

## CALL FOR PAPERS AND SEMINARS

### AMERICAN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

April 9-11, 1999  
Montreal, Canada

“Comparative Literature and Cultural Transnationalisms: Past and Future”

Is Comparative Literature redefining itself as Transnational Literary Studies, and if so, what does that mean? Though the modern nation-state is by no means obsolete (many would argue that it remains robustly intact throughout the world, even when sizable minority populations generate a “nations within nations” situation), there are nonetheless new singular pressures being put on the definition of national literatures and aesthetics by the globalization and marketing of culture. The slippages and tensions among comparative categories such as globalization, cosmopolitanism, internationalism, aesthetic ideology, standard language, genre and form are in line for interrogation in relation to the future of transnational literary comparatism. Suggested themes include:

**Geopolitical Comparatism:** North and South; Bodies of Water (Black Atlantics, Mediterranean-ness, islands archipelagos as signifying borders); continental configurations in world literature, the status of metropole / periphery locations; literature and ecology.

**Humanism without Borders:** How have legacies of humanism and the Enlightenment traveled and evolved? What is the status of the human in the humanities? What is the role of national borders in defining the literary field? How do we characterize relations between the pre-modern and the modern within the humanities? Are there critical paradigms that travel better than others?

**Narrative Chunnels:** literary history, genre, aesthetic markets and the New Eurpoe; Translation and the internationalization of the text. Fictional equivalents of the Euro. Transnationalism versus cosmopolitanism.

**Aesthetics and Culture:** Literary formalism and the migrations of metaphor and the metonymy across cultures. Poetics and literariness in comparative theoretical traditions.

**Monolingualism versus Creolization:** debates over standard language (rotten English, Anglo-Indian, Ebonics, Cubonics, Spanglish), redefinitions of Anglophone, Francophone etc., comparative Creoles.

Our next annual meeting will be held in the historic city of Montreal, in a region that continues to figure in contemporary debates on nationalism, regionalism, and hybridization. We are continuing to refine the format that has been used successfully in

the past two annual meetings. The great majority of sessions will take the form of 12-person seminars, meeting two hours a day for the three mornings of the conference, with four papers presented each day. As at the ACLA '98 in Austin, there will be two sets of seminars every day, so that each participant can take full part in one seminar and then float freely among individual sessions during the other block of seminars. This year, in order to increase the flexibility of presentations, we are also providing for a number of 8-person seminars, meeting for two days rather than three; this frees us from having to fit every topic into a 12-person grouping.

The use of seminars has enabled us greatly to increase the number of papers given at the conference, but we have also seen a notable rise in abstracts submitted. For the past two meetings, we were constrained by the space available for meetings and accommodation, with the regrettable result that we had to turn away a substantial number of attractive proposals. We are now planning for a sizable increase in the number of sessions, and we have every expectation that we should be able to find an appropriate home for every good proposal we receive.

In order to organize the program in a timely fashion, we invite proposals either for an individual paper or for a full seminar. You can join with a number of other people to present a fully-formed seminar; alternatively, you can propose a topic with one or more abstracts already attached to it, and the conference committee will try to fill out the seminars as appropriate. (Should this prove impossible, the committee will make every effort to find other seminar homes for the submitted abstracts.) If you have a topic for which you wish to solicit contributions directly this summer, a convenient way to do this is by posting a notice to the ACLA website ([www.alca.org](http://www.alca.org)) or by forwarding the solicitation to the secretariat ([info@acla.org](mailto:info@acla.org)), where it can be mailed to the membership.

We anticipate that the majority of abstracts we receive will continue to be individual submissions responding to the conference's overall themes. We have had good success in the past two years in creating interesting conjunctions of individual papers and expect that many sessions will continue to be formed in this way.

Please submit individual or group proposals by OCTOBER 30, 1998. Individual proposals should consist of an abstract (up to 300 words), plus a paragraph of biographical information. A group proposal should include an abstract of the general topic, followed by individual abstracts and biographical summaries for each participant.

Proposals / abstracts should be sent via e-mail to Emily Apter at [apter@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:apter@humnet.ucla.edu). A hard copy of the proposal should also be sent by mail to Emily Apter, Dept. of Comparative Literature, UCLA, 212 Royce Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1536.

We look forward to seeing you in Montreal for what promises to be an exceptionally lively and interesting meeting.