



ALS-MLA

American Literature Section of the
Modern Language Association

Annual Report, 1995

Compiled by
Susan Belasco-Smith
University of Tulsa

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American Literature Section Officers, 1995**Chair:** William L. Andrews (U of Kansas)**Executive Coordinator:** Susan Belasco Smith (U of Tulsa)**Advisory Council:**

Elizabeth Ammons (Tufts U), 1993-95

Marjorie Perloff (Stanford U), 1993-95

Amy Ling (U of Wisconsin, Madison), 1994-96

Frances Smith Foster (U of California, San Diego), 1994-96

James Robert Payne (New Mexico State U), 1995-97

Priscilla Wald (U of Washington), 1995-97

1995 Division Chairs:

Cristanne Miller (Pomona College)

Rachel Blau DuPlessis (Temple U)

Jane D. Eberwein (Oakland U)

Andrea Lerner (California State U, Chico)

Barbara Packer (U of California, Los Angeles)

Cheryl A. Wall (Rutgers U)

Editorial Board, *American Literature*:

Cathy N. Davidson (Duke U), Co-Editor

Michael Moon (Duke U), Co-Editor

Susan Stanford Friedman (U of Wisconsin, Madison), 1995

Carla Mulford (Penn State U, University Park), 1995

Kenneth Roemer (U of Texas, Arlington), 1995

Ramón Saldivar (Stanford U), 1995

David L. Smith (Williams College), 1995

Michael Warner (Rutgers U, New Brunswick), 1995

Christopher Wilson (Boston College), 1995

June Howard (U of Michigan, Ann Arbor), 1996

Sarah Sherman (U of New Hampshire, Durham), 1996

Claudia Tate (George Washington U), 1996

Michael Awkward (U of Michigan), 1997

Joanne Dobson (Fordham U), 1997

Emory Elliott (U of California, Riverside), 1997

David L. Minter (Rice U), 1997

Dana D. Nelson (U of Kentucky), 1997

Nominating Committee:

Sandra Zagarell (Oberlin College), 1993-95

Cheryl Torsney (West Virginia U), 1994-96 (Chair)

Lora Romero (Stanford U), 1994-96

Foerster Prize Committee:

Lynn Keller (U of Wisconsin, Madison), Chair

Lee Mitchell (Princeton U)

Carla Peterson (U of Maryland, College Park)

Hubbell Award Committee:

Mary Ann Wimsatt (U of South Carolina), 1995 Chair

Nellie McKay (U of Wisconsin, Madison), 1996 Chair

John Seelye (U of Florida), 1997 Chair

Jackson Bryer (U of Maryland, College Park), 1998 Chair

Jonathan Arac (U of Pittsburgh), 1999 Chair

Eric Sundquist (U of California, Los Angeles), 2000 Chair

Financial Statement, 1 July 1995-30 June 1996**BEGINNING BALANCE**

Balance at Duke UP \$12,692.00

Balance at U of Tulsa \$3,527.68

INCOME

Membership Dues \$17,492.00

VPI&SU \$1,000.00

Luncheon \$1,725.00

TU supplement \$3,000.00

Royalties \$81.00

Total \$23,298.00

BALANCE AND INCOME \$39,517.68**EXPENDITURES**

Luncheon \$1,757.76

Hubbell Medal \$278.00

Office Expenses \$368.74

Copying \$2,339.88

Office supplies \$209.60

Postage \$279.08

Phone/fax/network \$259.00

ALS to members \$17,072.00

Canadian GST \$67.00

Duke UP to TU \$3,500.00

Bank Charges \$40.69

Total \$26,171.75

ENDING BALANCE \$13,345.93**Membership Statement**

Number of paid members

6/95 6/96

Individuals:

U.S.: 687 729

Foreign: 55 62

Total: 742 791

Student/Retired:

U.S.: 118 177

Foreign: 5 3

Total: 123 180

Total: 861 971

Note: This version of the 1995 Annual Report of the American Literature Section of the MLA differs from the one distributed in 1996 in format, pagination, and cover art. It was prepared specifically for downloading in the form of a pdf (page description format) file from the ALS-MLA website: <<http://www.duke.edu/web/dupress/ALS/index.html>>.

**Minutes of the Advisory Council Meeting,
27 December 1994**

The Advisory Council of the Modern Language Association's American Literature Section met on 27 December 1995, 7:00-8:15 p.m. in the Chicago Hilton. Professors Cathy Davidson, Michael Moon, Mary Ann Wimsatt, Priscilla Wald, Robert Payne, Jane D. Eberwein, Barbara Packer, Cheryl A. Wall, Cheryl Torseney, Gary Scharnhorst, Lynn Keller, Susan Belasco Smith (Executive Coordinator), and William Andrews (Chair) attended the meeting.

Following the call to order, Smith announced the results of this year's election: Chair, Linda Wagner-Martin; Advisory Council: Evan Carton and Sharon Harris; Editorial Board of *American Literature*, Michael Awkward, Joanne Dobson, Emory Elliott, David Minter, and Dana D. Nelson. Andrews announced his appointments during his term as chair: Steven Mailloux to the Nominating Committee; Eric Sundquist to the Hubbell Award Committee; and Lynn Keller, Lee Mitchell, and Carla Peterson to the 1995 Foerster Prize Committee. Smith expressed her gratitude to Paul Sorrentino, Executive Coordinator from 1991 to 1994.

Reports were given by Andrews (as outgoing chair), Davidson and Moon (for *American Literature*), Wimsatt (for the Hubbell Award Committee), Scharnhorst for *American Literary Scholarship*, and Keller (for the Foerster Award). The text of these and other reports appear in this *Annual Report*.

Under old business, the council approved the 1993 request by Davidson that she and Moon share the editorial responsibilities for *American Literature* as co-editors.

Under new business, Andrews led a discussion of the ALS Articles of Agreement and how to ensure smoother continuity for the administration of ALS. Andrews agreed to circulate his written proposals to Council members.

In other new business, the Council approved Smith's request to use a different format for the *Annual Report* in order to simplify production and cut expenses and mailing costs. In addition, the Council approved Smith's request that she look into establishing a home page for ALS at the University of Tulsa or another appropriate host university Web site.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Susan Belasco Smith
Executive Coordinator, ALS
University of Tulsa

American Literature Section Chair's Report for 1995

The first thing anyone in my position ought to report as Chair is his or her gratitude to all those who willingly gave of their time, experience, and expertise to keep the American Literature Section a going intellectual

concern in 1995. Special thanks go to Susan Belasco Smith, the Section's new Executive Coordinator, whose grace under pressure has been such that I never felt pressured, only graced, by her partnership this past year.

During 1995, my duties were those of previous Chairs of the American Literature Section: First, to establish topics and secure speakers for the two annual MLA sessions sponsored by the Section; second, to work with the Executive Coordinator of the Section to ensure that the standing committees for the Foerster Prize and the Hubbell Award did their tasks and that new nominations for the appropriate positions and committees of the Section were generated in a timely fashion; and third, to preside over the annual Section business meeting and luncheon. Because so many colleagues responded so generously, the 1995 program seems to have held up the high standards of those in the past.

In an attempt to create sessions as stimulating and well-attended as those fashioned by my predecessors as Chair of the Section, I put together two panels on the following topics: "Identity, Politics, and American Literature" and "Conflict and Consensus in American Literature Studies." Although these sessions did not take place during the traditional times reserved for ALS sessions (a glitch we have tried to ensure will not happen at MLA next year), attendance at both sessions was substantial. The discussion following "Conflict and Consensus in American Literature Studies" continued for a half-hour after the papers were delivered. My thanks go to those who participated in both of these sessions and those who attended.

Working with Susan Smith to keep the administration of the Section going has taught me two things. First, Susan's title, Executive Director, might well read: Executive *Disentangler* and Coordinator. The entanglements we have grappled with are not due to poor leadership or coordination in the past, but rather to what we both see as a committee structure and administrative system that is needlessly cumbersome and overly bureaucratized. In an attempt to streamline the system and make it possible for the Section to do the lion's share of its business at MLA rather than through phone calls, correspondence, and e-mailings, I have proposed some revisions of the Section's Articles of Organization, which have been approved by the Advisory Council and which will be submitted to the Section membership for a vote in the spring of 1996. An approval of these revisions will mean that future Chairs—and especially the Section's hard-working Executive Coordinator—will incur less busywork and expense in the pursuit of their duties.

Appreciating the opportunity to serve as Chair this past year, I wish my successor, Linda Wagner-Martin, and the Section success and smooth sailing in 1996.

William L. Andrews, ALS 1995 Chair
University of Kansas

The 1995 Jay B. Hubbell Award

Committee Report

The 1995 Jay B. Hubbell Award Committee consists of Professors Jonathan Arac, Jackson Bryer, Nellie McKay, John Seelye, and myself as chair. The committee's deliberations begin in the spring. Committee members decided, after discussion, to follow procedures established and affirmed in previous years and to consider only those nominees at or near the end of their careers as candidates for the award.

As the committee chair, I circulated the list of nominees from previous years, asked for additions to the list, and supplied in a letter to committee members some brief biographical information about each person on the list. The committee then engaged in two rounds of voting: the first, to establish the top five nominees; the second, to rank those nominees in descending order, with votes allocated from 5 to 1. The nominee with the most votes, and therefore the 1995 Hubbell Award recipient, is Professor Blanche H. Gelfant, the Robert E. Maxwell Professor of Arts and Sciences and Professor of English Emerita at Dartmouth College. After the voting was completed, I notified Professors Susan Belasco Smith and Paul Sorrentino, who are respectively the present and past Executive Coordinators of the American Literature Section, of the result. I sent a copy of the letter to Professor William L. Andrews, the 1995 chair of the Section's Advisory Council, and, somewhat later in the year, corresponded with Blanche H. Gelfant about information that should be included in the citation that traditionally accompanies the awarding of the Hubbell Medallion at the annual business luncheon of the American Literature Section at the MLA convention.

Mary Ann Wimsatt
University of South Carolina

Citation for Blanche H. Gelfant

Jay B. Hubbell, for whom the award presented today is named, led a remarkable group of scholars who in the 1920s established the professional study of American literature as distinct from that of British literature. A native of Virginia, Hubbell received his Ph.D. from Columbia University and then taught at many schools, among them Bethel College in Kentucky, Wake Forest University, and Southern Methodist University. Most of his career, however, was spent at Duke University, where he founded and edited the journal *American Literature*, which is still flourishing today. The Hubbell Award was established by the American Literature Section in 1964 to honor a scholar who has made significant lifetime contributions to the scholarly study of American literature. The 1995 Hubbell Committee consists of Professors Jonathan Arac, Jackson Bryer, Nellie McKay, John Seelye, and myself as chair. For the committee, I am delighted to announce that the recipient of this year's

Hubbell Award is Blanche H. Gelfant, Robert E. Maxwell Professor of Arts and Sciences and Professor of English Emerita at Dartmouth College.

In a brief citation, it is impossible to do justice to Professor Gelfant's career and outstanding accomplishments, so I must single out only a few matters for special comment. Professor Gelfant received her A.B. degree from Brooklyn College and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She has taught at many academic institutions, including Queens College, the University of Southern California, the State University of New York at Syracuse, and since 1972 at Dartmouth. She has held fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the American Association of University Women. She has also held a Mellon Fellowship at the Wellesley College Center for Research for Women. The breadth and perspicacity of Professor Gelfant's scholarship are legendary among students of American literature. Her books range from her pioneering study *The American City Novel* (1954) to *Women Writing in America: Voices in Collage* (1985) and *Cross-Cultural Reckonings: A Triptych of Russian, American, and Canadian Texts*, issued this year by Cambridge University Press. She has published articles and book chapters on such diverse authors as Jack Kerouac, Joan Didion, Emma Goldman, James T. Farrell, William Faulkner, John Dos Passos, Tillie Olsen, Margaret Mitchell, and Willa Cather.

Professor Gelfant's publications, whether on Dos Passos, Olsen, Farrell, Cather, or other authors, have consistently attracted perceptive and favorable critical response. *The American City Novel* is now almost routinely called a classic, indispensable study; "The Forgotten Reaping-Hook," an article on Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, is described as having "changed the course of criticism on the novel"; *Women Writing in America* is commended for its "sharp perspicacity" and "thorough knowledge"; and *Cross-Cultural Reckonings* is called "a highly innovative" experiment that "delivers on Professor Gelfant's past reputation." That Professor Gelfant is, in the words of a noted scholar, "one of our finest scholar-critics of twentieth-century American literature" confirms the fact that she remains a profound and challenging thinker who continues to deliver on her past reputation.

In order to prepare the citation, the Hubbell Committee chair customarily asks the recipient of the award for reflections on his or her career, humorous experiences along the way, and similar matters. Professor Gelfant and I have conducted an engaging correspondence on these and other counts. With wry amusement, Professor Gelfant describes one of her early experiences with the MLA office. "The first essay I submitted for publication," on John Dos Passos, "I sent to *PMLA*, thinking I might as well start at the top and work my way down. Some time after the submission, I received a brown envelope

obviously containing a manuscript” and assumed that “my essay was being rejected.” It turned out that the *PLMA* editor, apparently without taking note of the name of the essay’s author, recalled that “I had written about Dos Passos” in *The American City Novel* and had decided “I...seemed a likely person to read a manuscript on Dos Passos. I wrote a brief note saying that I strongly recommended publication, but that since I had written the essay in question, the editor would probably like to have another opinion.” The fortunate conclusion to this story is that the essay, after circulation among several readers, “was ultimately accepted without any suggestion for revision.” Not surprisingly, Professor Gelfant observes, “the incident ended up a laughing matter” in the MLA office for several years.

On a more serious note, Professor Gelfant in reflecting upon her career remarks that in scholarship, “I always hoped to evoke other critics to continue working on a writer or a theme that had inspired me. I like to write about texts that for some reason interest me, perhaps obsessively, and to say what I see, while acknowledging what other critics see.... My interest is not in arguing with critics (whom I read conscientiously) but rather in discerning complexities that make a story or a novel a work to wonder at or wonder about. I am critical of what I read, and I think I can see the strange, unmanageable, and aberrant aspects of a text and the lapses in a writer’s art and social sympathies. But to me the wonder is that the text remains hypnotic, and indelible, an enduring experience, even though I may be in profound disagreement with its social and political views.”

Professor Gelfant goes on to say, “I have loved being in the profession, teaching and writing and moving into new areas of interest. I have written what I wanted to write, although I could not always tell you why that was what I wanted. I have kept an idealism I have always had about a liberal education and its liberating effects. That’s out of style, and so were books and writers that interested me. I’ve seen the books come back into style, and perhaps the idealism will too.”

One of Professor Gelfant’s most recent, most sensitive reviewers says that “Blanche Gelfant has shaped an eloquent voice, at once critical and informed, personal and exploratory. It is a voice worth listening to as cross-cultural and multicultural studies gain momentum.” Her scholarship, the reviewer continues, can spur such studies “toward the kind of flexible, open-ended inquiry so successfully employed in *Cross-Cultural Reckonings*.”

For the past forty years, Blanche Gelfant has remained a scholar worth listening to on any subject she chooses to explore. Among many other qualities, it is for her eloquence, her perceptiveness, and the enormous range and breadth of her investigations into both classic and forgotten authors of American literary texts that the Hubbell Committee has selected her as the recipient of

the 1995 award. On behalf of the committee, I am pleased and proud to present the Jay B. Hubbell medallion to Blanche H. Gelfant.

Mary Ann Wimsatt
University of South Carolina

Hubbell Award Acceptance Speech: Blanche H. Gelfant

Thank you for your generous introduction. I am aware as I stand here of the distinguished colleagues who have been recipients of the Jay B. Hubbell Award. I am grateful to colleagues who find me worthy of the honor. To all of you here, and to all who could not be here, I wish to express heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

This occasion evokes musings over a lifetime of work that, in the replay of memory, seems a succession of beginnings. For whenever I finished a piece of writing, the final period mysteriously turned into the beginning of an ellipsis, of an empty space I felt I had to fill. So I found myself perpetually impelled to begin anew. Even now, I look forward to beginning new projects, to encountering new books, new ideas—to saying something different from what I now can say. For this reason, I find new literary and cultural theories clarifying rather than arcane, though in my work I have not clung to a single theoretical position, nor pursued a single critical idea or literary figure, nor prescribed a single mandate. As I look back now, I think I have seldom used the word *must*, as in *we must*, the fervent phrase that signals a certainty I have often admired but seldom attained. Indeed, I stand here bereft of mandates that would tell us with certainty what we must do. All I can say is that each of us must work in the way he or she thinks best, knowing that what seems best may be provisional, circumstantial, shaped by the contingencies of time, place, and personal predilection and, consequently, subject to change.

The one unchanging element in my life has been a capacity for interest. I have found reading interesting; I found teaching interesting; and I have always been intensely interested in what I was writing, even when I knew at the time that I was writing about held little interest for others. Often I thought my work would not be published. In 1971, what journal would publish an essay on redoubtable Willa Cather that had the word “sex” in the title? But I felt I *must* have that word there. I sent the essay to *American Literature*, and Arlin Turner, a gentleman and scholar, accepted it handsomely. “Sex” remained in the title, along with the word “forgotten,” a key word that, I confess, led straightaway to *we must*. For I was claiming that we must remember the disquieting realities of American history; that we betray the past when we forget, and begin to redeem it when we remember.

So I would like to remember three women with whom I wish I could share this award—Lila, Wilfrida, and Jean.

I met Lila, Wilfrida, and Jean at the University of Wisconsin, where we were graduate students working for our doctorates. These three became my special friends; two were at different times my roommates. None was in American literature, but no matter. Lila was studying under Ruth Wallerstein, explicating the esoterica of metaphysical poets. Jean was writing on Virginia Woolf, at that time considered too esoteric to be widely read. I admired Lila and Jean as brilliant and ambitious students. I thought their ideas wonderfully original, exciting. I believed their work would make their names known. But you would not recognize their names if I told them, though you would know the names of their husbands, successful professors of literature, sometime members of MLA. At Wisconsin, Lila, Wilfrida, and Jean all married young men who were beginning their careers as students. I also married while in graduate school. We all helped our husbands in their studies and worked to support them financially. We all had children and cared for them ourselves, as we had to; we all cooked and cleaned. Meanwhile, the men finished their requirements and received their degrees. Jean and Wilfrida never finished. Lila did, many years later, but never wrote or made her name known.

I recall my three friends not to deplore what has been or to describe victims of a system. None of us thought herself victimized, either then or now. But all of us belonged to a past I want to remember in order to bring to mind cultural changes that, in a world troubled by divisiveness over race, religion, class, and gender, we may tend to forget. Today, brilliant young women can make their names known. Indeed, their names are known and respected, and valued as signifiers of social change. As we know, many today denounce change, warning that it is dangerous, a threat to values that have sustained American literature and American life. I realize that blanket advocacy can be as feckless as sweeping denunciation. So I am not saying that we must uniformly embrace change. But I want to acknowledge changes that have made a significant difference in people's lives and in the policies by which they are governed. *Policy*—it is a word I have learned to dread. For I have seen how policy, unlike courtesy, has opened the door for men and kept it closed to women. Years ago, when I was applying for a graduate fellowship, policy mandated that male students receive preferential treatment. Even though I had the better application, my chair explained, the fellowship had to go to Harry; I wonder who now knows his name. I learned of another policy when I applied elsewhere for a teaching position: here, I was told, the policy was simply to hire an inferior man over a superior woman.

But policy shares with life the capacity to change—or more precisely, individuals and groups working with ardor and vision can effect change. Changes in university policies, reflective of cultural, professional, and legal

changes, have distributed opportunities more evenly and widely among women and men and, however incompletely, among our diverse peoples. And changes in ways of thinking about all matters of human concern have enlivened the study of American literatures, now open to new and exciting interpretations. So I welcome change because it keeps us on the move, professionally, intellectually, morally. For myself, I favor temporary inhabitation, hotel life. I like to live intensely with a literary figure, a literary idea, a project, and then, after intimacy, to pay my bill, pack my intellectual baggage, and set off for new adventure in parts unknown.

At this point, no doubt, I should conclude with a resounding quotation from Tennyson's poem "Ulysses"—to strive, to seek, and all that. But I prefer plain words for the memories, hope, and inspiration stirred in me by this occasion. I am inspired by the Hubbell Medallion to a new beginning. I am hopeful that the future will open doors kept closed by custom and the contingencies of the historical times, and by policy. On the behalf of all those whom prejudice and policy still would shunt to the outside, I remember the women of my generation who aspired and tried and, in today's world, would have prevailed. In the wistful past that I can recall we all did what we thought we must. But the mandates have changed and, no doubt, will go on changing. I have, however, one naive concatenated mandate I would like to preserve and pass on. I find it sustaining. Love what you do, do what you love with a consuming interest, have fun, do good, and keep moving.

Blanche H. Gelfant
Dartmouth College

1995 Foerster Prize

This year's prize committee, composed of Lee Mitchell (Princeton U), Carla L. Peterson (U of Maryland), and myself, is pleased to award the Foerster Prize for the best essay in *American Literature* to Carla Kaplan, Assistant Professor at Yale University, for "The Erotics of Talk: 'That Oldest Human Longing' in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*." The essay appeared in the March 1995 issue.

Lee Mitchell describes the article as follows: "Carla Kaplan opens 'The Erotics of Talk' with a startling claim that seems to collapse distinctions between eros and talk—or rather, too neatly appears to equate conversation with ecstatic self-transcendence. Before one has time to protest, however, Kaplan nicely turns the tables, showing how the erotic scene of Janie's pear-tree 'revelation' stands not as lyrical gesture to an otherwise repressed sexuality but rather as the fulfillment of desire for self-transcendence imaged most urgently through Hurston's novel in terms of conversation, talk, narrating the self to another. Janie wants to find a listener, not a sexual partner, in a novel where public speech is everywhere rendered as 'meaningless nonsense.' The

ethos of reciprocity and equality so necessary to competent listening is rarely apparent, however, and Janie's refusal to speak in such limiting circumstances is less a resistance to narrative than it is an implicit celebration of the genuinely transformative 'erotics of talk.' Kaplan's triumph lies not simply in taking a novel we thought we knew and presenting it to us anew (showing how Janie's 'self-silencing' represents the rejection of a larger sentimental agenda that incorporates Hurston's novel as testament to communal reconciliation). Even more originally, she reveals the novel as part of a more radical strain in African-American fiction that challenges the reader to question his or her own capacity for 'listening,' and thereby rejects any easy romanticization of what it is one has learned."

This eloquent summary of the essay's multiple achievements requires little embellishment from Carla Peterson and myself. We would emphasize the nuanced way in which Kaplan qualifies and complicates her own insights, often by posing probing questions about what she has just claimed. She persuasively presents Hurston as at once privileging narration and questioning its social and personal value. Her argument depends not only upon brilliant analysis of the novel, but also upon positioning Hurston in relation to central aesthetic and political debates within the Harlem Renaissance. Noting that the novel's conversation between Janie and Pheoby takes place during the opening years of that movement, Kaplan demonstrates how its treatment of desire and voice—i.e., Hurston's bold representation of female desire, and her questioning of the efficacy of narrative and self-revelation—challenges available political models of African-American resistance.

By identifying the "oldest human longing—self-revelation" as the force shaping Janie's biography, this engaging essay dramatically revises received views of *Their Eyes were Watching God*. Additionally, the essay enhances understanding of the dilemmas faced by women writers in the Harlem Renaissance. Most importantly, it teaches us to bring a more skeptical perspective to literary works in which story-telling is said to establish community and in which we might be tempted to figure ourselves as ideal listeners. In the liveliness of its movement, the subtlety of its revelations, and the breadth of its achievements, "The Erotics of Talk" stood out among the many excellent articles appearing in *American Literature* this year.

Lynn Keller
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has completed the slate for 1996. The nominees are as follows:

Appointments:

ALS 1997 Chair: Susan K. Harris (Pennsylvania State U, University Park)

New Members of the *American Literature* Editorial Board:

Jay Clayton (Vanderbilt U)
Marianne DeKoven (Rutgers U)
Lee Edelman (Tufts U)
José E. Limón (U of Texas, San Antonio)
Timothy Sweet (West Virginia U)
Judith Fetterley (U of Albany, State U of New York)
Shirley Marchalonis (Pennsylvania State U, Berks)

Election:

Advisory Council:

Michael Bérubé (U of Illinois, Urbana)
Leland S. Person (Southern Illinois U)
Jeanne Pfaelzer (U of Delaware)
Gay Willenz (East Carolina U)

Submitted by

Cheryl Torsney, West Virginia University

Report on *American Literature*

1995 saw the publication of twenty-five essays in *American Literature*. Additionally, in the December issue we published a forum edited by Eric Sundquist, "American Literary History: The Next Century," a collection of papers originally presented at the American Literature Section division meetings at the 1994 MLA convention. We also published 143 book reviews and more "Brief Mentions" than we cared to count. The 1995 volume weighed in at 931 pages, a record, so far as we can tell.

Currently, the first guest edited special issue is in press. Edited by Sharon O'Brien, the March 1996 issue ("Write Now: American Literature in the 1980s and 1990s") features essays by and about contemporary writers. We are also gathering essays for a December 1996 special issue, "Unnatural Formations," edited by Michael Moon, and focusing on issues of sexuality.

After these two special issues, we will be mainly working to get our backlog under control. Even with a current rejection rate of over 95%, we still have a larger backlog than we would like. On the plus side, this means that we are very fortunate to be receiving excellent essays, far more than we can use. One sign of the quality of our submissions can be seen in *Subjects and Citizens: Nation, Race, and Gender from "Oronoko" to Anita Hill* (Duke University Press, Spring 1995), a collection of twenty essays from the last five years of *American Literature*.

Seven members of our Board of Editors will be leaving us this year, and we would like to extend our special thanks to them: Susan Stanford Friedman, Carla Mulford, Kenneth Roemer, Ramon Saldivar, David L. Smith, Michael Warner, and Christopher Wilson. They will be sorely missed.

Cathy N. Davidson
Michael Moon
Duke University

Report of the Committee on Scholarly Editions

As a standing committee of the MLA, the Committee on Scholarly Editions dates from September of 1976, and its charge remains that of promoting the highest standards of scholarly editing and of helping editors and publishers to present reliable texts in expertly prepared scholarly editions. The Committee seeks to provide services to all scholarly editors, whether veterans or neophytes in the field, in all the historical periods and languages served by the parent organization. Current members are William L. Andrews, Judith A. Calvert, Charles B. Faulhaber, Roberta Frank, Heather Jackson, Peter L. Shillingsburg, Mary B. Speer, Gary A. Stringer, and Elizabeth Witherell. Collectively, this membership includes an editor from a university press and scholars of American, English, French, and Spanish literature, whose periods of historical specialization range from medieval through the Renaissance to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and whose interests center in minority literatures as well as mainstream traditions.

What has traditionally been perceived as the CSE's primary function—the careful inspection and approval of editions that exhibit a high standard of textual scholarship—has remained an important part of the Committee's activities during this past year, and as of September 20th the Committee had awarded the "An Approved Edition" emblem to six volumes since our last report (Sept. 21, 1994). Reviews of five others, moreover, are at various stages of completion. In two additional cases, the committee has arranged for an experienced senior editor to serve as a formal consultant on an edition that is just being planned; and we have responded to a sizeable number of inquiries, many of which were apparently stimulated by the notice of the committee's services published in the Winter 1994 MLA *Newsletter*. A list of these inspections, consultations, and inquiries appears at the end of this report.

As in the past, the CSE sponsored two sessions at the annual MLA convention. The 1994 sessions in San Diego both dealt with the topic of electronic editions, and both were attended by more than 100 people. The sessions on copyright and on authorship and intentionally that we have organized for the 1995 meeting in Chicago similarly promise to be of interest to a large number of MLA members. The committee's interest in the impact of new technology on our field is further reflected in the fact that for the past two years committee member Peter Shillingsburg, through facilities at Mississippi State University, had maintained an Internet discussion group on the subject of electronic scholarly editions. Using information gleaned from this and other sources, we have begun to draft for electronic editions guidelines that will parallel those we have developed for printed editions. We hope to finalize these new guidelines over the course of the next year.

We are pleased to report that two programs initiated by the committee and authorized by the council in recent years are now operating smoothly, and we believe each of these significantly enhances the Association's support of scholarly editing. (1) MLA funding for CSE inspections became available as of September 1994, and three of the inspections listed below are eligible for—or have availed themselves of—this support. Editions that had previously arranged agency or publisher's funds to pay for inspections and those that applied before the MLA program went into effect have not been funded by this new program, but the program will no doubt expand as more editors learn of its availability. For the present, it seems advisable the MLA funds budgeted for this program be kept at the current level until it becomes clear what the normal demand is likely to be. (2) The program to award a biennial MLA prize for a scholarly edition is in place, and the first award will be made at the 1995 MLA convention in Chicago. At our September meeting Richard Brod, MLA Director of Special Programs, reported that 29 editions from 20 presses were nominated for the initial prize and that the process of selecting the first winner had gone smoothly. After reviewing a list of the volumes that had been entered in the first competition, the committee requested that Dr. Brod pursue through appropriate channels the possibility of publishing/announcing a "short list" of three to five runners up along with the name of the winner.

The committee looks forward to the publication in the coming months of the long-awaited MLA volume *Scholarly Editing*, a multi-disciplinary collection of essays on scholarly editing sponsored by the CSE and edited by former committee member D.C. Greetham. We also approved at our September meeting in New York a brief statement on the importance of scholarly editing that we hope to see published in a future issue of both the ADE and ADFL bulletins. Along with other manifestations of the Association's support for scholarly editing, including the recent establishment of the biennial prize, this statement is intended to benefit scholarly editors in their dealings with faculty committees and university administrators in the quest for tenure, promotion, and other kinds of professional advancement.

Volumes Approved, September 1994 to September 1995

William Wordsworth

Early Poems and Fragments, 1785—mid-1797. Vol. 18
The Cornell Wordsworth, Stephen M. Parrish, General
Editor

Editors: Jared Curtis and Carol Landon

Reviewer: Kenneth Johnston

Status: Approved August 29, 1995

James F. Cooper

Afloat and Ashore. In *The Writings of James Fenimore Cooper*, Kay S. House, Editor-in-Chief
 Editor: Tom Philbrick
 Reviewer: David Nordloh
 Status: Approved January 9, 1995

Mark Twain

Mark Twain's Letters, Volume 4: 1870-1871.
 In *The Works of Mark Twain*, Robert H. Hirst,
 General Editor
 Editors: Victor Fisher, Michael B. Frank, and Lin Salamo
 Reviewer: Noel Polk
 Status: Approved March 14, 1995

John Donne

The Epigrams, Epithalamions, Epitaphs, Inscriptions, and Miscellaneous Poems. Vol. 8
The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne; Gary A. Stringer, General Editor
 Editors: Ted-Larry Pebworth, Gary A. Stringer, and Ernest W. Sullivan
 Reviewer: T. H. Howard-Hill
 Status: Approved April 13, 1995

William James

William and Henry, 1854-77. Vol. 4
The Correspondence of William James
 Editors: Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berleley
 Reviewer: Robert Sattlemeyer
 Status: Approved October 20, 1994

Charles of Orleans

Fortunes Stabilnes
 Editor: Mary Jo Arn
 Reviewer: John H. Fisher
 Status: Approved February 27, 1995 (2nd ballot)

Reviews Pending (as of 9/20/95)**Luis Velez de Guevara**

The Plays of Velez de Guevara (twelve vols.), vol. 1
 Editor: George C. Peale
 Reviewer: Michael McGaha
 Status: Committee voted to defer (July 24, 1992);
 correspondence with the editor during the fall of 1992; awaiting further response from editor

James F. Cooper

Die Heidenmauer
The Writings of James Fenimore Cooper

Editor: Ernest K. Redekop and James P. Elliott
 (Kay S. House, Editor-in-Chief of the edition)
 Reviewer: Ralph Orth
 Status: review underway

William Wordsworth

Translations from Chaucer and Virgil. Vol. 17
The Cornell Wordsworth
 Editors: Bruce Graver, Stephen M. Parrish et al.
 Reviewer: Paul Sheats
 Status: balloting

Henry D. Thoreau

Journal, 5.
The Writings (Elizabeth Witherell, Gen. Ed.)
 Editor: Patrick O'Connell
 Reviewer: Susan Rosowski
 Status: review underway

Willa Cather

A Lost Lady
The Nebraska Cather Edition.
 Editor: Susan Rosowski
 Reviewer: James West
 Status: review underway

Sealed Volumes Recently Published

English Traits. Vol. 5 of *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Harvard UP, 1994)
The Anniversaries and the Epicedes and Obsequies. Vol. 6 of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* (Indiana UP, 1995)
 George Herbert, *The Temple: The Bodleian Manuscript* (MRTS, 1995).
Roughing It. Vol. 2 of *The Works of Mark Twain* (University of Calif. Press, 1993; supercedes 1972 edition of same work).
My Antonia. Vol. 2 of the *Willa Cather Scholarly Edition*. (U of Nebraska P, 1994).

Recent Inquiries

(Several of these queries initially came in to the MLA offices in New York and were forwarded to the Chair of the CSE, who then sought to help the inquirers by sending the Committee's brochures, guiding questions, and any other advice or guidance that could be mustered.)

David Clark, requested information on editing Yeats plays for The Collected Edition Alex Pettit, requested information on editing DeFoe Leslie Z. Morgan, requested information on editing ms. Marc. Fr 13 (the *Geste Franco*) Bruce Mills, requested information on editing "a nineteenth-century essay collection" Ramsay

McCullen, requested information on editing the correspondence of “totally unknown woman artists of the early Republic” Ann O’Donnell, requested information on editing Thomas More Jonathan Gross, requested information on editing letters of Lady Melbourne Kenneth Price, requested information on editing Edith Wharton Jonathan Eller (Pierce edition), requested list of approved vols. April Alliston, requested information on editing Sophia Lee’s *The Recess*. Kenneth Stackhouse, requested information on editing a commedia by Hurtado de Mendoza Robin Majumdar, requested information on editing one of the following four works: Woolf’s *The Waves*, Wolfe’s *Look Homeward, Angel*, Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Rhys’s *Tigers are Better Looking*.

A Statement from the Committee on Scholarly Editions

Textual criticism and scholarly editing are fundamental to almost any kind of work in the humanistic disciplines, and training in these areas has traditionally been regarded as essential. Until fairly recently, the normal expectation was that a student’s philological training, often manifest in the presentation of a scholarly edition as a dissertation, would naturally lead to other critical studies, based on the historical, linguistic, cultural, and bibliographical research necessary to the completion of a successful edition. As the effort to achieve definitiveness in textual editing came to emphasize the technical (even the apparently mechanical) aspects of that training, however, and as changing critical dispensations successively brought to the fore first “close reading,” then a challenge to the presumed objectivity of “close reading,” then post-structuralist deferrals of meaning, then socialized, gendered, or personal critiques of texts, the supposed positivism of textual editing led many in the profession to see it as irrelevant or even inimical to criticism “proper.” This disturbing situation has frequently led to a devaluation of scholarly editing, and it is widely the case that textual work is not accorded the same worth as other kinds of publication. In hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, “That’s not a ‘real’ book!” is all too often the institutional response to the scholar who presents a critical edition as a major publication.

The CSE is concerned that academic institutions properly appreciate the partnership of criticism with scholarship that is fundamental to the construction of a scholarly edition. From their different ideological perspectives, such textual theorists and practitioners as Jerome J. McGann, G. Thomas Tanselle, and Peter L. Shillingsburg have long insisted that the word “criticism” in the phrase “textual criticism” constitutes a serious claim, just as Eugene Vinaver once pointed to the speculative and interrogative nature of “textual criticism” in suggesting that the phrase implies a “mistrust of texts.” Recent extensions of this argument into textual theory have demonstrated that scholarly editing is as much a

part of its cultural milieu as is any other form of criticism and that it is just as plausible to posit a gendered or socialized or multi-cultural text or edition as it is to carry out projects of other sorts under these same ideological auspices. Indeed, the paradigms that govern some areas of the scholarly editor’s work (e.g., hypertext projects and electronic editions) may even be epistemologically and procedurally in advance of those followed by most other critics. In other words, the scholarly edition and the textual thinking that goes into its construction are not “pre-hermeneutical”; rather, paradigmatically they enact a “hermeneutics of suspicion” and reflect the editor’s critical engagement with the source(s), the author(s), the textuality and ontology, the transmission (including authorial revision and reconceptualization), the material medium, and the social reception of a text. Each act that an editor undertakes—in transcription, collation, selection of copy-text, emendation, and annotation—represents one aspect of this critical engagement. It would be unfortunate if our young colleagues just entering the profession, especially those trained in the most recent methodologies, should somehow receive from their institutions the sub-textual message that work on “text” was not considered “real” criticism and was not to be given the academic recognition it deserves.

The MLA fully supports the claim that scholarly editing and textual criticism are genuinely hermeneutic activities and requests that institutional appointment, tenure, and promotion committees give due recognition to the “criticism” that is inevitable in the successful practice of these forms of scholarship.

Submitted for ALS by Gary Stringer, Chair, CSE, University of Southern Mississippi

American Literary Scholarship

ALS 1994, the 32nd annual volume in the series, is on schedule for publication in June 1996, with distribution of copies to dues-paid members of the American Literature Section to follow promptly. The editor of this forthcoming volume is David J. Nordloh, Indiana U—Bloomington, who alternates in the task with Gary Scharnhorst, U of New Mexico, who is already commissioning chapter contributors for *ALS 1995*.

The co-editors have committed themselves to the reconfiguration of chapter coverage over the next few years. The changes to *ALS 1994* are a modest start. What had been “19th-Century Literature” is now two chapters, “Early-19th-Century Literature” and “Late 19th-Century Literature,” with the end of the Civil War roughly constituting the dividing line. Robert E Burkholder, The Pennsylvania State U, undertakes the former in its first appearance, and Laura E. Skandera-Trombley, State U of New York College at Potsdam, the latter. Two chapters in the traditional table of contents but missing last year

return: Martha Nell Smith, U of Maryland, will cover "Whitman and Dickinson" for both 1993 and 1994, after health problems prevented her from completing the chapter last year; and Christoph Irmscher, U of Bonn, discusses "German Contributions," a section of the "Foreign Scholarship" chapter which had been missing for several years.

Next year's changes will be modest, with the addition of "Spanish-Language Contributions" (treating both American literature in the Spanish language and Spanish-language scholarship) and the retitling of the "foreign" chapter as "Scholarship in Languages Other Than English." Antonio Marquez, U of New Mexico, will inaugurate the new chapter. Meantime, other chapters will change hands. Kent P. Ljungquist, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, will replace Benjamin F. Fisher temporarily in the "Poe" Chapter. John Samson, Texas Tech, will take over "Melville" from John Wenke, Salisbury State. Kenneth M Price, College of William and Mary, assumes "Whitman and Dickinson" from Martha Nell Smith. Alan Gribben, Auburn U at Montgomery, will contribute "Mark Twain," replacing Tom Quirk, U of Missouri. Lawrence J. Oliver, Texas A&M, Assumes "Late-19th-Century Literature" From Laura Skandera-Trombley. And Keiko Beppu, Kobe College, takes her turn at "Japanese Contributions," alternating with Hiroko Sato, Tokyo Woman's Christian U. The co-editors and Duke University Press have also agreed to revisions in the administration and production of the series. Contributors of chapters have always shared in the—need we say "modest"—royalties from commercial sales (that is, excluding copies distributed to Section members). Distribution of those royalties has been based on a complicated percentage arrangement that is dependent on the numbers and kinds of chapters. Because the numbers of chapters in particular has varied from year to year, determining the amounts has become even more complicated. Beginning with *ALS 1994*, editors and contributors will be paid a fixed one-time fee; the actual amounts roughly approximate actual royalties paid in the past. Besides this change in the royalty arrangement, the press and the editors have agreed to treat the production and distribution of *ALS* as if it were a journal, rather than continuing to treat it as a book. The chief difference lies in the greater ease of maintaining a continuing subscription list: rather than having to solicit individual orders from an open mailing list, the press can more simply offer a "renewal" to purchasers of past volumes. The system is particularly convenient for university libraries, the principal group of purchasers. Finally, the editors have enthusiastically accepted the advice of both the press—coherent with its internal treatment of *ALS* as similar to a journal in its continuity—and the advisory board of the American Literature Section to create an advisory board to assist them with long-range planning and with other issues

arising in the ordinary business of the series.

ALS editors and contributors are as always grateful to publishers for their generosity in supplying review copies, to Terence Ford and his staff in the MLA's Center for Bibliographic Services for a preprint of the Annual Bibliography, and to scholars for supplying offprints to assure that our volumes capture what print and electronic bibliographies sometimes do not. All materials for *ALS*, no matter to which year of coverage they pertain, can be directed to David J. Nordloh, Department of English, Indiana U, Bloomington, IN 47405; notices of publication can all be submitted over the Internet: nordloh@indiana.edu.

Respectfully submitted,
David J. Nordloh

1995 MLA Convention Program—Submitted Division Reports and Abstracts of Papers Presented

I. Division on American Literature to 1800

Report of the Executive Committee of the Division of American Literature to 1800

The Executive Committee of the Division on American Literature to 1800 met in Jane Eberwein's room at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Friday, December 29, at 9:30 a.m. Present were Jane Eberwein (chair), Frank Shuffelton, Phillip Richards, and Jay Fliegelman. Absent with apologies were Carla Mulford, Janice Knight, and Philip Gura. The chair reported on her conversations with absent members.

The meeting began with Eberwein's welcome to Jay Fliegelman as our newly elected member along with commendation of Carla Mulford for her admirable leadership and continuing help. Eberwein also reported on the general health of this Division. Last year's three sessions on the overall theme of "The Uses of History" turned out to be both stimulating and well attended, and the volume and quality of proposals submitted for this year's programs on the general theme of "Selves and Spiritualities in Early American Literatures" demonstrates continued interest in our Division's work. Before turning to scheduled business, Eberwein then reported on developments at the previous Business Meeting of the American Literature Section.

Most of the meeting was devoted to nominating candidates for various kinds of divisional service. For the Executive Committee ballot, two lists of three names each were prepared: one drawn from the list generated by MLA members during the 1995 election process and the other from Executive Committee suggestions. Janice Knight will enlist one candidate from each list for the 1996 ballot. She will also extend invitations to persons identified by the Executive Committee as candidates for service on the Richard Beale Davis Prize Committee. Lee Heller's resignation from the MLA Delegate

Assembly after the 1995 convention required the Division to name a replacement for her. On the advice of Carol Zuses in the MLA office, the Committee decided to name a representative for a new three-year term rather than trying to fill the one remaining year on Professor Heller's. Candidates for that post were chosen, in accordance with past practice, from those who had recently run for the Division's Executive Committee.

Philip Gura's report for *Early American Literature* was distributed in his absence. Subscriptions remain fairly steady, as does the rate of manuscript submissions to acceptances. It may be necessary for the journal to employ its own copy-editor again, in response to cutbacks at the University of North Carolina Press. The Executive Committee proposed a list of names to replace the two departing Editorial Board members, Teresa Toulouse and Michael Warner; those names will be transmitted to Professor Gura, who will issue invitations. The Richard Beale Davis Prize for 1995 goes to Ralph Bauer for his essay in issue 3 on "Colonial Discourse and Early American Literary History: Ercilla, The Inca Garcilaso, and Joel Barlow's Conception of World Epic."

Looking ahead to future MLA conferences, Eberwein reported on Knight's call for papers in the fall MLA newsletter. Our 1996 panels will anticipate the year 2000 with special attention to millennialism, nationalisms, and prospects for "making it new." Frank Shuffleton then sketched out plans for 1997 programming, which will focus on the role of writing in constructions of family, knowledge, and some aspect of community (nation, region, race, or ethnicity?). Phillip Richards suggested a panel on the politics of anthologizing, which sounds like a strong prospect for 1998.

Only a year after presenting its Honored Scholar of Early American Literature aware to Alan Heimert and in the absence of Professors Mulford and Knight, the Committee decided to defer for another year any action on naming the next Honored Scholar. A three-year interval seems appropriate to maintain the distinctiveness of such recognition. Eberwein reminded her colleagues of several names often proposed for the award and mentioned the divisional session coming up that noontime in honor of Thomas and Virginia Davis as an alternative way of celebrating accomplishments.

After some brief attention to Divisional record-keeping and upcoming business, the meeting ended around 11:15 a.m., with Committee members looking forward to three sessions sponsored by our Division and a party co-hosted with the Society of Early Americanists.

Submitted by Jane Eberwin, Oakland University

Session 197. The Tayloring Shop: Essays on Edward Taylor in Honor of Thomas M. and Virginia L. Davis— Presiding, Michael Schuldiner, U of Alaska, Fairbanks

Raymond A. Craig, Kent State U. "The 'Peculiar Elegance' of Edward Taylor's Poetics"

Several times each week, Edward Taylor would open a psalter to be greeted by the same few epigraphs, Pauline injunctions exhorting all to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The lesson of new England psalters is not, as John Cotton is said to have argued, that "God's Altar needs not our polishings." Rather, the tight use of Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is the foundation of Taylor's poetics—a poetics that derives from Augustine and Cotton in identifying the "peculiar elegance" of the Scriptures while extending biblical intertextuality into the making of new songs in a new context. Taylor's use of the Scripture's "peculiar elegance" extends biblical poetics to the non-historical, tropological use of the Word. Thus, it is not only the "type" or clearly allusive scriptural word or image that creates intertextual patterning; in Taylor's poetry, any image—sacred, secular, or personal—may exhibit intertextual and intratextual patterning across the *Preparatory Meditations*, resulting in full intertextual play across a broad range of poems and demonstrating what is poetic about Puritan poetry.

J. Daniel Patterson, Waltham, MA. "The Cultural Moment of Edward Taylor's *Gods Determinations*"

Viewing *Gods Determinations* as homiletic in epistemology, form, and rhetoric makes clear the work's ultimate coherence and the poet's design and control while further revealing its function as an instrument of authority within a cultural moment of crisis in New England Puritanism. Since the sermon in Congregational New England was "authority incarnate," and since the dimensions of crisis at this time involved much more than church membership, Taylor had great cause to design his poetic response in accord with a homiletic aesthetic. Paradoxically, Taylor devises a liberal strategy for maintaining a conservative vision: the complex cultural moment seemed so unstable to Taylor that he was willing to counsel his people that the least glimmer of spiritual hope was sufficient cause for them to run the extreme risk of damnation for approaching Communion in an unclean state. The exercise of homiletic authority in *Gods Determinations* reveals a Taylor who was writing between what he actually believed and what he was willing to say.

Jeffrey Jeske, Guilford College. "Edward Taylor and the Tradition of Puritan Nature Philosophy"

Edward Taylor inherits the same tangled philosophical traditions that his contemporaries do, and his mind moves agilely within them. Thus while his work expresses most visibly the ontological and epistemological assumptions of Christian Platonism, we also find Scholastics and contemporary scientific thought intermingling in his poetry, helping account both for

its richness and for the same contradictions which characterize Puritanism generally in his period. Nature appears, respectively, (1) as wilderness, imaging the Platonic and Calvinistic devaluation of the physical world, (2) as book, imaging the Scholastic confidence that nature can be used as a Scripture-supplementing text in which can be read the divine will and attributes, and (3) as machine, illustrating a more empirical attitude rooted in the new science in evolving theories of natural law, and in more positive attitudes toward reason. The same fault lines appear in Taylor's poetry, in other words, that would lead to Puritanism's fracture later.

Jeffrey A. Hammond, St. Mary's College, Maryland.

"Diffusing All by Pattern: Edward Taylor as Elegist"

In part because his occasional poems have received so little critical attention, we know Edward Taylor chiefly as a private, "meditative" poet strangely isolated from the literary culture of early New England. Taylor's elegiac verse, however, shows him to have been an accomplished "public" poet who did not eschew the more conventional forms of Puritan verse when occasion and audience demanded them. Moreover, his nine public elegies reveal a complex ritual of mourning underlying the stylized Puritan elegy—a dynamic of response also present in his more personal elegiac poems: the self-elegies and the poems to his first wife and two infant daughters. This similarity suggests that post-Romantic distinctions between "public" and "private" are anachronistic when applied to Taylor's poetry of mourning, and perhaps to Puritan verse generally.

Rosemary Fithian Guruswamy, Radford U. "A Farewell to David: Edward Taylor's Valediction and Psalm 19"

Although Taylor's valedictory poems present interpretative difficulties, Psalm 19 provides a prototype in topic and form. That Psalm focuses on the glory of creation and consequent need to glorify the Creator because of various blessings. Taylor poetically reworks the Psalm by creating a persona who changes perspective to view earthly creation as inferior to what lies ahead in heaven. This coincides with the growth of Taylor's assurance of his own glorification. One difficulty in the poem is Taylor's declaration that bird songs can serve as models for the heavenly songs he will shortly sing. This acceptance of birds seems to contradict the thrust of these valedictory poems. Two revelations in Thomas Davis's *A Reading of Edward Taylor*, however, underscore Taylor's belief that birdsong has spiritual worth not found in other manifestations of created nature.

Session 338. Racial and Religious Identity in Enlightenment America—Presiding, David Shields, The Citadel

Laura Jane Murray, U of Toronto, Saint George Campus. "Christian Discourse and Practice in the Life and Writing of Joseph Johnson"

Joseph Johnson (Mohegan, 1751-1776) died during the Revolutionary War while in the process of establishing an intertribal native Christian community in upper New York State, leaving two diaries and a substantial number of letters and sermons. Given the insistent humility of Johnson's writing, one might at first take Johnson to be an example of the abject colonized subject. But Christianity was even as early as Johnson's lifetime a force from *within* Native communities as well as from *without*; that is, Christian discourses and values and practices were no longer being generated solely by white ministers or even by lone converts. An interpretation of religion in Johnson's writing has to take into account not only the various dimensions of prevailing doctrine, and the question of audience, but the social context of his religious practice: Christianity served Johnson's community as a means to a better life on earth as well as in heaven.

Elizabeth J. W. Hinds, U of Northern Colorado. "The Specter of Value: Olaudah Equiano, Adam Smith, and the Cost of Living"

This essay situates Olaudah Equiano at the intersection of late eighteenth-century capitalist semiotics and Enlightenment individualism; further, the essay explores Equiano's discursive re-creation of his spiritual self in his *Interesting Narrative*. The essay contends that while Equiano exercises two autobiographical voices in his narrative, the autobiographical "self" he constructs is actually three-fold: as a slave, a merchant, and a convert to Calvinist theology, Equiano combines categories of experience reconcilable only in an era of rapid-growth, free-market capitalism.

Paula Bennett, Southern Illinois U, Carbondale.

"Phillis Wheatley's Vocation"

In "To Maecenas," Phillis Wheatley reworks classical material to fit and, with no small amount of candor, to comment on her situation as a poet-in-chains. In doing so, she not only articulates her frustration with her socially constructed status as a slave, but, by following Horace's lead and introducing her first and, as it turned out, only book of poetry with the ode, she sets all that follows within the discursive framework of its complaint. As this essay demonstrates, this complaint is based not only on her rage at the limitations imposed upon her poetry by her (race-based) enslavement but, equally important, on her commitment nonetheless to a vocation from whose practice she felt herself in some sense profoundly disbarred. In repeatedly insisting in the remainder of her *oeuvre* upon her hybrid (and oxymoronic) identity as a *Christian African Muse*—that

is, as one who was both “black” and “refin’d,” “diabolical[ly] die[d]” and part of “th’angelic train,” and in stressing the special authority this hybridity gave her, Wheatley sought to legitimate her voice in a culture that, unlike Horace’s, refused to grant artists legitimacy on the basis of their talent—and their craftsmanship—alone.

Session 477. The Rhetoric of Puritan Self-Fashioning—
Presiding, Jane Donahue Eberwein

Joy Young, U of California, Berkeley, “Identity,
Performance, and Spiritual Culture: The Puritan
Conversion Relation”

Scholars have regarded the Puritan conversion Relations as religious artifacts—theological blueprints that mix doctrine with experience. My paper shifts our perspective to performance, identity formation, and acculturation, and explores the tension between the Puritans’ antitheatrical prejudice and the theatrically produced self of the Relations.

The Relations manifest a speaker’s ineluctable self-transformation and construct a “verbal self” that needs, for the spiritual-social incarnation, the consent of an audience. I argue that the entire machinery of social control, prior knowledge, and theatrical presentation influenced the result of the testimonies—as it might in a theatrical competition. That is, the community reacted theatrically to the theatre they allowed. Through performance, the Relations relocated and temporarily resolved the doctrinal dilemma of “election” through the practice of social “selection.” They helped construct an Elect individual and Select community—a theatrically produced self performed in a spiritual society that excluded theatre, but in which every member had been a successful Player.

Lisa Whitney, Columbia U. “John Cotton’s ‘Divine
Eloquence’ and His Audience of Speaking Saints”

The connection between John Cotton’s celebrated eloquence and the efficacy of his preaching is something Cotton himself sought to mystify. Even among scholars who persuasively account for his eloquence, one finds a curious unwillingness to posit too direct a connection between the eloquence of his preaching and its spiritual effects. In Cotton’s regular preaching to his congregation (specifically, in the sermons of *The Way to Life*), he offers his listeners instruction in the successful reception of his rhetoric—trusting neither their powers of spiritual perception nor the power of his own rhetoric to accomplish the all-important work of spirit. In doing so, he effectively shares the burden of eloquence with his audience. Attention to these instructions in effectual hearing illuminates both the meaning of Cotton’s success and the elusive experience of a laity whose responses ultimately defined that success.

Dennis R. Perry, U of Missouri, Rolla. “John Eliot’s
Liberal Orthodoxy”

John Eliot, the “Apostle to the Indians,” filled a unique position among first-generation American Puritans, in terms of ideology as well as missionary vocation. While conservative in aspects of his support of the “New England Way,” he was liberal in his racial tolerance and in his questioning of the Bay’s civil covenant. His racial tolerance is evidenced in his openness to finding the elect among the Indians and in entertaining the hope that they are among the lost tribes of Israel. His “liberalism” further asserts itself in his unfavorable comparisons between red and white Puritans, implying the need for whites to adopt the biblical civil covenant practiced by the Indians in the praying towns. Through his life Eliot evolves from a Bay outsider among the Indians to an insider who defends the Indians against white oppression.

William Aarnes, Furman U. “Cotton Mather’s *Paterna*:
Dismissing Life, Transcribing Assurance”

Cotton Mather collected in *Paterna* devotions that his son—at first Increase but then later Samuel—could emulate. The revisions Mather made while copying an entry in his 1681 diary into *Paterna* indicate how Mather, instead of clarifying time, incident, and self, seems intent on dismissing them from this book. Collecting passages that seem contemporaneous, that replace narration with devotion, and that deny the self, Mather creates a work that seems—from a biographical standpoint—empty of life. But this emptiness is his attempt to gain life—not human life but the spirit of God. Furthermore, in writing devotions and then in copying them into *Paterna* Mather engaged in an activity that helped him feel close to God.

II. Nineteenth-Century American Literature

Session 372. Poetry and Cultural Criticism—Presiding:
Betsy Erkkila, Northwestern U

David Kellogg, Duke U. “Pierre Bourdieu, Poetry
Critic: Subject and Object in the Contemporary
Poetry Field”

Deborah Nelson, Graduate Center, CUNY. “Confess-
ing the Ordinary: Paul Monette’s *Love Alone*:
Eighteen Elegies for Rog and Bowers vs. Hardwick”

Session 572. The Oriental in Nineteenth-Century Literature—
Presiding: David Van Leer, U of California, Davis

David Van Leer. “Haunted Seraglios: Closet and
Canaan in Melville’s *Clarel*”

Diane Roberts, U of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. “Volup-
tuous Gardens: The South, Oriental, Race”

Gary Scharnhorst, U of New Mexico. “‘Ways That Are
Dark’: Appropriations of ‘the Heathen Chinese’ from
‘Plain Language from Truthful James’ to *Ah Sin*”

Malini Schueller, U of Florida. "Colonialism as the Repressed Political Unconscious of the 'Spiritual' Orient: Poe, Emerson, and Whitman"

III. Late Nineteenth-Early Twentieth Century American Literature

Session 71. *Chicago: Migration, Ethnicity, and the Rise of Naturalism*—Presiding: Kenneth Warren, U of Chicago

Katherine Joslin, Western Michigan U. "Slum Angels: Immigrant Women as White Slaves in Addams's *A New Conscience* and Dreiser's *Jennie Gerhardt*"

Addams's study of prostitution, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (1912), based on her social work at Hull House, and Dreiser's second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), based on his sister Mame's life, struggled to tell an accurate story about poor, rural, and immigrant women in Chicago. The paper places the social tract and the naturalist novel in the context of the "moral panic" over the relocation of poor women, who supposedly threatened the stability and order of the community, especially in cities where the influx of rural and immigrant people challenged middle-class patterns of living. Vice commissions, vigilance committees, newspapers and magazines reduced female experience in the city to a single, stylized narrative of "white slavery," a tale of sexual exploitation akin to the nineteenth century novel of seduction and rescue. Addams and Dreiser, I argue, adopted the white-slave narrative and, in doing so, compromised the "realism" they sought.

Traci Carroll, Rhodes College. "Negotiating Naturalism: Denaturalized Currencies in Nella Larsen's *Passing*"

As a late example of American naturalism, Nella Larsen's *Passing* draws upon and restructures the naturalist trope of the lone girl in the city who accrues or loses value through her circulation among men in the urban space. Female identity in naturalist works such as *Sister Carrie*, *The Pit*, and *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* is constructed through a careful process of female calculation, management, and consumption. Larsen refigures this feminine business of symbolic investment in both *Passing* and *Quicksand*, but her characters reveal a more frank concern with money and the construction of economic value than do their nineteenth-century precursors: Helga Crane does not want to admit the degree to which money determines her experience and limits her possibilities, and the dynamic between Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry is determined by their calculations of the costs and benefits of passing. In both novels, Chicago operates as a transitional urban space in which the characters construct different symbolic forms of

currency and establish new relations to that currency. Most markedly, Chicago functions as the site of production for lesbian desire as an unstable, denaturalized currency that is exchanged through the counterfeit activity of passing.

Chicago often represents a space of economic transformation, for better or for worse, in American naturalism: Curtis Jadwin is financially unmanned and affectively remade in Chicago's wheat pit, and the economic fates of Carrie and Hurstwood are set in motion in Chicago. According to Michael Davitt Bell, naturalist writers were negotiating through the genre their relation to both literary production and masculinity; Larsen refigures the naturalist convention of following the orphaned girl through the city in order to examine the desire of a female subject who is constructed as and through commodities. Larsen's representation of both Helga's sexuality and the dynamic of lesbian desire between Irene and Clare centers on, or rather pivots around, the fetishized commodity. Helga's sexual expression partakes of a highly autoerotic desire for striking clothing, which she explains as an "inherent racial need for gorgeousness" (18). Similarly, Irene's desire for Clare always passes through the commodity, the flowery dresses, the perfume, and the provocative lipstick. Indeed, Clare's apparition seems to emerge from the physical characteristics of the envelope and letter that precede her.

As Judith Butler has persuasively argued, Irene desires Clare for the indiscretion she represents, the erotic line of difference she occupies, yet she can never bring this desire into speech. Rather, Irene signifies the appeal and danger Clare represents by remarking constantly on her lavish and provocative clothing. Irene cannot speak of her desire for Clare, but she can comfortably desire Clare *through* her clothing.

The impossibility of articulating lesbian desire, the "something else for which she could find no name" (176) stand as a mute parody of commodity speech in Dreiser and Marx. Whereas the fetish of the commodity pleads with Carrie, attempts to seduce her by misrepresenting exchange value for use value, lesbian desire and passing both revolve around exchange value which has no correlative use value. Misrecognized homoerotic desire articulates itself as a fascination with racial passing and feminine clothing in Larsen's novel; the femme lesbian constructs desire precisely through an eroticization of exchange value, which Larsen contrasts with the joyless, dutiful, procreative use value of Irene and Brian's heterosexual relationship. But two difficulties arise: Clare's sexual and racial ambiguity create the same type of problem with misrepresentation, as Clare creates another kind of currency with which to pay "the cost" of passing (160). Larsen's exploration of femme lesbian desire as an unintended by-product of capitalism finds its antecedent in earlier naturalist works, which suggest

that female homoeroticism is in some way a “natural” outcome of the commodification of femininity. Although Carrie reconstructs herself in Chicago initially in order to attract the male gaze, her tutors of femininity become progressively more feminized: Drouet, the smart-looking Mrs. Vance, and Lola, a fellow chorus girl with whom Carrie finally establishes a home at the end of the novel.

Edward Watts, Michigan State U. “Chicago and the Nation: Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* and Jane Addams’ *Twenty Years at Hull House*”

In Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1905) and Jane Addams’ *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910), the city of Chicago becomes as much a subject as the immigrant characters and the specific social causes about which each author is concerned. The city in each is seen in the process of earning the “hog butcher of the world” title later bestowed by Carl Sandburg. Its conditions are miserable; its people divided and desperate, and help from the outside seems far away and unlikely.

Both show Chicago, then, filling the role assigned to it by the economically and culturally dominant eastern seaboard states. Chicago is doing the dirty work of industrialization and Americanization in slums and slaughterhouses without the benefit of a few hundred years to establish local identity and social infrastructure. While similar processes were going on in New York and Boston, these eastern cities, unlike Chicago, had a bedrock sense of self in place, a center which stabilized and domesticated these concerns. The East asked Chicago to do things despite the city’s youth and inexperience. Not surprisingly, it failed, and Sinclair and Addams write at length about the nature of that failure.

What we see in both, however, is Chicago being treated like a colony by the East—a primitive source of cheap labor and a dumping ground for its problems. Sinclair and Addams respond by employing a two-step postcolonial strategy. First, they appropriate and reject the externally imposed language and image for talking about the colony by the center. Both dally with the terminology of Naturalism to give the city—as well as its denizens—a bestial identity, defrocking Eastern language to show how it really felt about Chicago; not as a partner but as a domesticated beast of burden. Their focus on the brutality of immigrant experience directly confronts the image of the American Dream generated by eastern advertisers.

Second, instead of looking to the eastern center for solutions, they suggest locally-originated sources of relief. That is, if the colony does not need the capital for either subsistence or leadership, shouldn’t autonomy be sought? Eastern models seem incapable of coping with the complexity of interethnic problems and the city’s de facto multiculturalism. By stressing the newness of these conditions, Addams and Sinclair claim a region

difference in kind, not degree, from eastern cities, clearing the way for exploring more original approaches to problems.

I am rereading Sinclair and Addams as Midwestern writers who view Chicago’s problems, at the most basic level, as ones of marginalization and misrepresentation. By seizing the imagery by which it was defined and relocating the source of moral and cultural leadership, each would displace the East from its role as national center and declare Chicago (and the rest of the Midwest which feeds Chicago’s industries) a center in and of itself.

Session 270. *Poetry and Politics: 1880-1925*—Presiding:
Alan Golding, U of Louisville

Aldon Nielsen, San Jose State U. “‘I Never Ate a White Man Yet’: The Poetics of Indigestion”

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the works of many poets, including T. S. Eliot’s “Fragment of an Agon” and Vachel Lindsay’s “The Congo,” repeat racialized tropes of cannibalism also found in such racist tracts as Charles Carroll’s *The Negro a Beast* and George Fitzhugh’s *Cannibals All*. The racist metaphor of African cannibalism has also functioned as a peculiar institution within critical discourse in American literature, appearing as recently as the 1960s in Kenneth Rexroth’s appraisals of the works of Amiri Baraka.

Alongside this metaphorical tradition exists another literary convention, rarely examined, in which white authors have portrayed white characters as consuming representations of black people. Most powerfully seen in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s image of a small boy eating “Jim Crow” in *The House of the Seven Gables*, this practice is a literary parallel to the seemingly insatiable appetites of America’s slave markets for African bodies. Against this background, the history of early modernism’s frequent resort to blackface dialect in poetry may be seen as a series of metaphoric hiccups proceeding from literary America’s effort to swallow, without assimilating, the body of black culture.

Cary Nelson, U of Illinois—Urbana. “Politics and Labor in Poetry of the Fin de Siecle and Beyond: Fragments of an Unwriteable History”

The history of labor poetry is as yet unwriteable because we do not have ready to hand either the full range of modern poetic texts taking up the issues of work and its exploitation or the distinctive and ephemeral way the poetry was published and used at various moments by distinct audiences. It is possible, however, to begin presenting certain telling fragments of such a history. Consider, for example, Edwin Markham’s 1899 “The Man With the Hoe,” first published that January in the San Francisco *Examiner* and soon reprinted in newspaper after newspaper across the country. It was one of several protest poems Markham published and not the only one

to receive wide circulation, but its status is nonetheless exceptional. It became one of the anthems of the American labor movement, though in some ways, as I shall show, an atypical one. It also provoked a genuine national debate about its meaning and implications, one of the few times in our history a poem was the subject of such wide discussion and controversy; it was reprinted in numerous special editions and pamphlets. People argued over its meaning with a dedication usually reserved for specialists. Each of its reprintings, moreover, has special cultural meanings.

Moving through the first four decades of the twentieth century we can track multiple ephemeral uses of poetry in the labor movement. The repeated use of poetry in this way also had effects in other domains. Certainly it helped define more broadly the social uses to which poetry could be put. It thus made poetry “available” to other groups and constituencies that might successfully use poems to build solidarity among existing members and reach out to new ones. If we want to know what poetry meant in the 1890s, or the 1920s, we need to preserve and have access to objects like these. All these cards and broadsides make contributions to the historical meaning of the genre.

David R. Anderson, U of Louisville. “The Woman with the Tricorn Hat: Marianne Moore’s Republicanism”

Although Marianne Moore’s trademark, the tricorn hat, is often seen as a whimsical fashion statement, her tricorn reflects her serious interest in the political theory of republics, and explains her use of biological symbolism when discussing the best ways to preserve the civic virtue, diversity, and stability of republican governments. In poems such as “Is Your Town Nineveh?,” “An Octopus,” and “To Statecraft Embalmed,” Moore reiterates the central thesis of classical republicanism: that republics adapt to social crises by cultivating diversity (a variety of skills, knowledge, and experience), and civic virtue (citizens’ willingness of sacrificed self-interest for the public good). Because of her knowledge of Darwinian biology, Moore sees distinct analogies between evolutionary theory and republican theory, and turns to nature for models of adaptation, diversity, and self-restraint, all to preserve the American republic at the end of the frontier, and in the modern age.

Session 408. Race, Travel, and Imperialism in Late Nineteenth-Century American Literature—Presiding:
Sandra Gunning, U of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Martin Padgett, U of California, San Diego. “Travel, Exoticism, and the Writing of Region: Charles Fletcher Lummis and the ‘Creation’ of the Southwest”

This paper analyses how Lummis, through myriad articles and books of travel, history, and fiction, sought to create the Southwest as an area of the US in which

ethnic and cultural difference, archaeological and anthropological antiquity, and spectacular natural landscapes were made the cornerstones of a new regionalism that became centered in Los Angeles. I argue that from the moment Lummis walked into the old Mexican settlements of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico in 1884, while walking across the US from Ohio to southern California, he was actively engaged in mapping a new cultural geography of the Southwest. Through Lummis’s writing the Southwest was exoticised, expropriated, and exploited. It was made the proving ground of a reinvigorated ‘Anglo-Saxon’ racialized and masculinized identity. I examine articles, short stories, poems, and editorials with American Indian and “Spanish” New Mexican and Californian themes that Lummis published in *Land of Sunshine* (later renamed *Out West*), a Los Angeles-based literary and promotional journal that he edited between 1894 and 1910. I end the paper by emphasizing that although Lummis imagined the US as hierarchized along racial, class, and gender lines that clearly privileged forms of Anglo male authority, this is not the whole story. For the challenge of reading Lummis today is not to be merely dismissive of his flawed representations, but to criticize his texts in ways that counter the hierarchy of cultural values they establish.

Stephanie A. Smith, U of Florida. “Acquiring Taste: Imperial Margins in/of Whitman and Douglass”

In just the last six years, both Walt Whitman and Frederick Douglass have undergone frequent critical renovation in essay collections, new editions, or biography so that these two household names of an American imaginary since the Civil War have been unveiled as “new” products—newly interpreted, newly revealed—and therefore, it would seem, as superior to prior versions. The use of superlatives, or of revelation and novelty, of course, is neither surprising nor interesting as advertising strategy; indeed both Douglass and Whitman themselves were impresarios of renewal. Yet, despite the fact that these two writers were long-lived contemporaries who framed and indeed advertised themselves cannily as exemplums of novelty, increase, and expansion, a consumer today will rarely see Douglass and Whitman on the same page, or in the same venue, critical discussion, syllabus, or advertisement.

Indeed, more often than not, the way in which Douglass is offered to a consumer is unlike the way in which Whitman is packaged and *vice-versa*; using the difference between these two figures as an index to marketing politics, “Acquiring Taste” will raise questions about the constitution of the “novel” person as a form of international capital investment and exportation, that, I will argue, points to how the emergence of person-types or personality at the end of the nineteenth century helped to reconfigure and extend rather than to extinguish the logic of slavery; that is, personality signals

the shift from an economy in which bodies were bought and sold to one that insisted on identity as commodity. Thus while slavery was abolished as a legal form, the logic of ownership within it simply mutated into one of the current central tools of global capital expansion.

Anne E. Goldman, U of Colorado, Boulder. "American Studies and the Regionalist Unconscious"

This paper considers the paths Henry James and Maria Ruiz de Burton traverse in and out of New England and the United States in *The Bostonians* (1885) and *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) in order to explore the implications of thinking "regionally" about national conflicts like the Civil War and the U.S.-Mexican War. In both books, national identity develops from regional formations: Basil Ransom is a pale substitute for the "tatterdemalion darkies" who migrate North after the Civil War, the transplanted Southerner whom James uses to embody the nation's "black" contradictions and in so doing, to defuse the immigrant threat. Lola Medina is also an embodiment of regional conflicts, a young Californian who in going East embodies the paternal heart of the Puritan Norvals of Boston and allows Ruiz de Burton to deconstruct—by conflating—two national paradigms conventionally represented by regionalist languages as absolute values: the East-West border crossing articulated by the exhortation to "Go West, young man!" and the North-South divide figured by the Mason-Dixon line.

IV. Twentieth-Century American Literature

Report of the Executive Committee of the Division on Twentieth-Century American Literature

The Executive Committee met on 27 December 1995, 9:00 p.m.-10:15 p.m. in the room of Rachel Blau DuPlessis, chair, in the Executive Plaza Hotel. Present were Jay Clayton and DuPlessis along with Marisa Januzzi, the delegate. Rafael Pérez-Torres was recovering from illness and unable to attend the MLA. The other newly elected members of the Executive Committee, Cary Nelson and Ramón Saldívar were not informed in time to attend. However, the Division is happy to announce a full complement of members: 1) Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Temple University, term to 1996. Outgoing chair. 2) Jay Clayton, Vanderbilt University, term to 1997. Chair of the Division 1996-97. 3) Cary Nelson, University of Illinois, Urbana, term to 1998. Future Chair of the Division, 1997-98. 4) Rafael Pérez-Torres, UCSB, term to 1999. Future Chair of the Division, 1998-99. 5) Ramón Saldívar, Stanford University, term to 2000. Future Chair of the Division, 1999-2000. Marisa Januzzi, Delegate to the Delegate Assembly, University of Utah. Term to 1997. Nominations for the five-year term ending in 2001 were discussed. The Division nominated six names as follows: Executive Committee's Candidate: Priscilla Wald; First

Alternate: Ann du Cille. Second Alternate: Judith Roof. Membership Candidate: Carla Kaplan; First Alternate: Phyllis Frus. Second Alternate: Robin Schulze.

Convention, Washington D.C., 1996. The task of proposing topics is traditionally assigned to the incoming Chair. Jay Clayton is proposing a series of topics that complicate "postmodernism" with the issues and meanings emerging from multiculturalism.

Submitted by Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Temple University

Session 113. The Literary and Cultural Construction of Twentieth-Century "Whiteness"—Presiding:
Louis Owens, U of New Mexico

Judith Jackson Fossett, Princeton U. "(K)Night Riders in (K)Night Gowns: The Ku Klux Klan, Race, and Constructions of Masculinity"

Lorenzo Thomas, U of Houston, Downtown. "Me and My Shadow: Black Folks and 'Whiteness,' 1900-33."

Laura Doyle, Harvard U. "Narrative, Modernity, and Whiteness: The Case of Gertrude Stein"

The idea of modernity issues from the idea of historicity, that is, from the project to narrate culture as development, of which the modern is the apotheosis. In an odd twist, the modern arises from the historical. As I will argue in this paper, this twist has implications for the modernist encounter with the idea of whiteness and with the historical narrative whiteness inhabits. No modernist author expresses more allegiance to the modern than Gertrude Stein and as such she will be central to my argument.

In the first section of the paper, I will follow those theorists (e.g., Michel Foucault) who locate the emergence of historical narrative (vs. Platonic or taxonomic description) in the eighteenth century. I will additionally recall Edward Said's notion of western narrative as caught up in a search for origins and a myth of "beginnings." I will then link the rise of such narratives to the emergent discourse of race and in this light consider race a founding idea of modernity. In other words, I will argue that history, and the narratives of modernity attending it, depend on race as a diachronic principle. I will draw special attention to what I have elsewhere called domestic race discourses which consolidate in the eighteenth century, for it is out of these that historicized notions of whiteness first arise.

I will argue that this view of narrative—as a practice entangled with race since the eighteenth century—throws light on the deeper cultural stakes of the novel and of modernism's disruption of narrative. On the one hand, it explains how not only a fragmenting late industrialism, nor a constricting romance plot, but also a story of whiteness comes radically under question in works by Jean Toomer, William Faulkner, James Joyce, and Zora Neale Hurston. I will focus on Gertrude Stein

as one of the modernist authors most intensely and most contradictorily engaged in this matrix of race and narrative. Through the insistent use of repetition, including repetition of racist phrases, Stein at once depends on the power of a white identity and exposes the principles of the very narrative order that founds that identity. I will thus elucidate through Stein the complicated problematics of whiteness, modernity, and narrative.

Rosemarie Johnstone, U of Minnesota. "White Drinking Culture: *The Sun Also Rises*"

In *The Search for Order 1877-1920*, a history of reform movements in the United States, Robert Wiebe describes alcohol prohibition as one of the earliest expressions of an American "preoccupation with purity and unity." He argues that from the founding of the Prohibition Party in 1869 through the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1933, alcohol prohibition was just as much about managing difference within American cities as it was about controlling alcohol consumption across the nation. My paper reassesses Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* in the context of alcohol prohibition in the early twentieth-century by illuminating the ways in which Hemingway's constructions of Anglo-Protestant masculinity are based on episodes of drinking. The novel which epitomizes the nineteen-twenties era also participates in an historical moment in which the nation consolidated its ideas about Americanness, masculinity, and whiteness through a discourse on alcohol abuse.

Session 645: *Contemporary American Hybrid Genres: Essay, Poetic Essay, Essay-Poem*—Presiding: Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Temple U

Andrew Levy, New York, NY. "Freer than Anything that Is': Limits of Bonding—Leslie Scalapino, Robert Kocik"

"Hybrid crossed with artwork is not neoDarwinist but necroDarwinist . . ."

Hybridity, as both a critical term and theoretical construct, is the metaphor used in the descriptive analysis of texts, culture and society in Postcolonial criticism and theory, as in African-American literary studies, particularly recent work on "hybrid discursive structures." Concerned with formations of subjectivity and identity within repressive systems of political, economic and cultural domination, what could hybridity, when invoked as an aesthetic of mixings, a collage-based technique for the purpose of generating genre hybrids, mean for the poet qua critic, or vice-versa?

To examine this question, I look at the 'unnecessary complexity' of the poet's vocation, understood in terms Giorgio Agamben notes in *Idea of Prose*, as "fidelity to that which cannot be thematized, nor simply passed over in silence." To aid this study of vocation and its

importance in discerning the positive and negative valences of the term "hybridity," I discuss the critical and poetic texts of Leslie Scalapino and Robert Kocik. Both writers explore the economy, history, politics, psychology, sociology and aesthetics of the limits of bonding. In both writer's works, *hybridity* fails to encompass the complexities of their writing.

Seen to be linear—curious and proactive but not creative, *hybridity* scans for peculiarity, not alterity. Thus the unadulterated identity of the hybrid practice finally comes to the fore—*domestication*. The guided modification of potentialities toward strictly human ends.

Linda A. Kinnahan, Duquesne U. "Engendering Poetics: Women Experimental Poets and the Poetic Essay"

This paper considers the issue of silence within essays written by women poets experimenting with structures of language and subjectivity. Focusing upon the essay of literary criticism, this paper looks first at the 1980s journal of innovative women's poetry, HOW (ever) to explore the intersections of poetry, criticism, and theory in the journal's "hybrid" textual space. The paper then discusses the essays of Rachel Blau DuPlessis as they expose the silencing pressures, for women, of the conventional literary essay's structural and formal elements. A recent essay by M. Nourbese Philip is read as situating the generic conventions of the essay form within a colonialist and sexist cultural history as an effort to wreak the silencing of women within such a history. A final discussion of Susan Howe examines how her essays position a "feminized" form against the order of masculinity through retrieving margins, notes, and other suppressed texts and voices.

John Shoptaw, New York. "The Quicker Picker-Upper: Charles Bernstein's Hyperabsorbency"

"Artifice of Absorption" is a rare hybrid: a versified essay in poetics that names names. AA is also hybrid in its poetics, discovering magnetic poles of absorption and impermeability. These polar terms describe poems and readers. How much can a poem or reader absorb? How much resistance, in the poem or reader, must be overcome? AA is a defense of "impermeable" language poetry, arguing that it is really "hyperabsorptive"—intensely and permanently absorbing. These terms suggest that a poem raises formal hurdles to its understanding. But readers may dwell on and in a poem long after its content has been absorbed. Though clearer than most of Bernstein's eighties verses, AA is hyperabsorptive in its manipulation of line breaks and lengths, and in its absorption of other poetry and prose. In AA the critical conventions of block quotation and quotation "In the body of the text" become poetic resources.

Charles Bernstein, State U of New York, Buffalo. "The Revenge of the Poet-Critic"

Poetry continues to make active methodological interventions into critical and philosophic discourse. Any serious consideration of the longstanding "discrepant engagement" between criticism and poetry needs to look closely at the work of contemporary poets fully as much as the work of contemporary theorists.

Poetry is necessarily theoretical and it can evade this no more than it can evade its historicity. Blur poetry and poetics as I might, I do see them as distinct genres with specific traditions and I rely on the generic distinctions to perform my hermeneutic oscillations between the two. I'm not promoting an undifferentiated writing but, on the contrary, I am interested in increasing differentiation of writing forms. But that means we can't take our conventions for granted, else they become markers for distinctions no longer having any necessity.

Session 674. Creolization, Hybridity, Syncretisms, and Mixings: Theory and Practice in Performative Modes—Presiding: Rafael Pérez-Torres, UCSB

Walter Kalaidjian, Emory U. "Heritage, Hybridity, and Marlem: Performing Primitivism in the 1920s"

Barrett Watten, Wayne State U. "Dialogue and the Suppression of Difference in American Modernism"

The concept of "antagonism," as developed in the work of Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Slavoj Žižek, is useful in theorizing the formation of modern subjects, particularly in terms of dialogic exchanges in the public sphere. As a demonstration of the "impossibility" of the modern subject, Laura Riding acted out an "antagonistic" poetics in a dialogue with what she and Robert Graves called, in their 1926 *Survey of Modernist Poetry*, the "Plain Reader." Riding's articulation of a "democratic subject position" in her address to this "neutral" interlocutor took place via her presentation of the sublime difficulty of her poetry, invoking "open" horizons of an "impossible" sociality. A similar, if more famous, use of the public presentation of an antagonistic poetics occurs in the work of Ezra Pound, particularly as it moved from the difficulty of his epic poem to the deceptive availability of his popular/fascist radio broadcasts. Where Pound wanted to destabilize state power by means of a demoralizing negative rhetoric, Roosevelt's rhetoric literally reverses the panic attack Pound imitates. Pound and Roosevelt, then, may be seen in a kind of constitutive dialogue, one in which Pound offers himself up, as a matter of duty, as a self-canceling antagonism in the construction of Roosevelt's paratactic rhetoric of national unity, an antagonism it was in Roosevelt's hegemonic interest to suppress. For this reason, Pound should not be taken as exemplifying a poetics of hybridity, however heterogeneous his

sources. Pound's hybridity was a destructive acting out he wished to see punished, a negative of Roosevelt's rhetoric of unity.

V. Black American Literature and Culture

Session 72. Black Literary and Cultural Nationalism(s): From the Harlem Renaissance to the Present—Presiding: SallyAnn H. Ferguson, U of North Carolina, Greensboro

Karla F. C. Holloway, Duke U, "Cultural Nationalisms Passed On: African American Mourning Stories"

Jennifer Jordan, Howard U, "Black Arts Poetry and the Power of the Word: No Mo' Nommo?"

Mae G. Henderson, U of Illinois, Chicago. "The Status of Black Women Writers as Intellectual Property"

Session 271. The Legacy of Gwendolyn Brooks—Presiding: Cheryl A. Wall, Rutgers U, New Brunswick

Hortense J. Spillers, Cornell U, "Gwendolyn the Terrible: Later That Same Day"

Michael S. Harper, Brown U, "Wizardry: The Artistry of Gwendolyn Brooks"

Gwendolyn Brooks, Chicago, Illinois. Response

Session 713. Black Literary and Cultural Nationalism(s): From the Beginnings to the Harlem Renaissance—Presiding: Bernard Bell, Penn State U, U Park

Jerry Ward, Tougaloo College. "What's in a Name" The Literary Construction of Black Cultural Identity and Thought from the 1830s to the 1930s"

Trudier Harris, Emory U, "The Dilemma of Double Consciousness for Black Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance"

Houston A. Baker, Jr., U of Pennsylvania. "Generational and Ideological Shifts in African American Discourse"

VI. American Indian Literatures

Session 25. Native American Voices of the Midwest: Readings—Presiding: A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, U of Illinois, Chicago

Betty Louise Bell, U of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Kimberly M. Blaeser, U of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

William Penn, Michigan State U

Roberta Hill Whiteman, U of Wisconsin, Madison

Carter Revard, Washington U.

Session 198. Native American Literature: Seeking a Critical Center—Presiding: Kimberly M. Blaeser, U of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Kathryn Shanley, Cornell U “Heart Metaphors in American Indian Thought and Literature”
Gordon Henry, Michigan State U “American Indian Centers: The Unacknowledged Requisite for Concentric American Literatures”

Session 409. Teaching Native American Texts in Introductory Literature Courses—Presiding: James Ruppert, U of Alaska, Fairbanks

Chris LaLonde, North Carolina Wesleyan College. “Breaking Our Necks: Incorporating Native American Texts in American Literature Surveys”

Robert Gregory, U of Miami. “Ants in the System: Beginning to Think Strongly about Stories.”

Lou Caton, U of Oregon. “The Multicultural Canon, *The Sacred Hoop*, and *Ceremony*: Teaching the Native American Novel”

Cheryl Brown, U of Texas, Arlington. “Chona and Threau: The View from Another Culture”

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1986: Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV
1987-90: Jerome Loving
1991-94: Paul Sorrentino

Jay B. Hubbell Medal Winners

1964: Jay B. Hubbell
1965: Norman Foerster
1967: Robert E. Spiller
1970: Howard Mumford Jones
1972: Willard Thorp
1973: Leon Howard
1974: Walter Blair
1975: Henry Nash Smith
1976: Lewis Leary
1977: Gay Wilson Allen
1978: Cleanth Brooks
1979: Malcolm Cowley
1980: Robert Penn Warren
1981: Lewis Mumford
1982: Alfred Kazin
1983: R.W.B. Lewis
1984: Roy Harvey Pearce
1985: James Woodress
1986: Leon Edel
1987: Daniel Aaron
1988: Richard Poirier
1989: Nathalia Wright
1990: Edwin Cady
1991: Lewis Simpson
1992: Merton M. Sealts, Jr.
1993: Leo Marx
1994: Leslie Fiedler
1995: Blanche H. Gelfant

**Norman Foerster Award for the Best Article in
*American Literature***

1964: Allen Guttman
1965: Daniel Fuchs
1966: Eugene Huddleston
1967: Robert Reilly
1968: Lawrence Buell
1969: Benjamin Spencer
1970: Margaret Blanchard
1971: Thomas Philbrick
1972: Alan Howard
1973: Patricia Tobin & Eddy Dow
(separate articles)
1974: Robert Marler
1975: James Barbour
1976: Robert Lee Stuart & William Andrews
(separate articles)

1977: Charles Scruggs & Philip Gura
(separate articles)
1978: Stephen J. Tapscott
1979: Bryan Short
1980: Robert A. Ferguson
1981: Thomas M. Walsh & Thomas D. Zlatic
1982: Christopher P. Wilson
1983: Michael North
1984: Karen Dandurand
1985: David Hesla
1986: Joan Burbick
1987: Cynthia Jordan
1988: Margaret Dickie
1989: Richard Lyon
1990: Catherine Rainwater
1991: Lora Romero
1992: Michael Warner
1993: Lauren Berlant
1994: Caleb Crain
1995: Carla Kaplan

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