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Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak Receives Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award

The MLA's eighth Award for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement will be presented at the January 2018 convention to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, University Professor of Humanities at Columbia University and a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. Spivak was selected for the award by the Executive Council at the recommendation of the Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Review Committee and the Committee on Honors and Awards.

Spivak received her BA in English from Presidency College, Calcutta, and her MA and PhD from Cornell University. She has taught at the University of Iowa; the University of Texas, Austin; Emory University; and the University of Pittsburgh. She has been affiliated with Columbia University since 1991.

Spivak's work has been influential in a number of scholarly fields: postcolonial studies, international feminism, poststructuralist philosophies, critique of globalization, and attending to subalternity, as well as art and curatorial practices. Spivak first attracted acclaim for her translation of and magisterial preface to Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, published in 1976. Her preface was widely used as an introduction to the philosophy of deconstruction. Her landmark article "Can the Subaltern Speak?," first published in 1983, argued the necessity for establishing elite infrastructures so that subaltern resistance can be acknowledged. As Edward Said wrote, "She pioneered the study in literary theory of non-Western women and produced one of the earliest and most coherent accounts of that role available to us." Taking into account history, geography, and class, Spivak feminized and globalized deconstructionist literary theory. Among her major publications is *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999), in which she redefined and repositioned the postcolonial critic. Other publications include *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* and *Other Asias*. Spivak is also known for her translations of literary works by the writers Mahasweta Devi, Ram Prasad Sen, and Aimé Césaire. She received a Sahitya Akadami Award for translations from Bengali literature in 1997.

Spivak is an activist in feminist and ecological social movements and rural education. Since 1986, she has taught and trained teachers at five elementary schools established and funded by herself in West Bengal. In 1997, with money bequeathed to her by Lore Metzger of Emory University, she established the Pares Chandra and Sivani Chakravorty Memorial Foundation for Rural Education.

Spivak is the recipient of honorary degrees from the University of Toronto, the University of London, Oberlin College, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Rabin-dra Bharati University, Universidad Nacional de San Martín, the University of St. Andrews, Presidency University, Yale University, Universidad de Chile, and the University of Ghana-Legon. In 2012, she received the Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy and in 2013 was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Indian government.





Inside the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City

Exhibit Hall and MLA PubCentral

The exhibit hall will be in two locations in the New York Hilton Midtown (Rhineland Gallery, second floor, and Americas I, third floor). They can be accessed independently and will be connected by an escalator. Both locations will be located with easy access to the MLA registration and welcome center, convention sessions, members' lounge, MLA Career Center, and MLA PubCentral. Featuring nearly one hundred book publishers; academic journals; digital tools for research, writing, and teaching; and other services, the exhibit hall is the place to find the newest publications and products for classroom use and beyond. Connect with friends while you visit with editors, discover new books and authors, schedule a complimentary headshot, and sample a wide range of products and services during exhibit hall hours (5 and 6 January, 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.; 7 January, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.). The *Convention Daily* provides updates to all exhibit hall events, including receptions and book signings.

The MLA exhibit booth is located in MLA PubCentral and will be open during the exhibit hall hours. Shop for MLA products and receive a 30% discount on all MLA titles ordered at the booth. Spin our prize wheel for fun giveaways and extra discounts. Join us for a reception on 5 January at 4:30 p.m. to celebrate the release of our latest titles. Staff members from *MLA Commons*, *Humanities Commons*, and the *MLA Bibliography* will be available to meet with attendees, and you can peruse the 2017 MLA-prize-winning books to be honored at the MLA Awards Ceremony (6 January, 7:00 p.m., West Ballroom, New York Hilton Midtown). Please check the *Convention Daily* and the MLA Annual Convention *Twitter* feed (@MLAconvention) for up-to-date information.

Delegate Assembly Meeting

MLA members are invited to attend the meeting of the 2018 Delegate Assembly during the convention in New York. Members may speak to any of the items on the assembly's agenda. These items include regular staff and committee reports on association activities, special reports from the Ad Hoc Committee on Advocacy Policies and Procedures and the Elections Committee, proposed constitutional amendments, and proposals received from members, if any. (Note: Since the 1 October deadline for submitting motions and regular resolutions has passed, only emergency resolutions may be added to the assembly's agenda.) Documents related to these and other agenda items will be posted at the MLA Web site by mid-December (see www.mla.org/DA-Agenda).

The assembly meeting will begin at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, 6 January, in the East Ballroom of the New York Hilton Midtown. Because the assembly meeting is open-ended, even latecomers will have a chance to join in important discussions of association policies.

Honorary Fellows

Members are encouraged to submit suggestions for honorary fellows of the association. Honorary fellows are distinguished persons of letters of any nationality. The current rosters of honorary members and fellows can be found at the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/honorary_members).

Members who would like to recommend honorary fellows should refer to the instructions at www.mla.org/nominations_hon. (Note: The Executive Council is not currently accepting new suggestions for honorary members.)



When the Resolution Causes the Breach

[Social dramas consist of] breach, crisis, redress, and *either* reintegration or recognition of schism. . . . This breach is seen as the expression of a deeper division of interests and loyalties than appears on the surface. . . . The final phase consists . . . in the reintegration of the disturbed social group.

—Victor Turner, “Social Dramas and Stories about Them”

This past year has been difficult and at times heartbreaking. In addition to the attacks on public education throughout the pre-K–12 system, our universities are under siege. The government is pulling back on its obligation to education, as evidenced most recently when Betsy DeVos argued that “we’ve done a disservice to young people for many years by suggesting that the only path to success as adults is through a four-year college or university” (qtd. in Harris). Several campuses have become the scene of intense struggles to define and defend an open democratic space. What, for example, are the limits of free speech and who gets to decide what it means? The human and political costs of these new culture wars are staggering. The images of young white men holding torches and shouting racist and anti-Semitic taunts at the white-supremacist, neo-Nazi rally at the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, sent shock waves throughout the United States and the world. Shortly thereafter, the current administration targeted our students by rescinding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA. The economic costs are also enormous. The University of California, Berkeley, has allocated \$600,000 on security for an on-campus talk by a conservative political commentator (Yudof and Waltzer). The University of Florida spent a comparable amount on security costs surrounding a recent speech by a white supremacist. That money, arguably, could have been spent on financial aid for students and on the creation of more tenure-track faculty lines.

The escalating attacks have been compounded by the increasing devaluation of the humanities by some of our university leaders and administrators. Funding for the humanities dwindles, departments and tenure lines disappear, and precarious teaching positions become the norm as institutions strengthen STEM programs and majors that supposedly lead to jobs. The instrumentalist approach to education does not factor in the changing reality of the workplace—the job we train for today may not be the new kind of work we do tomorrow. Universities need to prepare students to think and express themselves clearly so that they can learn new things and then analyze and resolve challenges in their first, second, and third jobs.

We’re at a watershed moment in our liberal democracy. Are our educational institutions and our professional practices up to the task of defending and promoting the vital role of humanistic dialogue and education?

The MLA has not been exempt from the tensions and conflicts that define our social moment and our profession. Resolution 2017-1, whereby a majority of voting members opted not to endorse the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, revealed deep differences of opinion and turned many members against one another and against the MLA. Some argued that the MLA should not boycott academic institutions. Period. Some held to unconditional and nonnegotiable values of free speech. Others felt that the MLA could and should bring pressure to bear on educational systems that participate in oppressive political systems, whether it’s in the Israel-Palestine conflict or in the context of United States institutions that target DACA and international students. Some members felt the MLA should not involve itself in political matters, as if working and debating ideas in the public sphere were not in themselves political activities. The MLA has long provided a space within which these troubling debates and contestations take place.

More disheartening, however, is when our association mirrors the contentious larger public sphere so that we become opponents, antagonists, enemies even, rather than adversaries who can disagree and yet continue to work together. We are never going to agree, not at the MLA, not in the country. As Chantal Mouffe points out, “a well-functioning democracy calls for a confrontation of democratic political positions.” If this confrontation is missing, there’s a danger of its being replaced by “a confrontation of non-negotiable moral values or essentialist forms of identification” (7). The animosity that members feel extends to the institutions in which those debates take place. Social ruptures or breaches, according to the anthropologist Victor Turner, should ideally end in “reintegration” and resolution (149). Yet uneasy resolution, he understood, could provoke a new breach, as we saw with the outcome of Resolution 2017-1. Does the “fault” of the outcome lie with the MLA or with how MLA members, after years of lobbying and debate, decided to vote? After the vote, the Executive Council almost unanimously agreed that the prolonged process contributed, in part, to animosity provoked by the outcome. We are proposing a new decision-making process for members to vote on. When the proposal comes up for review next year, I encourage you to vote on whether these new procedures can help us handle our necessary conflicts less antagonistically.

(cont. on p. 4)

(cont. from p. 3)

My modest hope, as I leave the presidency in January, is that we use the size and clout of the MLA, and the spaces for debate the association offers, to focus on those arenas that unite us so that we can intervene in the urgent problems affecting our profession and our constituencies. Such action requires collective effort. And let's use the *MLA Action Network*, the OpEd Project workshop at the convention this January, and other tools the organization offers to help us develop our individual and collective skills so that we can more effectively voice our own opinions in the public sphere. There's a lot to do, and I am heartened by the belief that we are up to the task.

Diana Taylor

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Comment on this column at president.commonsonline.org.

Making Suggestions for Committee Appointments

This year the MLA Executive Council will make appointments to sixteen standing committees of the association. The council invites members to consider suggesting themselves or other members for one of the anticipated vacancies on the sixteen committees. Members' suggestions will be accepted at the Web site (www.mla.org/commsugg) from mid-November through early February. The Web page for suggestions provides information on the factors relevant to this new round of committee appointments. Because these factors change from year to year, suggestions made the previous year are not brought forward for the council's consideration. Members will therefore need to deposit new or updated suggestions after consulting the new Web listing of vacancies.

The council will be making appointments to fill these vacancies at its February 2018 meeting. Any questions about committee suggestions should be addressed to Carol Zuses at the MLA office (czuses@mla.org).

MLA Launches Advocacy Site

In September, the association launched the *MLA Action Network*, a Web site designed to connect members and humanities advocates to vital news, information, and resources for defending humanities education and supporting those who teach and study in our fields.

As humanities programs face increasing threats, the *MLA Action Network* offers a central location for supporters to get the news and tools they need to take action and for the broader public to learn about the issues. The *MLA Action Network* provides visitors with advocacy alerts; information about how philosophy, language, and literature help us understand our world; and opportunities to act in support of humanities education on the federal, state, and local levels.

The *MLA Action Network* connects visitors to stories about how humanities education shapes lives; investigates urgent workforce issues, including working conditions for the faculty members and graduate students that keep our education system running; and provides timely updates on government policies that impact our work. We encourage you to visit the site and to submit suggestions for news or resources you'd like to see highlighted. Find out more at action.mla.org.

Elections Committee Seeks Candidates

The MLA Elections Committee will meet on 26 January 2018 to begin the process of identifying candidates for the professional-issues and regional seats in the Delegate Assembly that will fall vacant when current delegates complete their terms. Those elected in 2018 will serve in the assembly from 7 January 2019 through the close of the January 2022 convention and must attend the meetings of the assembly in January 2020, January 2021, and January 2022.

The Elections Committee is charged not only with nominating candidates and overseeing the elections but also with ensuring that the various groups within the MLA find representation in the Delegate Assembly. Committee members are therefore interested in hearing from all MLA members who are willing to be candidates in next year's Delegate Assembly elections. Members who would like to be considered should write to the Elections Committee, c/o Carol Zuses, at the MLA office (czuses@mla.org).

The *MLA Newsletter* (ISSN 0160-5720) is published four times a year (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) by the Modern Language Association of America, 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434. The *MLA Newsletter* is edited by the executive director of the association, Paula M. Krebs. The managing editor is Anna S. A. Chang. The cost of an annual subscription is \$8. The subscription price is included in the dues of all members of the association. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. All news items and letters should be sent to the *MLA Newsletter* at the above address. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *MLA Newsletter*, 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434. MLA and the MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION are trademarks owned by the Modern Language Association of America.



We Are All Public Humanists

In the earliest days of the Modern Language Association, the focus of the convention and the association's publications was members' scholarly research. That remains, of course, at the heart of what we do. Advanced study in language, literature, writing, and cultural studies links our members across disciplinary specialization, genre, and historical period. But we have never been exclusively a scholarly association; the MLA has always also been a professional association.

The pedagogical insights in the *Approaches to Teaching* volumes have for many years complemented the extraordinary scholarship in *PMLA*, because most of us teach as well as research and write. *Profession* speaks to our members in their various roles as teachers, administrators,

and higher education professionals. The *MLA Action Network* addresses us as scholars who want to make change: to provide our administrations with resources to create better conditions for contingent faculty members, to help graduate students from Puerto Rico who want to keep up with their studies, or to lobby for state funding for higher education.

When you think of your professional self, what does that include? Teacher, scholar, writer, administrator? How does your professional self overlap with your self in your community? Do you bring your reader self to your news consumption, your writer self to activism or cultural work or the PTA? Your humanities training does not shut off when you leave the classroom or the archive. It informs your sense of the world beyond the text, or perhaps it makes the world a text.

We believe that humanities education makes it easier to see nuance, to smell when things are rotten, to hear the differences between lies and truth. And this is why we think it's worth promoting the value of studying the humanities, at all levels. We want our students to understand language and literature as a way to understand the world; we want them to value writing and performance and film and to understand how the skills and knowledge we get through the study of the humanities make us better readers, better consumers, better citizens, and, yes, better workers. It's not our business to prepare undergraduates for particular jobs. Instead, what we teach them prepares them for careers, for lives after graduation in which they

can put to use the subject area knowledge, the skills, and the values they learn in humanities classes. Humanities education prepares students to contribute to their communities, families, and workplaces, and as professional humanists we can approach that work from at least two sides. We can help our students become articulate about what their education has given them, and we can help those outside the university understand better the value of both undergraduate humanities education and advanced work in the humanities. We can, in short, become ambassadors for the humanities.

This year's convention invites you to do just that. It will include an OpEd Project workshop, training dozens of attendees to expand their scholarly writing and research skills to write for popular audiences. In addition, we are hosting twenty doctoral students from the United States and Canada who will learn through the Connected Academics project how their degrees are valuable in careers outside academe. Possible Futures, a career fair for new and mid-career professionals, allows convention attendees to talk with employers who respect and appreciate humanities doctorates.

We are offering more convention sessions on pedagogy and on professional development, and we are offering more professional development resources online and in print, for full-time and contingent faculty members and for nonacademic humanists. We are developing programming that helps departments make clear to their majors as well as to their communities and employers the value of humanities degrees.

The more we can talk to the world at large about what we do and why we do it, the clearer the value of our work will become. The more clearly we can demonstrate the value of humanities education, the more it will be valued by the public and our policy makers—and the harder it will be to dismiss it, to close language departments, to badmouth area studies degrees, to shed tenured positions in favor of per-course labor.

Come to the convention. Learn to advocate for what you do, what you teach, what you study. Write, attend meetings, talk. Today, especially, we all need to be public humanists.

Paula M. Krebs

Comment on this column at execdirector.commonsm.la.org.

Now Online

MLA 2018

Calls for Papers

MLA Action Network

The MLA Style Center

MLA Calendar





Flamingo, by Alexander Calder, Chicago

Deadlines for 2019 Convention in Chicago

Except where otherwise indicated, the deadline is the close of business on the date listed. For specific information, consult the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/conv_procedures). Please address all correspondence concerning committee sessions to Karin Bagnall (kbagnall@mla.org); forum sessions to Hagar Bermudez (hbermudez@mla.org); special sessions to Stacey Courtney (scourtney@mla.org); and allied organization sessions to Deirdre Henry (dhenry@mla.org).

late Nov. 2017	Session organizers may begin posting calls for papers for 2019 convention.
28 Feb. 2018	Deadline for submission of 2019 convention calls for papers. Any entity that plans to submit more than one session must submit at least one call for papers.
1 Apr.	Program copy deadline (including audiovisual equipment requests) for all convention sessions for 2019 convention
1 Apr.	Deadline for receipt of requests for waiver of membership requirements for participants in 2019 convention
1 Apr.	Deadline for Web submission of requests for audiovisual equipment for 2019 convention
7 Apr.	Deadline by which participants in 2019 convention must be listed on the MLA membership rolls
early June	Notification of Program Committee's decisions mailed to members who submitted proposals for special sessions and competitive sessions for 2019 convention
mid-July	Proofs of program copy and information on date, time, and place of 2019 convention sessions sent to organizers
late July	Deadline for receipt of corrections to proofs of program copy for the Sept. 2018 (Program) issue of <i>PMLA</i> for 2019 convention
late Aug.	Information on date, time, and place of the 2019 convention sessions to be sent by organizers to panelists
early Sept.	Early registration for MLA members opens for 2019 convention.
early Oct.	Early registration rates end. Regular registration opens for members and nonmembers for 2019 convention.
early Dec.	Regular registration deadline for 2019 convention
mid-Dec.	Hotel reservation deadline for 2019 convention
3–6 Jan. 2019	2019 MLA convention held in Chicago

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3. Paid Distribution outside the Mails including Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution outside USPS®	1,653	1,326
4. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	74	69
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4. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution outside the Mail	0	0
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Paula M. Krebs, Executive Director

Paul Lauter Receives ADE March Award

The ADE Executive Committee is delighted to name Paul Lauter the recipient of the twenty-sixth Francis Andrew March Award. He will receive the award at the MLA Annual Convention's awards ceremony in New York City on 6 January 2018. Lauter recently retired from Trinity College (Connecticut), where he was the Allan K. and Gwendolyn Miles Smith Professor of Literature and also served terms as di-

rector of American studies and chair of the English department. He has served as president of the American Studies Association and is the founding general editor of the influential *Heath Anthology of American Literature*, which powerfully redirected the field toward a more historicized, inclusive, and self-aware representation of the many voices and origins of American literature. He is also the author or editor of several books, including *From Walden Pond to Jurassic Park: Activism, Culture, and American Studies* and, most recently, *A History of American Working-Class Literature*. During 1964 and 1965 he worked in freedom schools in Mississippi and in Roosevelt University's Upward Bound program, and in 1967 he became director of the first community school project in the nation, at Adams-Morgan in Washington, DC. In 1972, he resumed his teaching career at the State University of New York, Old Westbury, an institution that especially served underrepresented

groups such as black and Latino students and older women. He was one of the founding editors of the Feminist Press and of the journal *Radical Teacher*. He has been a longtime and active member of the MLA, serving on the Delegate Assembly (1978–80), the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities (1988–91), the Joint Committee on Governance (1989), the Elections Committee (1998–99), and the ADE Executive Committee (2006–08). Lauter has forged a powerful complementarity between his social activism and his teaching, and he has been an ambassador for American studies around the world, having shared his expertise in more than twenty-five countries.

The Francis Andrew March Award was established by the ADE Executive Committee in 1984 to honor exceptional service to the profession of English. The award is named for Francis March (1823–1911), professor of English at Lafayette College and the first professor of English in America.

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Miriam A. Kazanjian Receives ADFL Award

The ADFL Executive Committee has awarded the twenty-second ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession to Miriam A. Kazanjian, an independent consultant with the Coalition for International Education, in Washington, DC. A specialist in international education, Kazanjian lobbies on policy issues and government relations that range from K–12 to higher education to careers and the professions. The Coalition for International Education is a group of over thirty national higher education organizations that she helped bring together in the 1990s and that she continues to guide. The coalition advocates for Department of Education programs and initiatives that promote global competence for students in the United States. Through the coalition, Kazanjian engages with professors and administrators, policy makers, private-sector officials, and the media about needs and capacities in international and foreign language education in the United States.

Kazanjian organized the first national research conference on HEA-Title VI / Fulbright-Hays at UCLA (1997) and was coeditor and contributing author to the conference's subsequent publication, *International Education in the New Global Era*. She organized two conferences that followed, at Duke University (2003) and at the College of William and Mary (2014). She has presented and published widely on federal education policy issues, including at the 2015 ADE-ADFL Summer Seminar East, in Arlington, Virginia. Kazanjian holds a BA in history and political science from the University of Rochester and an MPA from George Washington University, and she has studied Arabic, French, and Portuguese.

The award will be presented at the MLA Annual Convention's awards ceremony on 6 January 2018. Since 1994, the ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession has recognized eminent scholar-teachers who serve



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the profession in the larger community. Kazanjian is the first recipient of the award who serves the profession primarily through her lobbying efforts.

MLA Book Awards

Is your book eligible for an MLA book award? The MLA Committee on Honors and Awards invites authors and editors to compete for the association's publication prizes. There are eleven annual and fourteen biennial MLA prizes that honor outstanding work in languages, literatures, and interdisciplinary studies and in specific genres (e.g., translation, bibliography, letters, scholarly edition). For information on the individual prizes, their deadlines, and the application process, please visit the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/awards_competitions). You may also request detailed information on any MLA prize by contacting the programs office (646 576-5141; awards@mla.org).

New and Forthcoming MLA Titles

- *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Orhan Pamuk*
- *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Charles W. Chesnutt*
- *Approaches to Teaching the Writings of Emilia Pardo Bazán*

For complete information on these and other new titles, and to place orders, please visit www.mla.org/newtitles. MLA members receive a 30% discount on all titles. These MLA titles will also be available in e-book formats.

