

Session Descriptions for ICLA Research Committee (RC) Proposals

RC1. ICLA RC on Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages Series (CHLEL): Literatures in European Languages in a Post-European World:

Chair: Prof. Helga Mitterbauer (Université libre de Bruxelles, BE)

Helga Mitterbauer, Stefan Helgesson

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Languages are mobile, continents stay where they are. This makes the notion of 'European' languages questionable, given the global spread of English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. The former 'core' nations have reduced influence. We are living in a post-European world.

From a literary point of view, the situation is complex and exciting. Writing in European languages, especially in the global south, continues to grow. Intra-European dynamics (and crises) have in turn injected new vitality into the literatures of the continent, where publishing and reception infrastructures remain robust and to some extent internationally dominant. Migrant writing, 'Afropean' writing, Eastern European literatures, small literatures—all of these are currently multiplying the many facets of European-language literatures.

With this in mind, ICLA's Committee on the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages invites papers that address aspects of this evolving, global literary landscape.

Questions to be discussed include:

- What theoretical models are needed to account for the post-European condition?
- How can we rethink literary history in the light of this development and, conversely, what can history teach us about our present situation?
- What different (and even contradictory) cultural policies are at play in this plural field?
- Can the global and local dimensions be considered together, or are they incommensurable perspectives?
- Has linguistic difference as a literary quality been superseded by the hyper centralism of English and social media, or has it been revived?

Bibliography

Stefan Helgesson, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen: Literature and the World. London, New York: Routledge 2020.

Theo D'haen: A History of World Literature. London, New York: Routledge 2024.

Helga Mitterbauer, Carrie Smith-Prei (eds.): Crossing Central Europe. Continuities and Transformations, 1900 and 2000. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017.

Keywords: Literatures in European Languages, Post-European World, Migrant writing, 'Afropean' writing, Eastern European literatures, small literatures

RC2. ICLA RC on South Asian Literatures and Cultures: Decolonising 'World Literature' : Perspectives of Oratures and Literatures from South Asia

Chair: Prof. E.V. Ramakrishnan (Central University of Gujarat, IN)

E.V. Ramakrishnan, Sayantan Dasgupta

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Call for Papers (Open) by the Standing Research Committee for the Study of Literatures and Cultures of South Asia, ICLA

'Decolonising 'World Literature': Perspectives of Oratures and Literatures from South Asia'

If we look back on the evolution of the idea of 'World Literature' we will discover that the idealistic pronouncements by Goethe in 1823 and Rabindranath Tagore in 1908 on 'WL' have not been realized. The idea of 'WL' originated in Europe, when large parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America were being colonised by the imperial forces of European powers. The twentieth century has witnessed the emergence of these colonies into independent nations with greater awareness of their political and cultural identities. The works of those authors from Latin American, African and Asian countries who have won the Nobel prize or such prestigious awards in literature, figure in the list of canonical authors of the West. This only confirms that the idea of 'World literature' continues to be dominated by the ideology of Euro-centrism and its exclusivist approach to literary studies.

We find the world being increasingly standardised through the spread of technology, trade and migrations of people. Transnational net-works which ensure the dissemination of Western works of literatures have inbuilt filters that prevent the reception of texts and cultural goods from the global south. A noted comparatist from America, Gerald Gillespie wrote in 2017: "Now, after the year 2000, we are witnessing ... the attempt to erect a new style WL movement in the present century via the hegemony of English as a world lingua franca."

This seminar would like to address this complex situation. We need to shift our attention from 'World Literature' to 'the Literatures of the World'. Papers which analyse the oral traditions of South Asia, colonial encounter and its aftermath, the contradictions and conflicts that accompany the process of decolonisation are particularly welcome. We need to study the Indian diaspora's perceptions of the globalised world through their authors. Our larger objective is to examine how a new idea of 'WL' can emerge from the specific contexts of South Asian literatures and cultures.

Sub-themes: 'World Literature' and the South Asian Traditions of Translations,

Orality and Literacy in South Asia, Globalisation and South Asian Cultures,

Literatures of the Diaspora, Gender and Literatures in South Asia, Representation of Caste and Race in Literature

Bibliography

Ramakrishnan E.V., 2017 (Paperback). Locating Indian Literature: Texts, Traditions, Translations. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.

Ramakrishnan. E.V. 2017. Indigenous Imaginaries: Literature, Region, Modernity. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.

Ramakrishnan E.V. 2024. A Cultural Poetics of Bhasha Literatures: In Theory and Practice. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Please note that abstracts for the seminar are to be received by the date: January 7, 2025.

Abstracts should be sent to both:

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Sayantan Dasgupta: sayantan.dasgupta@jadavpuruniversity.in

Keywords: World Literature, Decolonisation, Eurocentrism, South Asia, Global South

RC3. ICLA RC on Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative: Beyond Masks and Capes: Comparative “Heroisms” in Graphic Narratives

Chairs:

- Stefan Buchenberger, Kanagawa University, Yokohama/Japan
- Abhishek Chatterjee, RV University Bangalore/India

Stefan Buchenberger, Abhishek Chatterjee

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Even as superheroes continue to dominate mainstream comics, graphic narratives worldwide have increasingly shifted toward themes that transcend Übermenschian ideals and the classic good-versus-evil binary. This panel invites scholarship on “Heroism,” “Villainy,” and the spaces in between in graphic traditions, examining how these themes intersect with national, folk, and world literatures. Traditionally, iconic figures such as Batman, Spider-Man, the Joker, and Green Goblin embody what Scott McCloud describes as archetypes that “amplify through simplification,” helping readers navigate the hero-villain binary. Yet, these characters are also sites of sociocultural anxieties—a point underscored in Fredric Wertham’s *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954). Figures like John Constantine and the Punisher further introduce morally ambivalent narratives that exemplify Thierry Groensteen’s theorization of the medium’s “postmodern turn.” Beyond superheroes, contemporary graphic narratives frequently address human-scale conflicts rooted in pluralities, harnessing the medium’s distinct ability to bear witness to trauma. Works such as Chris Ware’s *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth* (2000) and Brian K. Vaughan’s *Pride of Baghdad* (2006) present alternative visions of heroism within personal and collective struggles. In the Indian context, *Bhimayana* (2011) by Srividya Natarajan and S. Anand, rendered in Gond art, narrates Dr B.R. Ambedkar’s life and his struggle against caste oppression, foregrounding narrative forms that subvert universalist conventions and advocate for a comparative, interdisciplinary approach to comics studies. We welcome submissions that explore these themes through comparative, cross-cultural, and illustrators’ perspectives, examining how heroes, anti-heroes, and villains function across diverse global and historical contexts.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Comparative studies of superhero ideologies and moral complexities across cultures
- Antiheroes and the ethics of justice in diverse narrative traditions
- Human-scale conflicts in graphic narratives and trauma literature
- Non-Western graphic narratives that challenge Western aesthetic and narrative norms

Keywords: Narrative Archetypes, Ethics of Heroism, Comparative Comic Studies, Transnational Graphic Narratives

RC4. ICLA RC on Comparative Gender Studies Research Committee: Precarious Mediations: Queer Bodies in Virtual Spaces

Chair: Elizabeth Richmond-Garza (University of Texas at Austin, US)

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

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Kleist’s queer marionettes (1810), Haraway’s anti-identitarian cyborgs (1985), and Murakami’s wind-up bird (1994) offer us instances of post-human glitches that resist normalizations despite their embodied precarities. Hardt and Negri’s “new post-human bodies” (*Empire* 2013) and Latour’s confrontation of “the time of the Anthropocene” (2014) demand a remapping of the human as conventionally traced, in order to recognize it as an assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 1980). The Comparative Gender Studies Research Committee invites presentations on both earlier and contemporary materials related to the congress theme “Technology and Comparative Literature.” We particularly encourage submissions from scholars, writers, and activists that investigate how expressive artists represent, challenge, and reflect the lived experiences of those with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and/or mental health conditions when considered in relation to gender and sexuality. We seek papers reflecting the diverse experiences and narratives of marginalized groups, especially those from 2SLGBTQI+ and BIPOC communities. We will attend to technology in both our potentially posthuman virtuality as well as earlier moments of simulacra through interrogating all 6 terms: precarious, mediation, queer, body, virtual, and space. Mindful that a session on precarity offered in the privileged context of an international congress needs to adopt a position of allyship and avow its positionality, this session will recognize those who for various reasons are unable to be present. Papers might consider precarious labor, contrareproductivity, queer temporality, homonationalism, queer counterpublics, queering technological affordances, cooptation and fragility, queering conventional technologies, transmediation, queer play and gaming, fanfiction and queer networks, affect and ambivalence, technologies of identity, queer(ing) AI.

Bibliography

"The Mysteries of Moscow: In Which Boris Akunin Impersonates a French Writer and Reveals a Buried Secret." *The Akunin Project: The Mysteries and Histories of Russia's Most Popular Author*. Eds. Elena Baraban and Stephen M. Norris. Toronto: Toronto UP, 2021: 270-87.

*"Detecting Conspiracy: Boris Akunin's Dandiacal Detective, or a Century in Queer Profiles from London to Moscow." *Crime Fiction as World Literature*. Eds. Louise Nillson and David Damrosch. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017: 271-89.

Keywords: embodiment, precarity, mediation, virtuality, queer

RC5. ICLA RC on Comparative History of East Asian Literatures: Literary History of Asia: Connections, Translations, Reinventions

Chair: Prof. Haun Saussy (University of Chicago, US)

Haun Saussy

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East/West comparison focused on genres, canons, and concepts of poetics has served to give comparative literature a place in Asian academia. But that model of comparison has its limits. Looking to the long history of writing on the Asian continent, do we not see definitions of "literature" that vary from the European standard, as well as modes of circulation not anticipated elsewhere? The models and logics of comparison offered by the literatures of East Asia, Northeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia not only expands the reach of the discipline but modifies accounts of national literary history that are current on the continent by emphasizing exchange and adaptation rather than offering nativist genealogies. For this panel, case studies of intra-Asian literary relationships, from the beginnings of writing to the present, are invited, with the particular aim of clarifying general dynamics of cultural growth.

Bibliography

Ru zhi he: Su Yuanxi zixuanji 如之何：蘇源熙自選集 (Comparatively Speaking: Selected Essays of Haun Saussy), ed. Ji Lingjuan 吉靈娟. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2023.
The Making of Barbarians: China in Multilingual Asia. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022.
"Exile, Horizons, and Poetic Language." Journal of Social Research 91.2 (Summer 2024): 663-686.
"Some Under Heaven: World Literature and the Deceptiveness of Labels." Journal of World Literature (2024): 177-186

Keywords: Literatures of Asia, translation, adaptation, genre, commentary, script

RC6. ICLA RC on Literary Theory Committee: Literary Theory

Robert Young

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This is a holding request for a multi-person panel, the ICLA Theory Research Committee

RC7. ICLA RC on Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies: Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature

Chair: Chengzhou He (Nanjing Unniversity, CN)

Chengzhou He, Jing Jia

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In the context of the theme "Comparative Literature and Technology" of the twenty-fourth annual conference of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) from July 28 to August 1, 2025 in Seoul, South Korea, we propose a special panel entitled "Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature".

Scriptural reasoning (SR), an academic tool for people to engage in inter-faith dialogues by reading and reflecting on scriptures from all around the world, is gaining increasing significance in the contemporary era of digitalization and globalization. The importance of international communication cannot be overstated. Thus, more attention should be attached to SR since it plays a key role in cultural exchanges between different nations and regions. It also accords with the leading academic concept, "Global Humanities" which highlights interactions of humanities and arts and integration of knowledges among various disciplines through interdisciplinary methods and diverse cultural perspectives. The questions our session aims to explore include but are not limited to:

- 1.By analyzing the language, grammar, syntax, and meaning of scriptures from different religions, what interpretations can we arrive at that help shed new light on the classical texts?
- 2.How can we find the methodologies that are applicable to the inter-faith dialogues involved in scriptural reasoning? How should such methodologies be carried out in practice?
- 3.Inherent in the Abrahamic tradition, scriptural reasoning is usually thought to involve the studies of Jewish, Christian and Islamic scriptures. With the growing need to introduce diverse voices, how can we establish scriptural reasoning between China and the West?

In summary, centering around the above questions and beyond, this session will delve deeply into scriptures across faith boundaries and foster cultural dialogues across different religions and cultures.

Keywords: scriptural reasoning, global humanities

RC8. ICLA RC on Translation Studies: Translation Futures

Chair: Marlene Hansen Esplin (Brigham Young University, US)

Marlene Hansen Esplin, Rindon Kundu, Stephen Wu

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Translators and interpreters in the digital age face manifold opportunities and challenges that are only compounded as Artificial Intelligence in the form of Large Language Models moves into the public sphere. This seminar explores how new forms of technology and media shape the work of translation and prompt new forms of reading and engaging with archives or bringing the past into the present and future. We consider ethical and philosophical implications of emerging translation technologies. How do new translation technologies and literary ecosystems disrupt notions of authorship, textuality, and agency? What translation interventions are warranted to safeguard and lend visibility to minority languages and marginalized subjects? What are the particular perils and opportunities for translators in an era of globalization and our shared susceptibility to crises such as pandemics, the manipulation of information, and a changing climate? We ask what translators and translation theorists might offer a world coming to terms with new problems of language, communication, truth, and representation.

This seminar, organized by the ICLA Translation Studies Research Committee, invites abstracts interrogating digital translation encounters from a variety of methodological and theoretical perspectives—literary, historical, sociolinguistic, ethical—and considers themes including but not limited to the following:

- Translation and AI
- Translation and the Digital Archive

Translation and the Nonhuman
Translation and Globalization
Translation and Crisis
Translation Equity and Agency
Translation Justice in the Digital Era
Collaborative Translation
Translation and Affect
Translation and Intermediality

RC9. ICLA RC on Religion, Ethics and Literature: Literature as a Heretical Techne in Modernity
Chair: Prof. Kitty Millet (San Francisco State University, US)

Kitty Millet, Maria Rethelyi, Iphshita Chanda, Michal Ben-Horin, John Hawley, Kyra Sutton

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The seminar explores what it means for literature to act as its own agent in modernity, to essentially have its own agency in modernity. Consequently, it freights techne as a drive that exceeds technology, and suggests literature to be more than a cultural instrument, more than a reflection of "lived experience." The question becomes then whether modernity has transformed literature into a peculiar phenomenon, one whose fulfillment is no longer found in an object. Can we speak of literature as a techne that no longer reveals itself in objects? Perhaps the question should be, has technology in a modern world produced a writing, a literary drive, that extends the aesthetic to encompass another kind of materiality, or perhaps no materiality at all. Sponsored by the ICLA Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature, the seminar invites presentations on • literature as an extra-material drive, • the literary as a phenomenological experience • technology as an expansion of literary codes • the written as cryptological object • the ethics of the literary in modernity • religion as a literary code • the transformation of religion, ethics, and literature in modernity • translation as a literary language

Keywords: cryptological, ethics, religion, techne, phenomenology

Bibliography

2017. The Victims of Slavery, Colonization, and the Holocaust. A Comparative History of Persecution (Bloomsbury).
2024. Kabbalah and Literature.

RC10. ICLA RC on Arabic Comparative Literature: Korean Culture and the Arab World from the Middle Ages to the Internet Age

Chair: Prof. Lobna Abdel Ghani Ismail (Cairo University, Egypt)

Lobna Ismail, Fatiha Taib

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Cultural exchange between Korea and the Arab Muslim world can be traced to the middle of the ninth century. It is true that an ancient history of commercial and political relations between Korea and the Middle East had long existed before the Arab Muslims, yet it was the direct contact between Koreans and Muslims that accelerated cultural contacts. Their contributions and influence appear in a rich legacy of archives, official records, travelers' writings, translations of scientific works, transfer of manufacturing techniques, and mutual influences in the field of art, and so on.

Despite the fact that Korea and the Arab world share a past of common memories and rich cultural encounters derived and strengthened by trade, economic ties, and similar historical and political experience, they have quite unique and distinct cultures. It is that very commonality and uniqueness that have contributed to the modern fascination with Korean culture, literature, and diverse artistic productions. Modern Arab-Korean relations in Comparative Studies have flowered in the third millennium with the Internet and technological innovations playing a pivotal role in introducing Korean culture, literature, and art to the Arab public.

On the literary front, the translation movement from Korean to Arabic began with the translation of novels that have transcended Korean borders by winning international awards, to other literary genres by prominent Korean writers who have earned their recognition in and out of Korea. Translators contributed introductory articles and studies on Korean literature and culture which gained ground as an intriguing subject in Arabic literature and diaries.

In parallel with the interest of Arab universities in teaching Korean language and literature, Korean audiovisual art is very popular in the Arab cultural context: Korean dramas dubbed into Arabic have been able to compete with other non-Arabic dramas (e.g., Turkish and American) among viewers in Arab countries, as evidenced by the series broadcast by Arab satellite channels and Korean online streaming platforms. .

The session seeks to uncover the contribution of technology to cultural and literary material and its impact on the interaction and intersection of Arab and South Korean cultures. It also seeks to reflect on how technology helps foster new forms of cultural and literary exchange between both worlds and how writers address the challenges and opportunities of technology in reshaping human societies.

Bibliography

Lobna A. Ismail is an Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Cairo University, a literary critic and judge, freelance translator and public speaker. She is the Arabic translator of Gayatri Spivak's *Death of a Discipline*, and her latest translation is Palgrave-Macmillan's *Theatre & Interculturalism*. (2019)

Keywords: K-Literature, Arabic Culture, Technology, translation, comparative studies

Speakers will give 15-minute presentations, to be followed by 10 minutes Q & A among the participants in the session.

Abstracts : in English or French with 5 keywords.

Maximum 3000 characters; Font: Times New Roman; Size: 11; Line spacing: single.

Send a 100-word biography indicating your academic post, affiliation, area of study, and latest publications.

English abstracts to Lobna Ismail <lillyismail@yahoo.co.uk>, French to Fatiha Taib <fatihaamehzoun@hotmail.com>

Submission Deadline : 31 December 2024

Abstract selection notifications : 31 January 2025

RC11. ICLA RC on Comparative African Literatures

RC12. ICLA RC on Digital Comparative Literature: Digital Comparative Literature

Chair: Prof. Simone Reborà (University of Verona, IT)

Simone Reborà, Roxana Patras, Christof Schöch, Gabriele Vezzani, Pieter Francois, Yina Cao, Alexandra Huang-Kokina, Youngmin Kim, Marko Juvan

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In his 2015 article published in *Comparative Literature*, Matthew Wilkens notes that comparative literature is quite reticent about the growing field of digital humanities. He suggests overcoming this reluctance by testing computer tools for the needs of comparative literature: text mining, network analysis, sociology of literature, clustering, and mapping. Recently, various applications of computational analysis of text corpora and big data (on publication, translation, media resonance, etc.) have been gaining ground in comparative literature.

Following the relatively sparse responses to the challenges posed to the humanities by the advent of the Internet and digital media voiced by early birds of our discipline (e.g. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek's work since 1995), comparative literature needs to rethink its methods and ask itself whether computer-assisted methods can be a viable alternative or a welcome complement to the methods that characterize the disciplinary tradition. Finally, the recent explosion of computer-generated texts, translations and other achievements of artificial intelligence once again raises the question of the role of the author and other actors in the literary field.

Artificial intelligence is not only a problem or a literary topic that should be studied in a comparative perspective, but can also serve as a tool for comparative literary studies with its language models, word embedding, or algorithmic modeling. One may count among the challenges for such endeavors that multilingual materials still represent a considerable hurdle for computational methods, and that modeling multiple cultural contexts and their influence on meaning and the meaning of form is equally difficult, but both are paramount in the context of comparative literature.

To face such challenges, the ICLA Research Committee on Digital Comparative Literature (DCL) organizes a group session at the ICLA 2025 Congress, welcoming contributions on (but not limited to) the following topics:

- Distant reading techniques and computational literary studies when applied in a comparative perspective;
- Multilingual literary archives and the digitization of texts in different languages and writing systems;
- The transformation of the book, reading in the post-digital age, and born-digital literature;
- Geographic information systems, data visualization, and comparative literary studies;
- Machine translation, artificial intelligence,
- Language models and comparative literature.

Keywords: distant reading, transformation of the book, GIS, machine translation, llms

RC13. ICLA RC on Language Contact in Literature: Europe: Language Contact in Literature: Europe

Chair: Dr. Marianna Deganutti (Slovak Academy of Sciences, DE)

Eugenia Kelbert, Marianna Deganutti

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A9-13

The newly established ICLA Research Committee on Language Contact in Literature: Europe (LCLE) intends to revisit translation, literary multilingualism and related fields as sites of linguistic contact and change within the literary realm. We thus reconsider literature with a focus on the multiple ways in which languages interact and influence each other when they come into contact, both at the level of individual speakers and that of linguistic communities. A number of scholars have proposed to apply a contact linguistics paradigm to translation (Kotze 2020; Malamatidou 2016); this Committee's goal is to reinvent this approach for the global literary context (e.g. Hassan 2022). As many contemporary scholars of comparative literature (e.g. Yildiz 2012, Gramling 2016) recognize, the traditional focus on national literatures is insufficient to capture the global dimensions of the literary process. We therefore propose language contact in literature as a unified framework that can encompass and facilitate dialogue across several fields: the study of literary translation, multilingual and translingual literature, minor and borderland literature, influence across language boundaries, postcolonial literature, international literary movements and potentially others. Our aim is to identify and distinguish the diverse elements that contribute to literary language contact in its various guises, including linguistic and sociological factors, techniques and processes, as well as aesthetic and stylistic considerations. At the same time, we aspire to understand how different settings of language contact relate to one another, how they interact and what distinguishes them. To achieve these purposes, linguistics offers valuable theoretical support.

We invite original research papers that address the following areas and topics:

- The notion of language contact and how it can be productively applied to literature
- The array of elements/factors involved in a language contact in literature framework and their modulations
- The stylistics of language contact
- Manifest and latent multilingualism as an expression of language contact

- Translation as language contact
- What linguistic theories and approaches can contribute additional perspectives and nuance to the study of literary language contact
- The role of the author's linguistic background and of the reader
- Potential challenges and limitations, notably in terms of particular language pairs, integrating and reconciling existing terminologies and extending the approach beyond the European context
- Specific case studies on literary translation, multilingual and translingual literature, minor and borderland literature, influence across language boundaries, postcolonial literature or international literary movements
- Additional areas in literary study where a language contact framework may apply

Keywords: language contact, linguistics, multilingualism, translation, cross-language influences

Any questions should be addressed to Eugenia Kelbert (eugenia.kelbert@savba.sk) and Marianna Deganutti (marianna.deganutti@savba.sk).

RC14. ICLA RC on Literature, Arts & Media (CLAM): Intermedial studies and 'New Materialisms'

Chair: Prof. Jørgen Bruhn (Linnaeus University, SE),

Jørgen Bruhn

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Most theoretical models of intermediality are inherently epistemological: media studies, including intermedial studies, basically investigates, criticizes and historicizes all the different ways of perceiving the world by way of different apparatus or communicative entities which may be more or less technical, advanced and complex.

However, in recent decades a new set of questions has occurred, approaching the world not only epistemologically but also ontologically: such questions are often subsumed under the heading of New Materialism(s): ontological ideas relating to process philosophy and studies of emergent qualities have become more and more prominent in Media- as well as Literary – and Gender Studies. Such an ontological frame is of special relevance to Comparative Literature, where it raises important questions on the nature, practice, and relevance of comparison, and indeed of the notion of literature itself.

As the integration of such non-substantialist approaches within intermedial studies and comparative literature is still in its early stages, these theoretical-methodological relations deserve closer academic attention. The general aim of this panel is therefore to investigate in depth the possible relations between intermedial studies and new materialist methodologies.

Keywords: Intermediality, New Materialism, Media