

**CFP for “The Global Ocean and the Literary Models of the World”
Oceanic Humanities and Comparative Literature**

**29th July - 2nd August 2019
China**

XXII Congress of the ICLA (International Comparative Literature Association Congress):

The main theme: “Literature of the World and the Future of Comparative Literature”

Website: <http://icla2019.medmeeting.org/Content/105484>

From the 29th July to the 2nd August 2019

University of Macau SAR, China.

Panel proposal for the sub-theme: “Theorizing the Literary across Cultures”

If the ocean has enjoyed a primary position as an object of study in the areas of geography, geophysics or aquatic ecology, it has also, in the last few years, drawn the attention of an increasing number of scholars who use it as a scientific model for (re-)thinking contemporary human relationships or networks. The ocean has likewise served as a catalyst to truly question the conception of the globalization. Indeed, beyond its position as the dominant physical feature of planet Earth, the ocean is a remarkable source of inspiration for creativity, for recreation, for rejuvenation and for discovery. Its role as a veritable magnet for literature must also be highlighted, enabling the narrativization of ocean and human-ocean relationships in a multitude of ways. And yet, a host of additional questions arise from the relationship between literature and the ocean. How does literature reveal the ocean’s influence on life? To what extent can the literary models of the ocean — defined here both as a scientific model and as an aesthetic representation of the Globe and the phenomena of globalization — change, in substantial ways, our own representation of the world?

In this panel, “The Global Ocean and the Literary Models of the World,” we will study the ocean in a global perspective, bearing in mind, the idea of a common spatiality made up of water. Both the natural and symbolic properties of water as well as the limits and dimensions of oceans will constitute a new reflexive axis for understanding and reflecting on the alarming situation that the planet is facing today. How do literary texts refer to world oceans? How do literary texts inform the world oceans?

The “global ocean” is a recent term that recalls the idea of *Oceanus* (Gr. Ὠκεανός) in Greek antiquity, while according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911), in Homer’s poem (*Illiad*, i. 423, xiv. 201, 245, xxi. 196) or Thales’ theory, *Oceanus* is the origin or first principle of everything.

Although the ocean, if we were to go by its etymology, is conceived as “a river flowing unceasingly round the earth,” a river that embraces the world, Herodotus argues that it is “the great world sea” (Herodotus ii. 23, iv. 8). More recently, in *Oceanography* (1917), the Russian oceanographer Yuly Shokalsky coined the term “world ocean” in his analysis of the connections between meteorology and hydrology as he endeavoured to understand global climate changes. Later, in *Globalization and the World Ocean* (2006), Peter Jacques shows “how human survival is intricately linked to the sustainability of the world ocean, a singular connected body of regional oceans that is by definition a global resource that touches all other ecosystems”. From cosmology and Greek mythology to oceanography, the same question is posed: In what ways are we all connected to the ocean? From *Oceanus* to the global ocean, are there representations in novels or poems or plays that give a constructive and cohesive view of the Globe? Or to put it differently, are there literary models of a new common space, a new universality based on the notion of the global ocean? Does literature offer a different art of living?

In other words, in what ways can the notion of global ocean create connections at all levels of reality, between the local and the global, between various sciences including literature, between individuals and nations? If, as the concept of global ocean implies, the ocean can be used as an intellectual tool for re-thinking the future of our planet through new models, can the literary models of the global ocean respond to the general and contemporary disorientation of nations and individuals — if only by offering an alternative representation to that of the globe as the dominant image of the totality and of the earth as the global conquest of Western culture? How far is the notion of global ocean relevant in literature? In the final analysis, how can the literary models of the global ocean offer a way out, by explaining and mitigating local disorders and disasters?

Bénédicte Letellier (Associate Professor in Comparative Literature, University of La Réunion, France)

benedicte.letellier@univ-reunion.fr

Website: www.litterature-comparee.fr

Panel proposal submission due: **21 January 2019**

Submission and Registration On the International Comparative Literature Association Congress website: <http://icla2019.medmeeting.org/Content/107163>

The ICLA 2019 cannot cover any travelling and accommodation costs. Neither is it possible to waive conference fees.