

Avaliação de Unidades de I&D 2008

Unidade I&D: Instituto de Literatura Comparada (LIT-Norte-Porto-500)

- **Classificação: EXCELENTE**
- **Unidade I&D visitada em 09-02-2008**
- **Comentários do Painel de Avaliação:**

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Operational as a research centre since 1998, the Instituto de Literatura Comparada Margarida Losa is housed in the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto (FLUP). In addition to its research activities, it coordinates graduate degree Mestrado em Literatura e Cultura Comparadas through FLUP's Departamento de Estudos Portugueses e Estudos Românicos. The ILCML also supervises a number of doctoral dissertations.

The ILCML has received programmatic and pluriannual FCT funding in the last four years. It currently consists of 27 members—22 researchers with Ph.D.s and 5 Ph.D. candidates. Among the 22 Ph.D.s, 16 are full researchers.

The demographic of the Centre is a healthy mixture of professionals and pre-professionals at varying stages of their careers. Enhancement of its extramural profile seems to be a priority. It already has a number of international collaborations across Europe and across the Atlantic.

2. DECLARED OBJECTIVES

The declared aims of the ILCML for the period following this evaluation cycle, in addition to enhancement of internationalization, to develop the resources of its library for research and pedagogical purposes in the area of literature and cinema, hence the focus on books and films; streamline the collaborative efforts with the network of academic departments participating in its seminars and symposia, publish an annotated edition of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* with a *Guia de Leitura* in book form and in CD-ROM, and, most innovatively, enhance participation in the international network of comparative poetics LYRA.compoetics based at the University of Utrecht.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Instituto de Literatura Comparada Margarida Losa operates as one research line—INTERIDENTIDADES—, under whose umbrella are a number of projects: “Liminalities,”

which, in turn comprises four foci, namely, Migrations, Travel Literature, Translation and Drama Studies, and Detective Fiction; “Subjectivities and Sexualities,” which includes Poetry and the Construction of Subjectivity, Literature and the Visual Arts, and Poetics and Sex, and Gender.

Organisationally, the Centre is under the leadership of a Director but with no administrative infrastructure. While the Centre is functioning well and quite congenially, there is a need for an administrative assistant for coordination of the Centre's various activities, the growing number of its participants, and the greater complexity of its extramural and international collaborations. Once the ILCML garners some administrative support for its operations, it might consider putting in place an international advisory board consisting of specialists from other Portuguese institutions and from universities with which it already has, or is in the process of, establishing bilateral protocols.

4. PRODUCTIVITY

4.1 PUBLICATIONS

ILCML's most visible publishing program consists in the production of a highly professional *Cadernos de Literatura Comparada*, a book series comprised of the proceedings from the Centre's regularly hosted conferences and seminars, a quarterly collection of monographic essays published with QUASI Edições, as well as an electronic on-line journal on Utopian Studies—E-utopia, initiated in 2004, with seven numbers produced by the date of this site visit.

The members of the research Centre are quite productive, some more widely published than others outside the Centre's own publishing program. All in all, this is an admirable level of productivity for a relatively small Centre.

4.2. TRAINING

Within the period under evaluation, ILCML has supervised 16 M.A. theses, of which 12 are still in progress, and 9 Ph.D. dissertations, of which 3 have been completed. For the size of the Centre, this is a strong record for training in literary studies.

4.3. ACADEMIC EVENTS

Within the period covered by this evaluation, ILCML held two major conferences (November 2003 and November 2005), and it sponsored 29 lectures or seminars, principally by distinguished international guest lecturers, mainly European and American, as well as some by its own researchers.

5. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

With one Director and ad-hoc committees, the management structure of ILCML is rather simple. Though the Centre operates as a single research line, the variety of projects under its aegis and the growing number of participating researchers make the enhancement of the management structure imperative. This is even more important in view of the anticipated expansion of international protocols. At a minimum, a full-time administrative assistant would be necessary for the running of the Centre. The evaluation panel was impressed by the dedication and commitment of the Centre's leadership and by the esprit de corps among the researchers. Pragmatically, however, for the professional efficiency and practical sustainability of the Centre, some administrative staffing is indispensable.

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6. FUTURE PLANNING

The future sustainability of ILCML's activities depend in good measure on the enhancement of its administrative infrastructure. The intellectual content of the Centre is of a high level and there is internal cogency among the various projects within the global line of research. The various projects within this line are linked thematically and mutually reinforcing.

The research agenda, publishing program, and the regularly scheduled activities such as conferences and seminars lend both continuity and coherence to the operation of ILCML. Intellectually, then, the future of the Centre is on solid ground. The leadership of the Centre is likewise solid, as is the collegiality and harmonious working of the team. The only question regarding the sustainability of the Centre is infrastructure and administrative support. The declared goal of enhancing the library holdings is admirable and the recognition that the Centre needs operational assistance is realistic.

7. REGIONAL ROLE

Located in the northern tier of Portugal, the leadership of ILCML has expressed an awareness of the possibilities for expanding its outreach activities in the northern region of the country. One of the stated goals of the Centre is the enhancement of its relationship to the non-academic community in Porto and the region and this should be encouraged and properly supported.

8. NATIONAL INTEREST

A number of participating researchers in ILCML are from other Portuguese universities. And ILCML has an on-going collaboration with the Centro de Estudos Comparatistas (CEC) of the University of Lisbon.

9. INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

ILCML has an active engagement with the international community, principally through a number of bilateral protocols with a number of universities outside Portugal, namely, the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands; the University of California, Berkeley; Brown University, USA; as well as the Universidade Federal Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro through the GRICES/CAPES convention.

10. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND ADDED VALUE

The multinational network LYRA.COMPOETICS involving ILCML, Utrecht, Fluminense, Brown, and the Sorbonne, Paris, and the web site created by ILCML for coordination of this project is a unique feature of the Centre positions. It is pivotal role in the pursuit of developing an interactive dissemination of contemporary poetry and poetics.

11. GRADING OF CENTRE AND EVALUATIVE STATEMENT

Based on the review of accomplishments to date and on proposals for ongoing and future projects, as well as on the role it plays nationally and internationally through its activities, ILCML is found to be excellent.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) The Evaluation Panel recommends granting the FCT funding requested by ILCML.
- ii) The Evaluation Panel finds that the administrative structure of ILCML should be expanded to include at least one full-time staff member for the coordination of the Centre's activities.
- iii) As with other Centres, the Evaluation Panel would also like to recommend a streamlining in the delivery of granted FCT funding so that the resources could reach the Centre in a timely fashion. This will enhance the planning cycle of activities and distribution of responsibilities among the research lines of the Centre, as well as the planning for the training component of the Centre's commitment to doctoral student researchers and emerging scholars.