

CALL FOR PAPERS AND SEMINARS

AMERICAN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

March 11-13, 2005
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pennsylvania

“Imperialisms—Temporal, Spatial, Formal”

You are invited to participate in the 2005 conference of the ACLA, to be hosted by the Department of Comparative Literature at the Pennsylvania State University on March 11-13 (Friday through Sunday), 2005. Sessions and papers on any topic are welcome, in addition to presentations on the conference theme.

“Imperialisms” in relation to literature can be understood both literally and metaphorically, referring not only to the effect of political and cultural empires upon textual production, but also to the reign of favored paradigms and intellectual fashions in theory or criticism, the consequences of literary canons, or the predominance of particular genres and styles in specific places and periods.

Since ancient times there have been empires, and it could be argued that all human cultures can be considered imperial cultures, either as agents or as objects of imperial endeavors. Comparatists deal, in many different ways, with encounters between individual writers and texts that are positioned across demarcations, as well as with encounters among the human collectives brought into contact by imperial outreach at historical and spatial junctures (Bakhtin's "zones of contact"). Further, comparatists continue to explore the manifestations of the historical unfolding of imperialisms, whose ambivalences at the start of the twenty-first century may be starker than ever.

Below are listed a few possible topics for seminars or individual papers related to this theme:

- Imperialism as metaphor: Why (or how long, through what process) has imperialism become a dominant metaphor for forms of cultural transmission, intersection, and resistance?
- Empire and classification: “empire” is related to “in parare” – to set order in, classify – and thereby to master or rule. What is involved in the classificatory impulse of literary taxonomies and their hierarchies (the values associated with orality and literacy, prose and poetry, etc.) and fallacies?
- Empire and temporality: Why and where does the “empire” of the past, of traditions, myths, influences, or patrilinear genres, reign so forcefully in

literary histories? Is that chronological dominance being rethought? Is presentism a gain or a loss? Is it new?

- Forms of resistance to empire: laughter, the carnivalesque, blow-back, mimicry, travel, discovery, and their objects. Under what conditions does the traveler resist empire or promote it?
- The aftermath of imperialisms: if the Soviet Union was an empire (despite its official anti-colonial rhetoric), are the postcolonial approaches relevant to the study of Ukrainian culture. Similarly, to what extent was England in the later Middle Ages a postcolonial culture? Are all cultures postcolonial?
- Disciplinary imperialism: How do we regard the competing (quasi? anti? all too?) imperial reach of Comparative Literature vis-à-vis language departments? of English departments versus the rest?

These topics are intended to provoke your own proposals for seminars or individual papers. Continuations of seminars from previous years may be proposed again. If you would like to organize a seminar on any topic, once the seminar proposal is accepted we will post your Call for Papers on the conference website to invite further participants.

Deadline for Seminar Proposals: September 10, 2004

Deadline for Individual Abstracts: October 15, 2004

Travel funds will be available for graduate students. See our graduate student page for more information.

For further information or questions, please contact the ACLA 2005 chair:

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Please note: Participants in the annual meeting (paper presenters and session chairs) must be current members of the ACLA. Membership forms can be found on our website.