

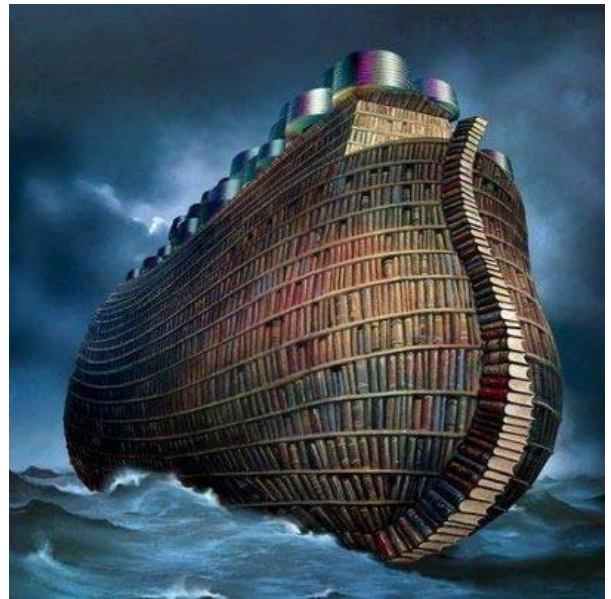
## Nothing but survival: On the origin and spread of literature

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January 31, 2:30pm  
Room U6/3061

### Abstract

For a long time literary theorists have been concerned with the question “What is literature?”. This issue does not raise the same interest in our days. After all, what really matters is what we do with literature, whatever it is. Time has come for a comparison between literary and evolutionary studies. The question we should ask is: “Why is literature?” Where do poetic uses of language rise from? For what reason or reasons, in a remote era of our history, our ancestors have started to spend (or lavish) both time and mental energies in seemingly free and relaxed verbal activities which are unrelated to immediate needs? Which are the features of human behaviour that literature tends to foster and strengthen? In this workshop Mario Barenghi argues that literature's aim is nothing but survival.



### CISEPS

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The seminar is part of the CISEPS project “**The diffusion of cultural traits**”, whose goal is to trigger interdisciplinary debates, emphasizing common problems and peculiarities among economics, philosophy, anthropology, geography, history, biology and many more fields. Thinking in terms of cultural traits – i.e., characters depending in some way on social learning – doesn’t imply exhaustion of cultural processes; rather, it means thinking critically to scientific models and metaphors for studying culture.

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