Call for Papers:
“The Future of Nationalism”
2009 USC Comparative Literature Symposium
University of Southern California, Los Angeles
Friday, February 27, 2009

We now invite complete submissions for our annual symposium featuring guest speaker and respondent Naoki Sakai, professor of Comparative Literature and Asian Studies at Cornell University. Professor Sakai is the author of Translation and Subjectivity: On “Japan” and Cultural Nationalism. This 1997 book argues that national identity and cultural politics are in fact “all in translation.” Sakai maintains that discrete languages exist only in relation to other, “foreign” languages, and that both the proper and the foreign are effects of a particular assumption about the capacity of “translation” to transmit identical content across otherwise insurmountable differences. The book extends the argument to the subject of the nation and, specifically, to Japan and the West being configured as two distinct and opposing entities. Translation and Subjectivity, in addition to Deconstructing Nationality, co-edited by Professor Sakai, and recent publications of the book series Traces, all offer new ways of thinking about translation, colonialism, and comparative cultural critiques.

To speak today of nationalism, postnationalism, and transnationalism is to ask: how do these classifications determine behavior, perception and identification. There are more and more instances of multiple, conflicting, and even threatening definitions of nationalism and its expressions. With the rise of globalization, where is the future of nationalism heading?

The authors of the papers selected for the Symposium are expected to participate in all symposium events on February 27, 2009. The symposium schedule consists of a morning seminar, led by Professor Sakai. The three selected symposium papers will be posted online for everyone to read in advance of the seminar. It will begin with Professor Sakai’s response to the papers and then open to a discussion of their arguments in conjunction with his own published work. After a catered lunch, we will reconvene for a lecture by Professor Sakai on his current research. There will be a light reception afterwards in closing. The authors of the chosen papers are invited guests at the Comparative Literature graduate student dinner with Professor Sakai, later that evening.

Submissions should speak directly to our theme, “The Future of Nationalism.” Graduate and undergraduate students are invited to submit essays no longer than 15 pages, double-spaced. Three papers will be selected to feature subjects from different national and cultural traditions, and all should include the comparative analysis of literature or literary theory.

Possible topics may include:
- National borders: crossing, trespassing, and bridging
- Multicultural nationalisms
- Contested citizenship
- Internationalism and/or cosmopolitanism
- National translations, practices, and definitions
- Radical vs. traditional expressions of nationalism
- Gender and race in relation to nationalism
- National belonging and un-belonging, inclusion and exclusion
- The evolution and/or dissolution of the nation-state
- Multiethnic, multicultural, and multinational subjects blurring the definitions of nationalism, and thus the conception of nation.

Deadline:
Completed papers must be received by midnight, Sunday, January 11, 2009.

Please email all submissions as Microsoft Word attachments to Symposium Director, Allyson Salinger Ferrante at salinger@usc.edu

Please include with your submission:
- Name and school affiliation
- Email and postal addresses
- Telephone number

The selection of papers will be announced in late January 2009.

The USC Comparative Literature Symposium is an annual event organized by the department’s graduate students and funded by multiple USC College departments, centers, and the USC College Graduate Student Professionalization Initiative.