

ROCHELLE TOBIAS

German and Romance Languages and Literatures
Johns Hopkins University
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Employment

Professor, Department of German and Romance Languages and Literatures, Johns Hopkins University, 2007-present.

Director, German Subdivision, 2007-2011, 2013-2018

Director, Max Kade Center for Modern German Thought, 2016-present

Associate Professor, Department of German, Johns Hopkins University, 2003-2007.

Assistant Professor, Department of German, Johns Hopkins University, 1996-2003.

Academic Director, Berlin Consortium for German Studies, Free University Berlin, 2001-02.

Education

Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, June 1996
Department of Comparative Literature

Free University, Berlin, Germany, October 1994-March 1996
DAAD Research Fellow

M.A. University of California, Berkeley, 1990
Department of Comparative Literature

B.A. Bryn Mawr College, 1985
Graduated cum laude with Honors in English

Honors, Grants, and Awards

Co-PI with Naveeda Khan and Deborah Poole, Alexander Grass Humanities Institute, Grant for Lecture Series, Critical Climate Thinking, 2016-2017

Environment, Energy, Sustainability, and Health Institute, Johns Hopkins University, Seed Grant, December 2015

Kenneth Weisinger Memorial Lecture, University of California, Berkeley, April 2011

Institutional Grant for the Creation of the Max Kade Center for Modern German Thought at Johns Hopkins, 2012

Fellow, Center for Advanced Studies, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, June 2009.

American Association of University Women, 2000-2001

Dean's Summer Research Fellowship, 1998

DAAD Fellowship, 1994-96

Mellon Dissertation Fellowship, 1993-94

Foreign Language Area Studies Summer Grant, 1991

Bertelsmann Foundation Scholarship, 1988

Books

The Discourse of Nature in the Poetry of Paul Celan: The Unnatural World. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

Pseudo-Memoirs: The Imitation of Life in Modern German Fiction, forthcoming.

Edited Volumes

Editor, Hölderlin's Philosophy of Nature (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

Editor with Philippe P. Haensler and Kristina Mendicino, Phenomenology to the Letter: Husserl and Literature (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019).

Editor with Julia Ng, "Benjamin, Scholem and the Marburg School." Modern Language Notes 127:3 (May 2012).

Editor, "Religion and the State: German-Jewish Perspectives." Modern Language Notes 121:3 (April 2007).

Editor with Rainer Nägele, "What is Formalism?" Modern Language Notes, 113:3 (April 1998).

Current Projects

Rilke, Phenomenology, and the Space of Consciousness. This project examines the cartography of the *Weltinnenraum* to bridge the gap between opposing pairs like subject and object, spirit and thing, and human and nature that have plagued modern thinking.

Ethics, Phenomenology, and Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Kafka attended the so-called "Louvre Circle" from 1902 to 1906, where the writings of Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl were discussed in some depth. I consider the limits of a theory of consciousness for constructing a notion of community and ethics through an analysis of Kafka's work, which, on the one hand, supports many of phenomenology's epistemological and ontological claims while, on the other hand, critiquing its account of a shared social world.

Articles

"Introduction: Hölderlin and the Natural Philosophical Tradition," Hölderlin's Natural Philosophy, ed. Rochelle Tobias (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

"Introduction" by Philippe P. Haensler, Kristina Mendicino, and Rochelle Tobias, Phenomenology to the Letter: Husserl and Literature, ed. Haensler, Mendicino, and Tobias (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019).

"Gregor Samsa and the Problem of Intersubjectivity in Husserl," Phenomenology to the Letter: Husserl and Literature, ed. Philippe Haensler, Kristina Mendicino, and Rochelle Tobias (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019).

“Rivers,” *The Anthropocene Unseen: A Lexicon*, ed. Cymene Howe and Anand Pandian (Santa Barbara, CA: Punctum Books, 2019).

“Walking Is Not Writing: Performance and Poetics in Walser’s *Der Spaziergang*,” *Spazieren muß ich unbedingt*. Robert Walser und die Kultur des Gehens, ed. Annie Pfeifer and Reto Sorg (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2018), 39-49.

“From Mythology to Myth: The Courage of Poetry,” *MLN* 132:5 (2017), 1164-1179.

“The Untamed Earth: The Labor of Rivers in Hölderlin’s ‘Der Ister,’” *Literatur für Leser* (2016), 61-73.

“Rilke, Husserl, and the Sensuality of Thought,” *Konturen* 8 (2015), 40-61.

“Rilke, Malte und die gnadenlose Liebe,” *Die Aporien des Verzeihens*, ed. Marc Crépon and Verena Rauen (Vienna: Verlag Turia & Kant, 2015), 177-202.

“Egology and Ecology: Husserl on the Natural World,” *Yearbook of Comparative Literature*, 58: 218-222.

“Rilke’s Landscape of the Heart: On The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge,” *Modernism/modernity* 20:4 (November 2013), 667-684.

“Paul Celan,” *DeGruyter Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, ed. Hans-Josef Klauck, Bernard McGinn et.al. (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2013).

“Introduction to the Special Issue,” *Modern Language Notes* 127:3 (April 2012), 427-32.

“Irreconcilable: Ethics and Aesthetics for Hermann Cohen and Walter Benjamin,” *Modern Language Notes* 127:3 (April 2012), 665-80.

“Budowanie Gwiazdy Dawida,” tr. Piotr Jakubowski, *Kartki Celana: Interpretacje*, ed. Joanna Roszak (Cracow: Austeria, 2012).

“Dvojna fikcija v Walserjevem romanu Jakob von Gunten,” tr. Mojca Kranjc, in Robert Walser, *Jakob von Gunten* (Ljubljana: Beletrina, 2011).

“À la limite de l’esthétique: La réconciliation pour Hermann Cohen et Walter Benjamin,” *Les cahiers philosophiques de Strasbourg* 27:1 (Fall 2010), 175-193.

“Writers and *Schlemihls*: On Heine’s *Jehuda ben Halevy*,” *Babel: Festschrift für Werner Hamacher*, ed. Aris Fioretos and Urs Engeler (Basel: Urs Engeler, 2008), 354-62.

“Aster, Disaster: The Nature of Names,” in *Pistola: A Literary Journal of Poetry Online*, March 2008, http://www.pistolamag.org/poetry/Entries/2008/3/7_Rochelle_Tobias.html.

“Romantic Irony and the Modern Lyric: Szondi on Hofmannsthal,” *Telos* 140 (Fall 2007), 131-46.

“The Letter and the Law: A Brief Introduction,” Modern Language Notes 121:3 (May 2007), 467-71.

“Fictional Lives: Thomas Bernhard’s *Auslöschung* and the Problem of Genre,” in Rethinking Autobiography/Konzepte des Autobiographischen, ed. Volker Kaiser, Manfred Schneider and Renate Voris, forthcoming.

“The Double Fiction in Robert Walser’s *Jakob von Gunten*,” in German Quarterly 79:3 (Summer 2006), 293-307.

“March 27, 1329: Pope John XXII condemns portions of Meister Eckhart’s work as heretical,” in The New History of German Literature, ed. David Wellbery et al (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 140-44.

“The Homecoming of a Word: Mystical Language Philosophy in Celan’s ‘Mit allen Gedanken,’” in Placeless Topographies: Jewish Perspectives on Literature of Exile, ed. Bernhard Greiner (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 2003), 175-85.

“A Doctor’s Odyssey: Sickness and Health in Kafka’s ‘Ein Landarzt,’” in The Germanic Review 75:2 (Spring 2000), 120-131. Reprinted in Short Story Criticism, Vol. 60, ed. Justin Karr.

“The Ground Gives Way: Intimations of the Sacred in Celan’s ‘Gespräch im Gebirg,’” in Modern Language Notes 114:3 (April 1999), 567-589.

“Das Gesicht der Dinge,” in Gedichte von Rainer Maria Rilke, ed. Wolfram Groddeck (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999), 104-121.

“Death’s Poetic Property” (A reading of Louis René des Forêts’ *Poèmes de Samuel Wood*) in Qui Parle 5:1 (Fall/Winter 1991), 9-26.

Book Reviews

Review of Samuel Frederick, Narratives Unsettled: Digression in Robert Walser, Thomas Bernhard, and Adalbert Stifter, German Quarterly, 86:4 (October 2013), 500-502.

Review of Katja Garloff, Words from Abroad: Trauma and Displacement in Postwar German Jewish Writers, Monatshefte 99:4 (Winter 2007).

Review of John Zilcosky, Kafka’s Travels: Exoticism, Colonialism and the Traffic of Writing for Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies, 41:2 (May 2005), 178-80.

Review of Noah Isenberg’s Between Redemption and Doom: Strains in German-Jewish Modernism, H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online, H-German@h-net.msu.edu, October 2001.

Review of Lydia Koelle’s Paul Celans Pneumatisches Judentum for Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies, 18:3 (Spring 2000), 173-176.

Translations

Wolfgang Ernst, “69 August Street,” Introduction to the catalogue for the exhibit Hausgeschichten (Berlin: Kunstwerke Berlin, 1995).

Interviews

Joachim Maier and Rochelle Tobias, "Eine Urenkelin von Simon Oppenheimer erinnert Familiengeschichte," Schriesheimer Jahrbuch 6 (2002), 104-132.

Lectures and Conferences

"The Allegedly Factual: Bernhard and Husserl on Fiction," American Comparative Literature Association, Washington, DC, March 2019.

"Like-Minded But Not Like-Bodied: Kafka's Challenge to Husserl's Notion of Intersubjectivity," The Inhuman Gaze and Perceiving Otherwise, Paris, France, June 2018.

"*Ungleichzeitig*: The Problem of Self-Relation in Rilke and Husserl," Rilke and Philosophy: An Interdisciplinary Symposium, Södertörns University Stockholm, May 2018.

"Time Out of Joint: The Problem of Self-Relation in Rilke and Husserl," Brown University, May 2018.

"Loose Threads: Text Formation in Robert Walser," Conference, Modes of Formation and the Thinking of Possibility, Johns Hopkins University, April 2018.

"Four Walls and Beyond: Kafka's Metamorphosis," German Studies Association, Atlanta, October 2017.

"Walking Is Not Writing: Performance and Poetics in Robert Walser's 'Der Spaziergang,'" Robert Walser-Zentrum, Bern, Switzerland, May 2017.

"The Neediness of the Gods: Hölderlin's Caesura," Hölderlin conference, Johns Hopkins, March 2017.

"The Untamed Earth: Hölderlin's 'The Ister,'" Climates Past and Present Conference organized by Sara Miglietti for GRLL and the Charles Singleton Center for the Study of Premodern Europe, JHU, February 2017.

"Four Walls and Beyond: Kafka's *Verwandlung*," Invited contribution to the seminar "Metamorphoses: Humans, Animals, Machines," German Studies Association, San Diego, October 2016.

"From Mythology to Myth: The Courage of Poetry," Brown University, March 2016.

"Music, Hölderlin, and the Rhythm of Thinking," Poetics and Politics: with Lacoue-Labarthe, Humanities Center, Johns Hopkins University, February 2016.

"The Climate of Thinking," Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris, December 2015.

“Soulful: The Movement of the Soul in Hölderlin’s ‘Andenken,’” American Comparative Literature Association, Seattle, March 2015.

“Rilke, Husserl and the Sensuality of Thought,” Rice University, October 2014.

“Jewish Writing and the Schlemihl: Heine’s Hebräische Melodien,” German Studies Association, Kansas City, MO, September 2014.

“Heine and the Flesh,” Response to Panel “The Image of Heine,” German Studies Association, Kansas City, MO, September 2014.

“Critical Commonplaces: Sebald’s Rings of Saturn,” American Comparative Literature Association, New York, April 2014.

“Rilke and Phenomenology: Poetic Imagination and Theories of Consciousness,” What is a Thing?, Conference at the University of Oregon, Eugene, February 2014.

“Rilke and Phenomenology: Poetic Imagination and Theories of Consciousness,” German Studies Association, Denver, CO, October 2013.

“Ringe und Linien bei Sebald,” Universität Hamburg, July 2013.

“Verisimilitude and Consciousness: On Descartes and the Novel,” Inaugural Conference of the Max Kade Center for Modern German Thought, “The Aesthetics of *Bildung*: Literature, Knowledge, and the Pleasure of Representation,” Baltimore, MD, November 2012.

“The Novel and the Problem of Other Minds,” German Studies Association, Milwaukee, WI, October 2012.

“Intransitive Love: Rilke and the Grammar of the Heart,” Keynote Address, Annual German Graduate Studies Conference, University of Virginia, February 2012.

“Das Ungebildete im Bild,” Internationale Rilke-Gesellschaft, Boston, September 2011.

“To Be a Female Poet: Rilke, Malte and the Mystery of Love,” Kenneth Weisinger Memorial Lecture, University of California, Berkeley, April 2011.

“‘Wenn ich ein Mann wäre...’: Rilke, Poetic Desire, and the Feminine Ideal,” American Comparative Literature Association, Vancouver, BC, April 2011.

“Rilke’s Heart,” University of California, Berkeley, April 2010.

“Literatur und das Archiv der Zukunft: Die Poetik W.G. Sebalds,” Ruhr-Universität Bochum, November 2009.

“Am Rand der Ethik und der Ästhetik: Versöhnung bei Hermann Cohen und Walter Benjamin,” Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, November 2009.

“An der Grenze des ästhetisch Darstellbaren: Versöhnung bei Hermann Cohen und Walter Benjamin,” Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität München, June 2009.

“The Nature of Spirit: Spirit, Ethics, and the Letter in Benjamin,” American Comparative Literature Association Convention, Boston, MA, March 2009.

“At the Limits of Aesthetics: Ethics and Religion for Benjamin,” German and Jewish Studies Workshop, Duke University, February 2009.

“Schlemihls and Writers: The Modern Jewish Subject,” Becoming Modern / The German-Jewish Experience / An Interdisciplinary Symposium, University of Pennsylvania, March 2008.

“The Ghost of an Author: W.G. Sebald’s Schwindel. Gefühle,” Vanderbilt University, February 2008.

“Aster, Disaster: The Nature of Names,” American Writers and Writing Professionals Convention, New York, NY, February 2008.

“The Ghost of an Author: W.G. Sebald’s Schwindel. Gefühle,” Northwestern University, November 2007. Invited lecture followed by an invited workshop on Paul Celan.

“Sacredness and the Law,” German Studies Association Convention, San Diego, CA, October 2007.

“Virtual Pasts,” German Studies Association Convention, San Diego, CA, October 2007.

“Shining Bright: Felix Krull, Aesthetic Play, and Life as Semblance,” Cornell University, January 26, 2007.

“Bernhard’s Punctum,” University of Washington, Seattle, January 27, 2006.

“Still Lives: Thomas Bernhard and the Crisis of Narrative,” Columbia University, October 6, 2005.

“Philosophy in the Woods with Thomas Bernhard,” Rethinking Autobiography / Konzepte des Autobiographischen. International Conference at the University of Virginia, September 23-25, 2005.

“The Measure of a Poem: Paul Celan’s Existential Poetry,” Annual Convention of the Modernist Studies Association, Vancouver, British Columbia, September 2004.

“A Life That Was Not: The Metamorphosis of the Autobiographical Genre in Robert Walser’s Work,” Annual Convention of the American Comparative Literature Association, Ann Arbor, Michigan, April 18, 2004.

“A Life That Was Not: Robert Walser’s Jakob von Gunten and Autobiography,” Princeton University, March 4, 2004.

“Literature and Religion in the Twentieth Century,” Faculty Conversations Series, Johns Hopkins University, October 2002.

“Mortal Words, Expiring Poems: Celan and Heidegger on Death as Possibility,” Annual Convention of the American Comparative Literature Association, Boulder, CO, April 2001.

“Guilt and Its Mythologies.” American Association of University Women, Frederick, MD Branch, March 2001.

“Eyesight: Celan’s Topography of the Eye,” Plenary Address at the conference “Grenzen: Charting Boundaries in German Literature, Language and Culture” organized by the Graduate Students in the Department of German at the University of Indiana, Bloomington, February 2001.

“Orbs, Hollows and Eye Sockets: Celan’s Topography of the Eye,” Annual Convention of the MLA, Washington, DC, December 2000.

“A Doctor’s Odyssey: Sickness and Health in Kafka’s ‘A Country Doctor.’” University of Oregon, Eugene, March 2000.

“A Doctor’s Odyssey: Sickness and Health in Kafka’s ‘A Country Doctor.’” University of California, Berkeley, March 2000.

“Choosing Academia.” Selected Speaker for The Interfaith Council. Johns Hopkins University, March 2000.

Respondent, “Heinrich Heine’s Notion of Time and History,” Annual Convention of the MLA, Chicago, IL, December 1999.

“Unleashing the Bears: The Weight of Memory in Celan.” Annual Convention of the German Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, October 1999.

“Not Naming Names: Memory and Forgetting in Paul Celan’s Work.” Third Annual Faculty Symposium on the Holocaust, Johns Hopkins University, April 1999.

“The History of a Promise: Messianic Strains in Paul Celan’s Late Work.” Discussion paper for the General Seminar of the Studies in Women, Gender and Sexuality Program, Johns Hopkins University, November 1998.

“The History of a Promise: Messianic Strains in Paul Celan’s Late Work.” Annual Convention of the International Association of Philosophy and Literature Conference, Irvine, CA, May 1998.

“Zwecklos: Error and Errancy in Kafka’s ‘Ein Landarzt.’” Kentucky Foreign Literature Conference, Lexington, KY, April 1997.

“The Echo Chamber: Hölderlin’s ‘Mnemosyne’ and Paul Celan’s Lichtzwang.” Stanford University, January 1994.

“The Anxiety of Photography in Manette Salomon.” The Berkeley Symposium: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Visual Representation, March 1990.

Conference Organization

Convener, “Literature and the Possibility of Transcendental Critique: The Legacy of Käthe Hamburger,” German Studies Association, Portland, Oregon, September 2019.

Co-Organizer, "Literature and Phenomenology: New Readings of Husserl," International Conference, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, May 2018.

Co-Organizer, "Modes of Formation and the Thinking of Possibility," International Conference, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, April 2018.

Co-Convener, "Phenomenology to the Letter: Husserl and Literature," Seminar at the German Studies Association, Atlanta, Georgia, October 2017.

Organizer, "*harmonisch entgegengesetzt*: Hölderlin's Philosophy of Nature," Johns Hopkins, March 30-April 1, 2017.

Co-Organizer, Lecture Series, "Critical Climate Thinking," Johns Hopkins, 2016-2017.

Co-Organizer, Workshop "Climate Change and its Challenges to the Scholarly Habitus," Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris, December 2015.

Organizer, Three-Day Seminar, "Hölderlin's Rivers," American Comparative Literature Association, Seattle, March 2015.

Co-organizer with Elisabeth Strowick, "The Aesthetics of *Bildung*. Literature, Knowledge and the Pleasure of Representation." Johns Hopkins University, November 2012.

Panel Chair, "Metaphors of the Gaze," Augenmensch: Goethe and the Field of Vision, Conference at Columbia University, November 1999.

Moderator, Between Messianism and Secularization, Criticism and Theology, Literature and the Sacred Conference, Johns Hopkins University, March 1999.

Session Leader, "Voices in/and/of Writing," at the Passions, Persons, Powers Conference, UC Berkeley, May 1992.

Member, Steering Committee, The Berkeley Symposium: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Visual Representation, March 1991.

Teaching

Undergraduate Courses:

Small Forms: The German Novella in the Mid-19th Century
Fighting Sleep: Insomnia and Literary Modernism
Urban Dwellings
In Transit: German-Jewish Literature of Exile
Topics in German Literature: Wandering
Chess Games
German-Jewish Thought Since the Enlightenment
Literary Modernism in Berlin
Fin-de-siècle Vienna
Robert Walser
Literature and Photography
Detective Fiction in its Nascence
What is a University?

Ghost Stories, Haunted Houses, and Other Occult Phenomena
Decadence
Panorama of German Thought
German Political Thought
Art in Literature
Heidegger's *Being and Time* and *Rectify*
Healing and Health in and Beyond Theology
Fictional Autobiographies and Autobiographical Fiction

Graduate Seminars:

Negative Theologies: Meister Eckhart and Georges Bataille
Narratives of Time: Theories of Tragedy and *Geschichtsphilosophie*
Modern German Verse: Individual Poems, Poetic Cycles
The History of a Concept: Redemption and Utopia in German-Jewish Thought
Paul Celan
Guilt in Heidegger and Kafka
Ontological Aesthetics
The Life of Stones: Geology in the Works of Goethe, Novalis and Celan
Pseudo-Autobiographies
Narrative Theory: A Critical Reevaluation
Nietzsche-Mann-Adorno
Understanding Irony
Aestheticism
Literature of Terror, Terror of Literature
The *Bildungsroman* and Its Critique
Anti-Mimesis: Modern Poetry and Aesthetic Theory
From *Kultus* to *Kultur*: Poetry, Tragedy, and the Ritual of Art
Drifters, Footprints, Telling Time
Heidegger and the Poets
Spiritual Poverty: Meister Eckhart, Musil and Benjamin
Life Worlds: Literature and Phenomenology
The Melancholic Imagination
Literature and Law: The Case of "Michael Kohlhaas"
Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*
Poetic Thought: Goethe, Hölderlin, Rilke
Philosophy and/of the Novel
Thinking of the Environment

Independent Studies:

Alienation in Brecht's Poetic Work
Robert Walser's *Mikrogramme*
Nietzsche
Musil's and Roth's Novels
Holocaust Testimonies
Richard Wagner and Thomas Mann
Kafka and Holocaust Literature

Professional Affiliations

Member, Modernist Studies Association, 2004-present.
Member, American Comparative Literature Association, 2000-2004.
Member, American Association of University Women, 1999-present.

Member, German Studies Association, 1999-present.
Member, International Association of Philosophy and Literature, 1998-2000.
Member, Modern Language Association, 1992-present.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lachelle", located in the upper right corner of the page.