**The Literary Communication Project (LITCOM)**

**Director** Roger D. Sell (H.W. Donner Research Professor of Literary Communication)

**The Approach**

Literary-communicational research views literary activity as one form of communication among others. It therefore involves a theory of communication in general.

The theory developed within LITCOM draws distinctions between transitive communication (which communicates *something*) and intransitive communication (which is more like a comparing of notes), between monological communication and dialogical communication (which is not simply a matter of formal surface features), and between coercive and deferential communication.

One of the main hypotheses being examined is that writing which comes to be valued by a wide range of readers over long periods of time tends to be communicationally intransitive, dialogical and deferential, and that as a result it is communicational in the etymological sense of the term: a form of community-making, whereby areas of overlap between different lifeworlds expand without necessarily resulting in a homogeneous consensus.

Literary-communicational research along these lines can strengthen the theoretical self-consciousness of literary critics seeking to mediate between writers and readers from differing backgrounds, or to engage in an ethical critique of the way writers actually treat their readers.

**Channels of activity**

LITCOM has already been running for about ten years, and has resulted in many publications, symposia, and research networks. The main institutional partner in Finland has been Oulu University’s Cultural Memory Project.

International cooperation is taking place within the Philosophy of Communication Section of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), for whom LITCOM will be hosting a conference on literature as communication in September 2011, and within the International Association for Dialogue Analysis (IADA), whose 14th International Conference, on the theme of literature as dialogue, LITCOM are hosting in April 2012.

LITCOM has also taken a major initiative in the field of early seventeenth-century English drama: the CoMEST Network (Community-Making in Early Stuart Theatres: Stage and Audience), which will be holding its pre-publication symposium in Arken in May 2012.
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Individual Finnish researchers currently working in or with LITCOM


- **Inna Lindrén** (ÅA, English). Doctoral thesis forthcoming on Kipling’s addressivity.


- **Jason Finch** (ÅA, English). Research on William Plomer’s fictional community-making out of the past.

- **Lydia Kokkola** (TY, English). Research on literary communication and silence.

- **Elina Siltanen** (TY, English). Research on Lyn Hejinian’s “Poetics of a Common Voice”

- **Janne Korkka** (TY, English). Research on Canadian fiction and prairie communities.

- **Antje Ecksturm-Rudd** (TY, English). Research on conceptions of literary genres within communities


- **Juha-Pekka Ala-Rauhio** (OY, English) Research on Arnold’s addressivity.