

Annual Report 2013-14

Research Committee on Comparative Gender Studies

International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA)

1. Committee-Sponsored Programme at ICLA in Paris (2013)

The Comparative Gender Studies Committee sponsored a 5-day seminar at the ICLA conference in Paris, 19-24 July 2013. This followed a 3-day seminar in Toronto in April 2013 even though we were not required to meet separately in a year in which there is an ICLA conference. As a result of many of our members being graduate students based in North America, travel for an international conference abroad is often cost prohibitive, but many graduate students and early-career faculty who have worked with our Committee over the past three years at ACLA put in for papers; there were nearly 40 submissions for only 20 slots on the programme. This has also increased ICLA membership. All of our 5 seminars were scheduled at 9 am at Sorbonne/Malesherbes, and the room was full at every single seminar with standing room only on some days. Papers were given in French or in English. The Committee would like to thank especially Anne Tomiche and her Committee for their support and help in organising this rather large seminar group. The Committee-sponsored programme from ICLA in Paris is listed below:

Comparing Queerly/Queering Comparison: Transformative Approaches to Comparative Studies

Seminar Moderator: William J Spurlin, Brunel University London, United Kingdom
Sponsored by the Committee on Comparative Gender Studies

Seminar 1. (Queering) Translation

Queering Translation: Is Translation a Critical Approach?
William J Spurlin, Brunel University London, United Kingdom

The Problem of Translating Queer Modern Poetry
Max Kramer, University of Saskatchewan, Canada

L'entre *Nathanaël*, le désir: Nathanaël (Nathalie Stephen)'s Queer Self-Translation
Jordana Greenblatt, York University, Canada

Métramorphose et plasticité: Contributions féministes à la traduction « queer »
Carolyn Shread, Mount Holyoke College, USA

Seminar 2. Feminist-Queer

Queering Aeneas: A Comparative Approach to the Postcolonial Feminist *Aeneid*
Tegan Zimmerman, University of Alberta, Canada

Landscapes of Loss and Desire: Thinking Trauma and Difference
Rita Terezinha Schmidt, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Where *Race* and Gender Meet: Sex with the *Other* in Quebec Fiction by Men
Lori Saint-Martin, Université du Québec, Montréal, Canada

Queer Confederacies: Material Feminism and Comparative Ecocriticism
Kate Rigby, Monash University, Australia

Seminar 3. Crossing Time, Crossing Cultures

Spatially Queer or the Early Modern Economies of Desire in Anglo-Ottoman Encounters
Adbulhamit Arvas, Michigan State University, USA

Ancient Chinese Discourses on Transgender: Beyond Western Paradigms
Wenjuan Xie, University of Alberta, Canada

Reclaiming Gender Roles in Early Modern Korea
S. Han, Binghamton University, State University of New York (SUNY), USA

The Princess, the Witch, and the Fireside: Miwa Yanagi's Uncanny Visualisation of Fairy Tales
Mayako Murai, Kanagawa University, Japan

Seminar 4. *Fin de Siècle* and Today

Freud and Sexual Rights
Robert Tobin, Clark University, USA

The Desirous Exchange of Mallarmé and Gauguin
Aaron Slodounik, Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), USA

Gender and Desire in Gertrude Stein's Exchanges with Henri Matisse
Chris Coffman, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, USA

Detecting the Dandiacal Body: A Century in Queer Profiles from London's Sherlock Holmes to
Moscow's Erast Petrovich Fandorin
Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, University of Texas at Austin, USA

Seminar 5. Contemporary Popular Culture

Épistemologie de « l'Armoire Magique »: Queering Fantasy, Comparing Practices and Fictions
Anne Isabelle François, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3, France

Doing Queer Things with Great Books: Literary Slash Fiction
Liedeke Plate, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Généalogies comparées des mouvements de libération homosexuelle: Lecture croisée de Mario Mieli et de Guy Hocquenghem
 Antoine Idier, Université de Picardie Jules Verne, France

Alchimie des poisons: Femmes fatales qui s'aiment depuis Amélie Nothomb jusqu'à Lady Gaga et Isabella Santacroce
 Mattia Marino, Bangor University, United Kingdom

2. Committee Annual Business Meeting in Paris (2014)

The Comparative Gender Studies Committee held its annual meeting on Wednesday, 24 July, at 11.00 am – 12.30 pm at ICLA in Paris.

The following officers of the Committee were elected at the annual business meeting. Officers were confirmed by email ballot in early September 2013 for those Committee members who were not present in Paris. Officers serve a three-year term with the option to serve only one additional term of three years if they so choose. The results of the election of our officers are listed below; terms of office expire at the ICLA conference in the year given in parentheses. Those listed for 2016 means that they will have already served two terms and must vacate that office; those listed for 2019 indicate that their office is renewable for a second term from 2016 should they desire to remain in it.

Elected Officers of the ICLA Comparative Gender Studies Committee

President/Chair (2016)

William J Spurlin, Brunel University London (UK)

Vice President (2016)

Liedeke Plate, Radboud University Nijmegen (The Netherlands)

Secretary (2019)

Chris Coffman, University of Alaska, Fairbanks (USA)

Elected Executive Committee Member (2019)

Jordana Greenblatt, University of Toronto (Canada)

Elected Executive Committee Member (2019)

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, University of Texas at Austin (USA)

Elected Executive Committee Member (2016)

Kate Rigby, Monash University (Australia)

The Committee also planned its seminar for ACLA in 2014 in New York on the Geopolitics of Gender and Sexuality as it related to the ACLA conference theme on 'Capitals.' The Committee drafted the Call for Papers (see the seminar listing below).

The Committee also discussed at length plans for 2015 when there is no ICLA conference and the viability of continuing to meet in the off years at ACLA, which always occurs in North America. This was especially concerning since the next ICLA will be in Vienna, which means that the Committee's annual seminars and its meetings will be shuttling between North American and Western Europe over a six-year period since ICLA/Seoul in 2010. While the bulk of our membership is on these two continents, and while the ACLA has been most hospitable and accommodating of our Committee through the inclusion of our seminars (including two 3-days seminars in 2012 at Brown University) and our Committee Business Meeting on the ACLA programme, the Committee discussed the possibilities of meeting in 2015 in a location outside of North American and Europe for the benefit of our members located outside of that axis. After some discussion, one of our members, Andries Visagie, volunteered the University of Pretoria in South Africa as a possible site for our 2015 meeting if our Committee could secure matching funding from the ICLA for a jointly-sponsored conference in comparative gender studies. He agreed to work up a Call for Papers and theme for the conference. This would then be discussed in March 2014 at the Business Meeting of the Committee at ACLA in New York.

The Secretary of the Committee volunteered to develop and update the Committee's website.

Sergia Adamo, an outgoing officer of the Committee from the University of Trieste (Italy), put out a call for papers on War and Gender to be held at her University in 2014, specifically inviting members of the Committee to give a paper. Seven Committee members submitted proposals.

Tegan Zimmerman, Committee member from Grant MacEwan University (Canada) proposed that the Committee also have a Sub-Committee and annual presence through a Committee-sponsored seminar at the Canadian Comparative Literature Association (CCLA)/Association Canadienne de Littérature Comparée (ACLCL). The Committee unanimously agreed and Tegan volunteered to form a group to propose a call for papers and a seminar for CCLA/ACLCL for 2014 in Canada.

3. Committee-Sponsored Programme at ACLA in New York (2014)

The Committee sponsored a three-day seminar at the ACLA annual conference 20-23 March 2014. The seminars were all very well attended despite the listing of nearly 400 seminars in the conference programme, the largest conference in the Association's history. Our Committee also picked up new members. The Committee-sponsored programme of seminars is listed below:

Gender, Sexuality, and Geopolitics: New Affinities/New Comparisons

Seminar Moderator: William J Spurlin, Brunel University London
Sponsored by the Committee on Comparative Gender Studies

Seminar 1. Geopolitics of Gender

Occupied Bodies in World War I

Margaret Higonnet, University of Connecticut, Storrs

Marry Me Not: Delayed Transfer Marriage and Communal Female Suicide in Hui'an, Fujian, 1911-1949

Courtney R Fu, Pennsylvania State University

Surpassing the Gendered Limits of Spatial Inscriptions in *El zorro de arriba y el zorra de abajo* and 2666

Mary R Renda, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

"Femen": Transnational Feminism Lost in Translation?

Julia Fee Müller, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt

Seminar 2. Queer Geopolitics

Oscar Wilde's Final Personality, or the Queerness of the Non-Place

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, University of Texas at Austin

Hart Crane's "Pleasant State of Beginning All Over Again": Mexico and Affective Possibility in Crane's Later Poetry

Leland Tabares, Pennsylvania State University

Shifting Geopolitical Borders/Shifting Sexual Borders: Renegotiations of (Queer) Regionalism in a Biopolitical World

William J Spurlin, Brunel University London

Edelman's *No Future* Meets Coetzee's *Slow Man*: Does One Have to "Choose" between Queer Theory and Feminist Theory?

Anca Parvulescu, Washington University in St Louis

Seminar 3. Trans and the Gender/Queer (Geo)Politics of Crossing

Paul Gauguin's Queer Commodities Networks, and Meaning.

Aaron Slodounik, The Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY)

Trans-migrations: A Chilean Novelist, an Indian Poet, and Queer Itineraries of Identity

Roanne Kantor, University of Texas at Austin

Travel of Grieving as Travel of Ideology: Trans Deaths and Nation-State Formation in Turkey

Sahin Acikgoz, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

“Something Beautiful and New”: Hedwig’s Traversals
Chris Coffman, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

4. Committee Annual Business Meeting in New York (2014)

The Comparative Gender Studies Committee held its annual meeting on Saturday, 22 March from 2.20 pm – 4.30 pm at ACLA in New York.

The Committee prepared and ratified the following Statement of Purpose at the meeting. The statement will be posted on the Committee website and used in official statements about the work of the Committee.

Comparative Gender Studies Committee of the International Comparative Literature Association

The Comparative Gender Studies Committee works to further the comparative study of gender and sexuality through organising innovative seminar programmes at the ICLA and at other conferences such as the ACLA. The Committee supports research and publication in the relatively new fields of comparative gender and comparative queer studies. We define ‘comparative’ in its broadest sense as an approach to the study of literature and culture that includes: a) traditional comparisons across national and linguistic borders as these relate specifically to gender and/or sexuality; b) comparative work across historical, postcolonial, and transnational contexts focusing on gender and/or sexuality; and c) scholarship using gender and/or sexuality as sites of comparison themselves, or in relation to race, class, ethnicity, national and religious affiliation, and other sites of difference. We also support research on the gender and queer politics of textual and/or cultural translation in all historical periods. The work from our seminars is published in international peer-review journals and in edited collections with major academic presses. Anyone with a scholarly interest in comparative gender/queer studies is invited to join the Committee, and we especially welcome graduate students.

The results of the 2013 election were announced at the Committee. Members were asked to consider running for leadership roles within the Committee for 2016 when the ICLA meets in Vienna.

The Committee began planning for its sessions for 2015. After some discussion, it was decided that the Committee should plan seminar programmes for ACLA 2015 in Seattle and for a conference in April 2015 to be held in South Africa. Andries Visagie sent in a Call for Papers with his colleagues at the University of Pretoria who will co-sponsor the conference along with the Comparative Gender Studies Committee of the ICLA. The proposed title of the conference will be “Gendered Modernities in Motion: Literary and Cultural Interrogations of Gender and Sexuality in a Time of Transnational Dialogue’ (working title). The Committee is working with the organisers in South Africa to revise the title and the Call for Papers. It was decided to meet both in Seattle at ACLA and in Pretoria, South Africa, in order to provide opportunities for those Committee members in close proximity of either location to attend and to be involved in the work of the Committee.

The Chair updated Committee members on the status of the Committee's publications, and the Secretary reported on the status of the Committee website.

5. Committee-Sponsored Programme at CCLA/ACLC, Brock University, Canada (2014)

The Committee sponsored a one-day seminar at the Canadian Comparative Literature Association/Association Canadienne de Littérature Comparée 25-27 May 2014 for the first time. The seminar was organised by Tegan Zimmerman, a Committee member, and the CCLA/ACLC would like to have a Committee-sponsored event each year at its annual conference. The following seminar was given:

Gender and Sexuality

Chair: Tegan Zimmerman, Grant MacEwan University

Sponsored by the ICLA Committee on Comparative Gender Studies

Feminism and Femininity in Late 20th Century Brazilian and Canadian Literatures: A Constructive Dialogue or another Problematic Comparison?

Lidiane de Cunha, Independent Scholar

Nannies and Caregivers in Iranian Women's Memoirs

Safaneh Mohaghegh Neyshabouri, University of Alberta

Why Now? Queer Theory and Comparative Literature

Jonathan A. Allan, Brandon University

6. Publication and Dissemination of the Committee's Work

The following are forthcoming publications under the auspices of the Committee:

a) Special Issue of Comparative Literature Studies (CLS)

This special issue is based on the Committee's work at ACLA in Vancouver on queer translation and has been published by the journal *Comparative Literature Studies (CLS)* this year.

CLS Special Issue: The Gender and Queer Politics of Translation: Literary, Historical, and Cultural Approaches

Guest Editor, William J Spurlin, Brunel University London (UK)

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Queering Translation Studies: New Approaches

William J Spurlin, Brunel University London (UK)

A Queer and Embodied Translation: Ethics of Difference and Erotics of Distance

Aarón Lacayo, Rutgers University (USA)

Homme peut-il vouloir dire *femme*? Gender and Translation of 17th-Century French Moral Literature

Pierre Zoberman, Université de Paris XIII (France)

Strategies of Translating Sexualities as Part of the Secularization of Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Russia

Sergey Tyulenev, Durham University (UK)

Translation is Blind: Reflections on Narcissus and the Possibility of a Queer Echo

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, University of Texas at Austin (USA)

Tick as Appropriate: A) Gay; B) Queer; or C) None of the Above: Translation and Sexual Identity in Lawrence Venuti's *A Hundred Strokes of the Brush Before Bed*

Serena Bassi, University of Warwick (UK)

Untranslatable Desire: Inter-Ethnic Relationships in Franco-Arab Literature

Mehammed Mack, Smith College (USA)

b) Special Issue on Gender and Sexual Health and Queering Disability Studies in the Journal of Medical Humanities.

This work comes out of our ACLA panel on Gender and Sexual Health in 2012 at Brown University as well as out of work at the Modern Language Association in conjunction with the MLA Division on Literature and Science in 2012 in Seattle, so this will be an interdisciplinary comparative endeavour. The special issue is co-edited by Rebecca Garden (Upstate Medical University) and William J. Spurlin, (Brunel University London). All papers have now been submitted for the special issue and selected papers are currently undergoing peer review. The issue is due to be published in 2015.

c) Special Issue of InterTexts on 'Comparatively Speaking: Gender and Rhetoric.' Guest edited by Pierre Zoberman and Liedeke Plate.

This special issue is currently in progress and has been accepted by the journal. Papers are currently undergoing peer review. It is being guest edited by Pierre Zoberman (Université de Paris 13, France) and Liedeke Plate (Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands), and it is due for publication in 2014 or 2015.

d) Book Review

The publication listed below, which is a publication of the Committee, has been reviewed this past year:

Recherches Littéraires/Literary Research 29. 57-58 (2013): 26-33. Review of *Comparatively Queer: Interrogating Identities across Time and Cultures* (Eds. Jarrod Hayes, Margaret R. Higonnet, and William J. Spurlin, New York: Palgrave USA, 2010) by Benjamin Hudson.

7. Budget/ ICLA Support: Committee's Spring Conference in South Africa

The Committee remains concerned about only meeting in the off-ICLA years at ACLA in North America. This makes it difficult for our Committee members outside of North America to attend our meetings in the years between ICLA conferences. For April 2015, we have decided to organise a seminar for ACLA in Seattle in order to maintain our regular visibility at ACLA, but also to co-sponsor a conference with Prof Andries Visagie, a Committee Member and Comparative Literature colleague at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, in order to allow those who live far from North America to attend Committee meetings and participate more fully in the Committee's programmes in the years in which there is no ICLA conference. The proposed title of the conference will be "Gendered Modernities in Motion: Literary and Cultural Interrogations of Gender and Sexuality in a Time of Transnational Dialogue" (working title). This will be the Committee's first set of seminars in the global South. The conference would be partly sponsored by the Southern Modernities Research Group, a Faculty Research Group at the University of Pretoria, and they have requested matching funding. We will also work with the South African Comparative Literature Association to draw in more Committee members from South Africa. The Committee would like to request a sum of US \$2000 from the ICLA to match the funding required for the conference. A Call for Papers and more details about the conference will be provided at the EC meeting as these are currently being developed now.

8. Permanent Status of the Gender Studies Research Committee of the ICLA

Finally, the Gender Studies Committee would like to request formally that it be given the status of a permanent committee of the ICLA. The Committee was formulated and approved in 2003 and had its first official seminar programme at the ICLA in Hong Kong in 2004. Since that time, the Gender Studies Committee has met and delivered seminar programmes at each and every ICLA conference since, including Venice (2005), Rio de Janeiro (2007), Seoul (2010), and Paris (2013). Since 2009, the Committee has met each and every year at the ACLA by providing seminars, including two different 3-day seminars at Brown University in 2012, and holding its annual business meeting. The Committee has been highly active and productive since its ten years in existence; while most of our membership comes from Europe and North America, we now have members from all six continents.

The Committee also publishes its work regularly; below is a list of our publications that are out as well as those in production and forthcoming:

Gender and Literary Studies. Special Issue of *Comparative Critical Studies* 6.2 (2009). Guest Editor Margaret R. Higonnet.

Von Flotow, Luise, ed. *Translating Women*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010.

Hayes, Jarrod, Margaret R. Higonnet, and William J. Spurlin, eds. *Comparatively Queer: Interrogating Identities across Time and Cultures*. New York: Palgrave USA, 2010.

The Gender and Queer Politics of Translation: Literary, Historical, and Cultural Approaches. Special Issue of *Comparative Literature Studies* 51.2 (2014). Guest Editor William J. Spurlin.

Comparatively Speaking: Gender and Rhetoric. Special Issue of *Intertexts*. Forthcoming 2014. Guest Editors Pierre Zoberman and Liedeke Plate.

Critical Healing: Queer and Disability Studies Interventions in Biomedicine and Public Health. Special Issue of *Journal of Medical Humanities*. Forthcoming 2015. Guest Editors William J. Spurlin and Rebecca Garden.

There are also publication plans for the work of the Committee at ICLA in Paris in the form of an edited collection, as well as another edited collection from the work of the Committee on gender, sexuality, and geopolitics at ACLA in New York.

Over recent years, the Committee has built its membership. The Committee attracts doctoral students in comparative studies who are writing on comparative gender or comparative queer topics for their Ph.D. theses, as well as those in the early stages of their career who work in these areas. At ICLA in Paris, many graduate students and early career academics attended their first ICLA and became members, and this has helped boost ICLA membership.

Gender, as a lens and research tool, continues to be used as an important method for framing the discipline of comparative literature. Gender not only includes feminist and queer approaches, but includes masculinity studies and trans studies. Work in comparative gender/queer studies challenges some of the discipline's normative assumptions around literature and the critical practice of comparison. This work has helped re-shape and re-vitalise the discipline, and it continues to have major impact on the study of comparative literature. We therefore request that the standing status of the Committee be reviewed so that it can be given permanent status as a Research Committee of the ICLA given its track record of productivity and the importance of its continued work.

Submitted to the ICLA Executive Council on 20 July 2014,

*William J Spurlin
Brunel University London (UK)
Committee Chair*