

Department of Comparative Literature, Indiana University Bloomington  
Graduate Conference Proposal  
10-11 April 2015 Bloomington, Indiana University



A missed connection is an attempt to reach out to a stranger whom one has encountered in the past, often with the hope of establishing an emotional or physical contact. At its core is a search for a new beginning or, at least, the potential of a closure.

Literature offers countless examples of missed connections: desperate lovers and failed revenge, comedies of errors and Kafkaesque scenarios, cultural gaps, open endings and unfinished novels. These unfulfilled encounters are never concretized, yet they can be sources of inspiration for writers for whom absence is a productive condition.

In media today, missed connections are manifestations of society's struggles with language and failures of communication. Different forms of ads, online or in newspapers, offer the opportunity to amend the loss of an initial personal contact by mediating desires through a third party entity.

The phrase 'missed connections' thus embodies a paradox because it contains both an original unfulfilled communication and the potential remedy for this absence through textualization.

In a world where communication is facilitated through mediation, what kind of connection is missed and what kind is re-created? This conference seeks to provide allegorical understandings of the concept within culture. We want to start from the initial paradox of the missed connection as simultaneous presence and absence to investigate the interactions between the norms and the margins. In this global world, how do we negotiate our identities in the structures of language and society? Comparative Literature has always been the third party that connects texts and cultures together across time, space, and language, thus destabilizing notions of cultural hegemony, canons and authorship.

We want to encourage interdisciplinary and global approaches to the field of Comparative Literature. We welcome proposals from a variety of disciplines including, but not limited to: Literary Studies, Film and Media Studies, Gender Studies, Translation Studies, Jewish Studies, Linguistics, Critical Race Studies, Religious Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Cognitive Science.

Suggested themes for our discussion:

- Memory, collective memory and history
- Diasporas, citizenships, nations
- Incomplete, fragmented, unfinished, experimental, posthumous texts, mixed media
- Love, romance, sexuality and gender
- (in)communicability ; the ineffable, spoken, read, or imagined languages
- Mediated communication, social media platforms, blogging culture and biographical/autobiographical

Please send an abstract (300 words max), a title for the presentation, and a short bio (50 words max) including your name, email address, degree level and institutional affiliation to: [iu.complit@gmail.com](mailto:iu.complit@gmail.com) (both in the body of the email and as an attachment) by **February 1st, 2015**.

