

times there have been two or three offers, and the triennial business meeting has had to vote. Obviously, this system has great advantages: the conference is planned by a professor who fully understands the interests and expectations of members, and it is as a rule much less expensive than one organized by a conference centre. However, just how much longer this happy situation will continue is difficult to predict, for fewer and fewer of us have the time and energy to devote to the organization of an international conference, which can easily take up all one's spare time for a year or more.

Since taking over the responsibilities of Secretary-General and Treasurer of IAUPE from the late and much missed John Lawlor, I have been able to make two changes to our practices which have proved very valuable. The first is the establishment of a system of payments by credit card, which has made it much easier to collect dues; the second is the computerizing of records and the production of a membership database. This cuts the secretarial work down very considerably, and has the further advantage of giving me information about members which is very useful for advance planning. All members are invited to name their principal fields of interest within English studies, and this makes it possible to ensure that the choice of sections at any conference will reflect majority interests. I can also supply to section chairmen lists of those members who are interested in their field, so that they can choose speakers partly at least from IAUPE members – though we have a certain number of guest speakers as well.

All in all, IAUPE is a thriving association, even though we shall have to keep a careful eye on developments, and modify our practices where it proves appropriate to do so.

*www.unav.es/iaupe*

## The International Comparative Literature Association (AILC/ICLA)

*Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée*

*Gerald Gillespie*

Comparative literary studies gathered momentum throughout the 19th century in Europe and North America and began to thrive with the advent of Modernism. But the successful launch of an international collaborative organization specifically dedicated to comparative literary studies dates concretely from discussions held in the framework of the sixth congress of FILLM at Oxford in 1954. The daughter organization born there, the Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée/International Comparative Literature Association, is proud to figure today as the second largest affiliate of FILLM and to enjoy active relations with its parent. AILC/ICLA has in turn attracted close to three dozen national and regional associations of comparative literature (the discipline will henceforth be abbreviated CL) as collaborating organizations. Since the 1970s, our semi-annual *ICLA Bulletin* has regularly carried the names and contact data of such affiliated organizations and other vital news and information on CL internationally. It currently reaches some 5000 individual colleagues in about 70 countries as a membership benefit. AILC/ICLA's somewhat younger semi-annual journal *Literary*

*Research/Recherche Littéraire*, likewise worldwide in its scope, has been carrying reviews and review articles on CL publications for a couple of decades to the same readership and many libraries. Today AILC/ICLA's website contains a valuable trove of information and links, including the *Bulletin* and *Literary Research*. AILC/ICLA intends to make its electronic informational nexus increasingly interactive.

AILC/ICLA appeared on the scene opportunely as a channel for the enthusiasm for CL that followed upon World War II. The now almost legendary 'restart' of the discipline was initially a transatlantic affair. The first congress of AILC/ICLA was held in Venice in 1955 and concentrated extensively on Romance literatures, but the second congress moved across the Atlantic to Chapel Hill in 1958. Besides an exhilarated contingent of American and European postwar 'pioneers', the second congress boasted a sprinkling of Asian scholars and a broader intercontinental programme. Further congresses were to see a modest opening to participation by CL scholars from Africa. This readiness to dialogue and to shift the venue of the discipline's chief meeting away from Western Europe was crucial for the ensuing globalization of CL – a process that (as I shall detail below) is still powerfully advancing. The locations of the completed 16 congresses held thus far plus that of the forthcoming 17th reflect the emergence of an important primary rhythm of AILC/ICLA that has now prevailed for half a century: Venice (1955), Chapel Hill (1958), Utrecht (1961), Fribourg (1964), Belgrade (1967), Bordeaux (1970), Montréal-Ottawa (1973), Budapest (1976), Innsbruck, (1979), New York (1982), Paris (1985), Munich (1988), Tokyo (1991), Edmonton (1994), Leiden (1997), Pretoria (2000), Hong Kong (2003).

Before the fall of the Wall, one of AILC/ICLA's accomplishments through its congresses was to provide a forum at which scholars from Eastern Europe could interact directly with their counterparts outside the Soviet bloc in the weeklong flow of events. The fact then as now was that a congress required at least a couple of years of advance planning, in close consultation with the Executive Council. Then, if AILC/ICLA's General Assembly endorsed the plan, it took three years of efforts to implement the congress. And afterwards a couple or more years were needed to publish the rather complicated proceedings. This meant that many literary scholars in Eastern Europe kept in more continuous contact with their counterparts in Western Europe and other regions of the world during the extremely difficult decades of the Cold War.

The congresses as large, complex gatherings were not the sole opportunities which AILC/ICLA devised for bringing scholars together in person. Early on, the pattern was established not only of holding the full-scale triennial congress with its General Assembly, but also of staging the interim annual business meetings of the elected AILC/ICLA Executive Council (including the invited heads of its planning and research committees) in conjunction with a regional CL conference which an affiliated association of CL, a national academy, or a major university centre sponsored. There are now approximately three dozen sites across Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific where such important intellectual encounters have taken place.

In fact, by the late 1960s a triple rhythm surfaced. This came about because AILC/ICLA began to elaborate research and publication networks involving teams of co-workers. This was a natural outgrowth, initially, of doing a proper job in selecting papers for, and next producing the proceedings of, successive AILC/ICLA congresses. Through FILLM, our Association has been linked with CIPSH and UNESCO and from time to time has received funds in support of research and publication from both. Organizing a congress that cuts across a swath of many cultural territories and their institutions is no easy matter, especially when one considers that the local organizers must do serious fund-raising to underwrite the most considerable part of expenditures. However, the heavy economic and management burden which organizers assume does not buy them the privilege of determining the structure of the congress. Rather, the intellectual shape of a congress evolves preponderantly from input from

a variety of active individuals outside the territory where the congress is located, and increasingly over the past two decades the interests of AILC/ICLA's international research groups have flowed into the construction of a congress programme. It was understood in the beginning – and this is still the rule today – that not the particular local organizing group was in charge of a specific congress intellectually, but that the entirety of AILC/ICLA was involved. The Executive Council retained authority over and monitored the contents and the process. Screening committees had to be and were in fact cross-cultural, and this necessarily meant recruiting a large number of experts from around the world. Thus, in the subsequent stage of publishing, the organizers could draw upon outstanding figures from various nations who had served in the earlier selection work. Over time, as the size and scope of AILC/ICLA congresses grew, their internal variety necessitated a change in publication practice. There was a shift from offering one or two comprehensive volumes of the (usually winnowed) proceedings, to offering a multi-volume set divided thematically and placed under the direction of several editors. Hence cumulatively, some 50 volumes have emerged from our congresses thus far – surely an impressive example of collaborative CL.

Another stream of volumes has gradually intertwined with AILC/ICLA's congress proceedings and today presents a distinct 'fourth' rhythm of our collaborative work. At the Belgrade congress, suggestions for an international series, the *Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages*, led to creation of a large, self-renewing editorial board, called the Coordinating Committee, to handle the venture. Gradually, research teams were constituted to undertake broad-gauged projects on specific literary phenomena and movements; and when appropriate, certain volumes were structured to reach out beyond the older European homelands to the New World and elsewhere (e.g. Africa) where European languages often functioned as important vehicles. Today this series, unique in its aims, boasts many impressive volumes and subseries. Here, too, the good offices of FILLM have played an enabling role; several of these volumes have benefited from receiving CIPSH publication grants. Later a separate Committee on Translation Studies and then a Committee on Literary Theory, both with specifically international CL profiles, were launched. Other new sources of energy from the 1990s are the Committee on Intercultural Studies and a set of time-limited research committees established as vehicles to achieve specific focused goals: *Voyage in Literature*; *Cultural and Literary Identity*; and *Issues and Methods of CL*. In 1997 were added *Mediterranean Studies*, and *Modernity*.

Meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, the Executive Council of AILC/ICLA recently engaged in a thorough review of all its administrative and research structures as of the turn of the millennium, with an eye to the future. Some 15 specific decisions emerged. The Council retained two of its most productive standing research bodies (the Coordinating Committee for the *CHLEL* series, and the Committee for Intercultural Studies), and also acknowledged the enormous success of its time-limited research committees, several of which proudly drew a bright line under their achievements. The Council established several new time-limited research committees with open mandates to stimulate work in regions where it was felt that collaborative comparatism could benefit from conferences and publication activities associated with local venues and regional headquarters. This model promised to accelerate for younger scholars the experience of working alongside seasoned international comparatists. In addition, Council formally ratified a number of practices that had evolved over the decades to ensure steady recruitment of new leadership and wider involvement of aspiring comparatists worldwide.

Thus moving into the new century, AILC/ICLA has a fresh mix of research entities besides its older Coordinating Committee and newer Committee on Intercultural Studies. These include time-limited groups involved with: Latin American Studies; East Asian Studies; Mediterranean Studies; North European Studies; East and Southeast European Studies;

Modernity; Literary Theory; and Translation Studies. The Council, the members of which have working bases in some two dozen different cultures, is now headed by the distinguished scholar Koji Kawamoto (Tokyo). As mentioned, the next congress will be located in Hong Kong. Since the congress of 2000 was held in Africa, the congress of 2006 will likely take place in either the New World or Europe. Where to hold a future congress is one of the most important matters which the General Assembly decides by ballot.

One characteristic of AILC/ICLA has been reinforced decade by decade through the activities of a myriad of concerned individuals. By the truly impressive breadth of its critical and theoretical efforts, AILC/ICLA has converted into an attractive reality the famous 'prophetic' opening paragraph of Henry Remak's essay 'Comparative Literature: Its Definition and Function' (1961). The seemingly unrealizable dimensions which Remak posited four decades ago in his description of potential avenues of comparatism are the dimensions which, collectively, AILC/ICLA has been elaborating in fact. This diversity sometimes is disconcerting or even intimidating for colleagues used to working in more restrictive environments, but it can also become exhilarating. AILC/ICLA provides a congenial home for comparatists with particular interests who can band together in working groups (e.g. to study the interrelation of literature and the other arts, to pursue South Asian literatures cross-culturally, to elaborate a theoretical understanding of literary learning with the aid of cognitive psychology, and so on). AILC/ICLA simultaneously provides a complex network which allows individuals to flow out of one approach or orientation into another. Respect for a multiplicity of CL activities creates a natural barrier against conformist norms, even when certain geocultural territories might for a time be in the grip of this or that prescriptive thinking. In this respect, we cannot underestimate AILC/ICLA's value to many colleagues as an instrument for gaining intellectual liberty under the sometimes adverse conditions in particular cultures.

*www.byu.edu/~icla*

## The International Institute Charles Perrault, France (IICP)

*Institut International Charles Perrault – France*

*Virginie Douglas*

The Institute specializes in training, research and the organization of events in the field of children's literature and culture. It was founded in May 1994 by Paris-Nord University (Paris XIII), more particularly by Jean Perrot, Professor of Comparative Literature at this university and a specialist in children's books, and the town council of Eaubonne, which is situated a few kilometres north of Paris. Paris-Nord University has had considerable experience in the field of children's literature through training courses for librarians in particular, and the creation of the Institute corresponded to a further attempt at developing links between the educational system, professionals concerned with children's literature (from authors to publishers or librarians) and childhood culture in general, including multimedia materials or the cinema for instance. Indeed education in France is characterized by its rather theoretical stance while children's studies call for a more pragmatic viewpoint. Working at once with schools (experiments are carried out in classes in the Paris area), regional educational authorities and