



**The Institute for World
Literature
22 June – 17 July 2015,
Lisbon**

**Sociology and World Literature
&
World Literature and Production**

Group leaders:

The combined groups of “Sociology and World Literature” and “World Literature and Production” cooperated fruitfully during our seven meetings. We discovered exciting intersections of our fields of interest and learned from each other both during the meetings and in private discussions that were sparked by presentations and suggestions expressed during the more formal meeting time of the group. Our desire to find bridges between the two groups preceded our meetings in Lisbon. Consequently, the two group leaders worked together to organize a schedule that would allow one person from each group to present during each meeting. Thus, having a maximum of two presentations each meeting, and grouping together presentations that had the potential of opening a dialogue between the fields, the remaining time after the presentations was used to ask for clarifications from the presenters, to offer suggestions and to seek connections between research fields. We also had the pleasure to host guests from other affinity groups who visited and contributed to our discussions.

After some ice-breakers that helped us getting to know each other a little better, the first session offered the floor to Sarah D'Adamo for her presentation “*Encounters with Global Pedagogies: Situating the Classroom in Mixed Terms.*” Considering that, though all the members of the group were at various stages in their progress to a degree, at some point in time we generally expected we would all teach, Ms. D'Adamo's presentation was meant to highlight some common goals we might have as educators. Based on an analysis of “pedagogical manifestations of the paradigm of globalism in the North American literary and cultural studies,” her presentation sought to highlight “the heuristics of ‘difference’ at play in a global or a world canon.” She presented a theorized syllabus conceived “around the skills of cognitive mapping and world comparison, and an interpretative mode that encourages students to draw out sociological facts from texts themselves.” Her work took into consideration sociological factors related to the target audience.

The next session brought to the table the idea of *Literary (r)evolutions* from the perspective of Chinese literature. Mingchen Yang's *Transpacific and World Literature Vision: A New Critical Code of Chinese American Literary Studies* looked at the intersection of Anglophone literary system with the Chinese literary system. Ou Liping's *The Origins of Confucianism and the Establishment of Chinese Classical Aesthetics* explored literary production within the framework of the establishment of classical Chinese aesthetic concepts. Continuing the (r)evolutions, only this time related to technological progress, the next session was entitled *Technologies, Humans and the*

Text. Tamara Vucenovic's *Reading and Writing Processes in the Context of Information Society* considered the ways in which the reading process is changing in a technologized society: "The reading process as a paradigm for the intimate experience and individual cogitation of the content is changing, mostly because of technological and social innovations known as the Web 2.0." She introduced the members of the group to new social modalities of reading and creating online. Cintia Vezzani's *To Live Forever We Shall Die: Analyzing the Impossibility of Being in "The Invention of Morel"* probed the effect of technological advancements on literary production, as well as the relationship between public and private in Western society in relationship to the tensions between routine and repetition.

The third meeting, entitled *Ideas of Space; Globalized Settings in World Literature* brought together a paper identity performance and a paper on marginocentric cities. Alison Kasko's *The "True Education" of Anjali Bose: Performance and Ideological Identity in Miss New India* probed the intersections of performance and identity, call centre culture, and gender and national identity within the context of migrant narratives. Tomás Espino Barrera's *From Trieste/Triest/Trst to Ruse/Rustschuk: Claudio Magris and marginocentric cities* astutely analyzed differences between center and periphery, introduced and explained the concept of 'marginocentric' to many of the group members and sparked discussions with its proposal of rethinking national paradigms within the context of Claudio Magris' work.

Rewriting & Reinterpreting: the production & circulation of texts was our next theme. Laura Cernat's *Rewritings of Canonical Works in a Global Context: Biografictions* presented an incipient stage of her doctoral project. She scrutinized "masterpieces of intertextuality, [that are] reinventing or re-contextualizing not only episodes from the lives, but also passages from the works of the great authors chosen as their subjects." Her exciting take on biofiction proposed that an "opening of the canon" is possible to include new canon-worthy pieces of World Literature. Our fifth encounter, *Sociology of Literature: Theories/Methods*, was dedicated exclusively to sociological issues. Fabienne Gilbertz presented the theoretical framework of her thesis, *The Professionalization Processes of Luxembourg Literature in the Second Half of the 20th century (1945-1986)*. Hers was an enlightening presentation regarding the evolution of literature production in Luxembourg, as well as the methodological factors involved in taking on such an extensive project. Madeline Bedecarre's *Pathways to Literary Prestige: A Case Study of the Concours Théâtral Interafricain* was as well a methodological example for the group members. Besides looking at the manufacturing of literary recognition as opposed to value, and the relationships between center and periphery, her presentation showed the conditions of production and circulation of literary texts in her chosen temporal, spatial and genre segment.

Our last session focused on *World Literature in the 19th Century*. Madalina Meirosu's presentation *Nineteenth-Century Automatons: Revisions of Myths Following the Industrial Revolution* delved into an investigation of transcultural reactions to industrialization and political revolutions in the long nineteenth-century; furthermore, she unearthed the connection between these reactions and the production of fictional texts focusing on the automaton motif. Mert Öksüz's exciting paper *The Relationship of Writers and Book Sellers in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul* took a sociological approach to book production and distribution in Istanbul; solidly researched, the paper guided our group through the archives of Istanbul.

Selected quotes from group members:

“I did find the experience to be valuable, particularly for the many opportunities for people to share different knowledge backgrounds, approaches, and modes of questioning from their diverse contexts. I appreciated the good questions I received from other practitioners about my own work, based in their experiences with classroom teaching and with sociological analysis. I also think the gathering offered some insight into institutional life in a range of national contexts, which was fascinating for me!” Sarah D’Adamo

“The affinity group was a great chance to get a close glimpse into the current work of other colleagues from different parts of the world. Our group was quite heterogenous and the presentations covered mostly unrelated topics. At first, this seemed a bit disappointing, but it was precisely this thematic variety made the group appealing by opening up different approaches through thought-provoking comments coming from specialist in other areas. I also found the methodological variety very interesting, as the affinity group offered a chance to see different approaches to literature in action and dialogue (through Q&A.)” Tomas Espino

