



Letter from the President

Dear ACLA community:

Greetings! I hope this letter finds you as well as possible in these strange times. And what a difficult 16 months we have had! While we had to cancel the 2020 conference and move the 2021 conference to the virtual platform, these 16 months have also challenged many of us in ways that serve to strengthen both our field and our community by confronting structural racism and settler colonialism in the U.S. in more immanent and visceral ways than ever before. Of course, the U.S. does not have a monopoly on structural racism and settler colonialism, and as comparatists who work with multiple languages, periods, and cultures, these times are also challenging us to consider the racial, indigenous, and settler colonial critique of cultures beyond the U.S. as part of an international call to decolonize the curriculum and to imagine an abolitionist university. American exceptionalism is something we comparatists have always implicitly resisted, but now this work is more imperative than ever, if only because racism and colonialism in one society is more often than not connected to global processes, as well as racism and colonialism elsewhere. This, to me, is an important part of what it means to consider comparative work as an ethical demand.

Part of the effort against American exceptionalism has been an attempt to internationalize at ACLA, which has been ongoing for several years. Since 2017,

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associations from around the world. This has resulted in several collaborative panels and seminars at our annual conferences from 2017 to 2021, including a seminar that I co-organized with past president Wail Hassan for the 2021 conference entitled “Geopolitics of Comparison around the World,” which involved scholars who are officers or members of various non-U.S. Comparative Literature associations.

As part of this ongoing internationalization effort, the 2022 ACLA annual conference will take place in Taipei, Taiwan, from June 15th to 18th, in collaboration with the Comparative Literature Association of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and a dedicated local organizing committee chaired by Professor Joan Chang of National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). While I am excited about the NTNU venue, where Comparative Literature was first taught in Asia in the 1940s, and the return to the in-person format, I am also acutely aware of the ongoing pandemic and the economic and travel stresses it continues to exert. For this reason, we have increased travel grants and reduced registration fees for graduate students and contingent faculty, and have created a contingency plan to move the conference to the virtual platform should it become necessary. Please help support students, contingent faculty, and other low-income faculty by responding to our new fund-raising campaign Support a Scholar (please see below). We appreciate and depend on your support.

Also as an ongoing effort to address structural racism and settler colonialism in the United States and beyond, I will convene a roundtable on “Decolonizing Comparative Literature” at the MLA convention in January 2022. I hope many of you will be able to attend.

Finally, even though the 2021 virtual conference was not conducive for networking and other more intangible gains of a physical conference, the good news is that the 2021 virtual conference was an overall success. It included 255 seminars and 13 special sessions, with a total of around 3000 participants. It was in fact one of the largest conferences ACLA has ever held. Please continue to support ACLA by proposing a seminar or submitting a paper for the 2022

Sincerely Yours,

Shu-mei Shih

ACLA President (2021-2022)

Support a Scholar

The ACLA is excited to announce [the new Support a Scholar fund](#), continuing our tradition of providing financial support for contingent faculty and graduate students who wish to attend the Annual Meeting.

[We welcome donations](#) to the Support a Scholar fund as we move towards the [2022 Annual Meeting in Taipei](#). These \$500 grants help support travel and accommodations for our most vulnerable members at a time when we see increasing cutbacks in university budgets and the effects of economic downturn during the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome contributions from friends of the ACLA in helping us to meet our goal of issuing 100 grants.

DONATE NOW

Changes to the René Wellek Prize

The ACLA Board is pleased to announce several changes to the René Wellek Prize guidelines, which take effect immediately. First of all, the ACLA Board had been considering over several years whether books published posthumously are eligible for prize consideration. It now affirms that such works *can* be considered and wishes to acknowledge the very book that motivated this decision, Gilberto Perez's *The Eloquent*

comparative film criticism :

Gilberto Perez's The Eloquent Screen: A Rhetoric of Film (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P 2019) begins by suggesting "it is time that we develop a rhetoric of film" beyond our customary critical practices. Adapting for the purpose Kenneth Burke's understanding of rhetoric, Perez argues that film's persuasiveness rests on the forms of identification it enables, forms both similar to and different from those of literary fictions. The book develops its theses by accretion through its patient, original, and often moving analyses of a range of works, classic and contemporary, from European, North American, and Asian cinemas. Piercing and provocative commentary on many films, from John Ford and Terrence Malick to Pedro Almodóvar, from Luis Buñuel to Alfred Hitchcock to Abbas Kiarostami, is framed by a vast range of critical and theoretical references. What Perez says of Burke and other theorists can thus apply to The Eloquent Screen itself: "Rhetoric deals in specifics. It is a theory of practice. Its generalizations particularize." Informing its exemplary interpretations of specific films is a lifetime's intimate study of the cinematographic image. Its readings convey a sense of joy not dissimilar to the delight Pérez's admired masters take in their productions.

Second, the Board announces that **two** Wellek Prizes will be awarded in 2022—one for a single- or co-authored monograph, and one for an edited essay collection. Further details are available at <https://www.acla.org/prize-awards/ren%C3%A9-wellek-prize>.

Announcements

- The ACLA's annual prize awards are open for submissions! [Click here](#) to read more about each prize and their guidelines.
- Is your ACLA membership expiring soon? [Check](#) your membership status and [renew](#) today!

- Congratulations to ACLA member Rishi Rajbhandari, 2020 recipient of the [Charles Bernheimer Prize](#), who has been awarded a [National Endowment for the Humanities grant](#) to write a book on the relationship between fiction and history in a selection of contemporary South Asian and Eastern African novels written in French and English.

In Memoriam

The ACLA marks with deep sadness the deaths of our esteemed colleagues in this period of great loss.

Christopher Larkosh, 1964-2020, Professor of Portuguese, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. Chair, Charles Bernheimer Prize, ACLA 2020.

- *Re-Engendering Translation: Transcultural Practice, Gender/Sexuality and the Politics of Alterity* ed. (London/New York: St. Jerome/Routledge, 2011).
- *Writing Spaces* (Kaohsiung: NSYSU Press, 2013).
- *KulturConfusão: German-Brazilian Interculturalities* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

<https://www.umassd.edu/cas/portuguese/faculty/christopher-larkosh/>

Qadri Ismail, 1961-2021, Prof of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature, English, and Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

- *Culture and Eurocentrism* (London: Rowman and Littlefield International, *Disruptions* Series, 2015).
- *Abiding by Sri Lanka: On Peace, Place and Postcoloniality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, *Public Worlds* Series, 2005).

<https://cla.umn.edu/english/news-events/news/memorial-professor-qadri-ismail>

Lauren Berlant, 1957–2021, George M. Pullman Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Chicago.

- *Reading Sedgwick*, ed. (Duke UP, 2019).
- *The Hundreds* (Duke UP, 2019), written with Kathleen Stewart
- *Sex, or the Unbearable*, with Lee Edelman (Duke UP, 2014).
- *Desire/Love* (Punctum, 2012).
- *Cruel Optimism* (Duke UP, 2011), 2012 René Wellek Prize, American Comparative Literature Association.
- *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Duke 2008).
- *Compassion*, ed. (Routledge, 2004).
- *Intimacy*, ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2001).
- *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. (Duke 1997).
- *The Black Public Sphere* (as editorial member of the Black Public Sphere Collective), UChicago 1997.
- *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (UChicago 1991).

<https://news.uchicago.edu/story/lauren-berlant-preeminent-literary-scholar-and-cultural-theorist-1957-2021>

In recognizing our colleagues here for their contributions to our field and to our community, we know that we have missed many. Please send us their names so that we may mark their passing.

Calls for Papers

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- [Call for papers](#) for *JAm It!* Issue #6, The Fractured States of America.
- [Call for papers](#) for *Kremenets Comparative Studies*, a journal aiming to unite philologists in order to exchange opinions on modern researches of literary and linguistic phenomena in a comparative aspect.
- [Call for papers](#) for *Literature and Medicine*, themed issue "Hunger and Waste."
- [Call for papers](#) on "Translation Theories of Translators" for *Chronotopos - a Journal of Translation History*, a multilingual, open access and peer-reviewed journal based at the University of Vienna's Centre for Translation Studies.
- [Call for papers](#) for the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Ecohumanism*.

To post a call for papers or job announcement to the ACLA website, email info@acla.org.

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