Literary studies are being transformed by the emerging disciplinary field of World Literature. Yet the world of literature is by no means self-evident. Issues of language and culture, national and global identity, originality and translation raise as many questions as they answer. What is the world in the new literary studies? And how does literary theory relate to this world? What are the appropriate structures for understanding literatures as a global phenomenon? Where do languages and cultures belong in relation to theoretical approaches that are largely defined and determined by Anglo-American interests? Is the nation-state or the language culture the only, or even the appropriate structure within which to locate literary traditions and histories, or are other structures needed? In this one-day conference at the Humanities Research Centre, ANU Canberra, literary scholars explore the relationships between the nation, language and the world, world literature and transnational methodology, the individual literary voice and its global reception.

**Keynote Speakers:**
Professor John Flower (University of Kent)
Professor David Roberts (Monash University)
Program

9.00am: Introduction and Welcome

9.30
Prof. David Roberts (Chair: Peter Morgan)
Monash University

*World Literatures and World Literature: Civilizations and Globalization*

10.30: Discussion and Morning Tea

11.00
Dr. Robert Boncardo (Chair Peter Morgan)
University of Sydney

*What is a world, such that there is literature in it?*

11.30
Dr. Laetitia Nanquette (Chair Ash Collins)
University of New South Wales

*Iranian literary blogs and the globalization of Iranian literary networks*

12.00
Prof. John Flower (Chair Ash Collins)
University of Kent

*Literature as warning: Orwell’s 1984, Houellebecq’s Soumission and Sansal’s 2084: la Fin du monde?*

1.00-2.00pm: Lunch

2.00
Amina El-Halawani (Chair: Laetitia Nanquette)
University of Sydney/University of Alexandria

*Of Yeats’s Cathleens and Abdel Sabour’s Princess*

2.30
Dr. Stewart King (Chair: Laetitia Nanquette)
Monash University

"Eye of the Beholder? Some Observations on Poe, Borges and the Invention of World Crime Fiction"

3.00
Prof. Peter Morgan (Laetitia Nanquette)
University of Sydney

*Competing Models of World Literature*

3.45
Discussion and Afternoon Tea: What is World Literature? Where do we go from here? (Chair: Peter Morgan)

4.45: Drinks & Dinner

For further information, and to RSVP for catering purposes, please email convenors:
ashok.collins@anu.edu.au. Offers of Papers: peter.morgan@sydney.edu.au

Website for the HRC: http://hrc.anu.edu.au/HRC-visitor-information
Abstracts

Prof. David Roberts
World Literatures and World Literature: Civilizations and Globalization
Monash University (david.gjandh.roberts@gmail.com)
- Prof. Roberts’ paper has been circulated in full.

Dr. Robert Boncardo
What is a world, such that there is literature in it?
University of Sydney (rbon6565@uni.sydney.edu.au)
In this paper, I will propose a series of interlinked theses regarding the ontology and epistemology of world literature. My wager is that many of the theoretical difficulties besetting the notion of world literature can be clarified by recourse to the philosophy of Alain Badiou, whose ontology and logic of appearing offer novel resources for understanding artistic production in general and literary production in particular. By reinscribing the key questions of world literature in terms of Badiou’s thought, my approach will be dogmatic, yet with a view to clearly bringing out the lines of fracture any theory of world literature has to confront. Specifically, I will draw on Badiou’s account of a world and the different intensities of appearance within it, as well as his logic of change within a world. As I hope to show, Badiou can provide us with (1) a more rigorous understanding of the relevant unity at stake in literary production; and (2) a clearer account of the different kinds of changes it undergoes. Indeed, this last point will allow us to question what the novelty of a theory of world literature itself consists in.

Dr. Laetitia Nanquette
Iranian literary blogs and the globalization of Iranian literary networks
University of New South Wales (l.nanquette@unsw.edu.au)
Is literature circulating without frontiers in the age of literary blogs? The Iranian blogosphere has been an important cultural site since 2001 and Persian, the language of Iran, is the fourth most-used language of the blogosphere. This paper will study contemporary Iranian literary blogs to understand how literary texts circulate today in a country at the margins of the literary centers, restricted in its literary endeavors by international sanctions and internal censorship. It will describe the context in which Persian literary blogs are conceived, analyze the characteristics of Persian literary blogs, as well as their impact on the Iranian literary field and the role literary blogs play in Iranian literary networks. Is their history (proliferation and then decline) evidence of a literature in the process of becoming global?

Prof. John Flower
‘Literature as warning: Orwell’s 1984, Houellebecq’s Soumission and Sansal’s 2084: la Fin du monde’?
University of Kent (J.E.Flower@kent.ac.uk)
By way of a brief examination of two novels written in the same language but by authors of different cultures this paper will attempt to consider how they address an issue of international significance and serve as warnings.

Ms. Amina El-Halawani
Of Yeats’s Cathleens and Abdel Sabour’s Princess
University of Sydney/University of Alexandria (aminahalawani@gmail.com)
A common problematic for peoples of colonized or postcolonial nations is to try and define their own perceptions of themselves and their nations in an attempt to both define and
assert their own identity. This endeavor is often pushed by their yearning for what they have lost, but their quest is never simple; for the past remains remote, and the future uncertain. This paper aims to examine Yeats’ Countess Cathleen, his collaborative work with Lady Gregory Cathleen Ni’Houlihan, as well as Salah Abdel Sabour’s The Princess Awaits as case studies both in Ireland and Egypt. The plays seem to find solace in native folktales, weaving them as an attempt to return to original and traditional forms, but they do not stop there. It is through the use of such rich heritage that they also manage to enhance affect and move their audiences. In other words, the writers seem to find freedom in the fantastic and novelty in tradition, bringing to us a complex vision in which an idealized fantastic world collides with a critical portrayal of a nation at odds with itself. By focusing on these plays, this paper aims to tackle how these two writers use the realm of the fantastic to negotiate matters of identity, rights and nationhood, as well as call for their audiences’ interaction and involvement in the issues of their day.

Dr. Stewart King
"Eye of the Beholder? Some Observations on Poe, Borges and the Invention of World Crime Fiction"
Monash University (stewart.king@monash.edu)
There is a paradox in the very notion of crime fiction as a form of world literature. On the one hand, the modern detective narrative had a transnational birth when Poe and Hoffman set their respective “Murders in the Rue Morgue” and Das Fräulein von Scudéři in France, beyond the U.S. and German linguistic and literary cultures in which they were conceived. Since these transnational origins, crime fiction has become a global phenomenon, crossing borders and languages as writers throughout the world have adopted and developed the genre. On the other hand, there is a tendency to reject the international dimensions of the genre through an insistence on national specificity. This attitude is evident both in fiction – in many novels themselves – and in scholarship, where the crime novel is conceived as the new Heimatroman (Erdmann). This paper seeks to overcome the division between the global and the local in crime fiction through an analysis of Jorge Luis Borges’s reflections on the detective novel. The paper proposes a way of approaching crime fiction that acknowledges the importance of the national referent at the same time as being alive to the genre’s international dimensions.

Prof. Peter Morgan
Competing Models of World Literature
University of Sydney (peter.morgan@sydney.edu.au)
Earlier literary assumptions about nation, culture and even language as the essential bearer of literary culture have been set aside in the context of accelerated globalization since the end of the 20th century, and various notions of global literary dynamics have been put forward. Most recently Alexander Beecroft has outlined a new and productive approach drawing on Wallerstein and Casanova, in order to develop a set of ideal-typical literary-historical constructions. In my paper I discuss Beecroft’s approach in the context of world literature studies. In the final section I use the figure of Albanian writer, Ismail Kadare, as a case study in the ways in which we can productively reconceptualize categories of world literature using Beecroft’s models.