"Can the Migrant Speak?"
Romance Languages and Literatures Graduate Student Conference
Harvard University
April 6-7, 2018

Keynote Speakers:
Prof. Sandra Ponzanesi (Utrecht University)
Prof. Amy Sara Carroll (Cornell University)

"Can the Migrant Speak?" engages with the figure and agency of the migrant. It is not often that we hear about - or listen to - the migratory experience from those undergoing it themselves. By asking this question during a time of tumultuous political change, we directly address the roles of our disciplines, and academia as a whole, in relation to this issue that continues to shape lives across the globe in powerful ways.

While the term is linguistically unambiguous - the migrant is the person who moves - its uses have always been fraught. What are the politics of naming figures ranging from refugees and undocumented individuals to foreign professionals and "expats" under the single word "migrant"? How do people negotiate between various labels, and what tensions emerge between personal assumption and external imposition of those labels?

Migration is not a homogeneous phenomenon. We want to address the ways certain migrants are situated at the intersection of identities - language, race, gender, class, religion - that complicate and fundamentally shape their experiences of migration.

If movement across borders and oceans characterizes literal migration, what are other forms of migration that are equally significant but often overlooked? How do we understand the

movement between languages, the hybridization of identities, and the fusion of cultures? How does climate change form landscapes and movement? If the text itself constitutes an act of migration, what are its frontiers? How does viewing a text as a mobile entity versus seeing it as a static, fixed object transform one's experience of it? How is literature (as a discipline) itself migrating as new literary objects (digital archives, Facebook posts, Snapchat stories, interactive maps) pop up onto our radar?

In addition to accepting conference papers, we seek to widen the scope of our discussion beyond academia by considering texts and objects that nonetheless have the power to theorize: personal narratives, documentaries, creative pieces. Thus we hope to address the problematics of presentations about the "words of the migrant" when voices around the world - including those of our own community members - continue to be silenced.

Topics may include but are not limited to:

• Persecution and marginalization
• Exile, displacement, and refugee narratives
• Border Theory
• Colonization
• Alienation and dislocation
• Race and intersectionality
• Interculturality and bilingualism
• Nationality, (loss of) citizenship, and transnationalism
• Exploration and travel narratives
• Pilgrimage
• Ecocriticism
• Translation
• Correspondence
• Clandestine publication or circulation of manuscripts
• Literary innovation
• Digital Humanities

We welcome submissions from graduate students in the humanities and social science disciplines, examining migration across ages, languages, and interpretations. Presentations should be in English and should not exceed 20 minutes in length. Please send abstracts (250 words maximum) to canthemigrantspeak2018@gmail.com by **January 15, 2018**. Proposals should include the title of the paper and the name, affiliation, and e-mail address of the presenter should appear on a cover sheet, as well as any requests for technical equipment.