

MINUTES OF THE ICCLA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
Renmin University, Beijing; 4-5 September 2014

In attendance: Hans Bertens, CHO Sung-Won (beginning with the afternoon session, September 4), Dorothy Figueira, John Burt Foster, Massimo Fusillo, HASHIMOTO Yorimitsu, Peter Hajdu, Achim Hölter, KAMIGAITO Ken'ichi, Kathleen Komar, Marc Maufort, Chandra Mohan, ŌSHIMA Hitoshi, PARK Sowon, Anders Pettersson, E.V. Ramakrishnan, Márcio Seligmann-Silva, William Spurlin, YANG Huilin, ZHANG Longxi (beginning with the afternoon session, September 4), and ZHOU Xiaoyi.

Excused for reasons communicated to the Officers and the Executive Committee: Hans-Joachim Backe, Christine Baron, Lucia Boldrini, Marcel Cornis-Pope, Wiebke Denecke, César Domínguez, Manfred Engel, Isabel Capeloa Gil, Theo D'Haen, Ute Heidmann, Jean-Marc Moura, Suzanne Nalbantian, Haun Saussy, Monica Spiridon, Micéala Symington, and Anne Tomiche.

First Session: September 4, 9:30 am.

The Association's President, Hans Bertens, opened the session at 9:30 am. He thanked YANG Huilin for inviting the Association's Executive Council to meet at Renmin University, for overseeing the logistics of the meeting, and for scheduling the Association's symposium on "The Languages of Comparison" concurrently with the World Sinology Conference. He also thanked Dr. Cathy Zhang for her many efforts in organizing the details for this visit. YANG Huilin then welcomed the council members to Beijing and to Renmin University and made several announcements about upcoming events, including a welcoming dinner with some representatives of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association.

The minutes of the Council's two-day business meeting, of the two meetings of the General Assembly, and of the Joint Meeting of the old and new Executive Councils, all of them at the University of Paris (Sorbonne) in July 2013, were approved unanimously. The agenda for this year's meeting was approved after arranging to include Haun Saussy's proposal for a new standing committee on a comparative history of East Asian literatures as an addendum to the Research Committee's report.

President Hans Bertens then gave his report. He drew special attention to the need for the Association to sponsor new long-term research projects outside the European region, with the Saussy project on East Asian literatures as a case in point. He hopes to announce another such initiative next year, on the literatures of the Islamic world, an idea suggested by Theo D'haen. He also announced the reappointments of Monika Schmitz-Emans and Jean-Marc Moura as chairs of the Balakian Prize and the Structures committees respectively, as well as the appointment of Theo D'Haen as chair of the Nominations Committee. Working with Achim Hölter, Hans Bertens has continued with preparations for the 2016 Congress in Vienna and should be able to finalize a revised memorandum of agreement with the University of Vienna. Representing the Association, President Bertens also gave lectures in Beijing, Tokyo, and Brussels and attended an important UNESCO meeting in Paris. The President's report was approved, with no opposition and one abstention (by the President himself).

John Burt Foster, the English-language secretary, then reported on his activities for the year. After working with Marc Maufort to oversee the election of new officers and council members at the Paris Congress, he prepared English versions of the minutes for the four business meetings at the Congress. When it became clear that the timing of the Beijing meeting would prevent the French

secretary Micéala Symington from attending, he helped make plans to ensure preparation of the official French minutes. John Foster would write an English version that would be sent for suggestions and approval to Marc Maufort, the previous French secretary, who would be in Beijing in his capacity as a vice president. The minutes would then go to Micéala Symington, who would use them to prepare the French version.

As the Beijing meeting approached, John Foster worked closely with the President to prepare the agenda, solicited and received the annual reports for the meeting, and forwarded the reports to YANG Huilin, who oversaw preparation of a handsome booklet of these materials. John Foster expressed appreciation for YANG Huilin's last-minute assistance. In concluding, he noted the large number of officers, council members, and chairs of research committees who had been unable to attend a meeting in early September. This was largely due to a recent change in European academic calendars. Acceptance of his report came with no opposing votes and one abstention, by John Foster himself.

In Micéala Symington's absence, Marc Maufort gave her report as the Association's French secretary. In addition to taking the minutes for the joint meeting of the old and new executive councils in Paris, she had had significant responsibilities that carried over from her position as European treasurer. In particular, President Hans Bertens pointed out how difficult the transfer of funds to the new European treasurer, Hans-Joachim Backe, had been. Marc Maufort added a comment on handling the transition between French secretaries. There is also one piece of business that remains outstanding, which involves the requirement that the Préfecture de Paris be sent a copy of the Association's bylaws. However, this issue may be moot as a result of Jean-Marc Moura's research into the Association's status as a Paris organization, as discussed in the report of the Structures Committee. Micéala Symington's report was unanimously accepted.

The reports of the three treasurers gave an overview of the Association's finances. In the absence of Hans-Joachim Backe, Hans Bertens gave the European treasurer's report, which in addition to showing a healthy surplus included significant earnings from interest. If current rates hold, the Balakian Prize funds, which are also held by the European treasurer, will cover the 2016 prize without having to dip into capital. John Foster inquired whether the European treasurer, who holds final responsibility for all three of the Association's accounts, needed to give a consolidated report every year. Marc Maufort replied that such reports were only required at General Assemblies. Peter Hajdu asked about payment of the Hungarian association's dues prior to 2013, for which he has documentation but about which there is some confusion, to judge from the records of the European treasury. This question will require further correspondence. Following Hans Bertens's praise for the clarity and thoroughness of the European treasurer's report, it was accepted with a unanimous vote. Kathleen Komar's report as treasurer for the Americas noted the renewed health of the Canadian association, which contributed to an upward trend in membership in the region. Her remarks about irregular payments from associations in Argentina, Peru, and Brazil, due in part to currency controls by those nations, led to discussion of how to respond to non-paying national organizations. Treasurers were encouraged to send firmer letters when requesting payment of dues, and the director of the Vienna Congress was asked to consider a requirement that all presenters on the program be members of the Association. The report of the treasurer for the Americas was unanimously accepted.

The treasurer for Asia and the Pacific, KAMIGAITO Ken'ichi, took the floor to discuss the funds in his account. Because the Japanese Comparative Literature Association pays its dues in yen rather than dollars, he has accounts in both currencies. Depending on exchange rates, there can be advantages in using one currency or the other, and he requested authorization to use yen or dollars as he sees fit. Authorization was granted by a unanimous vote. A discussion of membership trends revealed a steady increase from China, India, and Korea to accompany the large contributions from the JCLA. John Foster noted that the treasurers' reports indicated that the Association had some 3500 dues-paying members in 2013-14 and financial reserves totaling \$214,780, of which \$18,630

were for the Balakian Prize. The Asia/Pacific treasurer's report was accepted with no opposing votes and one abstention.

Dorothy Figueira, who edits the Association's annual journal *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research*, announced that Volume 30 had just appeared. The meeting offered congratulations and applause. To publicize the Association's activities more fully, the journal now includes "updates" on the projects of the Research Committees. (Since actual committee reports can only be addressed to the Executive Council, information given in the journal cannot be described as reports.) Dorothy Figueira noted that the journal now receives review copies from a significant number of publishers, and urged Council Members to view writing a review for the journal as integral to their service to the Association. She reminded the meeting that to receive a print copy of the journal, members needed to make a specific request. Last year's shift to online distribution, which has been preferred by a large majority of members, has saved the Association \$20,000. This money is now free for other purposes, such as management of the membership list. Dorothy Figueira concluded by requesting two forms of financial assistance, \$2500 for printing and mailing costs (down from \$22,850 in 2013) and \$5000 for the course buy-out that frees her schedule for editorship of the journal. Accompanied by applause, her report and these funding requests were accepted with a unanimous vote.

Discussion then turned to Steven Sondrup's report on the Bulletin and on the membership lists. As noted in the report, the accuracy and completeness of these lists have been a persistent problem. Given the difficulties with student assistants (rapid turn-over, non-academic nature of the task), the secretaries were asked to prepare a job description and to determine the costs of hiring a regular employee to handle the lists. The question of the Bulletin led to a discussion of the Association's website. Hans Bertens mentioned his problems in adding materials to the site, in response to requests from Manfred Engel and others, and asked whether the Association should look for an official webmaster. Achim Hölter also criticized the website, and insisted on the vital importance of an attractive web presence. In particular, in seeking funds for the 2016 Congress, he had found that prospective contributors wanted to see the Association's website before any decision. PARK Sowon said that the Association should have the capacity to update the website every day, and that there should be a wide array of fully functioning links. Also discussed was the relative value of a website hosted by a university versus one managed by a commercial server at a reasonable annual cost. The Executive Council agreed on the importance of a long-term solution to these issues, thanked Steven Sondrup for his dedicated service to the Association, and accepted his report with a unanimous vote.

Achim Hölter then reported on progress in planning the 2016 Congress in Vienna. He began by apologizing for his confusion about the symposium schedule, which prevented him from giving his paper. He went on to discuss the financial issues raised by the necessary agreements with both the University of Vienna proper and the university's Events Management office. "A Memorandum of Understanding" was still being negotiated, with care to ensure that the Association would not be liable for more expenses than were acceptable. Final agreements should be ready by the end of September. Referring to Anne Tomiche's report on the 2013 Paris Congress, Achim Hölter stated that it was too early to draw up a comparably detailed budget. As with many other academic institutions, meeting rooms at the University of Vienna must be rented, rather than being free. At this point a complete package runs to €100,000, after a €50,000 reduction from the original offer. Unfortunately, although Germans and Austrians join the same regional comparative literature organization, German universities cannot send funds to scholarly meetings outside Germany. Since Austria has only four comparative literature departments, they cannot provide the level of funding that their more numerous French counterparts contributed to the Paris congress. As a result, Achim Hölter has decided to solicit funds from non-academic sponsors. Discussion then turned to the best wording for the Congress topic, and to who should deliver key-note addresses. It was agreed that the Association should advance \$10,000 in "seed money" for the Vienna Congress, with the

expectation that these funds would be returned once books were closed on the event. With the arrival of meal-time, further discussion of Achim Hölter's report was postponed until the afternoon.

Second Session: September 4, 2:00 pm.

A lively discussion of the precise title for the Vienna Congress ended with the decision to use "The Many Languages of Comparative Literature." There would be four plenary speakers, and the officers and executive council would discuss possible choices via e-mail. It was proposed that along with prominent scholars, one might include authors, as at some previous Congresses. Acceptance of Achim Hölter's report was unanimous, without abstentions.

The Association's president Hans Bertens then gave more details about the work of recently appointed committee chairs. He began with Monika Schmitz-Emans and the Balakian Prize committee. Entries to this competition should go to the president, but otherwise Monika Schmitz-Emans has full responsibility for the committee's business.

Hans Bertens was delighted that Theo D'haen had agreed to chair the Nominations Committee. Not only had he directed the 1997 Leiden Congress, but he has a wide network of contacts in the field, which has been enhanced by visiting appointment at Harvard for one semester every year. He will make a special effort to locate younger colleagues to serve on the Executive Council. Anders Pettersen took this opportunity to mention the need to consider gender balance during the nomination process. John Foster praised the model set by Manfred Engel, the previous chair of the Nominations Committee, who asked each nominee to list their five leading publications. This practice not only ensured that the nominees were qualified, but at the election it greatly simplified the preparation of an informative list of candidates.

Hans Bertens then summarized Jean-Marc Mourra's report as chair of the Structures Committee. After extensive research, he discovered that after 1956 no record could be found of the Association's registration in Paris as an international organization headquartered at the Sorbonne. In addition, the Association's legal basis does not, as generally believed, lie with a 1901 law for organizations of this kind, but with a 1939 extension of this law that formally declares the Association to be an association étrangère, a legal status that apparently no longer exists. The report of the Structures Committee was unanimously accepted, with the understanding that the President will work with Jean-Marc Moura to resolve these difficulties and will keep the Executive Council and the officers informed.

Next on the agenda was the proposal from Anders Pettersen, who had been charged in 2013 with formulating a policy on voting rights that might include the chairs of research committees.

Currently only officers and members of the Executive Council can vote. Jean Bessière and Gerald Gillespie, as honorary presidents, had sent messages questioning the wisdom of enlarging the franchise in this manner, and Peter Hajdu and Dorothy Figueira both asked whether people should be able to vote on their own reports. Further discussion resulted in a wide variety of views, but it became clear that there was a distinction between Standing Committees, which were not time-limited, and the other Research Committees, which did have time limits. It was also pointed out that at the current meeting the President had set an example by abstaining from his own report, and so had many later reports. This practice would eliminate the problem of voting on one's own report. It was decided to hold two straw votes, first on the question of "Do we want to give votes to the chairs of Standing Committees that are engaged in research?" This vote was 8 yes, 1 no, with 6 abstentions. The second question was "Do we want to give votes to all chairs of research committees?" which would include the time-limited committees. This vote yielded 2 yes, 8 no, and 6 abstentions. Consequently, the question of granting votes to the chairs of Standing Committees engaged in research (such as the Coordinating Committee and the Gender Studies Committee) was referred to the Structures Committee.

Returning to the Association's membership lists, it was decided that John Foster should open negotiations with Jenny Webb, the journal's managing editor, to see whether she could be hired, under a long-term paid arrangement, to manage the lists. The major savings realized when most members agreed to receive the journal in electronic format had made this option possible. The question of venues for the 2019 Congress then arose. Discussion made it clear that after two meetings in Europe either North America or Asia were strongly favored. China might be a possibility according to the president, and William Spurlin mentioned that Australia might be available. The heavily attended annual meetings of the American Comparative Literature Association made a North American venue quite problematic (what location might be available for a big meeting, when so many sites had already been used?). However, it was agreed that John Foster should meet with a team from Halifax, Nova Scotia, which had recently approached him, to assess the potential for meeting in Canada.

Third Session: September 5, 9:30 am.

Marcel Cornis-Pope's report as chair of the Coordinating Committee for the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages was given in his absence by John Foster. The problem of a missed subvention from the Union Académique Internationale has been resolved to the committee's satisfaction. It currently has ten projects in progress, and a volume on "literary hybrids" in our multimedia age is now at the publisher. Volumes at an advanced stage include the first volume of a Nordic project, the second volume of the Iberian one, and a volume on orality as a challenge to comparative literary history. Other volumes will deal with medievalism, migrant literatures, transatlantic literatures in the 20th century, a discrete phase in the development of the Renaissance, a reconsideration of realism(s), and the conceptualization of European literature(s). The Coordinating Committee's report was accepted unanimously, and the committee's request for support in the amount of €3000 was authorized.

The report of the Research Committee, chaired by César Domínguez, was given by Hans Bertens. The report was unanimously approved, and its recommendation of a new Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature, chaired by Kitty Millett from San Francisco State University (USA), was accepted.

In the absence of Haun Saussy, who has agreed to set up the Standing Committee for a Comparative History of the Literatures of East Asia, President Hans Bertens reminded the meeting of the need to broaden the Association's research. In the scope and duration of its activities, the committee would resemble the Coordinating Committee for European Literatures. Discussion raised the possibility for a similar committee on the literatures of the "Indian Ocean ring." To the question "why East Asia?" the proposal pointed to the many filaments of connection, both literary and cultural, that characterized the Greater China region. Full authorization to proceed with setting up this committee was granted to Haun Saussy, on the condition that he report on progress to the Executive Council. President Hans Bertens will correspond with him about the requirements for Standing Committees and within reason may advance funds to assist his efforts.

The Translation Committee, which is being reconstituted by its chair Sandra Bermann, reported on its double seminar at the 2014 meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association. It also elected a full slate of officers, created an initial list of members, and made plans for a 2015 meeting that would lead to publication in a journal or book. The report was accepted with a unanimous vote. In the absence of Suzanne Nalbantian, the chair of the Research Committee on Literature and Neuroscience, her report was summarized by John Foster. Though her committee had sponsored a full program of five sessions at the Paris Congress and was organizing a major conference in October at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (on Long Island), it was noticed that her report made no mention of a formal committee structure. She needed to be informed of the Association's requirement that she have a committee with at least 8 members that would be evenly divided

between the fields of neuroscience on the one hand and literature and the arts on the other. The officers and executive council voted 12 to 0 with 3 abstentions to delay acceptance of the report until information was received about the composition of this committee. John Foster was delegated to discuss this issue with Suzanne Nalbantian.

The report of the Research Committee on Literary Theory, detailing its recent publications, its 2014 conference in Osaka, and its plans for a 2015 conference in Pécs, Hungary, was given by its chair, PARK Sowon. The report was unanimously accepted, with a reminder that the committee's bylaws would need to be approved by Executive Council. At the afternoon session (for details, see below) the Association also authorized a travel grant for the keynote speaker at the committee's annual theme-oriented convention.

William Spurlin, chair of the Research Committee on Gender Studies, reported on its wide range of activities. In addition to a full schedule of meetings and a variety of publications, he emphasized the group's large number of members, which reflects the growing interest of younger scholars in its research. The committee now has a website, and to expand global outreach is planning a 2015 meeting at the University of Pretoria, South Africa; it also envisions a later meeting at Monash University, Victoria, Australia. This report was unanimously accepted.

William Spurlin then requested that, given the committee's sustained activity since its formation in 2003, it receive permanent status as a Standing Committee. This request received a 12-0 vote, with one abstention. William Spurlin also requested financial support in the amount of \$2000, a sum that would cover the committee's obligations at the Pretoria conference. This request was unanimously accepted.

Chandra Mohan reported on the activities of the Research Committee on Literary and Cultural Interrelationships between India, Its Neighboring Countries and the World. As a further indication of the committee's success in organizing a full series of panels at the Paris Congress, eight of these papers will be published in the congress proceedings. To encourage cross-cultural comparisons within the South Asian sphere, members of this committee have overseen the introduction of courses in languages like Nepali and Urdu at one major Indian university and have started a new course on South Asian literatures in translation at another. They have also organized both a symposium and a major international conference on South Asian literary and cultural issues, with Pakistani scholars in attendance. Dorothy Figueira added that, thanks to the initiative of Indian colleagues on this committee, comparative literature has become an integral part of several newly founded universities. When asked whether this Research Committee had a properly established committee, Chandra Mohan replied that it did, and President Hans Bertens confirmed this point. This report received a vote of unanimous acceptance.

In the absence of its chairs, Manfred Engel and Bernard Dieterle, Hans Bertens led discussion of the bilingual report of the Research Committee on the Cultural and Literary History of the Dream. Besides a program of meetings and publications, this group is cooperating with a related research group on "European Dream Cultures," which has an application pending with the prestigious Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. KAMIGAITO Ken'ichi noted that similar research exists in Japan, and said that he would contact Manfred Engel with this information. This report received a unanimous vote.

The report of the Research Committee on Comparative Literature in the Digital Age, which had completed its second three-year term, was circulated in the absence of its chair, Hans-Joachim Backe. The committee had sponsored five sessions at the Paris congress, and six of its papers will be published in the conference proceedings. The committee plans to meet in Spring 2015 to discuss whether to continue its research program outside the framework of the Association, now that its mandate has expired. The report was accepted unanimously, with elicitation for Hans-Joachim Backe.

John Foster then presented the volume forwarded to him by Haun Saussy, with the title *Intersections, Interferences, Interdisciplines: Literature with Other Arts*, which had had the Association's financial support. This book, edited by Saussy and Gerald Gillespie, collected the

papers from the interarts symposium after the Association's business meeting at the University of Chicago in 2012. In a related matter, John Foster presented a book proposal from Gerald Gillespie and Jean Bessière with the working title of "Contextualizing World Literature," for which they requested support of €2,400. The book consisted of selected papers from a well-attended set of sessions at the Paris Congress, to which was added the reflections of five former Association presidents, along with the introduction and two afterwords by the editors. Discussion emphasized the proposal's difference from the Chicago book, with its direct connection to an Executive Council meeting. Doubts were also raised about whether the book might be too polemical or would be seen as an official statement from the Association. The proposal and its request for support were accepted on a 12 to 1 vote, with one absention. The vote included these provisions: that the support was a one-time payment, that it did not create a precedent, and that the Association's policies for funding books do not consider requests of this nature, which did not grow out of an Executive Council symposium.

Attention then turned to Anne Tomiche's final report on the 2013 Paris Congress. It had been a major success, with 1500 presentations distributed among some 150 sessions and 300 workshops. Because significant funds had been raised from the University of Paris, partner institutions in France, and various governmental entities, registration fees had been kept at a reasonable level, and fees for students and for colleagues from "least developed countries" could be reduced. With the remaining balance after settling costs of the Congress itself, Anne Tomiche assembled an editorial team that evaluated the 500 submissions for the conference proceedings, selected 190 of them for volumes that will illuminate the Congress's theme of "Comparative Literature as a Critical Approach," and arranged publication with Classiques Garnier. Her report received a unanimous vote and vociferations of extreme gratitude.

Fourth Session: September 5, 1:30 pm.

President Hans Bertens opened this session with an update on the selection of sites for the 2015 business meeting. He has learned that Talinn, which had been mentioned as a possibility, was definitely not interested. He had also received an offer from Lisbon, but despite having heard nothing recently from Portugal, he would check back with that contact. He would inform the Council and the officers of any progress.

YANG Huilin then reported on the year's activities of the Research Committee on Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies. Its program included a variety of conferences both in China and abroad, two special issues of journals, and visiting lecturers who had come from Western Europe, North America, and Israel. Dorothy Figueira praised the ecumenical breadth of these projects, but asked about efforts to include China's "independent churches" in the Committee's activities. YANG Huilin replied that the Research Committee had a policy of keeping its distance from specific churches, so that there were no church-based scholars among its members. In addition, given its interest in cross-cultural transfer and mutual understanding between the Chinese classics and the Jewish and Christian scriptures, it had chosen to focus on contacts with Western scholars. The committee's report was accepted with a vote of 15 to 0, with one abstention. The meeting concluded with a discussion of various new directions in comparative literary study that the Association might encourage in the future, with a view to maintaining its relevance and leadership in the field. President Hans Bertens reaffirmed his interest, outlined in his annual report, in forming a Standing Committee on a Comparative Literary History of the Islamic World. The Association should pay more attention to literature from the different areas of the world. He also cited the value of identifying and establishing relationships with regional networks for comparative literature, like the one in which Executive Council member Lucia Boldrini had been president. In general, there needed to be progress in bringing an increasing number of younger scholars and graduate students into the Association. As one hopeful sign, Dorothy Figueira mentioned the

relaunch of the Polish comparative literature association. Thinking of Africa in regional terms, Kathleen Komar noted that Africanists wished to be in dialogue with Africans, opening up the prospect for intra-African comparatism.

Chandra Mohan suggested using some of the Association's funds for travel money, to enable more members to attend the Congresses; but discussion drew attention to logistical difficulties like ones Eugene Eoyang faced for the 2004 Congress in Hong Kong. Establishing a prize for the best comparative literature dissertation met with a warmer reception; such a prize would be a companion to the Balakian Prize for the best first book, and together the two prizes would encourage participation by younger scholars. At this point PARK Sowon inquired about a travel subvention from the Association to help support the Theory Committee's invitation of a featured speaker on the theme for their yearly meetings. President Hans Bertens approved this idea, making it clear that the subvention would be for travel only (no honorarium), had to be reasonable (no first-class tickets), and would be reimbursed to the traveler after the meeting.

Further discussion focused on some emerging areas of inquiry, especially ones that brought more regions of the world into discussion. For example, E.V. Ramakrishnan remarked on the importance of translation studies in the Indian context, while KAMAGAITO Ken'ichi mentioned that the prominence of East/West studies overshadowed other important cross-cultural relationships, such as the India-China connection within Asia. Issues involving intermediality and new media were also addressed, and ZHANG Longxi brought up the overriding importance of defending the value of drawing comparisons, perhaps in dialogue with New Literary History's issue "On Comparing." Recalling earlier comments about the website, it was suggested that the Association should devise a concise mission statement that covered these new directions in research. This statement, both on the website and in *Recherche littéraire* / *Literary Research*, would help to update the Association's "old-fashioned image."

Leaving this task to the discretion of the President, the meeting adjourned at 2:30.

Respectfully submitted,
John Burt Foster, Jr.
English-language secretary.