

CFP: The Text as Being: Ontologies of Redemption, Repair, and Regret, a panel sponsored by the Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature, for the ICLA Congress, July 21-27, 2016, University of Vienna.

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Call for Papers

Date:

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Austria

Subject Fields:

Black History / Studies, European History / Studies, Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, Jewish History / Studies, Literature

The International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) will have its 21st World Congress at the University of Vienna, July 21-27, 2016. ICLA brings together a global cohort of scholars working in multiple literary traditions. This year's conference theme is ICLA: The Many Languages of Comparative Literature. To that end, the Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature invites submissions for the following panel:

The Text as Being: Ontologies of Redemption, Repair, and Regret

In H.G. Adler's *The Journey* (2009), Paul, a Jewish survivor of a death camp, swept up in a group of wandering refugees, finds his way to an abandoned barracks where he studies his reflection in a mirror. He realizes that he "needs no witness to confirm that he has become a person again. . . . He lives by his own laws now; it's the only way possible if what he wants is more than to be called by just any name like all the others." In this moment, Adler pegs Paul's new existence to an imagined identity. He writes into Being a subject position for the one who "has become a person again." In Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), Dana imagines literature as a prosthetic because she has been injured by the legacy of slavery. The text must represent the regret of loss. In Francisco Rodriguez's *testimonio, Vida para los que vienen despues en el Salvador* (1993), Rodriguez invents Abelino, a figure who narrates Rodriguez' childhood during El Salvador's civil war because it is "too difficult to write in the first person about all he saw, lived, felt." The text becomes a voice for the muted and the silent.

These examples suggest literary ontologies as a means of redemption, repair, and regret. Conceptually, they rethink arguments proposed by Immanuel Kant, Etienne Gilson, Emil Fackenheim to show that the work of art calls into being new subject positions: there must be an aesthetic stage on which to reposition the subject around the recognition of loss, its regret, and the subjunctive hope for what could be or could have been. Literature provides a space to reclaim the ethical, to mark and address the subject in repair. This panel, proposed by the Research Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature of the ICLA, invites scholars to consider literary ontologies as new modes of thinking

not only about the religious, the aesthetic, and the ethical, but also about their intersections and how they might inform comparative literature as a discipline. Interested parties may contact the panel chairperson, Kitty Millet (kmillet1@sfsu.edu), with any questions. However, all abstracts must be submitted through the ICLA's portal in order to be considered.

Submission deadline **31 August 2015**.

Please submit abstracts via the ICLA's website: <https://icla2016.univie.ac.at/group-sections/> (section #17052)

For more information about this ICLA Research Committee, please feel free to visit our webpage: <http://online.sfsu.edu/kmillet1/faultlinesgrp.html>. A copy of the CFP for all of the committee's Congress panels appears there as well.

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