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René Wellek Prize 2023: Edited Collection

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Migrating Minds: Theories and Practices of Cultural Cosmopolitanism, edited by Didier Coste, Christina Kkona, and Nicoletta Pireddu

“What can and what should be the contributions of cultural and aesthetic experience, analysis, creation, and theory to a cosmopolitanism for this 21st century torn between globalization and a “war of civilizations” when the very survival of humankind and of the living planet is threatened by a tragic hubris at world scale?” This is the ambitious question that the volume *Migrating Minds Theories and Practices of Cultural Cosmopolitanism* explores with an eye to peripheral and less often discussed cosmopolitan traditions, the bridging of disciplinary lines between the humanities and the social sciences, and a sustained yet constructive critique of how and why the concept and its Eurocentric bias have come under attack in recent decades. Yet, the editors powerfully argue, the concept retains its relevance today because, at its roots, it remains genuinely concerned with cross-cultural human relationships. Around this core concern the editors of this expansive collection define a new understanding of cosmopolitanism for our times. Cosmopolitanism describes much more than a condition of mobility, rootlessness, or hybridity; instead, it is articulated in the essays as “a way of inhabiting the world that entails constant self-interrogation, creative interaction with other peoples, cultures, and languages, and a political sense of a justice always to come” that calls upon everyone’s sense of responsibility for its realization.

It is this sense of responsibility as scholars and practitioners of world and comparative literatures that deserves to be mentioned and warmly praised. Not only does the collection showcase comparative literature’s openness to a wide gamut of traditions of scholarship in multiple languages, but it also insists on how the declension of cosmopolitanism must be seen as plural and at times displaying a dynamic tension among its diverse instantiations. The openness of the approach, the legibility of the style, and the strong pedagogical concern animating the volume make *Migrating Minds* an outstanding intervention that shows the way forward for comparative literature in the twenty-first century as a field that has the courage to rethink its concepts and methods and assume its responsibility as a crucial player in the ethical training of future generations of students, scholars, and world citizens.

It is with great pleasure that we unanimously award the ACLA René Wellek Prize to Didier Coste, Christina Kkona, and Nicoletta Pireddu for their edited collection *Migrating Minds: Theories and Practices of Cultural Cosmopolitanism*.