

Helsinki 29 June 2018

International Comparative Literature Association Report of the Activities of the Comic Studies and Graphic Narrative Research Committee July 2017-June 2018

In 2017, the Comic Studies and Graphic Narrative Research Committee organized two panel series and meetings at international conferences: the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) congress, held in Utrecht 6-9 July, and the European Network of Comparative Literary Studies conference (ENCLS), held in Helsinki 23-26 August. Noriko Hiraishi, one of the founding members of our research network, represented the group at the ACLA executive meeting. Angelo Piepoli organized a two-day ACLA seminar entitled, "Who's Bad? Representing Heroes, Villains and Anti-Heroes in Comics and Graphic Narratives," while Lisa DeTora organized "Embodiment at the Margins: Theorizing Embodiment and/as Subjectivity in Literature and the Arts I," including a panel devoted to the work of the Graphic Narrative Research Group.

For the ENCLS on "Fear and Safety" Umberto Rossi and Kai Mikkonen organized two sessions entitled "Between Fear and Safety: Post-Memory in "European" Comics and Graphic Narratives". Its first session, included Riccardo Capoferro (Sapienza University of Rome), Takayuki Yokota-Murakami (Osaka University) and Lisa De Tora. The second session included presentations by Shiamin Kwa (Bryn Mawr College) Emanuela Zirzotti (Sapienza University of Rome), Marco Petrelli (Sapienza University of Rome), and Umberto Rossi (Rome). The papers given at these sessions are meant to be published in a thematically organized anthology edited by Umberto Rossi and other members of the research committee. This work continues the truly global character of the research group as well as a further commitment to collaboration and ongoing engagement between our members.

The co-chair of the research committee, Stefan Buchenberger, gave a talk "Evil as Performance, Performing Evil: Three early clownish Superman villains: Mr. Mxyzptlk, Toyman and Prankster" at the conference on "Imagineers in Circus and Science: Scientific Knowledge and Creative Imagination", organized by the Humanities Research Center at the Australian National University in Canberra 3-5 April 2018.

Over the last winter and the spring of this year, the research committee members Lisa DeTora, Angelo Piepoli and Umberto Rossi continued editing a volume of the ICLA proceedings that includes the papers given at our sessions organized for the Vienna congress in 2016. The chairs of the committee, Kai Mikkonen and Stefan Buchenberger, wrote an introduction to this collection that also chronicles a short history of the research committee.

Yours truly,

Kai Mikkonen