

THE 2003 BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

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**LETTER FROM THE ACLA PRESIDENT,
MARGARET HIGONNET**

Dear Colleagues,

The power of global thinking—along with its hazards—has been much debated by comparatists. This has been especially true in a year when uncertain communication and violence have marked the return of world attention to the birthplace of Sumerian culture, where the oldest *mappa mundi* was found on a sixth-century Babylonian tablet. We have had ample occasion to reflect on the complex factors that affect how history is written, and more specifically how cultural history is forged or forgotten. Forces that may seem remote and vague, like the “bitter river” that circled ancient Babylon on that tablet, have come home, threatening freedom of travel and intellectual exchange. Programs and departments of comparative literature have been challenged to keep their budgets balanced and to continue supporting research. This year, the ICLA meeting planned for Hong Kong had to be cancelled. Libraries are struggling to preserve freedom of speech in the face of excessive security measures.

Yet in many ways, this forty-third anniversary of the ACLA has also been a year for comparatists to celebrate. The annual meeting on April 4-6, 2003, ably hosted by Heather Richardson-Hayton and Laurel Amtower at the California State University San Marcos and San Diego State University, attracted well over 600 presenters at 70 panels. This set another record in spite of financial cutbacks, reduced travel in response to the war in Iraq, fears of SARS, and visa problems for some esteemed international scholars who were forced to withdraw. The beautiful hillside setting of the university at San Marcos, between the desert and the sea, as well as the elegant modern buildings and high-tech classrooms, offered participants the possibility of enjoying a fine balance between provocative papers and relaxed pleasures. The theme of border crossing drew reflections on gender, genre, media, material culture, audiences, and Arabic culture, among many other topics.

The distribution of our annual prizes at the conference underscored the continuing vitality of comparative scholarship today. Henry Remak, who received the first Lifetime Achievement Award, handed out offprints of his recent scholarship. The Harry Levin Prize, which was awarded to Julie Stone Peters for her superb *Theatre of the Book, 1480-1880*, attracted such strong submissions that three other authors—Gil Anidjar, Ian Balfour, and John C. Shields—also received honorable mention. Although we are still working to build up the fund for the Bernheimer Prize, we were able to award the prize this year to Emily Wilson for her doctoral dissertation in comparative literature at Yale University. The Horst Frenz and A.O. Aldridge prizes went to excellent graduate students selected from an impressive cohort.

Many of our panels, like Harry Potter, produce sequels in subsequent years. We look forward to seeing each other again next year, when the conference will be held April 15-18, 2004, at the University of Michigan, hosted by Tobin Siebers. The call for papers published in this issue envisions a broad range of topics under the rubric of "Global Ethnic Networks—Old and New" (<http://www.umich.edu/~acla>).

Under the stewardship of Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, who became our new Secretary-Treasurer a year ago, the ACLA is presenting a new face electronically. The web site offers links to information about the organization, membership forms, our annual prizes, by-laws, minutes from board meetings, and of course the annual conferences. It also provides a quick springboard to titles of comparative literature journals, electronic journals, digitalized texts, and online bibliographies. Elizabeth has been working with Carey Eckhardt, the President of the ADPCL, to update our list of programs and departments in comparative literature, and she would welcome your input. We would also like to make the membership list as useful as possible to you, and would appreciate hearing your ideas about how to do this, for example, having members list three fields in which they are currently working. For questions and suggestions, please write to the secretariat at info@acla.org or to me at higonnet@uconn.edu.

We also will be welcoming your response to our two panels at the 2003 MLA conference, which takes us back to San Diego. The roundtable chaired by Haun Saussy will present a draft of the next ten-year Report on the Discipline, which we think will provoke a discussion about changes within the profession as lively as that which greeted the Charles Bernheimer report a decade ago.

This has been a time for rethinking how we do things as comparatists and for moving comparative literature toward the center of our study of literature. As Carey Eckhardt's note here indicates, the ADPCL is planning a summer seminar for June 3-5, 2004, in Colorado Springs on evolving options for teaching world literature, looking at innovative curricula and broader institutional arrangements. Please contact Corinne Scheiner (cscheiner@ColoradoCollege.edu) with topics for the program. The MLA also has invited comparatists to join the ADE and ADFL at a conference June 26-29, 2003, at Snowbird, Utah, to participate in a conversation about shared interests in areas such as translation studies, cultural studies, post-colonial literature, film, and gender studies. Under the leadership of President Mary Louise Pratt, a comparatist herself, and of the MLA's Executive Director Rosemary Feal, questions about the institutional place of comparative literature, of interdisciplinary work, and of area studies have come to the fore. The MLA publications committee also is interested in developing comparative proposals for the series on "Approaches to Teaching"; David Damrosch is planning a volume on "Approaches to Teaching World Literature" for this series.

We look forward to further collaboration with the ADPCL and the MLA in reconsidering where we usually draw disciplinary lines: along the boundaries of period, national language, and genre. Should the creative foment of the panel titles our members propose to conference organizers help us redefine the "divisions" of our discipline, the job definitions when we hire, and the requirements imposed on our graduates? Amid these sea changes, we need to be especially sensitive to their impact on our students and our junior faculty. Comparatists

should be able to contribute models for the integration of modern language departments that are consolidating, and the comparative focus on cultural and interdisciplinary studies will benefit from the interdisciplinary focus that promises to be one of the hallmarks of the twenty-first century. Of course, these trends cannot be separated from our responsibility to ancient cultures, as David Damrosch eloquently reminded us at the conference. This year I am especially grateful not only for the remarkable panoply of David's projects designed to help renew our teaching, but also for his support as I recovered from an accident. With David on one side and Kathleen Komar, our new Vice President, on the other, I look forward to the promise of the coming year.

Cordially yours,
Margaret Higonnet

**LETTER FROM THE INCOMING SECRETARY,
ELIZABETH RICHMOND-GARZA**

This letter could not begin without a heartfelt expression of praise for Elaine Martin's collegial and professional administration of the Secretariat at the University of Alabama. As both a friend and an adviser, she has made my job and that of my assistants, Kevin Carney, Ryan Fisher, Matthew Russell, and Laura Sager, so much easier this year and has challenged us to carry on her accomplished work. I also wish to thank the ACLA Board and membership for giving UT Austin the opportunity to host the ACLA's administrative offices until 2007. As I imagine the role of interdisciplinary and foreign language programs in the next few years, I see the Secretariat as having an important role to play not only within the ACLA but also in comparative studies more generally. I see the University of Texas as an ideal place for this development with your collective support, wisdom, and, sometimes, patience. The Secretariat will continue to expand and develop technologically, intellectually, and institutionally.

Situated now in the complex and multicultural border region of the United States, the Secretariat will continue the ACLA's commitment to the inclusive regional definition of "American" which has been expressed so well through the choice of both the topics and the locations for our meetings. I hope that we can build on the ACLA's already distinguished international and multicultural profile so as to integrate these vital areas of comparative study even more fully into the ACLA's profile, not only hemispherically but also globally. I hope the Secretariat will be able to facilitate such area studies liaisons and organizational collaborations especially in diasporic and globally oriented studies.

In the context of such interdisciplinary and collaborative goals, the continued enhancement and development of the ACLA's web resources is crucial, to make the ACLA an ever more critical site of intellectual and collegial exchange and connection. I hope that you have had a chance to visit our completely renovated website at www.acla.org and invite any comments and additions. The growth I imagine for the website ranges from adding expanded databases, collaborative discussion groups, and distribution lists, to showcasing through web publishing the innovative and interdisciplinary achievements of our members.

In this era of assessing the place of literary and linguistic studies as a whole within the academy, I see the future of Comparative Literature as lying in a clear articulation of its role not only in graduate but also in undergraduate education. I would like to use the crossroads of the Secretariat for undergraduate outreach—as a central resource and point of reference and support for faculty designing and developing comparative studies at their home institutions, and for undergraduates themselves, whose work will be crucial in defining the future of our field. The membership of the ACLA represents the most complete, varied, and dynamic network of scholars working in Comparative Literature, and their interests and expertise are invaluable. I am honored and excited to have the chance to work with all of you in the next few years.

Elizabeth M. Richmond-Garza
Secretary-Treasurer, ACLA

**LETTER FROM THE ADPCL,
THE ASSOCIATION OF DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS
OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**

Dear Colleagues,

What follows is a brief report from the Association of Departments and Programs of Comparative Literature (ADPCL), a partner organization of the ACLA. Our participants include program and department chairs, graduate and undergraduate directors, and others who guide or would like to create comparative literature curricula, programs, institutes, etc., as they are variously called.

First, we invite you to visit our new website at <http://www.adpcl.org/>, which provides information about the ADPCL along with links to a range of other resources on topics such as the job market, the array of comparative literature associations worldwide, etc. As indicated on the website, mailing lists are also available from the ADPCL. Institutional membership in the ACLA now includes ADPCL membership, and all academic units representing comparative literature and world literature in any way—whether the unit is a program, department, committee, cluster of courses offered by another entity, or comparative literature by any other name—are invited to join. Membership forms, reflecting the new joint ACLA/ADPCL arrangement, are available at http://www.acla.org/instit_gen_join.htm.

Second, we are planning a conference on the Undergraduate Curriculum, a topic likely to be of increasing interest to all of our academic units. Not only are the perennial debates about how and what we should teach as important and engaging as ever, but we also face institutional questions at the present time regarding the place of comparative literature in relation to the curricula of English departments and foreign language departments. The ADPCL invites all department/program chairs, directors of undergraduate programs, and those interested in creating undergraduate programs to join us next summer for a conference on the Undergraduate Curriculum. The conference is being planned for June 3-6, 2004, at the Colorado College's Baca Campus, located at the northern end of the San Luis Valley, at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Further information is available from Corinne Scheiner at Colorado College and will be posted on the ADPCL website.

Third, at the upcoming MLA meeting in San Diego, December 27-30, the ADPCL will host a session addressing a vital professional concern for many of us, the current crisis in scholarly publishing in the humanities. Scholars seeking to place book manuscripts in some specialties within comparative literature, especially those involving smaller market languages, have lately been receiving bad news from university presses because the presses, in the face of economic problems, are diminishing or eliminating their acceptances of new books in fields where

sales may not meet costs. Even in broader or larger market fields it may be more difficult to place a book manuscript than it used to be. Our MLA panel on this topic will be as follows:

Session 406: "The Crisis in Scholarly Publishing: Comparative Literature and Literatures in the Smaller Market Foreign Languages," Sunday, December 28, 2003, 7:15-8:30 p.m., Solana Room, San Diego Marriott Hotel.

Session Leader: Caroline D. Eckhardt, Penn State Univ., University Park.

1. "A Learned Society's Perspective: What Can Professional Associations Do?" —Pauline Ruth Yu, UCLA, and incoming president of the American Council of Learned Societies.
2. "A University Press Editor's Perspective: The Economic Crisis for Presses and the Options for Publishing on Foreign Language Literatures"—Mary E. Murrell, Senior Editor for Literature and Translation, Princeton University Press.
3. "A Department Head's Perspective: Economies of Scarcity and Economies of Excess—between Paper and Electronic Publishing"—Haun Saussy, Stanford University.

Your comments regarding any administrative aspect of comparative literature are most welcome. Again, if your academic unit is not yet an institutional member of the ACLA/ADPCL, we invite you to join, and we look forward to working with you.

Caroline D. Eckhardt
President, ADPCL
Penn State
e82@psu.edu

Corinne Scheiner
Secretary-Treasurer, ADPCL
Colorado College
cscheiner@coloradocollege.edu

THE 2003 ACLA PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
THE ROAD OF EXCESS:
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AT A DOUBLE CROSSROADS¹

Over the years, ACLA presidents have often given their farewell address a double aspect: highlighting the achievements of our field and our association, and reflecting on what we can do better. My title and subtitle are meant to celebrate the tremendous expansion of our field of vision in recent years and at the same time to raise concerns about what we may be losing amid these considerable gains. There is much to celebrate in the excitement of new horizons, well reflected in the steadily growing numbers of papers given at our annual meetings during the past decade, now up to six hundred each year, delivered by participants from as many as two dozen countries and treating works from all over the globe. We have a lot to study now, and we believe with Blake that “the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.” We are now reaping the fruits of a literary world far larger than the traditional purview of much comparative study, so often focused on Western Europe and a few selected major powers elsewhere.

Even as we make the most of our new opportunities, it is worth remembering that Blake’s formulation is a Proverb of Hell, an ambiguous realm at once of genius and torment. Blake’s line is the third infernal proverb given in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and the proverbs that precede it foreshadow both our accomplishments and our present challenge. “In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy,” as the first proverb tells us—a sentiment any scholar can appreciate, bringing to life the dead metaphor of the academic “field,” now overflowing with bumper crops of all sorts of works we can study and teach. Yet those of us who care about the past will be less content with the second proverb: “Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead.” This grinding down creates “the road of excess” we traverse in the third proverb.

Our scholarly path is a crossing both spatially and temporally, and the danger I want to highlight here is that we risk purchasing our tremendous global expansion at the cost of a dramatic foreshortening of the historical depth of our study. Not only would such a foreshortening deprive us of a great wealth of past works; an inattention to the past limits our ability to do justice to present-day works as well, especially those from the non-European cultures whose contemporary works are increasingly prominent in the view of ACLA’s members. Our work at this crossroads may, in fact, lead us to double-cross our new-found foreign friends, if we don’t pay enough attention to the deeper cultural history from which the contemporary works have emerged.

My subtitle recalls the trenchant lead article in the 1960 *Yearbook of Comparative*

¹ A condensed version of the presidential address given at the ACLA annual meeting at the University of California, San Marcos, April 5, 2003.

and General Literature by Henry H.H. Remak, recipient this year of ACLA's first Lifetime Achievement Award. His full title was "Comparative Literature at the Crossroads: Diagnosis, Therapy and Prognosis." The crossing he examined was between the aesthetic and the social. Remak cast this crossing in terms of the then-current debate between the more positivist—but also socially engaged—"French school" of comparatists and the more aesthetically inclined "American school." The American school was dominated by scholars like Leo Spitzer and René Wellek who tended to view the literary work as "a stratified structure of signs and meaning," as Wellek had put it the year before in his influential article "The Crisis of Comparative Literature" (283). Wellek's article had called for a focus on aesthetic universals rather than a French-style emphasis on the cultural embeddedness of works and the "foreign trade" between national literatures, an emphasis that Wellek saw as dryly positivistic at best, and jingoistic at worst. By contrast, Remak urged his readers to unite the social with the aesthetic, giving full attention to both.

Remak's viewpoint has come to be widely shared, and much comparative work does indeed attend equally to the social and to the aesthetic as he urged us to do. Yet we encounter a comparable dichotomy today in the split between rival conceptions of world literature. For much of the postwar era, and still in many survey courses today, world literature has been thought of as a great conversation developed across the centuries among masterpieces that are seen as interacting in a broad construct such as "the Western tradition" or "the East Asian tradition." In recent years, a very different conception has come more and more to the fore, of world literature as a series of windows on the world, fascinating for the insights they give into the world's many cultures, whether or not these works share any genetic connection or even count as "masterpieces" at all.

The older view can be said to have privileged time over space: to do justice to traditions stretching from Homer and Sappho to Proust and Woolf, even such wide-ranging scholars as Erich Auerbach mostly confined themselves to the major powers of Western Europe. As the *YCGL*'s founder Werner Friederich remarked at a conference on the teaching of world literature in 1959, "Sometimes, in flip-pant moments, I think we should call our programs NATO Literatures—yet even that would be extravagant, for we do not usually deal with more than one fourth of the 15 NATO-Nations" ("On the Integrity of Our Planning," 15). Happily, we have greatly extended our literary map since then, but today we are in danger of eclipsing time almost as drastically as the earlier comparatists eclipsed space. ACLA's own conferences provide ample evidence for this pattern. For the past decade, I've made a note of the period base of papers presented at our annual meetings. Some papers don't have a specific period focus, and some treat authors I couldn't identify, but most papers do focus on one or more writers in a single period, and of those I could identify, in recent years anywhere between 80% and 90% of our conference papers have focused on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Let me take this year's program as a case in point. A total of 506 of this year's paper titles indicated a period base that I could identify; no fewer than 86% of these papers concerned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This propor-

tion certainly wasn't the creation of the conference's directors, who themselves work in earlier periods, Heather Hayton as a medievalist and Laurel Amtower in early modern literature. They made sure to formulate the conference's themes in such a way as to invite earlier as well as later contributions, and they specifically solicited papers and sessions based in earlier periods. Their efforts kept the modern proportion below its previous high of 90%, but only by four percent.

By my count, the identifiably period-based papers divided as follows:

Ancient	6
Medieval	21
Early modern	31
Eighteenth century	13
Nineteenth century	68
Twentieth century	367
Total:	506

Only 71 of these 506 papers (14%) focused on periods earlier than the nineteenth century, and almost three quarters of the papers (73%) were based in the twentieth century alone. Furthermore, if we divide the twentieth century into early and later halves, it turns out that 80% of the twentieth-century papers focused on postwar works—295 papers in all. In other words, almost three fifths of *all* the period-based papers delivered at the conference were devoted to the last fifty years out of the thousands of years of human literary production.

The earlier periods, moreover, suffer from ghettoization as well as outright diminution: no fewer than 80% of the pre-twentieth-century papers were presented in sessions devoted entirely to pre-twentieth-century materials. The periods beyond the recent past, in sum, have a separate but dramatically unequal status at our annual meetings. The present imbalance in our conference programs is all the more striking as we continue to give considerable weight to earlier periods when introducing students to world literature: survey anthologies like Norton's, Bedford's, and Longman's currently give around two thirds of their space to pre-1800 materials, and half or more of their space to pre-1650 works. We may not want to return to the strong emphasis that past generations of comparatists gave to classical antiquity and to medieval and Renaissance studies, yet the pendulum has now swung very far into the contemporary; it wouldn't take much more movement in this direction for the past to disappear from our view altogether. We no longer need to rename world literature "NATO Literatures," as Werner Friederich wryly proposed in 1959, but now a different concern emerges: in all honesty, should we rename ACLA the American *Contemporary* Literature Association?

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Given the diagnosis outlined above, what therapies can we adopt to yield a favorable prognosis? Moral exhortation is invigorating in its way, but I suspect that the best medicine is naked scholarly self-interest. Let us assume that the majority of our members are increasingly drawn to contemporary works, and that they will continue to want to work on their materials of choice. My theme here will be that a close attention to the earlier periods of the cultures we study is critical

for the full understanding of contemporary works themselves, and a full understanding of contemporary literature can in turn reinvigorate our study of the earlier periods, bringing past and present into a renewed and productive dialogue.

As an example of this dialogue, I will take the interplay of past and present in contemporary Mayan culture. My text will be Rigoberta Menchú's famous 1983 *testimonio*, produced in collaboration with the anthropologist Elizabeth Burgos-Debray, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú*, translated into English as *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. Burgos-Debray transcribed, arranged, and edited Menchú's eloquent account of her childhood in Guatemala and the horrific events surrounding the civil war that claimed the lives of her parents and a beloved brother. The resulting book had a major effect in rallying international support for the native population, and in winning the Nobel Peace Prize for Menchú, yet the book has aroused controversy on both political and factual grounds. Originally mounted in crude terms by conservative polemicists like Dinesh D'Souza, these critiques have recently been given new weight by an exhaustively researched book by the anthropologist David Stoll, *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (1999). Stoll criticizes Menchú for her tendency to recount dramatic eyewitness scenes of torture that did not in fact occur, and for presenting an inaccurate picture of her native village as a harmonious rural commune organically united in struggle against ladino oppression. My concern here, however, is not with Menchú's strategic selection and arrangement of materials, but rather with Burgos-Debray's framing of them: intent on writing an engaged history of the present, Burgos-Debray failed to see the living force of the past in Menchú's culture.

It was perhaps inevitable that in shaping her life story for outside consumption a twenty-three-year-old, exiled from her shattered village and her lost homeland, would romanticize her childhood and would foreshorten the actual historical and cultural dynamics that were occurring as she grew up. At that point in her life, trying to make sense of her radically disorienting experiences, Rigoberta Menchú presented Burgos-Debray with a shifting and unstable cultural history, part Rousseauian idyll, part Manichean dystopia, in which unchanging ancestral wisdom is constantly opposed to the oppressive demands of the encroaching mixed-race ladinos, whose culture is diametrically opposed to Mayan culture in every way. In presenting this complex of views, Menchú systematically downplays conflicts within the Mayan community and passes over the many ways in which Mayans and ladinos have developed in a fraught but dynamic relation to one another over the past five hundred years.

As she describes her culture, Menchú paints a remarkably ideal picture of pre-Conquest Mayan life: "Children haven't always died young. Our forefathers told us that our old people used to live until they were a hundred and twenty-five, and now we die at thirty or forty" (68); "Many of our race now know how to kill. The whites are responsible for this" (69). Even in the present, she prefers not to dwell on conflict within her own community. Discussing the village's treatment of boys and girls, for example, she worries round the topic without wanting to draw the conclusions her own examples clearly suggest:

When a male child is born, there are special celebrations, not because he's male but because of all the hard work and responsibility he'll have as a man. It's not that machismo doesn't exist among our people, but it doesn't present a problem for the community because it's so much a part of our way of

life. . . . Boys are given more, they get more food because their work is harder and they have more responsibility. At the same time, he is head of the household, not in the bad sense of the word, but because he is responsible for so many things. This doesn't mean girls aren't valued. . . . Nevertheless, the community is always happier when a male child is born and the men feel much prouder. (14)

While Menchú plays down conflict within her community, she often exaggerates the differences between Mayans and ladinos. She is not alone in doing this. John Hawkins has argued in his book *Inverse Images: The Meaning of Culture, Ethnicity and Family in Postcolonial Guatemala* that contemporary Mayan and ladino Guatemalans tend to see themselves as members of two separate cultures, each defined programmatically as the inversion of the other—with the dominant ladinos typically taking possession of the more desired trait in every opposition. In Hawkins's view, this is not two cultures at all but a single, interdependent cultural system, in which ladinos “are” literate, Spanish-speaking, Westernized city dwellers, and Mayans “are” illiterate, non-Spanish-speaking, non-Westernized country dwellers. Each group clings to these self-images, which continue to seem like the underlying truth even though many ladinos are in fact rural farmers and some Indians are educated city dwellers. Menchú's account shows many instances of this kind of self-reinforcing cultural differentiation. Though she lived for several years in Guatemala City, she never felt at home there—and never felt she *should* feel at home there: “The city for me was a monster, something alien, different. ‘Those houses, those people,’ I thought, ‘this is the world of the ladinos.’ For me it was the world of the ladinos. We were different” (32).

All in all, it is not surprising that the young Rigoberta Menchú would play out these deep-seated though partly fictive paradigms in her talks with Elizabeth Burgos-Debray. What is remarkable is that, far from making any effort to tease out the contradictions in Menchú's cultural self-understanding, Burgos-Debray herself went well beyond Menchú in elaborating the image of timeless native wisdom unaffected by Western culture. Thus, in dividing the taped material into chapters, Burgos-Debray chose epigraphs for each chapter, many taken from the *Popol Vuh*, the classic Mayan story of creation and early history. This is, however, a text that Menchú herself never mentions and seems never to have seen. The sacred text that she does refer to, frequently, is the Bible—naturally enough, as she was raised as a devout Christian, and like her father she became a catechist, instructing children in Catholic doctrine and leading Bible study groups in her village. In her introduction, however, Burgos-Debray raises Menchú's use of the Bible only to minimize it: “Rigoberta borrows such things as the Bible, trade union organization and the Spanish language in order to use them against the original owner. For her the Bible is a sort of ersatz which she uses precisely because there is nothing like it in her culture” (xvii).

The problem with Burgos-Debray's statement is that it denies the plain fact that the Bible *is* an important part of Menchú's culture, though to recognize this would be to allow for a serious interplay with ladino culture. Instead, the quotations that Burgos-Debray imports from the *Popol Vuh* emphasize an eternal native truth, as in the epigraph to the first chapter: “We have always lived here: we have a right to go on living where we are happy and where we want to die. Only here can we feel whole; nowhere else would we ever feel complete and our pain would be eternal” (1). Similarly, a chapter on marriage ceremonies begins with

this epigraph: “Children, wherever you may be, do not abandon the crafts taught to you by Ixpiyacoc, because they are crafts passed down to you from your forefathers. If you forget them, you will be betraying your lineage” (59). Yet a close reading of Menchú’s actual account shows a very different picture: the very customs she now identifies as the timeless wisdom of her ancestors have been profoundly influenced by centuries of Christian belief and practice. Not only have the Maya long acceded to the missionaries’ key demands (abandoning human sacrifice, accepting baptism for their children, attending Mass, and celebrating the major saints’ days); they have actually adopted the Bible’s history as a model for their own. As Menchú says:

A lot of it is familiar. For example, we believe we have ancestors, and that these ancestors are important because they’re good people who obeyed the laws of our people. The Bible talks about forefathers too. So it is not something unfamiliar to us. We accept these Biblical forefathers as if they were our own ancestors, while still keeping within our own culture and our own customs. (80)

This assimilation to biblical models is no new phenomenon, no ad hoc adoption of an “ersatz” that can be erased in favor of the “real” story of an ongoing separate, chthonic identity. One of the earliest surviving Quiché Mayan texts, the *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*, was written in 1554 some seventy-five miles southwest of Menchú’s village. The authors of this document recount the history of the Quiché as a way of legitimating their claims to their land. They begin by describing how the Quiché were led from over the sea by the founder of their culture, Balam-Quitze: “When they arrived at the edge of the sea, Balam-Quitze touched it with his staff and at once a path opened, which then closed up again, for thus the great God wished it to be done, because they were sons of Abraham and Jacob

Clearly aware of the Conquistadors’ speculation that the remarkably sophisticated native population might be the lost tribes of Israel, the Lords of Totonicapán embrace this history, assimilating Moses to Balam-Quitze, who goes the Bible one better by leading his entire people—thirteen tribes in all—safely across the sea to the new world, where he then ratifies a covenant with them by the side of a sacred mountain, giving them permanent possession of their promised land. (171-72)

The Mayan uses of biblical models shouldn’t be thought of as some passive, unthinking “syncretism,” a term increasingly disfavored by people who study modern Mayan culture. Instead, both the Lords of Totonicapán and Rigoberta Menchú engage in an active process of selecting and reworking elements that will be useful to them, in a process that Barbara Tedlock has described as involving a “complementary dualism” in which opposed elements are given interlinked functions and made to coexist (*Time and the Highland Maya* 4, 44). Interestingly, while Menchú opposes cultural mixing in other aspects of life, she speaks positively of mixtures in the case of religion: “Catholic Action is like another element which can merge with the elements which already exist within Indian culture. . . . This is where you see the mixture of Catholicism and our own culture. We feel very Catholic because we believe in the Catholic religion but, at the same time, we feel very Indian, proud of our ancestors” (80-81).

The point isn’t that contemporary Mayan culture as a whole has effectively abandoned pre-Columbian religious beliefs and practices. The point is rather that Mayan culture “as a whole” is made up of many different strands, even within a single group like the Quiché and even in a single village, where different peo-

ple may hold very different beliefs. Taking Menchú out of history, Burgos-Debray suspended her own critical judgment of the real complexity of present-day Mayan culture, creating Menchú as a romanticized figure of timeless native authenticity all too compatible with the very racial stereotypes that Menchú's life and work explode.

As the example of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* indicates, even a very contemporary "window on the world" may best be understood in its engagement with the past as much as with its present interlocutors. In Menchú's case, that past includes both earlier Mayan texts and that foundational Western classic the Bible. Our self-interest as scholars is that by attending to this multiple, multitemporal conversation, we can do better justice to our texts—and save ourselves significant scholarly embarrassment as well.

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There has been a steady drift toward the modern throughout the past two hundred years of scholarly activity, and yet the predominance of the contemporary in recent ACLA meetings goes well beyond the general trend. Indeed, it goes well beyond the period distribution of the prizes that ACLA is awarding this year for excellence in scholarly work; most of this year's prizes have gone to work based in earlier periods. Perhaps the very strength of our conference structure has contributed to this disjunction: with most sessions taking the form of two- and three-day seminars, often organized by a nucleus of participants with mutual interests, a small-group dynamic may have arisen that slowly, steadily tilts the balance. We may have reached a point where people working in earlier periods simply don't often think of coming to our meetings. Have we as an organization condemned ourselves to choose between breadth and depth?

Conferences help define the leading edge of work in a field, and what we talk about at our meetings today may be what is taught on our campuses a decade from now. So if the problem I've identified is a real one, it is important for us to address it in our conferences, lest our association become irrelevant to a substantial number of comparatists—or lest work in earlier periods becomes irrelevant to comparative literature as a field. I've suggested that our seminar system may have contributed to this situation, but I also believe that this problem can be addressed in our conferences by a better use of our seminar structure itself. Three basic means can be used to re-open a serious temporal range in our sessions. First, we can challenge ourselves as individuals to widen our historical field of vision, as is often the case currently in the minority of papers based in earlier periods, as well as in such papers as Kathleen Komar's "Klytemnaestra's Daughters in the 1990s." Second, the limitations of individual capacity can be addressed by soliciting more collaborative work. As Henry Remak already argued forty-three years ago, "the more extended nature of Comparative Literature demands that we consider the feasibility of joint enterprises even more seriously and urgently . . . whether we like it or not" ("Comparative Literature at the Crossroads" 25). Though our overall seminar structure is strongly collaborative, our individual papers continue to be written and presented almost exclusively by individuals. As conference organizers and as participants, we need to emphasize the scholarly advantages, and the pleasures, of collaborative work.

Third, we can take much greater advantage of the collaborative possibilities of our seminar structure as a whole. Certainly seminars can work well when they bring together a dozen people with a common interest in, say, Latin American film or early modern sonnet sequences, yet when the overwhelming majority of sessions have such a singular period focus, the result may reinforce a pattern of people talking only to those who already share their views and their general base of knowledge. A few sessions at this year's conference do actively work across the temporal divides I've been discussing, such as the pair of seminars directly titled "Crossing Historical Boundaries," and the ambitious session on "Renaissance as a Term and Theme beyond the European Early Modern Period," which includes materials in Chinese, Bengali, Arabic, Yiddish, and Irish. In this connection, we can also do more to link or pair sessions that can work together across time as well as space, opening up a greater range than the single-seminar format alone can provide.

Our conferences have grown rapidly in recent years along with the broadening global scope of our work, but there is no reason to accept a stark trade-off between breadth and depth. We now have the opportunity to deepen our dynamic engagement with differing times as well as places, invigorating our seminars with a new dimension of collaborative interaction, and seeing the past freshly from our broadened contemporary vantage point. A whole old world opens before us today.

David Damrosch

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ACLA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD TO HENRY H.H. REMAK

In presenting its first Lifetime Achievement Award to Henry H.H. Remak, the ACLA wishes to acknowledge Henry Remak's major contributions both to the ACLA—of which he is a founding member—and to the field of Comparative Literature for the past six decades and more. The electronic *MLA Bibliography* lists no fewer than 100 books and articles by Professor Remak, yet these only represent his more recent work, which goes back for decades before the bibliography begins, starting with his first articles in the late 1930s while still a graduate student at Indiana University. His articles of the 1990s continue to engage lifelong interests in comparative nationalism, as in his 1995 article “Il concetto di ‘nazionale’ nella letteratura comparata: Pro e contra,” and in the discipline as a whole: “Comparative Literature and Literary Theory: Will the Twain Ever Meet?” (1994); “El Futuro de la literatura comparada” (1998). From the start, Professor Remak's scholarship and award-winning teaching have been marked by deep learning and by theoretical and methodological sophistication, presented in a mode of good-humored, constructive polemic designed to wake up his students and keep his colleagues on their toes. The American Comparative Literature Association has benefitted greatly from his stimulating presence over many years, and we are pleased to take this opportunity to celebrate a scholarly life of exceptional and ongoing achievement.

David Damrosch
President

Margaret Higonnet
Vice President



An Invitation to Join the ACLA

Why join the ACLA?

- We keep you informed about the latest developments in the discipline and the profession through our journal, *Comparative Literature*, the *ACLA Bulletin* (in the summer issue of *CL*), our website, and emails to the membership.
- Our annual meetings are innovative, provocative and fun—and small enough that you get to know your colleagues. In 2004 we will meet in Ann Arbor. We also sponsor two panels and co-host a social event with the School of Criticism and Theory at the annual MLA meeting.
- We have an informative website at www.acla.org. It offers you and your students the opportunity to become involved and exchange ideas with other scholars in the field. Please let us know how the website can best meet your needs (info@acla.org).
- ACLA members receive a subscription to *Comparative Literature* and membership in the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA), which meets triennially in cities around the world (ICLA membership is optional for students); the next ICLA conference will be in Hong Kong. Members may also join the Southern Comparative Literature Association (SCLA) and receive *The Comparatist*, and may subscribe to additional comparative literature journals: *Comparative Literature Studies*, *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, *World Literature Today*, and *Symploke*.
- When you become a member, your name automatically goes into our computer database so that you will receive all email notices, calls for papers, announcements, and conference information. Stay informed!
- The ACLA is your professional organization, and we need your support and participation. Please consider joining us.

Please enter my membership in the ACLA for the calendar year 2004 (Jan-Dec).

- I enclose _____ \$50 for a one-year membership
Includes a subscription to CL and membership in ICLA
- _____ \$35 for a one-year student membership
Includes a subscription to CL and membership in ICLA
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Questions? Contact us at info@acla.org or 512-471-1925

**MLA ANNUAL MEETING
December 2003, San Diego
ACLA SESSIONS**

ACLA is sponsoring two panels at this year's MLA Convention in San Diego. If you will be attending the MLA in San Diego we hope that you will join us for these two comparative sessions as well as for our cash bar, shared with the School for Criticism and Theory. The topics, session organizers, and speakers are listed below. Please consult the MLA program for times and venues for all three of these ACLA-sponsored events.

Panel A.

“Comparative Literature in the New Millennium: Diagnosis, Therapy, Prognosis”
Chaired by Haun Saussy, Stanford University

This session will be a roundtable forum chaired by Haun Saussy, to present and discuss the draft ACLA Report on the Discipline, successor in formation to the Bernheimer Report. Members are warmly invited to come and contribute ideas and comments for the shape of the final report, which is to be presented at our annual meeting in Ann Arbor next spring.

Panel B.

“From the Old World to the Whole World: Anthologies Today”
Chaired by Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, University of Texas at Austin

This panel will bring together editors from several major world literature anthologies to discuss the changing curricular shape of the field and strategies for the future. The speakers and topics will be:

1. Mary Ann Caws (CUNY Graduate Center, general editor of *The HarperCollins World Reader*): “Words and Worlds”
2. Gary Harrison (University of New Mexico, co-editor of *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature*): “What Is World Literature?”
3. Sarah Lawall (University of Massachusetts, Amherst, general editor of *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*): “Reading the World”
4. David Damrosch (Columbia University, general editor of *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*): “What Isn't World Literature? Selection, Definition, Presentation”

We look forward to seeing you at both sessions.

CFP: ACLA ANNUAL MEETING 2004
“GLOBAL ETHNIC NETWORKS—OLD AND NEW”
15-18 April 2004, University of Michigan—Ann Arbor
Conference Website: <http://www.umich.edu/~acla>

We invite papers for the 2004 annual meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association to be held at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The theme of this year's meeting is “Global Ethnic Networks—Old and New.”

We are interested in seminars or individual papers that explore the convergence of ethnicity and globalism in pursuit of both strategic boundary-crossing as well as the theoretical connections central to the comparative method. We especially encourage seminars that focus on interdisciplinarity or premodern periods. Some interpretations of our theme include but are not limited to:

- **Hybrid Forms:** mixed and transitional genres, cross media, experimental writing, cloning, history of generic forms, comparative Americas, disability, satire, manuscript studies, contagion, forgeries, performance studies, translation, popular culture, disciplinarity, slang
- **Time and Counter-Time:** periodization and its others, fantasy, real-time media, chronologies, time-lag and speed, dreamwork, cross-historicization, spirituality, progress narratives, mythology, music and rhythm, opera
- **Gender and Sex:** sexual customs, human rights and gender, perversions, body politics, pleasure and desire, sex change, transnational lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, homosexuality and Islam, same-sex marriages, (de)criminalization of sexual behavior
- **Mechanical Reproduction:** print culture, science fiction, ancient seals, Chinese block prints, film studies, human genome project, publishing history, cyborgs, body art
- **Arrivals and Departures:** exile, forced emigration, migration as hospitality, reciprocity, postcolonial migration, arrivals and returns, expulsion, migrant travel literature, habitus and dress codes, religious differences, explorers, flaneurs, asylum, intellectual migratio
- **Market Culture:** nation emotions, tourism, exchange economies, politics of price, commemoration, consumer activism, gastronomy, fashion, kitsch, value
- **Identity Politics:** assimilation, symbiosis, collectivization, shifting subjectivities, cultural relativism, rupture, cultural identity and memory
- **Collecting:** travel and collecting, local museums, museums and nation-building, testimonies, exotica, souvenirs, surrealism, ethnographic objects, categorization, display, visual culture, exhibiting
- **Nation and Post-Nation:** community formation, cosmopolitanism, postcolonial colonial theory, ethnicities, diaspora

- **Violence and Silence:** trauma, life stories and autobiographic narratives, representations of ordeal and rupture, genocide, ethnic cleansing, narratives of recovery and pain, mourning and politics of resistance
- **Empire:** Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Ottoman, imperial endeavors, nostalgia, scientific explorations, cartography, travel literature, commercial exploration, Westernization reforms, isolation versus transformation, religion and empire, secularism, geopoetics

Proposals for 10-12 person panels (meeting 2 hours per day for 3 days) should be submitted online at the conference website or to the ACLA. Individual paper proposals should be submitted directly to panel organizers.

Deadline for Seminar Proposals: **August 25, 2003**

Deadline for Individual Abstracts: **October 1, 2003**

We will be happy to post proposed panel CFPs on the conference website but encourage you to advertise for participants to your session in other scholarly venues as well.

Travel funds are available for graduate students. Deadline for application for the graduate student travel funds is **February 23, 2004**. Please visit our graduate student page for more information.

For more information or questions, please contact the ACLA 2004 chair:

Professor Tobin Siebers
Program in Comparative Literature
2015 Tisch Hall
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003
acla2004@umich.edu

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

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE PRIZES FOR 2003

The Harry Levin Prize

The Harry Levin Prize, given in alternate years with the René Wellek Prize, is this country's most prestigious book award in the discipline of comparative literature. Those books eligible for the Levin Prize in 2003 emphasized literary history or criticism as opposed to theory; in the spirit of comparative literature, they are engaged with more than one national literature or with issues of literary study in general. Books published in the triennium 1999 to 2002 were considered for the Levin award, presented at the ACLA Annual Meeting (California State University–San Marcos) in April 2003.

The winner of the 2003 Harry Levin Prize was Julie Stone Peters (Columbia University) for her book *Theatre of the Book, 1480-1880: Print, Text and Performance in Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Honorable mentions were also awarded to: Gil Anidjar, *"Our Place in al-Andalus": Kabbalah, Philosophy, Literature in Arab Jewish Letters* (Stanford University Press, 2002); Ian Balfour, *The Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy* (Stanford University Press, 2002); John C. Shields, *The American Aeneas: Classical Origins of the American Self* (University of Tennessee Press, 2001). The full citation of the awards is printed in this issue of the *ACLA Bulletin*. The Prize Committee for 2002-2003 was: Haun Saussy (Stanford University), chair; David Ferris (University of Colorado at Boulder); and Lois Zamora (University of Houston).

Announcing the 2004 René Wellek Prize:

The Wellek Prize recognizes an outstanding work in the field of literary and cultural theory. Books in the triennium 2000-2003 will be considered for the 2004 Wellek award to be presented at the ACLA Annual Meeting (University of Michigan) in April 2004. The deadline for submissions for the 2004 Wellek Prize is December 31, 2003. Please consult the ACLA website for additional information about the prize competition at: <http://www.acla.org/levinandwellek.html>

The A. Owen Aldridge Prize

The A. Owen Aldridge prize is awarded to the best graduate student essay selected from a competition. *Comparative Literature Studies*, at the Pennsylvania State University Press, publishes this annual prize-paper. The winning article also carries a monetary prize. The purpose of this competition is to encourage and recognize excellence in scholarship among graduate students and to reward the highest achievement by publication. This project is sponsored by *Comparative*

Literature Studies in cooperation with the ACLA and supported by the Department of Comparative Literature at Penn State.

The winner of the 2003 A. Owen Aldridge prize was James Ramey (University of California–Berkeley) for his paper “Parasitism and Pale Fire’s Camouflage: The King-Bot, the Crown Jewels and the Man in the Brown Mackintosh.” The prize committee for 2002-03 was: Beatrice Hanssen (University of Georgia), chair; Lydia Liu (University of California–Berkeley); and Mary Ann Witt (North Carolina State University).

Graduate students are encouraged to submit a polished paper in English, approximately 15-20 pages long (double-spaced), following the MLA Style Manual (1985), prepared for anonymous evaluation. The deadline for the 2004 Aldridge prize competition is November 15, 2003. Further information on the Aldridge prize can be found at: <http://www.acla.org/aldridge.html>

The Charles Bernheimer Prize

Each department or program in Comparative Literature in North America may nominate one dissertation completed during the current year (for the 2004 competition, a dissertation completed by September 1, 2003). The ACLA expects that the majority of dissertations nominated have been written by students enrolled in Comparative Literature, but a department or program may nominate a dissertation by a student enrolled in another program if it judges this the best dissertation in comparative literature of the year. The sponsoring department or program must be a current member of the ACLA.

The winner of the 2003 Bernheimer Prize was Emily Wilson (Yale University Ph.D. 2002) for her dissertation entitled “‘Why do I Overlive?’ Greek, Latin, and English Tragic Survival.” The prize committee for 2003-04 is: Michael Palencia-Roth (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) and Sarah Lawall (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

To nominate a dissertation for the Bernheimer Prize, we ask you to notify the ACLA secretariat at info@acla.org of your nomination and to send copies of the dissertation directly to the judges. For the 2004 Bernheimer Prize copies must reach the judges by November 15, 2003. Further information on the Aldridge prize can be found at: <http://www.acla.org/bernheimer.html>

The Horst Frenz Prize

The Horst Frenz Prize is awarded to an outstanding paper presented by a graduate student at the annual meeting of the ACLA; the prize is awarded at the following year’s conference. The Horst Frenz Prize consists of a \$250 gift certificate for books, a \$250 travel grant to attend the following ACLA Conference to receive the award in person, and publication of the essay in the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*.

The winner of the 2003 Horst Frenz Prize was Lida Oukaderova (University of Texas at Austin) for her paper “Money, Translation and Subjectivity in Isaak Babel’s

‘Guy de Maupassant, ’” presented at the 2002 Annual Meeting in Puerto Rico. The jury for the ACLA 2003 Conference at California State University–San Marcos was: Margaret Higonnet (University of Connecticut), Eugene Eoyang (Lingnan University Hong Kong), and Kevin Larsen (University of Wyoming).

Nominations of papers are encouraged from all Association members who participated in the annual meeting. The deadline for nominations this year was May 1, 2003. Nominations (including name, paper title, e-mail, etc.) should be sent to Kathleen Komar, *komar@ucla.edu*. Further information on the Frenz prize can be found at: <http://www.acla.org/frenz.html>

2003 HARRY LEVIN CITATION

Julie Stone Peters (Columbia University), *Theatre of the Book, 1480-1880: Print, Text and Performance in Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Once, there were classical theatrical texts, and performance styles had to be reimagined, as happened in the Renaissance; later, there emerged hybrid recording media that flashed text and performance simultaneously before audiences; in between, the rival media of publishing and stage performance ceaselessly borrowed from each other, bickered, competed, and conspired, in a process that raised the stakes for both. Julie Stone Peters's *Theatre of the Book* traces the history of visual, verbal, and theatrical representation over four centuries with copious documentation, scholarly verve, and subtle interdisciplinary attention. At once a study in media theory, a philological and bibliophilic scrutiny of the transformation of plays into texts, and a genealogy of a number of leading themes in the formation of early-modern or modern sensibility, this rich book invites us to look at the "Gutenberg era" in new and non-exclusive ways.

Honorable mentions:

Gil Anidjar: *"Our Place in al-Andalus": Kabbalah, Philosophy, Literature in Arab Jewish Letters* (Stanford University Press, 2002). The great works of medieval Jewish "Spain" (to use the area's retrospective designation) happen between languages (Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew), between genres, between religions, and between eras (as many of them gained a further life through their twentieth-century readers). Anidjar's book brings to light the translated quality of this writing.

Ian Balfour's *The Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy* (Stanford University Press, 2002) brings to literary history the skills of close reading and a keenly philosophical consciousness. This study establishes the defining role of prophetic writing within the literary period that has done so much to define our critical modernity, and, in so doing, brings that period back to a reconsideration of its essential roots.

John C. Shields, in *The American Aeneas: Classical Origins of the American Self* (University of Tennessee Press, 2001), juxtaposes the mythography of the American Adam to a complementary (and heretofore occluded) tradition, which he refers to under the sign of the American Aeneas. This study breaks out of the "errand into the wilderness" model of early American literature, and thus recontextualizes and amplifies the comparative study of American literature up to the present.

Haun Saussy, Stanford University, Chair
Harry Levin Committee
American Comparative Literature Association

Other Committee Members:
David Ferris, University of Colorado at Boulder
Lois Zamora, University of Houston

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
January 1, 2002-December 31, 2002

ACCOUNTS

Alabama Credit Union Checking Account

Balance Forward	\$19,711.90
Expenses	- \$11,954.34
Income	\$25,585.25
Final Balance	\$ 0.00

Alabama Credit Union Savings Account

Balance Forward	\$ 701.34
Expenses	- \$ 10.00
Income	\$ 6.97
Final Balance	\$ 0.00

Alabama Credit Union Money Market Account

Balance Forward	\$53,604.32
Expenses	\$ 0.00
Income	\$ 541.66
Final Balance	\$ 0.00

2002 Conference in Puerto Rico

Balance Forward	\$ 0.00
Expenses	- \$ 3,934.00
Income	\$20,724.46
Final Balance	\$ 0.00

AM South Savings Account

Balance Forward	\$ 1,707.06
Expenses	\$ 0.00
Income	\$ 3.84
Final Balance	\$ 0.00

University Federal Credit Union (Austin, Texas)

Balance Forward	\$ 0.00
Expenses	- \$ 3.00
Income	\$ 129.09
Final Balance	\$ 0.00

Pershing Investment

Balance Forward	\$ 0.00
Expenses	\$ 0.00
Income	\$ 167.93
Final Balance	\$45,167.93

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (Continued)
January 1, 2002-December 31, 2002

University of Texas Account	
Balance Forward	\$ 0.00
Expenses	- \$17,323.82
Income	\$ 3,612.50
Final Balance	\$49,103.23
University of Texas Contribution	
Balance Forward	\$ 0.00
Expenses	- \$44,194.31
Income	\$44,194.31
Final Balance	\$ 0.00
EXPENDITURES	
Journal subscriptions	- \$12,712.50
ICLA yearly payment	- \$ 5,870.00
Prizes	\$ 0.00
Membership fees/dues	- \$ 940.00
Conferences	- \$ 6,731.39
Travel	\$ 0.00
Website	- \$ 1,020.20
Student subsidies	- \$ 4,030.36
Office expenses	- \$16,699.51
Refunds/Returned checks	- \$ 135.00
Bank/Credit Card fees	- \$ 455.14
Miscellaneous	- \$ 913.73
Office Staff	- \$27,911.64
EXPENDITURES	- \$77,419.47
	\$95,966.01
TOTAL INCOME (Membership + Conference + UT)	
BALANCE	\$18,546.54
TOTAL ASSETS	
Pershing Investment	\$45,167.93
UT Account	\$49,103.23
YEAREND BALANCE	\$94,271.16
INITIAL BALANCE	\$75,724.62
NET CHANGE	\$18,546.54

Respectfully submitted by Kevin Carney and Ryan Fisher
 ACLA Administrative Assistants