s rare for any writer, even in the West — to broach this question was a very radical enterprise,” he said. “Here’s a writer who is tackling that question before Western writers. So the imperative of literature is to be irreverent, to go against the grain, and one way to take the legacy of our predecessors is by way of translation and introducing them to a global audience.”

More Europe, More English

Columbia: October 9
Adrija Roychowdhury

COLUMBIA’S European Institute and the Heyman Center for Humanities organised a talk by Professor Abram De Swaan on the language constellation in the European Union. This talk was the second part of the 2014-15 Europe Seminar on the European public sphere.

Abram De Swaan is a Professor of social science at the University of Amsterdam and has written the book *The Words of the World: The Global Language System*. His lecture at the Heyman Center was with reference to the theory he put forward in his book.

De Swaan said that there are about 6,000-7,000 languages in the world and they form a hierarchical pattern. He described this pattern as the “galactic model.” Thus, there are a few peripheral languages, which he likened to the moon. Then there are a few central languages which are like planets. The super central languages are like the sun and the hyper-central language is like a black hole. According to him, this is the system of languages within which the European Union functions today. In this system, English has become the hyper-central language, which, like a black hole, sucks all speakers inside it and organizes the system.

He said that a multiplicity of languages makes for diversity from a global perspective. However, it might lead to a uniformity of local cultures. It is a misconception that language multiplicity always leads to a cultural multiplicity, he said. Most often, the opposite happens. In the European Union, there are twenty-eight states and twenty-four languages. Since there are so many languages, there has to be a focal point for

![Literature and Storytelling panel/ Kavitha Surana](image1)

![Dr. Abram De Swaan/ Adrija Roychowdhury](image2)
communication. For a long time it was French. However, once England became a member, English gradually climbed up into the European bureaucracy.

At the institutional level, we see more and more use of English. In the official sessions of the parliament, theoretically there should be translators for all twenty-three languages. However, this rarely happens. Translation is made to one of the major languages (French, Spanish, English and sometimes Polish). In the Eurozone, England is not a member. English is not the mother tongue of any of the member states. Yet everyone communicates in English.

This brings us to the question of what happens in the domestic sphere. De Swaan said that more and more students are learning English as their first and only foreign language. The psychology behind this phenomenon is that one is more willing to use a good which is used by the majority, not because of its merits, but because of its convenience. The Erasmus Programme of the European Union has led to an Anglicisation of European higher education. Universities of all states offered programs in English. However, De Swaan said that the European Union denies completely that English is the major language.

De Swaan went on to suggest that however critical we might be about this, we need to understand that due to a common language, people of diverse cultures interact. In fact, all critiques of language hegemony of English are in English.

However, De Swaan said that the problem is the added advantage that such a system gives to the native English speakers. He said that English is not a neutral phenomenon. It is laden with implicit values, particularly in academia. “We need to de-anglicize English,” said De Swaan.

There are material conditions for the production of texts. All of them are located in America or England. He suggested that Europe should develop their own material conditions instead of always bowing down to native English speakers. In this regard he gave the example of India. After driving out the British, Indians made English their own by establishing their own publishing houses and media houses which work exclusively in English. He said that the European nation states should strive for something similar. “They should create Euro English such that Euro English is no longer your English,” said De Swaan and ended the lecture on this note.

**Perspectives on the Future of Migration into Europe**

CUNY: October 15
Kavitha Surana

LATELY, immigration has become one of the most contentious topics of debate in Europe. As the European Parliamentary elections of last May displayed, far right parties across Europe are gaining followers with their anti-immigration rhetoric. Meanwhile, the influx of people fleeing war and oppressive regimes in the Middle East and Africa and attempting to seek refuge in Europe, seems unlikely to slow down any time soon. So far in 2014 at least 150,000 people have crossed the Mediterranean in overcrowded unseaworthy boats, a record number. It I probably that Europe will need to deal with the reality of increase migration for years to come.

To analyze the issues facing the region, CUNY’s European Union Studies Center and the European Affairs Committee of the New York City Bar Association convened a panel entitled, “The Future of Migration into Europe.” The event brought together diverse perspectives, including Ambassador Inigo Lambertini, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, Ursula Mojkowska, European Parliament Attorney in Washington, D.C. Office, Ronald Jumeau, Ambassador for Climate Change and former Permanent Representative of Seychelles to the United Nations, Professors Fabio Costa Morosini and Laura Sartoretto, directors of program on globalization, migration and refugee law reform at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul Law School in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and Professor Martin Schain of the NYU Department of politics and editor of Comparative European Politics. Dr. Catherine Tinker, the Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the New York City Bar Association introduced the panel.

Ambassador Lambertini’s discussion focused on Italy’s role in the Mediterranean, as the main portal for immigrants trying to reach Europe. He said that all but 10% of migrants to Europe this year entered through the seas. He added that, “another very scary increase this year is a huge increase of unaccompanied minors.” He said that many come from Eritrea, Somalia and Gambia.

“The problem is that this picture is just taking into account those arriving to Italy,” he said. “But there are a lot of people who lost their lives, who don’t arrive to Italy, because this journey is very, very dangerous.” He highlighted Italy’s proactive humanitarian search-and-rescue operation, Mare Nostrum, which has saved over 100,000 migrants in international waters in the past year, but said that this operation, which cost over 9 million
euros a month to operate, would finish now because the costs were unsustainable.

He also discussed Libya’s role in the migration route. “People who arrive from Libya cannot be sent back—there’s no government, no authorities there,” he said, warning that “Libya also has one of the best cases to become the next Islamic state or a haven for a terrorist organization.”

Next, Mojkowska spoke about the European Parliament’s perspective on immigration to Europe. “To understand where the EU stands in terms of it migration policy, it is very important to note that the actual concept of common immigration policy is a fairly recent one,” she began. She said that, according to the treaties of Amsterdam and Lisbon, the EU should develop a common policy to legislate the conditions of entry, residence and long term visas and permits, as well as decide the definition of the rights of non-EU nationals residing in a member state. But, she added “European immigration legislation, however, does not imply a replacement of EU sovereignty to grant entry and residence to their territories. There is no such thing as a residence permit to the EU as such.”

She added the Lisbon treaty provides the legal basis for a common asylum policy and that The EU charter of fundamental rights provides for a right to asylum in its article 18. However, she added, “although the right to asylum in granted, EU law does not provide for ways to facilitate the arrival of asylum seekers. Obviously Asylum seekers do not always qualify for a visa and that’s why they cross the border in irregular manners. “

Mojkowska also mentioned the Dublin Regelations, which set up the framework of who is responsible for processing asylum applications. She said that though the regulations were set up to avoid a situation where no member state wants to take responsibility and to prevent “so-called asylum-shopping,” the consequence of the rules mean that the EU’s Southern and Eastern border states are most affected. by asylum applications in proportion to their population. “

“Overburdening of some member states, including Italy, can only be tackled by those EU member state who are less affected, however, solidarity remains subject to the conflicting interests of member states,” she said. “Mediterranean member states have repeatedly called for fair distribution of asylum seekers among member states. Currently there is an ad-hoc EU regulation in place with member states volunteering – but only reluctantly – to take asylum-seekers.”

Ambassador Jumeau brought a different perspective to the discussion. His country, Seychelles, one of the 12 smallest countries in the world, will likely be one of the many regions of the world heavily affected by climate change in the coming years. Thus, he raised the problem of the fact that many of his country’s citizens may one day need to flee to Europe – and they would not be the only ones. “Climate change is a new driver of migration…however bad the situation is now, especially what we see in the Mediterranean, its going to get worse, much worse. And Europe must be prepared for it,” he said. “Climate change migration may fuel the rise of the radical right in Europe.”

He said that Small island countries are often reluctant to have their islands designated as victims of climate change, partly because of the fear that this will reduce pressure on major emitters to reduce greenhouse gas emission. “We don’t like the term climate refugee,” he said, “because until now, refugee is someone who has a country to go back to.”

But, Jumeau also said that the EU should be doing more to help people displaced by climate change. “We feel like the EU should set up rules on how and when to provide refuge and protection, including during increasingly severe climate-linked natural disasters.” He said. “Not only has practical follow-through on promises to do so been limited, but the rise of the radical right across Europe has meant that…attitudes to incoming migrants is all too frequently negative at best and hostile at worst.”
immigrant problem,” he said. “Europe, not so much.”

Schain also pointed a spotlight on a relatively new issue regarding migration: Intra-EU migration. “This involves EU citizens who, by right, can travel and enter other EU countries,” he said. “This is a right that’s been established under the treaties of Rome, this is a right that’s been augmented under the Shengen courts. This is a right that’s now been challenged, and it’s been challenged quite vocally by the current British government.”

Panelists at Columbia’s Maison Française Discuss: How Fragile Is Europe?

CUNY: October 13
Amanda Islambouli

In light of the economic crisis and its difficult relations with Russia, Europe’s stability, fragility and viability has been questioned by skeptics in recent years. A panel of university professors, however, all reached the conclusion that the vision painted by these Euroskeptics is an exaggerated one, and that Europe is not quite as fragile as such critics would have us believe.

The first speaker, sociology professor Paul Schnabel of Utrecht University and Queen Wilhemina Visiting Professor at Columbia University, concluded that, given the circumstances, European unification has progressed at more or less the pace one would expect it to. He sees European unity as being strengthened by its far-reaching welfare state. The Europeans, he argues, when confronted with a man who has become handicapped ask, what can we do for him? The Americans, rather, ask what can he still do? Panelist Sheri Berman, Professor of Political Science at Barnard College, presented a modified version of this statement: Europeans feel this kinship to their fellow countrymen, but possibly not to all Europeans.

Whichever is the case, Schnabel finds the camaraderie here a key element in the binding of European society, and links this to the fact that countries are not likely to want to withdraw from the Union. His overall assessment is that Europe is less fragile now than it was ten years ago, and that this development and unification have no foreseeable end.

Next, the panel took an economic look at the question of Europe’s fragility with the second speaker Alexander Rinooy-Kan, a professor of Economics and Business at the University of Amsterdam. He cites Paul Krugman and other academics that state that Europe, with its austerity measures, provides the perfect example of how not to deal with a financial crisis. However, despite its slow growth rate, Rinooy-Kan concurs that Europe is not as fragile as people may think it is. In fact, he believes that the crisis actually gave rise to more unity, expressed in this instance in the budgetary discipline, banking union, reduction of the democratic deficit, and new European Commission reforms that resulted.

Rinooy-Kan’s discussion then turned to the strengths and weaknesses of the Union. One thing that was certain was that Europe has common enemies to unite against. With Russia as its political rival, China and the US as its economic one, and ISIS as a physical one, and it being surrounded by a “ring of fire” (Africa, the Middle East, and Russia), Europe has no shortage of reasons to forge bonds among its nations. While it lacks a single army, ruler, constitution or even public opinion, he sees markers of success in Europe’s flag, parliament and anthem. What the EU does have is control over the world’s largest consumer market, and that is nothing to scoff at, he added. While he believes that Europe is fragile, as it is young, he finds strength in its heterogeneity of people and ideas, and claims the collaboration of today will only beget more collaboration tomorrow.

Thus, Europe is shaky, but it is a union that is allied and irreversible.

Berman went on to ask more of the European Union. While both speakers agreed that Europe was now a legitimate and solid union, she wanted to know whether there was dynamism, and not just stagnation, in its future. To her, she hopes and truly believes that Europe can become something more than just bureaucrats and laws, something with more political cohesion, something that, perhaps, gives rise to patriotism.

Professor Emeritus from the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Study Wim Blockmans challenged the optimism of the previous panelists, and cited issues where the European member-states have acted of their own volition, rather than heeding orders from Brussels. France’s failure to meet regulation debt standards is the key example cited here, along with many abuses of personal freedoms committed by the Hungarian government. David Cameron also, unsurprisingly, was mentioned in this discussion for his attempts to remove certain parts of the Convention on Human Rights, which also highlights the resurgent influence of the political right. These issues aside, Blockmans finds that Europe’s economic footing is sturdier than perceived, as Central Europe’s integration skews the numbers.

Victoria de Grazia, the final panelist and Professor of History at Columbia University applauded the progress of the EU, but not without criticizing its shortcomings. Issues such as youth unemployment are not dealt with in a uniform fashion, as a federation of this sort should be equipped to do. Furthermore, the European Neighborhood Policy has not been working to its full capacity thanks, in part, to the lack of a common foreign policy. The largest failure in recent years, to her, is the undermining of Europe’s normative powers displayed in the Ukraine crisis.

While all of these speakers and panelists discussed the flaws, shortcomings, and progress to be made, the overall consensus was this: the European Union is a solid, stable structure with enormous power, and, despite what skeptics might want people to believe, it is here to stay.
Péter Forgács Presents His Exhibit *Letters to Afar*

New York: November 11

*Irina Vuokasavic*

Péter Forgács, artist and filmmaker from Hungary, presented a private viewing and discussion of his exhibit *Letters to Afar* at the Museum of the City of New York. The exhibit premiered at the museum on Wednesday, October 22, 2014 and will remain on view until Sunday, March 22, 2015.

“Letters to Afar” is an immersive video art installation that contains 13 orchestrations displayed on 9 screens. The exhibit is comprised of home movies, or “letters”, taken by Jewish immigrants travelling from New York to Poland during the 1920s and 1930s. These amateur filmmakers captured their Polish relatives and friends going about their daily lives in the small towns of interwar Poland. The home movies take place in Łódź, Kolbuszowa & Sokolów, Oszmiana & Kurów, Warsaw, Nowogródek, Kraków, Kaluszyn & Kamionka, Vilna & Zaręby Kościelne, and Étude.

Péter Forgács avoided a broad historical narrative and instead delved into the private world of a particular place and time. He said that he is interested in life in its unexpected variability—millions of peoples’ lives, songs, fairytales, fights for daily bread, writing, and servicing the community. He captured this kind of intimate human behavior through looks and gestures, and replayed it at different speeds—with captions and spoken text drawn from memoirs, letters, and literature.

Forgács explained that the viewer experience is at the center of his exhibit. He said that he didn’t have a main goal behind making it but rather, he wanted viewers to think of their own memories and the memories of others. He said that it was up to the viewer to give an interpretation of the art in the exhibit.

“You shouldn’t ask me before you ask yourself because that’s the big question mark. Not only is there a sociological, psychological, historical meaning but there is your personal experience,” he said.

The exhibit is accompanied by a score of traditional Jewish music by New York-based band, The Klezmatics. Founded in 1986, the band fuses klezmer music with elements of jazz, rock, gospel, and other modern musical genres.

The amateur filmmakers who shot the footage donated it to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. YIVO is an academic institution that mostly preserves Jewish cultural history in Eastern Europe. It has the largest collection of home movies made by American Jewish tourists on visits back home to Poland in the 1920s to 1930s.

Gustave Eisner is the cameraman who took many reels of films. He was a Jewish travel agent who specialized in “going home” tours for Jews. He made his movies partly to drum up business for his travel agency.

Péter Forgács is a Budapest based independent filmmaker and media artist who specializes in working with archival footage. His main interest is the tension between official and private history and between the historical and existential dimensions. He represented Hungary at the 53rd Venice Biennale where he showcased his work *Col Tempo—The W Project.*
UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES
285 Mercer St., 7th floor
All events take place at the center unless otherwise noted
212.998.3838
cems.as.nyu.edu

FRIDAY, November 7th at 4:30 pm
Workshop: “Gender and transformation” with Elżbieta Limek-Dominiak (University of Wrocław) and Jill Massino (University of North Carolina at Charlotte).

LA MAISON FRANÇAISE
16 Washington Mews
All events take place at the Maison unless otherwise noted
212.998.8750
nyu.edu/maisonfrancaise

MONDAY, November 3rd at 9:30 am
International Symposium: “Alexandre Koyre: Transatlantic perspective.” RSVP by October 29th at vd526@nyu.edu.

THURSDAY, November 6th at 7:00 pm
Lecture: “Liberté et destin,” by Pascal Bruckner (philosopher, novelist). This event is in French.

MONDAY, November 10th, 7:00 pm
Lecture: Que peut (encore) la littérature?: Philippe Forest (University of Nantes).

TUESDAY, November 11th at 6:30 pm
Film: “West,” Screening introduced by Professor Barton Bigy (Professor at University of Massachusetts Amherst and Founding Director of the DEFA Film Library).

FRIDAY, November 21st at 6:30 pm
Concert: “The Brooklyn Arts Song Society & The Rainer Maria Rilke Songbook.”

KING JUAN CARLOS I OF SPAIN CENTER
53 Washington Square South
All events take place at the Center unless otherwise noted
212.998.3650
nyu.edu/pages/kjc

THURSDAY, November 6th at 10:00 am and FRIDAY, November 7th at 10 am
Symposium: “Community formation across the early-modern Iberian world,” with Pablo Fernández Albadailejo (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro (Universidade de Lisboa), Fernando Bouza (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Antonio Feros (University of Pennsylvania), Jean-Frédéric Schaub (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales – Paris), Mafalda Soares da Cunha (Universidades de Évora), Nuno Senos (Universidade Nova de Lisboa), Jon Arrieta Alberdi (Universidad del País Vasco), Stuart Schwartz (Yale University), Tamar Herzog (Harvard University), Alejandro Canéque (University of Maryland), Gabriel Paquette (The Johns Hopkins University), Gabriel Rocha (NYU).

FRIDAY, November 14th at 9:00 am
Conference: “A conference in honor of Marie Louise Pratt.”

THURSDAY, November 20th at 7:00 pm
Poetry Series: “Transatlantic Readings,” by Noni Benegas (Argentina–Spain) and Benetti Del Pliego (Spain–USA). Introduction by Lila Zemбorain (NYU). In Spanish.

DEUTSCHES HAUS
42 Washington Mews
All events take place at the Haus unless otherwise noted
212.998.8660
nyu.edu/deutscheshaus

TUESDAY, November 4th at 6:30 pm
Discussion: “Remembering the fall of the Berlin Wall,” A conversation between Alexander Osang (Der Spiegel) and Ulrich Baer (NYU).

FRIDAY, November 7th-Monday, January 5th
Exhibition: “Scraps of Poetry,” Exhibition curated by Astrid Busch and includes works by Astrid Busch, Dagmar Buhr, Franziska Hunig, Antonia Low, Michael Merck, Andreas Neumeister and Andrea Pichl.

TUESDAY, November 11th at 6:30 pm
Film: “West,” Screening introduced by Professor Barton Bigy (Professor at University of Massachusetts Amherst and Founding Director of the DEFA Film Library).

FRIDAY, November 21st at 6:30 pm
Concert: “The Brooklyn Arts Song Society & The Rainer Maria Rilke Songbook.”

CASA ITALIANA
24 West 12th Street
All events take place at the Casa unless otherwise noted
212.995.4012
nyu.edu/pages/casaitaliana

MONDAY, November 3rd at 5:30 pm

MONDAY, November 3rd at 7:00 pm
TUESDAY, November 4th at 6:00 pm  
Lecture: “Villa Del Balbianello,” Author and artist Sarah Plimpton will present a lecture on FAI’s magnificent Villa Del Balbianello, located on Lake Como.

WEDNESDAY, November 5th at 6:30 pm  
Lecture: “I am a Camera,” Fabrizio Ferri (photographer, director and music composer) in conversation with Grazia d’Annunzio (US special projects Editor, Vogue Italia).

THURSDAY, November 6th at 6:00 pm  
Film Screening: “Barolo Boys: The story of a revolution,” Followed by a discussion with directors, protagonist Elio Altare and sommelier Alessandra Rotundi.

FRIDAY, November 7th at 6:00 pm  
Book Presentation: “Writing Fashion in early modern Italy from Sprezzatura to Satire.” with Eugenia Paulicelli (author), Virginia Cox (NYU) and Bella Mirabella (NYU).

MONDAY, November 10th at 6:00 pm  
Panel and Documentary Screening: “THE CRITERION COLLECTION releases LA DOLCE VITA.” Followed by panel discussion with Issa Chubb (The criterion collection), David Forgacs (NYU) and Eugenia Paulicelli (CUNY).

FRIDAY, November 7th at 6:00 pm  

MONDAY, November 13th at 6:00 pm  

FRIDAY, November 7th at 6:00 pm  
Book Launch: “Belfast Noir,” with Stuart Nivelle (author), Lee Child (author). Free admission to members of the Glucksman Ireland House and to all students/faculty with a valid NYU ID card. For non-member, $10 donation at the door. RSVP required.

FRIDAY, November 7th– Sunday, November 9th  
Event: “Irish Arts center’s PoetryFest,” Tara Bergin, Peter Fallon, Adam Fitzgerald, Leontia Finn, Miriam Gamble, Matthea Harvey, Rita Ann Higgins, Dave Lordan, Robert Pinsky, Gerald Stern and Kevin Young. This event is at Irish Arts Center, 553 West 51st street.

THURSDAY, November 13th at 6:00 pm  

FRIDAY, November 14th at 6:00 pm  

MONDAY, November 10th at 5:30 pm  

FRIDAY, November 14th at 8:00 pm  
Concert: “The Blarney Star Concert Series: Eliot Grasso,” Free admission to members of the Glucksman Ireland House and to all students/faculty with a valid NYU ID card. For non-member, $15 donation at the door.

THURSDAY, November 20th at 6:00 pm  
Lecture: “How to enhance the European Public Sphere,” by Christine Landfried (NYU). This event will take place at 2nd floor common room, The Heyman Center.

THE HARRIMAN INSTITUTE  
420 West 118th Street, International Affairs Building (IAB), Room 1219  
All events take place at the Institute unless otherwise noted  
212.854.4623  
www.harrimaninstitute.org

WEDNESDAY, November 5th at 5:00 pm  
Discussion: “The History of the copyright wars,” with Peter Baldwin (UCLA and NYU), Joe Karagnis (The American Assembly) and Joris Van Hoboken (NYU). This event will take place at room 1219, International Affairs Building.

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WEDNESDAY, November 5th at 12:00 pm  
Talk: “The menace of unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, culture, and money,” by Michael Weiss (editor-in-chief, The Interpreter). This event will take place at Marshall D.Schulman Seminar Room (1219 IAB).

WEDNESDAY, November 5th at 3:00 pm  
Discussion: “The Eastern Mediterranean and European energy landscape: trends and opportunities,” with Prof. Yannis Maniatis (Greek minister of energy, environment and climate change). This event will take place at 1501 IAB.

THURSDAY, November 6th at 12 pm  
Discussion: “Who are the Moldovans and where are they heading?: A discussion on Identity, Human Rights and Aspirations of the citizen of the
Republic of Moldova,” with Luliana Marcinschi (director of human rights information center-CIDO). This event will take place at Marshall D.Schulman seminar room, 1219 IAB.

THURSDAY, November 6th at 2:15 pm
Talk: “Open economies, closed polities: Financial globalisation and authoritarian politics with evidence from Russia,” by Igor Logvinenko (post-doctoral fellow, Harriman Institute). This event will take place at 1201 IAB.

TUESDAY, November 11th at 12:00 pm
Book Talk: “The collapse: the accidental opening of the Berlin wall,” by Professor Mary Elise Sarotte (University of Southern California). This event will be held at Faculty House, Garden room 2.

FRIDAY, November 7th at 3:00 pm
Panel Discussion: “Michel Foucault: the late lectures,” with Seya Benhabib (Yale University), Francois Ewald (Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers), Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia University), George Kateb (Princeton University) and moderator Emmanuelle Saada (Columbia University).

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THURSDAY, November 6th at 7:30 pm
Film: “La Cour de Babel (School of Babel),” Film screening followed by a moderated discussion in French.

THURSDAY, November 13th at 9:45 am
Conference: “Dante’s Poets: Thirty years later,” It is a one day conference in honour of the book’s 30 years anniversary, featuring work by current and former students.

MONDAY, November 17th at 6:00 pm
Lecture: “Silent Moon: On Leopardi’s ‘Canto Notturno,” by Professor Giorgio Ficara (Professor at University of Turin and visiting Professor at Columbia University) and Jonathan Galassi (the president and publisher of Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

WEDNESDAY, November 19th at 7:00 pm
Concert: “Concert by Benjamin Hochman,” featuring works of Matthew Aucoin, Bach, Dallapiccola, Frescobaldi, Ligeti and Schumann work.

Film Series: “Knowledge is the Beginning: Barenboim, Said, and young Middle Eastern musicians,” followed by discussion with Mariam Said (Barenboim-Said Foundation), Fiamma Arditi (Senza Frontiere Film Festival) and several musicians from the West-Eastern Divan orchestra.

DEUTSCHES HAUS
420 West 116th Street
All events take place at the Haus unless otherwise noted
212.854.1858
www.columbia.edu/cu/german/dhaus

Zaidee Parkinson and Alanna Maharajh Stone. Fee and open to the public.

THE ITALIAN ACADEMY FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN AMERICA
1161 Amsterdam Avenue
All events take place at the Academy unless otherwise noted
212.854.2306
www.italianacademy.columbia.edu

THURSDAY, November 6th at 7:00 pm

THURSDAY, November 20th at 8:00 pm

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THURSDAY, November 20th at 6:30 pm
Film: “J’accuse,” Antoine Compagnon (Columbia University).

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WEDNESDAY, October 22 at 7:00PM

WEDNESDAY, October 29 at 6:00PM

THURSDAY, October 30 at 7:00PM
Concert: “JACK Quartet,” featuring guest artists Vox n Plux, Steve Beck (piano), Miranda Cuckson (violin) and Jay Campbell (cello). New music by William Anderson, Jonathan Dawe, Matthew Greenbaum, and Charles Wuorinen. Produced with

THURSDAY, November 6th at 2:15 pm
Talk: “Open economies, closed polities: Financial globalisation and authoritarian politics with evidence from Russia,” by Igor Logvinenko (post-doctoral fellow, Harriman Institute). This event will take place at 1201 IAB.

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THURSDAY, November 20th at 8:00 pm
EUROPE IN OCTOBER

October 1: As the Eurozone economy continues to struggle, British and German manufacturing industries experiences slowed down.

October 2: Russian investors visited North Korea to boost business ties.

October 2: Russia presented its 2015-17 budget which showed a 20% rise in defence spending as part of the plan to modernise the country's military.

October 3: Media reports indicated that the head scarf ban for women in French public service leads many women to turn towards self employed E-trading.

October 3: Conservatives in the UK pledged that the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) would no longer be enforceable in the UK, a radical move.

October 8: The World Health Organisation (WHO) said that Ebola would be unavoidable in Europe as it rushed to provide support to Spain to contain the disease.

October 8: The United Nations estimated a death of at least 3,660 people in the last six months due to fighting in Ukraine.

October 12: Australian opposition leader, Bill Shorten said that Vladimir Putin should not be welcome in the G20 summit at Brisbane.

October 12: Rally took place on the streets of Barcelona to oppose the move to make Catalonia an independent state.

October 12: Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops to return to their permanent bases near the Ukraine Border.

October 16: The European Commission stated that the Russian gas shutdown would limit power cuts to just one nation-Estonia.

October 17: Two French journalists face possible sentences for violation of immigration rights in Indonesia.

October 23: Ban on prostitution in Northern Ireland resulted in divided opinion.

October 24: Vladimir Putin blamed Washington for global issues like the unrest in Ukraine and Islamic terrorism.

October 28: Italian President Giorgio Napolitano testified at a high-profile mafia case, investigating whether state officials held secret talks in the aftermath of bombings in the 1990s. Napolitano was called as a witness but there is no suggestion he was involved in the wrong-doings.

October 29: The Sistine Chapel limited the number of visitors and the time of their visit while at the same time providing better illumination and air-conditioning within the chapel.

October 30: Sweden became first EU member in Western Europe to officially recognise the state of Palestine.

October 30: Russia, the EU and Ukraine signed a deal to resume Russian natural gas supplies to Ukraine for winter after several months of delay. The EU agreed to serve as a guarantor for Kiev.

October 31: Hungary’s Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, scrapped his plans for a controversial internet tax after protests flooded the streets of Budapest, worried that the law would work to silence opposition voices and curtail civil liberties.