

20. Research Committee Report June 2018

Theo D'haen, Chair

Since the ICLA Board meeting of 2017 the composition of the AILC/ICLA Research Committee is as follows:

New Members, start 2016 until 2019, once renewable

Theo D'haen (Leuven -
Chair) May Hawas (AUC)
Zhang Hui
(Peking)
Vladimir Biti
(Vienna)
José Luís Jobím (Rio de
Janeiro) Marko Juvan
(Ljubljana)
Paulo Horta (NYUAD)

Members continued for second term, rotate off 2019

Sibylle Baumbach (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz) - starts
second term Mads Rosendhal Thomsen (Aarhus Universitet) - starts
second term
Hein Viljoen (Noordwes-Universiteit) - starts second term

According to the Statutes of the ICLA, the Research Committee “aims to examine proposals for research projects under the aegis of the ICLA, monitors activity of existing research projects sponsored or recognized by the Association, and investigates ways to stimulate and support research efforts of special relevance to the work of the Association.” Scholars who want to submit proposals for new committees under the aegis of the AILC/ICLA should send to the Chair of the Research Committee a document including:

A short description of the proposed project, with a clear statement of the problem to be investigated (500 words maximum).
A more detailed description of the project field, including sections on overview of the project field, project rationale, objectives and plan/timeline for implementation (2000 words maximum).
Team composition, including short biographic profiles (200 words per bio).
Information regarding the links of the project with both local and international institutions. Information regarding research and teaching outcomes of the project.
Information regarding a plan of activities (a detailed schedule of planned activities for the next 3 seminars, workshops, etc.) and publications.
Information regarding measures to make the project visible (media dissemination, public outreach).

Since the 2017 AILC/ICLA Board meeting the Research Committee received two new proposals answering to the guidelines just listed. Massimo Fusillo proposes a research committee on LITERATURE, ARTS, MEDIA. Achim Hoelter proposes a research committee on LITERARY

HISTORY. Both proposals were sent round to the Research Committee members, who by majority (not all returned a verdict within the response time set) approved that I submit the said proposals to the AILC/ICLA Board, which I herewith do in attachment to the mail that also encloses the present report. As for ongoing committees, annual reports on the status of the project, including undertaken activities, publications and information on dissemination, should be submitted to the Executive Council's empowered representative, the designated AILC/ICLA Secretary. As per earlier reports this includes the following committees: "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies" (2011), "Literature and Neuroscience" (2011), "Literary and Cultural Inter-relationships between India, Its Neighbouring Countries and the World" (2011), "Literary and Cultural History of the Dream" (2013), "Religion, Ethics, and Literature" (2014), and "Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative" (2015).

Respectfully submitted,

29.05.2018 Theo D'haen, Chair

Addendum Report 2018 Standing Research Committee AILC/ICLA

Dear Professors Zhang and Horta, Members of the AILC/ICLA Bureau,

Please find in attachment sent to Prof. Horta an Addendum to the Standing Research Committee report I sent in earlier. The proposal for an ad hoc research committee on African literatures contained in such addendum results from an initiative taken at the 2017 AILC/ICLA Bureau meeting in Utrecht, but only now reached the Standing Research Committee, with an urgent request to be still considered for the 2018 Kunming Bureau meeting. The full Standing Research Committee has been consulted (electronically) on the proposal, and has approved its submission to the Bureau. Therefore, I herewith respectfully send it on for approval to the Bureau.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theo D'haen', is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Theo D'haen

20. Research committee Appendix a

Proposal

ICLA Research Committee on “Comparative African Studies / Literary Histories of Africa”

Rationale: The importance and rich complexities of the African continent's cultural histories and literatures have not so far found a corresponding reflection in the structure of ICLA's research committees, and the lack of participation of African comparatists on its Executive Committee also reflects this situation. It is urgent, therefore, that this situation be reversed and that a Research Committee focused on studies of various African literatures, in both indigenous languages and also those inherited from colonisation, be created within the ICLA. Given that the African continent has a population of nearly one billion, a total of 54 countries, a plurality of forms of literary and cultural production both on the continent and in the African diaspora, the possibilities for comparative analysis are both challenging and multiple. A research committee focused on African literary histories and comparative literary and cultural studies within and across Africa, and in diaspora, will bring an immeasurable contribution to the ICLA, its members, and make a lasting contribution to the field of comparative studies while interrogating critically the discipline's continued Eurocentric biases.

Objectives: The Research Committee in Comparative African Studies / Literary Histories of Africa should initially establish its work and research plan, which should necessarily include a significant number of countries and languages of that continent. In view of the enormous ethnic, cultural, and linguistic variety of this continent, the Research Committee should propose working strategies that allow the inclusion of indigenous languages, as well as be open to aspects such as decolonisation strategies, the relation of literature to other media, gender and LGBTQ studies, the ongoing impact of the wars of decolonisation and post-independence conflicts, pan-Africanism, African diaspora, and the politicisation of translation in African contexts, among other topics that the Research Committee deems relevant. The Research Committee will include members from different countries and continents, as is usual with regard to the ICLA Research Committees, but will necessarily also include members based in or from African countries.

Membership: Committee membership is open to anyone with a scholarly interest in comparative approaches to African literatures/cultures and African literary and cultural histories. Committee membership and Chair(s) to be determined. The Committee would welcome graduate students working in African studies with comparative approaches (broadly conceived). For the time being, the proposed Committee is being coordinated by Professor Marcio Seligmann (Brazil) and Professor William Spurlin (UK) from the ICLA Executive Committee.

Marcio Seligmann

William Spurlin
22 June 2018

Possible members/chairs of the proposed committee

Ana Mafalda Leite (U. Lisboa, Portugal) anamafaldaleite@gmail.com
Inocência Mata (U. Lisboa, Portugal) mata.inocencia@gmail.com
Francisco Noa (Universidade do Lúrio, Moçambique) francnoa@yahoo.co.uk
Ute Fendler (Universität Bayreuth, Germany) ute.fendler@uni-bayreuth.de
Meg Samuelson (University of Adelaide, Australia) meg.samuelson@adelaide.edu.au
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Ebony Coletu, Penn State University coletu@psu.edu
Ayo Coly, Dartmouth College ayo.a.coly@dartmouth.edu [a trained comparatist, too!]
Wendy Belcher, Princeton University wbelcher@princeton.edu
Jeanne-Marie Jackson, Johns Hopkins University jjacks98@jhu.edu

Research committee appendix b. (note — no proposal from Omri was included)

Proposal of a New ICLA Research Committee on LITERARY HISTORY

by Achim Hermann Hölter (Vienna)

Literary history is the interpreting, organising, and reconstruction, of all the facts and phenomena, both diachronic and narrative, which together form the social system of textual communication called literary fiction. Throughout history, every art form or media action has always been a stimulus to tell or write the story of its origin or its connection with economy, society, events, and other texts. In this respect, literary history runs parallel to the histories of music, art, theatre, and also religion, philosophy etc. It presents itself mainly as an academic genre of often bulky books, but is also existent in manifold other forms and structures of media and writing.

The research committee on literary history is going to look into all these forms, both traditional and innovative, which portray the development of literature as a process across regional, national, and global levels, during longer or, sometimes, shorter periods of time, comparative or within a monolingualistic frame.

With this in mind, the investigation of literary history will deal with all imaginable methodological, epistemological, practical, medial etc. aspects of literary history, except the production of new literary historiography as such. For this reason the research committee is neither a duplicate nor even a substantial overlap with CHLEL or any non-European comparative history of literature, be they recent or just in creation. The aim is rather to investigate the principles, agents, scopes, and forms of literary historiography on the widest possible basis. The main aspects will be:

1. Methods (analytic studies, history of epochs, history of events, philosophy of history, metahistory, new historicism, social history, media history and, logically, comparative literary history).
2. Main subjects include authors, genres, gender, geographical spaces, nations, climate, religions/ confessions, themes and motifs, and the history of „Weltliteratur“, „world literature“, „littérature universelle/ mondiale“.
3. The development of historiography is to be reconstructed for single epochs of literary criticism (from antiquity through the middle ages, the romantic period, and positivism to present times).
4. Epistemological questions have come into focus only recently, such as auto- vs. heterohistory, the paradigm of cultural heydays, chronology vs. timelessness, all

narrative and narratological aspects in general (breaks vs. continuity), genealogies, patterns of order, metaphors, concepts, figures of thought etc.

5. Another aspect which has hardly been accounted for until now is the diversity of the textual shapes that literary history, beyond the literary history book proper, assumes in basically all forms of poetry, fiction, and drama.

6. Furthermore, the conveyance of literary history occurs in many medial forms: all species of visual media, films/ biopics, graphic novels, but also spatial media like monuments and cemeteries, in public memorial culture (street naming), and even in public and private material culture (stamps, coins, keepsakes). Numerous other types of literary history, even games and social activities, have been created, but have, until now, met rather few critical approaches.

7. Finally, literary history has a long individual and institutional tradition in almost all cultures and eras. Hundreds of biographies, works, methods, and achievements of comparatists and other writers of literary history, as well as some centres of historiographic writing may be analysed and appreciated.

This proposal is based on the positive response received during the Utrecht business meeting, where, amongst the board members present, about ten persons spontaneously declared themselves interested to join the committee. Up until now, however, no group has been created. Our intention is that, during the ICLA congress 2019 in China, Achim Hermann Hölder (Vienna) - himself author of studies on iconic genres, metaphors, and protagonists of literary historiography - would, gladly together with a vice chair, organise a constituent workshop, inviting colleagues who have already produced publications on literary historiography or are planning to do so, and supply a basic bibliography.

Research committee appendix c.

LITERATURE, ARTS, MEDIA

Proposal of a New ICLA Research Committee

by Massimo Fusillo (Chair) and Marina Grishakova (Vice Chair)

In the last decades, studies on intermediality have been facing continuous hybridization and diversification of the multisensory milieu in which we live – the emergence of the «culture of convergence», as defined by Henry Jenkins. It is a perspective that must certainly involve comparative literature, since literary texts are becoming a part of a complex galaxy of media, languages, cultures. Intermediality can thus regain the comparative tradition of inter-art studies, and offer a medium-aware analysis of various hybrid genres, from the most studied to new media: musical theatre, theatrical performance, filmic adaptation, TV series, graphic novels, computer games, video-art, video-clips, advertising.

The research committee on literature, arts, and media will deal with the new roles and the new configurations of literature in the global polymorphic imagery, including: the dissemination of literary techniques (narration, empathy, point of view, various rhetoric strategies) in every aspect of contemporary culture.

From the ancient times to the present, literature has been recited, written, printed, illustrated, accompanied with music or dance, adapted to painting, stage and film. Literature, as literary and media scholars (Werner Wolf, Marie-Laure Ryan, among others) observe in their works, may share some common (transmedial) features with other media (such as narrative, descriptivity, thematics), may quote and thematize other media, or may be remediated and transposed across media. Literature is one medium among others, closely associated other media. With the emergence of new technologies and art forms and the development of media literacy in the 20th century, ignoring the impact and interaction between media and literature becomes increasingly difficult. Whereas new technologies (photography, film) made available new forms of reproduction and spread of images, the experiments of avant-garde art highlighted the material (graphic, acoustic, visual) aspects of language and the interplay of word and image. Further, digital technologies have intensified the interplay and hybridization of forms and genres of old and new media. Artistic practices and scholarly explorations provide interesting insights into the distinct and common semiotic features of media, which present both a limitation and productive challenge for cross-media adaptation. As a result, “the dynamics of the literary system simply cannot be tackled without making allowance for developments in the contemporary media system of society... Histories of literature should be written as a part of media histories” (Siegfried Schmidt). Monomedial education and research practices have become increasingly problematic, and the new forms of interaction of literature with other media offer new challenges to scholars and educators.

The very concept of “medium” is notoriously multivocal: it may refer, among other things, to communicative channels of transmission, material or technological support for such transmission, or artistic forms and systems of expression. Additionally, there are various concepts describing and defining relations and interactions between media: intermediality, transmediality, plurimediality, multimodality and others. Whereas transmedial studies mostly focus on features common to various media and their transmission, intermedial studies involve any relations between media and target a media-sensitive analysis. Thanks to these multiple forms of interpretation and analysis, many aspects of literature has been (re)discovered as means of physical support, communication, cognitive processing or artistic expression. The study of literature with other arts and media reveals the undiscovered or unexploited potentialities of literature as a vehicle of aesthetic, cultural and social functions.

The first activity of this group or research has been the workshop Comparison and Intermediality: The Gesamtkunstwerk, which was part of the 2016 International ICLA Congress in Vienna; the proceedings of this workshop will be published by Rodopi as a separate volume. If approved by ICLA, the Research Committee will have its first conference in Tartu in 2018.

List of the members:

Hans-Joachim Backe, IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Jan Baetens, University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Belgium

Jørgen Bruhn, Linnaeus University, Sweden

Philippe Despoix, University of Montréal, Canada

Massimo Fusillo, University of L'Aquila, Italy

Cécile Guedon, Harvard University, USA

Caroline Fischer, Université de Pau, France

Marina Grishakova, University of Tartu, Estonia

Hashimoto Yorimitsu, University of Osaka, Japan

Silke Horstkotte, University of Warwick, UK

Haun Saussy, University of Chicago, USA

Márcio Seligmann-Silva, IEL Universidade Estadual de Campinas, UNICAMP, Brazil